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LEADOFF

Liebe Mitglieder,

Was haben die Anschläge von Paris und die Flüchtlingskrise gemeinsam? Sie verändern die Welt, wie wir sie bisher kennen. Herausforderungen der Äußeren Sicherheit greifen uns in unserem Innersten an – eine terroristische Mörderbande rüttelt ebenso wie gepeinigte, flüchtende Menschen an den tragenden Säulen unseres bisherigen Selbstverständnisse wie auch an unseren Grundwerten. Wie werden wir persönlich und unsere Gesellschaften insgesamt mit dem Veränderungsdruck zurechtkommen, wie unsere politischen Eliten mit den herausfordernden Aufgabenstellungen? Können wir auch künftig noch Nuancen ausdifferenzieren oder wird die Zukunft grobkörnig und schwarz-weiß? Siegt rechtsextrem gegen die politische Mitte? Bleibt Europa eine Union? Mit welchem Auftrag schicken wir eigentlich unsere Soldaten in die Welt und geben wir Ihnen dafür den erforderlichen materiellen ideellen und materiellen Rückhalt? Wird sich auch die Zivilgesellschaft bei den anstehenden internationalen Stabilisierungsaufgaben wirkungsvoll einbringen? Womit müssen wir im Neuen Jahr rechnen? Was können wir tun?

Das Weihnachtsfest 2015 wird sicherlich nachdenklicher als in früheren Jahren. Der Vorstand der pmg wünscht Ihnen und Ihren Familien ein friedliches, frohes Weihnachtsfest und ein gutes neues Jahr.

Ralph Thiele, Vorstandsvorsitzender

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Will a NATO “Cool War” with Russia Blow Hot?

Overview

The Cool War¹ between NATO and Russia is going through a dynamic phase. There appears to be a pause in the Ukraine conflict with Moscow’s decision not to support any further military expansion of the rebel rump regimes in the Donbas region. Furthermore,

¹ Unlike the more binary conflict between the Soviet Empire and the Atlantic Alliance, the Cold War, Alliance relations with Russia are best described as “Cool War” a mixture of competition, containment, and cooperation. It is noteworthy that during the recent peak of the Ukraine crisis the Putin regime did not attempt to sabotage P5+1 negotiation with the IRI to affect an agreement to greatly curb the Iranian nuclear program. For a description of the possible emergence of a “Cool War” between the United States and China see Paul K. Davis and Peter A. Wilson, *Looming Discontinuities in US Military Strategy and Defense Planning – Colliding RMA’s Necessitate a New Strategy*, RAND, OP326, March 2011.

there has been the dramatic military intervention by Moscow in the Syria Civil War. These geo-strategic maneuvers may be part of an elaborate effort by the Putin regime to gain meaningful sanction relief from the Atlantic Alliance. On the other hand, these efforts may fail, and the Putin regime may conclude that it has to “double down” and renew its covert and overt military campaign to carve out of Ukraine an economically and geographically viable “New Russia”. This heating up of the Ukraine crisis will likely prompt a robust financial and military response by the Atlantic Alliance. That response may be perceived by Moscow as so threatening as to prompt the Putin regime to widen the conflict with the Atlantic Alliance by launching a covert and possibly overt campaign to destabilize Estonia and Latvia with the intent of collapsing the cohesion of NATO. This destabilization campaign might well include the “use” of the Russian nuclear arsenal as part of a “grab-and-threaten-to-smash” campaign. Below is an exploration as to how NATO could enhance its Article V extended deterrent commitment to East Europe in the face of the prospect in the near-future of a very severe political military crisis prompted by a new major act of aggression by Moscow.

Pause in the Ukraine Crisis

Although the current crisis between Russia and Ukraine appears to be in a tentative remission, there is the very real prospect that the Atlantic Alliance will face a far more serious Europe-wide military crisis with Russia that entails the risk of nuclear war.² That prospect will emerge if the Putin regime decides to shatter the current ceasefire agreement with Ukraine, the Minsk II Accord sometime next spring. Currently, Moscow appears to be playing a waiting game with much more benign public rhetoric aimed at a politically fragile Europe in the hopes that most of the European

² For an expression of alarm about this type of scenario see Graham Allison and Dimitri Simes, “Russia and America” Stumbling to War”, *The National Interest*, May-June 2015 and Lilia Shevtsova, “What Should the War Fear: The Rise or Decline of Illiberal Powers?”, *The American Interest*, December 2, 2014.

financial sanctions will end this early winter. Noteworthy has been the lack of any military action taken by the Ukraine rebel forces with Russian direct support to seize a land bridge along the Sea of Azov to Crimea during this late summer. Simultaneously Putin has launched a military expeditionary operation to shore up the Assad regime in Syria. His motivation for this strategic maneuver remains open to speculation.³ He may believe that by playing a major role as a Syrian civil war peacemaker he might get some credit from the European Union for stabilizing the current torrent of refugees flowing from the Syrian war zone. Further, this ploy may be part of a larger geo-strategic game to radically reduce the temperature of the tensions with the Atlantic Alliance over the Ukraine crisis in the hopes of gaining substantial sanction relief by this winter. On the other hand, this military “move of greatness” may be driven by the desire to show the United States that Russia is a power to be taken seriously in the Middle East, irrespective of the evolution of the Ukraine crisis.⁴

Overall, it appears that Putin has decided to lower the temperature of the Ukraine crisis and find out

³ Russia began air strikes in support of the Assad regime on the 30th of September 2015. Early indications suggest that those air strikes are against Syrian rebel forces not allied with ISIS aka Daesh. See “Syria crisis: Russian airstrikes against Assad enemies”, *BBC News*, September 30, 2015

⁴ For a discussion of the possible linkage between the Ukraine crisis and Putin decision to up the military ante in Syria see Geoff Dyer and Kathrin Hille, “The battle for Syria”, *Financial Times*, September 25, 2015 and James J. Coyle, “Russia Looking for an Exit?”, *RealClearDefense*, September 24, 2015. President Obama met with President Putin during the annual General Assembly meeting at the UN this September 28th. It is quite obvious there is a strong difference of opinion between Washington and Moscow as to whether Assad is a solution or part of the problem of ending the Syria civil war. See “Analytic Guidance: What the U.S.-Russia Talks on Syria Portend”, *STRATFOR*, September 26, 2015. Also see Geoff Dyer and Kathrin Hille, “The battle for Syria”, *Financial Times*, September 28, 2015 and Fredeick W. Kagen and Kimberly Kagan, “Putin Ushers in a New Era of Global Geopolitics”, *Institute for the Study of War (ISW)*, September 27, 2015. Putin may attempt to offer the Obama administration and the EU a “grand bargain” to radically lower the temperature of the Ukraine crisis to gain sanction relief while offering a way to end the Syrian civil war on Moscow’s terms.

whether the United States and its NATO allies are prepared to come to a strategic modus vivendi. During this summer’s multi-hour media telethon, Putin attempted to put the best face on Russia’s economic prospects, although the current sanction regime imposed by the EU and the United States has severely disrupted the Russian economy.⁵ Adding to Moscow’s misery is the loss of income from a price collapse of oil and natural gas prompted by last year’s decision by Saudi Arabia to conduct an oil price and market share war with North America’s burgeoning unconventional oil and gas industries.⁶ Already the Russian government is planning to make major cut backs in domestic social and non-military investment programs to protect Moscow’s very ambitious defense reform and modernization program.⁷ Finally, the cost

⁵ President Putin took a much more downbeat view of the economic threats from the West during his late fall 2014 speech to the Russian Federal Assembly. He called for a national mobilization and willingness of the Russian population make sacrifices in support of Moscow’s strategy of confronting the Atlantic Alliance. See “Russia: Putin’s Annual Speech Marks Dramatic Shift”, *STRATFOR Global Intelligence*, December 4, 2015

⁶ There appears to be a consensus amongst many global energy analysts that oil prices will be low (below \$60 a barrel) for a long period of time (end of the decade). This driven by the twin impact a reduction in demand with China’s economy facing a secular slowdown and increased energy efficiencies in the “West” and the prospect that North American unconventional oil and gas business will respond to any future rise in oil and gas prices with a rapid increase in production thereby acting a global swing producer and price setter, the former role of Saudi Arabia. See Terry Engelder, “Is US oil boom already turning to bust? OPEC can only dream”, *The CONVERSATION*, May 8, 2015, *Annual Energy Outlook 2015 with projections to 2040*, U.S. Energy Information Administration, DOE/EIA-0383 (2015), and Robert Berke, “Iran Deal May Redefine the Middle East”, *OILPRICE*, September 20, 2015 for an analysis of the cascading geostrategic and geo-economic effects of the July 14, 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran and the P5+1.

⁷ There is increasing evidence that the Russian defense sector may be suffering from both smaller future budgets and the disruption of the supply of important defense material from Ukraine. Two premier and highly touted combat aircraft programs, the TA-50 “fifth generation” fighter bomber and the next generation strategic bomber are suffering major development and production delays. See Alexander Mladenov, “Rapidly Going Nowhere – Confused Priorities For Russian Air Power”, *Combat Aircraft*, October 2015 and Maxim Pyadushkin, “Slow Going – New Russian bomber, fighter development face delays”, *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, August 17-30, 2015.

of the Crimean annexation coupled with the ongoing costs of supporting the two rump states, the Donetsk Peoples Republic and the Luhansk Peoples Republic in eastern Ukraine, has become onerous without a decisive strategic result. In fact the longer the time this conflict in the Donbas remains “frozen” the more time the Ukraine government has to reform and reorient its economy with financial assistance from the “West” while building up a more robust military posture. Without sanction relief, if only from Europe, the full effect of these negative economic consequences is likely to be manifest to the Russian population by this winter. Noteworthy has been the emergence of labor unrest in diverse sectors of the Russian economy prompted, in part, by the current secular downturn and the prospects of increasing inflation flowing from a severely devalued ruble.⁸

This suggests that President Putin who now has the deserved reputation of a geo-strategic risk taker may conclude the Minsk II agreement should be torn up with another round of military aggression against Ukraine.⁹ He may believe that he has a “window of opportunity” to take more decisive military action to create a more viable “New Russia” that acts as a geographic bridge between Crimea and Russia proper.¹⁰ The tipping point of this decision may be both a decision by the Atlantic Alliance to stand firm on the current sanction regime, increasing tension between Moscow and Washington over the course of the Syrian and Iraqi twin civil wars, and mounting signs of Russian domestic political unrest this winter.¹¹

⁸ See Andrew Kramer, “Unpaid Russian Workers Unite in Protest Against Putin”, *The New York Times*, April 21, 2015

⁹ For description of Putin’s leadership style see Vincent Jauvert, “Unraveling the Putin Enigma, from the Inside”, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, RealClear World, April 22, 2015

¹⁰ For the case the Putin regime will find the current frozen Ukraine conflict strategically intolerable see S.R. Covington, *Putin’s Choice for Russia*, Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, August 2015

¹¹ Certainly there is a “gray swan” scenario that leads to a drastic deterioration in U.S. and Russian relations that includes a possible military clash between Russian and U.S. air forces during air operations over Syria prompted by com-

A Road to a European War

In the spirit that “history does not repeat itself but rhymes,” many commentators have noted the pre-World War I analogy to the European powers “sleepwalking” into a global war. A more appropriate historic analogy is the road to war between Japan and the United States before Pearl Harbor. It was during that crisis, that the Roosevelt Administration made the strategic blunder of launching a lethal economic and financial boycott before deploying a credible military deterrent force in the Philippines. Even though the Japanese political and military leadership was very pessimistic about the prospect of any Pacific Ocean war with the United States, the very effectiveness of the U.S. sanctions convinced that leadership that they had no choice but to roll the military dice.¹² In a similar fashion, the Putin regime may decide that the “West” has forced his hand, and that a major use of military power both to shatter the national viability of an increasingly capable anti-Russian Ukraine and the cohesion of NATO is an attractive option.¹³

Failing to get sanction relief from the Atlantic Alliance during the winter of 2016, Putin could order a major mobilization of the Russian Armed Forces to conduct a summer 2016 campaign to carve out a much larger New Russia, including a land bridge to Crimea. Such an operation could not be semi-covert as during the Russian military escalation to save the pro-Russian rebel forces from military defeat during August 2014.¹⁴ Rather, this operation would involve an expeditionary operation of some 70,000 troops using their advantages in armor, long-range rocket artillery, and air power to

peting strategic objectives between Washington and Moscow.

¹² For an excellent history of these events see Eri Hotta, *Japan 1941: Countdown to Infamy*, Knoph Publishers, 2013

¹³ For a analysis of Moscow’s window of action before economic ruin see former CIA Director David H. Petraeus’s testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, September 28, 2015. See Walter Pincus, “Putin may be running out of money, Petraeus says”, *Washington Post*, September 29, 2015

¹⁴ For a detailed description of this operation and the strain it has placed on the Russian Armed Forces, see Igor Sutyagin, “Russian Forces in Ukraine”, *Royal United Service Institute, Briefing Paper*, March 2015.

shatter any Ukrainian military resistance. A follow-on force of some 100,000 internal security personnel would replace the expeditionary force to provide internal security for a much more economically and geographically robust New Russia.¹⁵ Such an overt military escalation would likely prompt the EU and the United States to impose even harsher financial sanctions such as denying the Russian banking system access to the SWIFT financial transaction system. Further, the European major powers may acquiesce to Washington’s demand to permanently reinforce NATO forces in East Europe including the Baltic States as well as provide lethal arms to what remains of the state of Ukraine.

These combined Atlantic Alliance financial and military responses may further convince Putin and his leadership cadre, dominated by the Siloviki,¹⁶ that the cohesion of NATO can be collapsed by both the covert and overt use of the force of arms. NATO has taken over the last eighteen months overt action after the beginning of the Ukraine crisis to reinforce its deterrent posture in East Europe through increased ground exercises and aerial patrols. This posture remains modest as a permanent presence. More recently, these initiatives have led to a U.S. decision deploy company/battalion sized ground force prepositioned equipment sets in East Europe that includes the modernization of the USMC prepositioning stocks in central Norway.¹⁷ The relative modesty of this effort has been driven by Washington’s desire not to get out of ahead of German elite and public opinion which could risk damaging the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance. If Moscow decides to violently discard Minsk II, then European and most importantly German public and elite opinion about NATO reinforcement options may shift in favor of same. Moscow would then have to

¹⁵ For an estimate over the level of effort for different Russian campaigns against Ukraine see “Gaming a Russian Offensive”, *STRATFOR Global Intelligence*, March 9, 2015.

¹⁶ The “power” ministries of national security

¹⁷ Christopher P. Cavas, “Inside the US Marine Corps Prepositioning Program”, *Defense News*, September 22, 2015.

act decisively before NATO could shore up its deterrent posture with the permanent deployment of ground forces in East Europe especially in the totally exposed Baltic States. Although the Atlantic Alliance has a clearly superior high technology expeditionary capability, as compared to the Russian Armed Forces, Moscow may be confident, dangerously so, that it has a military “ace in the hole” in the form of its large and diverse nuclear arsenal’ especially its large and diverse Non-Strategic Nuclear Forces (NSNF).

On the Russian NSNF Posture

What is not subject to debate is the fact that the Russian political military leadership has continued to maintain and invest in a robust non-strategic nuclear force (NSNF) posture. The best public analysis suggest that the Russian Armed Forces maintain between 1,000 to 2,000 operational theater/battlefield nuclear weapons that can be employed in support of Russian combined arms operations. Evidence suggests that this arsenal could be used to compensate for the current and future inferior high technology combined capability as compared to the regional combat potential of either NATO or China.¹⁸ This military inferiority is severely aggravated by the reality that the Russian Armed Forces is much smaller than the armed forces of the Soviet Empire; therefore technological inferiority, much less military incompetence, cannot be compensated by the mass of men and material.¹⁹

Not unlike NATO’s posture during the first decade and a half of the Cold War, the Russian political military leadership has been quite explicit about its reliance on its

nuclear arsenal as an “asymmetric” source of military strength in face of the high technology “conventional” superiority of the Atlantic Alliance. Certainly, there has been a persistent pattern in a wide range of military exercises conducted over the last decade namely that the limited use of nuclear weapons was a plausible, if not mandatory, part of the war planning of the Russian Armed Forces. Formally, the public Russian military doctrine is cautious in this regard and claims that nuclear weapons will only be used in response to a nuclear, chemical or biological weapon use or against a “conventional” campaign that is threatening the existence of the Russian state.²⁰ What has become much more alarming over the course of this past year’s Ukraine-Russia crisis has been persistent threats by a variety of Russian political leaders that nuclear weapons might come into play if a European conflict broke out between Russia and the Atlantic Alliance. A year ago, a threat by the leader of the Russian Parliament that “Russia had the capacity to turn the United States into radioactive ash” could have been dismissed as irresponsible rhetoric.²¹ Since that time, there has been a persistent pattern of statements by an array of Russian authorities including President Putin that highlight Russia’s large and diverse nuclear arsenal. Although the concept of using nuclear weapons in a limited and controlled fashion to de-escalate a regional conflict does not have formal doctrinal standing, the concept of limited nuclear weapon

²⁰ The public operative statement is as follows: “The Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to use against it and (or) its allies of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as in the case of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons, when under threat the very existence of the state. The decision to use nuclear weapons is taken President of the Russian Federation.” Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation 2014. Also see Roger N. McDermott, Russia’s Conventional Military Weakness and Substrategic Nuclear Policy, Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2012

²¹ For a description of this threat made by a noted Russian media commentator see Olga Oliker, Christopher S. Chivvis, Keith Crane, Olesya Tkacheva, and Scott Boston, *Russian Foreign Policy in Historical and Current Context*, RAND Perspective, PE-144-A, 2015.

use has been discussed in a wide range of Russian national security fora.²² Furthermore, the Russian Armed Forces have conducted numerous military exercises where non-strategic and strategic nuclear weapon use has been part of the exercise play.²³ If this concept of limited nuclear weapon use has high level Russian legitimacy, then the next logical step is for the Russian leadership to consider how limited nuclear weapon use might be used coercively as a part of a strategy of geo-strategic intimidation.²⁴ In that regard, there is the noteworthy example of the Russian Ambassador to Denmark threatening NATO naval forces in the Baltic Sea in the event of a regional military crisis between the Atlantic Alliance and Russia.²⁵

On the Fate of the INF Treaty

One of the plausible casualties of the emergence of a Cool War between the Atlantic Alliance and Russia is the demise of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Current public evidence indicates that the Russians are conducting tests of a long-range

²² For a detailed analysis of Russian nuclear forces and their doctrine of use see Jakob Hedenskog and Carolina Pallin (eds.), *Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year Perspective-2013*, FOI, Stockholm, Sweden, December 2013. For another survey of Russian thinking on regional nuclear deterrence (RND) options see Dmitry Adamsky, “Nuclear Incoherence: Deterrence Theory and Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons in Russia”, *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 37, Routledge, 2014

²³ See Palin, op. cit.

²⁴ There is a striking parallel between Russian elite interest in the possible limited use of their nuclear arsenal to “manage” a regional crisis to Pakistani military thinking about its procurement of an enlarged and diverse arsenal. The Pakistanis have clearly signaled their desire to deploy a large and diverse nuclear arsenal to compensate for India’s increasing conventional combined arms superiority. See Iskander Rehman, *Murky Waters: Naval Nuclear Dynamics in the Indian Ocean*, Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, March 9, 2015 and Toby Dalton and Michael Krepon, *A Normal Nuclear Pakistan*, Stimson Center, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015. Further, this is the underlying rationale of the North Korea’s regime to keep and modernize its nuclear arsenal even in the face of sustained sanctions. See Shane Smith, *North Korea’s Evolving Nuclear Strategy*, US-Korea Institute at SAIS, August 2015.

²⁵ See Adam Withnal, “Russia threatens Denmark with nuclear weapons if it tries to join NATO defence shield”, *Independent*, March 22, 2015. Also, see Gudrun Persson, “Russian Strategic Deterrence – Beyond the Brinkmanship?” RUFBS Briefing No. 29, FOI, Swedish Ministry of Defense, September 17, 2015

¹⁸ See Igor Sutyagin, *Atomic Accounting A New Estimate of Russia’s Non-Strategic Nuclear Forces*, Royal United Service Institute (RUSI) Occasional Paper, November 2013 for the lower estimate of 1000 NSNF weapons and Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, “Russian nuclear forces, 2012”, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March 2012 or the higher estimate of 2000 operational NSNF weapons.

¹⁹ The smaller size and weakness of the Russian Armed Forces is highlighted by the challenge to recruit and retain competent and motivated military personnel. See Elizabeth Braw, “Russia’s Conscription Conundrum – The Obstacles to Modernizing the Country’s Armed Forces”, *Foreign Affairs*, August 25, 2015.

ground launched land attack cruise missile (LACM) in a clear violation of the INF agreement that bans this class of weapon. The weapon in question appears to be a ground launched cruise missile, the Iskander M, SSC-X-8, with a range well beyond the 500 kilometer range limits specified by the INF. One worry is that if the INF Treaty is repudiated by Moscow, the Putin regime may develop and deploy a new nuclear-armed transcontinental range ballistic missile similar to the SS-20.²⁶ More plausible is that the Russian motivation is driven by the need to radically upgrade their long-range “conventional” precision strike capability. This suggests that if a “breakout” occurs, it will likely take the form of the GLCM program aka Iskander M already under development. Large-scale deployment of GLCMs within the European theater will provide the Russian Armed Forces with a precision deep strike option designed to put key NATO military and civilian infrastructures at risk. The value of this option rises with the likely prospect that the Russian long-range bomber fleet armed with precision stand-off weapon will remain modest in size and suffer from a major delay in the development of a next generation strategic bomber.²⁷

Russia’s Nuclear Weapon “Use” Options in the Baltic Region

In light of Moscow’s ongoing campaign to remind the United States and Europe of the reach and scope of its nuclear arsenal, one can foresee that the Russian nuclear arsenal will play an undeniable role in a future crisis in the Baltic region. That arsenal will be used in an offensive and not defensive role during a campaign by the Putin regime to covertly and overtly destabilize Estonia and Latvia with their substantial Russian speaking minorities. If you will

²⁶ The Russian military leadership might decide to deploy a variable range variant of the SS-27 Topol-family ICBM thereby obviating the cost of developing a purpose built transcontinental range ballistic missile, currently banned by the INF Treaty.

²⁷ See Bill Gertz, “Russia Again Flight Tests Illegal INF Cruise Missile”, *The Washington Free Beacon*, September 26, 2015 and “A U.S. – Russian Arms Treaty Could Be in Trouble”, *STRATFOR*, September 28, 2015.

Russia’s nuclear forces will serve as a shield against any NATO military escalation in response to Moscow’s use of “hybrid” conventional forces to overturn the geo-strategic status quo in the Baltic Sea region. As noted above, the Putin regime might conclude, following its decision to widen its aggression against Ukraine, to preempt any NATO response to reinforce East Europe with a Baltic full spectrum campaign to destabilize Estonia and Latvia. The higher order strategic objective of this high risk campaign would be to discredit the Atlantic Alliance’s Article V commitment to Estonia and Latvia thereby collapsing the credibility of NATO as a collective security organization. Most defense analysts in the Atlantic Alliance appear to believe that a Baltic destabilization campaign would begin with the “hybrid war” tools and techniques used by Russia to quickly seized Crimea with minimal violence.²⁸ On the other hand, the use of “little green men” might well be the precursor to a short notice “grab-and-threaten-to-smash” military operation to quickly occupy Estonia and Latvia before an effective NATO military response. The size of this Russian expeditionary force required for such an operation could be rather modest, say no more than 40,000 troops mainly drawing on the more elite airborne and Special Forces units. The Putin regime could make the explicit threat that a large NATO military response that would take days if not weeks to organize and employ would be met with limited nuclear weapon use. Nuclear weapons could be brandished in an overt way such as the detonation of a “theater” nuclear weapon as part of an Arctic regional defense exercise.²⁹ Even if these threats did

²⁸ For two good discussions of the Russian concept of “hybrid” warfare see Wo Pyung-Kyun, “The Russian Hybrid War in the Ukraine Crisis”, *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis*, September 2015 and Maria Snegovaya, “Putin’s Information Warfare in Ukraine”, *Institute for the Study of War (ISW)*, September 2015.

²⁹ The brandishing of nuclear weapons by Moscow would certainly be coupled with a very sophisticated Information Operations (IO) campaign aimed at the European publics to convince them that the United States was risking a nuclear war over issues of modest European concern. Furthermore, this campaign would be designed to stir up a mass anti-war movement led by the radical parties of the left and right to

not deter a major NATO military response, the shadow of this threat would seriously inhibit the NATO leadership from taking any action against high-value Russian military capabilities based in Russia proper and Kaliningrad such as their strategic surface to air missile systems (SAMS) and precision guided SRBMs, the Iskander SS-26 SRBM, and ground based anti-ship missiles. Furthermore, Moscow might make very explicit threats against Stockholm and Helsinki to stop any indirect or direct military support to a NATO military response. According to some defense analysts, without Sweden’s minimal provision of overflight rights, any NATO military response to Russian aggression against the Baltic States will be highly constrained if not rendered unworkable.³⁰ In the most extreme case, Russia might be prepared to detonate a nuclear weapon to create a high altitude electromagnetic pulse (HEMP) event over Stockholm to collapse the Swedish will to continue supporting NATO.³¹

NATO’s Options: Defend and Deter

Clearly the political military crisis scenarios described above reside in the category of a “gray swan” scenario, plausible events of low probability but of very high consequence.³² Many in the Atlantic Al-

paralyze NATO’s rapid deployment decision making process both politically and physically.

³⁰ See Bo Hugemark, editor, *Friends in Need – Toward a Swedish Strategy of Solidarity with her Neighbors*, The Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, Stockholm, 2014 for a description of possible Swedish military responses to an act of aggression by the Russian Federation against the Baltic States. Publication of this candid analysis was not without controversy within the senior Swedish defense leadership at the time of its publication.

³¹ The detonation of a high yield nuclear weapon over Sweden as a form of electromagnetic coercion is not without risk to the global inventory of satellites operating at Low Earth Orbit (LEO). Depending the altitude of the detonation, the lower Van Allen belt could be energized and expand to lower altitudes. As a consequence many satellites might suffer the electronic equivalent of accelerated aging and fail over the course of weeks and months. Naturally, this event would compel the emergency evacuation of the International Space Station.

³² For a discussion of gray swan events—low probability, high consequence, but forecastable scenarios, also known as predictable unpredictability—see John Kay, “Tailgating Is Not How to Deal with Long-Tail Events,” *Financial Times*, February 18, 2015

liance especially in Europe may dismiss these concerns as overheated militarist rhetoric. Others who accept the concerns as legitimate will undoubtedly argue because as they have in the past that the only solution is to acquiesce to the Russian demands that Ukraine should formally accept Moscow's sphere of influence to avoid a future Baltic Sea regional crisis.³³ A much more forceful response is justified and warranted. The Obama Administration in close consultation with its key European allies should immediately prepare for a much more robust military response in preparation for a decision by Moscow to widen its aggression against Ukraine. A major intelligence warning "tell" that Moscow is considering more overt aggression in the Baltic Sea region is the acquiescence of Belarus government to the placing of substantial Russian forces in Belarus during peacetime. Such a move will seriously alter the military balance for NATO in a very adverse way.³⁴ This will mean the rapid deployment of U.S. and NATO European ground and air forces to East Europe with the intent that a significant portion would become part of a permanent garrison to enhance NATO's deterrent posture. Currently Estonia and Latvia are quite vulnerable to the lower spectrum of Russian aggression.³⁵ They are utterly vulnerable to a "grab-and-threaten-to-smash" operation that requires the minimal mobilization of the Russian Armed Forces. It would be the intent of the permanent NATO ground force presence to preclude any rapid and low cost act of aggression. Furthermore, that permanent presence does not rely on the timely high level political decision to deploy rapid reaction forces at the height of a near-future crisis under the shadow of

Russian nuclear threat.³⁶ Finally, the Baltic States must follow Poland's path and make a major investment in building a robust homeland defense capacity to provide a credible countermeasure to any "hybrid" threat of the use of IO and Special Forces by Moscow. The highest priority of the Baltic States is to build a much more robust internal security infrastructure to defeat the leading edge of any Russian initiated "little green men" scenario. Further, this enhanced self-defense capability must include the creation, within each state, of at least one active homeland defense brigade that includes a robust anti-armor and low altitude air defense capacity as well as several more lightly armed brigades designed for rapid mobilization. To put it bluntly, the credibility of NATO's extended deterrent commitment will require the Baltic States to demonstrate that they are prepared to robustly defend their homelands, especially under the shadow of Russia's very powerful nuclear arsenal.

NATO Nuclear Force Options

It has been suggested by a number of defense and national security analysts that NATO should respond to the possible brandishing of nuclear forces (TNF) by Moscow with the forward deployment of a new generation of "theater" nuclear weapons. NATO should respond symmetrically to the nuclear threat.³⁷ Current U.S. nuclear force modernization plans include the provision of the B-61 nuclear bomb with a precision delivery option. If modified as a glide bomb, this nuclear weapon will provide NATO dual capable aircraft especially the F-35A with an enhanced capacity to penetrate Russian air defenses. The B61-12 bomb program is to provide the U.S. with a single variant nuclear

bomb to be used on long-range bombers and dual capable fighter-bombers such as the F-16 and F-35. Public reports indicate that NATO has just fewer than 200 nuclear bombs deployed in six NATO airfields. The B61-12 bomb while not technically a modernized TNF weapon will provide NATO planners the ability to use this bomb with precision and a very low yield. Furthermore, the bomb might be provided with snap-out wings to provide the carrier aircraft with an additional stand-off capability to facilitate the penetration of a local air defense threat.³⁸ Other more robust modernization options have been called for such the deployment of a nuclear-armed variant of the U.S. Army's ATACMS SRBM or the recreation of the nuclear-armed variant of the sea-based Tomahawk cruise missile, the TLAM-N.³⁹ Another possibility is to arm dual capable aircraft with a nuclear-armed long-range LACM such as a variant of the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM). In terms of the strategic theorizing of the Cold War era, this enhanced NATO TNF posture might provide more escalation options to respond to the Russian threat of limited nuclear weapon use, but such deployments would come at a heavy, if not intolerable, strategic price.

Extended Deterrence through the Linkage of Permanent Presence

A decision by the U.S. to modernize and forward deploy a new generation of NSNF to NATO

³³ One strategic consequence of this "gray swan" scenario is that Russia would leave outright the INF Treaty.

³⁴ Reid Standish, "Putin Clips Lukashenko's Wings With Air Base in Belarus, Foreign Policy", September 23, 2015

³⁵ This "hybrid" threat was clearly identified early on during the Ukraine crisis. See Janis Berzins, "Russia's New Generation Warfare in Ukraine: Implications for Latvian Defense Policy", National Defence Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic Research, Policy Paper number 2, April 2014.

³⁶ For an analysis of U.S. and NATO build-up options in Eastern Europe see F. Stephen Larrabee, Peter A. Wilson, John Gordon IV, *The Ukraine Crisis and European Security – Implications for the United States and the U.S. Army*, RAND Arroyo Center, RR-903-A, March 2015

³⁷ For making the case for NATO theater nuclear force (TNF) modernization see Rebecca C Heinrichs, "NATO's Nuclear Nightmare over Ukraine", Hudson Institute, April 3, 2015 and Matthew Kroenig, "How to approach nuclear modernization? A US Response", Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2015.

³⁸ For a description of this modernization option and current status of the U.S. nuclear bomb posture see Hans M. Kristensen, "B61-12: The New Guided Standoff Nuclear Bomb", Federation of American Scientists, 2015. This report indicates that the total inventory of B-61 bombs held by the United States is a little over 800 nuclear weapon similar in size to the lower estimate of the Russian NSWF posture. The precision guided B61-12 will provide NATO with the option of conducting strikes with a weapon with an accuracy estimated to be about 30 meters Circular Error Probable (CEP) and a yield of 10 kilotons.

³⁹ To be militarily relevant a nuclear-armed ATACM would have to be deployed in Eastern Europe during peacetime as a direct counterbalance to the Russian arsenal of short range nuclear weapon such as nuclear artillery and the SS-26 SRBM. The Tomahawk class LACM could be deployed on a wide range of warships and submarines thereby reducing the European regional opposition to a NATO NSWF expansion program.

would undermine the Obama Administration's desire to both de-emphasize the role of nuclear weapons to shore up its nuclear non-proliferation strategy much less try to preserve the option for the next administration to begin a new round of nuclear arms reduction negotiations with Moscow.⁴⁰ Furthermore, a decision to expand the NATO NSWF posture both in quantity and quality would call into question the extended deterrent effectiveness of the current U.S. nuclear arsenal in East Asia and might prompt a call from South Korea and Japan for the U.S. to once again forward-deploy NSWF as during the Cold War.⁴¹ Of equal if not greater importance, there is the high risk that any attempt to reinforce the current arsenal of nuclear bombs based in NATO Europe with a new generation of NSNF would likely rip the alliance apart and paralyze any attempt to permanently reinforce NATO's posture in East Europe with high technology conventional forces.

There are powerful political forces on both the left and right of the European political spectrum that would jump at the chance to severely weaken the cohesion of NATO if not destroy the alliance outright.⁴² More relevant to the Russian NSWF challenge is the extended deterrent role the current nuclear forces of the United States, France and the United Kingdom can play if their ground forces are part of the permanent forward deployed presence in East Europe and especially in the Baltic States. Against this context, there is no compelling need to change the nu-

clear modernization plans of the United States, France and the United Kingdom. In fact the United States plans to gradually modernize all elements of the "Triad" of strategic nuclear forces as defined by the New START treaty with Russia while engaging in a long-overdue life extension program for its arsenal of air delivered nuclear bombs including those currently forward deployed in Europe.

NATO has already taken modest but sustained action to reinforce its military presence in East Europe. Currently, the concept of a rapid reaction force is based upon the idea that NATO will be able to make a timely decision to execute a flexible deterrent operation (FDO) at the height of a future Baltic Sea regional crisis. That is a very risky assumption especially if Putin decides to raise the geo-strategic stakes with a major act of aggression against what is left of Ukraine. The NATO forward presence in East Europe should be expanded and made increasingly permanent, and this process should be undertaken and completed with some urgency.⁴³ At a minimum, the Alliance should be prepared to rapidly move, by air, land, and sea, a much more ro-

bust deterrent force into East Europe if the Putin regime decides to shatter the Minsk II cease-fire accord and/or significantly increases the Russian Armed Forces peacetime posture in Belarus.

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THEMEN

The ISIS Security Challenge to China's "One Belt, One Road" and SCO

Introduction

In September 2013 Chinese President Xi Jinping launched the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "Maritime Silk Road" (One Belt, One Road), as part of China's "March West" policy across Eurasia. One

Map 1: Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road



Source: Xinhua, May 8, 2014

⁴⁰ After all, the Obama Administration's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation is highlighted by its major diplomatic effort coupled with a program of financial and economic coercion to complete in the face of fierce domestic and Israeli opposition the P5+1 nuclear agreement with Iran this early summer. Obviously the fate of the New START nuclear agreement between Washington and Moscow would be put at profound risk following an acute political military crisis in the Baltic region.

⁴¹ For an analysis of the challenges facing the U.S. extended deterrent commitments in East Asia see Robert Manning, *The Future of U.S. Extended Deterrence in Asia*, Atlantic Council Report, October 6, 2014.

⁴² Jaime Corybn, the new leader of the British Labor Party has called for the end of NATO. See Ned Simons, "NATO Should Have Been Disbanded in 1990", Say Jeremy Corbyn", *The Huffington Post, UK*, August 27, 2015.

⁴³ A recent RAND analysis suggested the permanent and rotation deployment of three or four brigade combat teams (BCTs) in Eastern Europe would significantly shore up the NATO deterrent posture. See James Dobbins, et al. *CHOICES FOR AMERICA IN A TURBULENT WORLD*, RAND Corporation, RR-1114-RC, August 2015. For a much more pessimistic estimate of this enhanced conventional defense/deterrence requirement see Michael E. O'Hanlon, *The Future of Land Warfare*, Brookings Institution Press, 2015.

year later, on July 4, 2014, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi called for jihad against countries that "seized Muslim rights," naming China first in a list of 20 countries around the world. Al-Baghdadi referenced Xinjiang numerous times and asked Chinese Muslims to plead allegiance to him, and threatened to occupy parts of Xinjiang, which appeared

Map 2: ISIS Caliphate in Five Years' Time



Source: Daily Mail, June 30, 2014

(Source: John Hall, "ISIS Militants Outline Chilling Five-Year Plan for Global Domination," Daily Mail, June 30, 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2674736/ISIS-militants-declare-formation-caliphate-syria-iraq-demand-muslims-world-swear-allegiance.html>)

on ISIS's caliphate map (see page 7 and 8).⁴⁴

While the idea of occupying Chinese territory currently seems farfetched, the Chinese have a legitimate reason to defend against what amounted to a declaration of war from this Islamist extremist organization. Given ISIS' aspirant caliphate covers a large swath of territories of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) members and partners, Chinese strategists and SCO will also worry about how ISIS's eastward pivot will impact their own westward march across the Eurasian Silk Road.⁴⁵

Indeed in the July 2015 SCO summit, the two core missions were (1) admitting India and Pakistan as full members and (2) how best to counter ISIS and Islamic extremism within member territories.⁴⁶ With the admission of Delhi and Islamabad underway, and the fact that the aspirant caliphate in-

cludes SCO territories of Central Asia, AfPak, Kashmir, Russia's Chechnya and China's Xinjiang, SCO states can now focus on the second mission of countering ISIS and Islamic extremism.

Map 3: SCO states



Source: Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Credits: Eleanor Albert, Julia Ro

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

ISIS in Syria threatens SCO homeland

Syria is the jihadi hotbed of not only ISIS but also other Salafist extremists that threaten to attack Eurasia and radicalize its large Sunni population. Given Syrian anti-Assad groups include Chinese Uyghur jihadists from Turkistan Islamic Party (TIP), an al Qaeda affiliate originally based in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) but recently found a new home in Syria, China along with Russia, India, and Egypt see Syria's Assad as a bulwark against Sunni extremist

groups consisting of radicalized Muslims from their own territories, as well as a bulwark against ISIS. As such both Egypt and Syria applied to join SCO in June.⁴⁷

Since 2012, the People's Liberation army (PLA) has been increasingly alarmed by droves of Chinese Uyghur militants joining jihad and turning Syria into a new Pakistani FATA to launch attacks against the Chinese homeland. If Assad falls, jihadi fighters from Russia's Chechnya, China's Xinjiang, and India's Kashmir will then turn their eyes toward the home front to continue jihad, supported by a new and well-resourced Syrian operating base in the heart of the Middle East.

In fact, ISIS has already made inroads in SCO territory. On 16 July Kyrgyz security forces foiled two ISIS-linked attacks targeting Kyrgyzstan's capital and a nearby

Russian airbase. Factions of Taliban and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) have also pledged loyalty to ISIS, risking further provocation of ISIS presence in "Wiliyat Khorasan" (encompassing Afghanistan, Central Asia and Xinjiang).⁴⁸ India's Lt Gen K H Singh

⁴⁴ "ISIS Plans to Take Holy War to Xinjiang," *Want China Times*, August 10, 2014; Don Mackay, "ISIS Militants in Iraq Proclaim New Islamic State and Pose Threat to 'All Countries,'" *Mirror*, June 30, 2014, <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/isis-militants-iraq-proclaim-new-3790221>.

⁴⁵ Christina Lin, "ISIS Caliphate Meets China's Silk Road Economic Belt", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Winter 2014), <http://www.rubincenter.org/2015/02/isis-caliphate-meets-chinas-silk-road-economic-belt/>; Yo-Jung Chen, "Zhou Yongkang, Islamic State and China's Pivot West," *The Diplomat*, September 9, 2014.

⁴⁶ Nikolay Surkov, "SCO ready to expand and fight ISIS", *Russia & India Report*, June 15, 2015.

⁴⁷ "Syria and Egypt may join Shanghai Cooperation Organization as observers—diplomat", TASS Russian News Agency, June 5, 2015, <http://tass.ru/en/world/799107>; "Egypt applies to become dialogue partner of Shanghai security bloc—Kremlin aide", TSS Russian News Agency, July 6, 2015, <http://tass.ru/en/world/806320>

⁴⁸ Jacob Zenn, "Future Scenarios on the New Silk Road: Security, Strategy & the SCO", Center of Shanghai Cooperation Organization

likewise expressed alarm that ISIS would gain a foothold in Kashmir and launch attacks from there.⁴⁹

Moreover, other Salafist extremist groups in addition to ISIS are gaining a stronghold in Syria. One troubling development is TIP that is establishing a Syrian base. A September *Syria Now* article reported that 3,500 Uyghurs are settling in a village near Jisr-al Shughur that was just taken from Assad, close to the stronghold of TIP that is in the Turkey/Saudi/Qatar-backed Jaish al-Fatah, or Army of Conquest.⁵⁰ The news comes on the heels of TIP capturing a Syrian airbase and acquiring MIG fighter jets as well as other advanced weaponry, similar to ISIS capturing Iraqi army's advanced US weaponry.⁵¹

It is plausible to settle 3,500 Uyghur families in Jisr-al-Shughur – given in 2013 Turkey already had a Uyghur Diaspora of more than 100,000 with current figures estimated at 300,000, thus proportion wise 3,500 is not a large number.⁵² According to Jacob Zenn in Jamestown Foundation's *Terrorism Monitor*, TIP was based in AfPak before the Syrian war, but in 2013 it began supporting Syrian rebels. Now counter-terrorism experts estimate its total numbers in Syria may reach 1,000 militants including male fighters and their families.⁵³ If more Uyghurs are

settled in Syria via Turkey, TIP can recruit additional fighters from nearby villages.

Through Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar's support for the Army of Conquest, TIP has risen to prominence within the anti-Assad coalition and played a key role in defeating the Syrian army at Jisr-al-Shughur earlier this year.⁵⁴ The most prominent TIP fighter to emerge from the Jisr-al-Shughur videos was the spokesman for TIP's "Syria branch" since 2014, Abu Ridha al-Turkistani.⁵⁵ In the video he led fighters to take over a building, and climbed a clock tower to plant a black-and-white Jabhat-al-Nusra style flag on which "Turkistan Islamic Party" was written in Arabic.⁵⁶

These Uyghur militants have claimed and supported a series of high-profile terrorists attacks in China in 2013 and 2014, including the Kunming train station attack that China dubs its "9-11", with some Uyghurs calling for an intifada against the Chinese communist regime.⁵⁷ Now that TIP has established a base in Syria and is expanding its presence and recruitment, China may be compelled to adopt *Global Times* 2013 recommendation to "Take fight to ETIM before threat grows" and send troops to Syria.⁵⁸

With the *Army of Conquest* consisting of Chinese-led TIP, Uzbek-led Imam Bukhari Jamaat and

Katibat Tawhid wal Jihad, along with al-Nusra and other al Qaeda affiliates entrenched in Jisr-al-Shughur in Syria's Idlib governorate, this coalition will now have a direct supply line open from Turkey's Hatay Province to Idlib to establish a de-facto state in north-western Syria, led by Jabhat-al-Nusra and supported by several Central Asian militias.⁵⁹ Indeed, a 2012 U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report corroborates Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia's desire to carve out a Salafist statelet in Syria east of Assad-controlled territory in order to put pressure on his regime (In 2012 it was further east, but now that Assad has lost much territory it is just east of Latakia).⁶⁰

However, Ankara, Doha, and Riyadh likely did not consider the negative fall out that the de facto state would now pose a security threat to China, Russia, and Central Asian countries as a safe haven for militant groups to launch attacks in the home front. For China, Xinjiang may become the next Afghanistan and follow the pattern of AfPak, Syria/Iraq, with local militant forces/cross border havens attracting foreign fighters, and enjoying material and diplomatic support from outside powers with shared ideology/interests.

In light of ISIS expansion and Salafist extremist groups establishing a base in Syria, SCO would need to embark on a robust counter-terrorism effort to address this emerging threat.

SCO vs. ISIS in Syria

While SCO has hitherto been an internal collective security bloc and not a collective defense alliance targeted at external threats, in face of terrorist threats increasingly emanating from outside their territory, SCO is gradually project-

Studies Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, March 24, 2015, <http://www.coscos.org.cn/a/relatedworks/2015/0324/735.html>

⁴⁹ "ISIS in India: Terror Group Is Trying To Gain Foothold In PoK, Says Army", *Huffington Post*, March 7, 2015,

<http://www.coscos.org.cn/a/relatedworks/2015/0324/735.html>

⁵⁰ *Syria Now*, September 9, 2015, <http://syrianow.sy/index.php?id=72&id=9967>

⁵¹ Caleb Weiss, "Turkistan Islamic Party releases photos from captured Syrian regime airbase", *The Long War Journal*, September 10, 2015,

<http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/09/turkistan-islamic-party-releases-photos-from-captured-syrian-regime-airbase.php>

⁵² Matti Nojonen and Igor Torbakov, "China-Turkey and Xinjiang: a frayed relationship", *Open Democracy*, August 5, 2009,

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/article/china-turkey-and-xinjiang-a-frayed-relationship>

⁵³ Jacob Zenn, "Al-Qaeda-Aligned Central Asian Militants in Syria Separate from Islamic State—Aligned IMU in Afghanistan", *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume 13, Issue 11, May 29, 2015,

<http://www.jamestown.org/programs/tm/single/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHCi36E-vyQ#t=16>

⁵⁴ "Inside Jisr al-Shughur—battle day 3", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHCi36E-vyQ#t=16>

⁵⁵ "A short video showing the opening of yesterday's ongoing battle Inside Jisr al Shughur", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEnv694ziNm>

⁵⁶ Aaron Y. Zelin, "Şawt al-Islām presents a new video message from Hizb al-Islāmī al-Turkistānī [Turkistan Islamic Party] in Bilād al-Shām: "Conquest of Jisr al-Shaghūr", *Jihadology*, May 1,

2015, <http://jihadology.net/2015/05/01/şawt-al-islam-presents-a-new-video-message-from-hizb-al-islami-al-turkistani-turkistan-islamic-party-in-bilad-al-sham-conquest-of-jisr-al-shaghur/>

⁵⁷ "Nothing justifies civilian slaughter in China's '9-11'", *Global Times*, March 2, 2014, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/845570.shtml>

⁵⁸ "Take fight to ETIM before threat grows", *Global Times*, December 22, 2013.

⁵⁹ Jacob Zenn, "Al-Qaeda-Aligned Central Asian Militants in Syria Separate from Islamic State—Aligned IMU in Afghanistan", May 29, 2015

⁶⁰ "2012 Defense Intelligence Agency document: West will facilitate rise of Islamic State 'in order to isolate the Syrian regime'" *Levant Report*, May 19, 2015, <http://levantreport.com/2015/05/19/2012-defense-intelligence-agency-document-west-will-facilitate-rise-of-islamic-state-in-order-to-isolate-the-syrian-regime/>

ing outward. United by the common threat of ISIS and radical Islam destabilizing their homeland, Russia, China, and India are setting aside their strategic rivalry in the Eurasia heartland and in May announced they would conduct their first joint counter-terror exercise later in the year.⁶¹ ISIS presence in the Sinai also prompted Egypt in June to submit an application to join SCO.

Indeed various countries need to put aside their underlying national rivalries and cooperate in the fight against ISIS and Islamic extremists. In a January 2015 *Russia Today* article entitled “Russia, Syria, Iran, China needed in global fight against ISIS”, Lawrence Freeman, an intelligence analyst noted that one cannot fight ISIS while simultaneously precipitate a war with Russia and carry out regime change in Syria.⁶² So far this disjointed western approach has failed, allowing ISIS to fester and continue to grow in size and power. Pat Buchanan, former presidential candidate and advisor to President Nixon and President Reagan, also joined the chorus to make ISIS, not Assad, a main enemy in Syria given the U.S. led coalition has an anti-ISIS and not anti-Assad mandate. He urged the U.S. to work with Russia to combat ISIS, noting if Assad falls, it “would result in a terrorist takeover, the massacre of thousands of Alawite Shiites and Syrian Christians, and the flight of millions more refugees into Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey – and thence on to Europe.”⁶³

He continued. “Indeed, if Assad falls now, the beneficiary is not going to be those pro-American rebels who have defected or been

routed every time they have seen combat and who are now virtually extinct. The victors will be ISIS and the Nusra Front, which control most of Syria between the Kurds in the northeast and the Assad regime in the southwest. Syria could swiftly become a strategic base camp and sanctuary of the Islamic State from which to pursue the battle for Baghdad, plot strikes against America and launch terror attacks across the region and around the world.”

Virginia State Senator Col Richard Black (ret) also observed the Army of Conquest and ISIS are merely drug cartels struggling for dominance while sharing similar goals of establishing a puritanical Caliphate that murders, enslaves, and dominates “infidels.” The former consists of Al Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, other Islamic extremists while the latter is an extreme version of Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), both displaying the same level of barbarity as Russian President Putin pointed out, in reference to the 2013 video of a rebel commander performing cannibalism and eating the organ of a dead Syrian soldier.⁶⁴

Now history appears to be repeating itself with the establishment of a Turkey-requested Syrian no-fly zone similar to the one in Libya. This is problematic since the safe haven will allow “rebels” to topple the existing regime so that jihadists can overrun Syria as it has in Libya. In fact, Libya has turned into such a jihadi inferno that boatloads of radicalized Libyan refugees heading towards Europe have identified Christians in their midst and drowned them by throwing them overboard. And despite Washington and Ankara’s insistence that in Syria it will be an “ISIS-free” zone, a senior Obama administration official told CNN that since Turkey has granted the U.S. access to its air bases to push back ISIS, the arrangement creates “nearly the same effect” as a no-fly zone.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ “Syrian rebel commander organ eating video”, Human Rights Investigations, May 14, 2013,

<http://humanrightsinvestigations.org/2013/05/14/syria-rebel-organ-eating-video/>

⁶⁵ Barbara Starr and Ashley Fantz, “U.S. official: Turkey air base pact has nearly the same

effect as a no-fly zone”, CNN, July 27, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/27/world/turkey-isis-us/index.html>

Additionally, the anti-ISIS coalition is further hamstrung by a lack of boots on the ground. While in Iraq the US-led anti ISIS coalition has Peshmerga and Iraqi boots on the ground, it lacks similar partners in Syria now that Turkey has blocked Syrian Kurds in the coalition. As such, SCO can step in as much-needed infantry. As terrorist threats are now emerging outside of SCO borders, member states will need to follow similar US post-9/11 policy and take the fight to enemy territory – whether in AfPak, Iraq, or Syria. In fact, in September 2014, the Obama administration also requested for Chinese assistance in the fight against ISIS.⁶⁶

As Marc Julienne, Moritz Rudolf, and Johannes Buckow from the Berlin-based Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS) observed, “China could become one of the major stakeholders in international efforts to combat terrorism.”⁶⁷ Writing in *The Diplomat* in May, they noted that given terrorism is a domestic and transnational issue that has become a priority for China’s international agenda, Beijing would expand its international anti-terror efforts via bilateral cooperation and multilateral forums.⁶⁸

Indeed, With China’s Xinjiang province increasingly on the radar of global terror groups, the government can no longer isolate the local “East Turkestan separatist” problem from the “global jihadi” problem. While the world focuses on China’s growing military budget and tensions in the East and South China Seas, scant attention has been paid to the fact that

effect as a no-fly zone”, CNN, July 27, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/27/world/turkey-isis-us/index.html>

⁶⁶ Stuart Leavenworth, “Susan Rice seeks China cooperation against Islamic State as Beijing visit ends”, *The Miami Herald*, September 9, 2014, <http://www.miamiherald.com/latest-news/article2084325.html>

⁶⁷ Marc Julienne, Moritz Rudolf, Johannes Buckow, “The Terrorist Threat in China”, *The Diplomat*, May 26, 2015.

⁶⁸ Marc Julienne, Moritz Rudolf, Johannes Buckow, “The Terrorist Threat in China”, *The Diplomat*, May 26, 2015; “Beyond Doubt: The Changing Face of Terrorism in China”, *The Diplomat*, May 28, 2015; “How the Chinese Government Fights Terrorism”, *The Diplomat*, June 1, 2015; “China’s Counterterrorism Campaign Goes Global”, *The Diplomat*, June 3, 2015.

⁶¹ “Russia Plans Joint Military Exercises With China and India”, *The Moscow Times*, May 13, 2015,

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/520687.html>; “Joint China-India counter-terrorism exercise held in W. India” CCTV, November 19, 2014, <http://english.cntv.cn/2014/11/19/VIDE1416348008931208.shtml>

⁶² “Russia, Syria, Iran, China needed in global fight against ISIS”, *Russia Today*, January 14, 2015.

⁶³ Pat Buchanan, “Patrick Buchanan: Putin is right to make ISIS, not Assad enemy No. 1 in Syria”, *Sioux City Journal*, September 20, 2015.

China's internal security budget has surpassed that of its military every year since the 2009 Xinjiang uprising.

In 2010, China's security budget was \$87 billion while defense was \$84.6 billion; in 2011 security was \$99 billion while defense was \$95.6 billion; in 2012 security was \$111.4 billion while defense was \$106.4 billion; in 2013 security budget was \$123.6 billion while defense was \$119 billion. In 2014, the Chinese government withheld full disclosure of the security budget due to its sensitive nature, while defense is \$131.57 billion. However, based on past trends it was likely higher than the defense budget.⁶⁹ Based on its budget expenditures, this suggests Beijing views terrorism and instability as a greater security threat than military conflict in the Western Pacific and will be compelled to adopt a more proactive military stance to maintain stability.

There have already been discussions in China regarding sending troops to fight ISIS and in September 2014, China offered to help Iraq with airstrikes.⁷⁰ Moreover, the Assad regime is currently still the legal and UN-recognized government of Syria, despite only holding 1/3 of its territory. If Assad asks and gives permission for Russia, China and other SCO members to assist him militarily, that would be in accordance with international law. This differs from the current U.S.-led anti-ISIS coalition airstrikes in Syria that is neither operating under a UN mandate nor permission from the sovereign government, although it enjoys implicit permission to some

⁶⁹ "China Withholds Full Details of 2014 Domestic Security Budget," *South China Morning Post*, March 5, 2014; Ben Blanchard and Jon Ruwittch, "China Hikes Defense Budget, to Spend More on Internal Security," Reuters, March 5, 2013; Edward Wong, "China Announces 12.2% Increase in Military Budget," *New York Times*, March 5, 2014; Mu Chunshan, "China and the Middle East," *The Diplomat*, November 9, 2010; "China Boosts Domestic Security Spending by 11.5 Pct," Reuters, March 5, 2012; Leslie Hook, "Beijing Raises Spending on Internal Security," *Financial Times*, March 6, 2011.

⁷⁰ Dingding Chen, "China should send troops to fight ISIS," *The Diplomat*, September 12, 2014; Jeremy Bender, "China Signaled It May Join Operations Against ISIS in Iraq," *Business Insider*, December 15, 2014.

extent from the Assad regime to fight ISIS. In 2014 Britain's David Cameron hesitated to participate in Syrian airstrikes precisely due to fears of violating international law.⁷¹

Ideally SCO should operate under a UN mandate, such as one recommended by British MEP Steven Woolfe on keeping Assad in power, deploy ground troops (under UN banner) and send back refugees.⁷² Absent a UN banner, China can still offer troops if Assad requests assistance, joining Russia, Iran and other SCO members in that effort to combat ISIS and other Islamic extremist groups in Syria. Given US no longer needs Mideast energy nor would commit ground forces as it is rebalancing east to Asia, even while China is increasing its energy dependency and pivoting west on its Silk Road, China and SCO's entry into the war against ISIS would be a welcomed step in Washington. It may also be welcomed by Israel, as China's influence over Iran (and thus Syria) could potentially constrain Tehran's actions against Israel that threaten China's rapidly expanding investments in the region, especially with Israel's key role in the Silk Road as an alternative Suez Canal for trade between China and Europe.⁷³

SCO-US/NATO-EU Cooperative Security on Counterterrorism

There have also been interest and discussions from the Chinese side regarding counter-terrorism cooperation with NATO and US, which support NATO's Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism (PAPT) with non-NATO countries. In 2011 Dr. Pan Guang, director of SCO Studies Center at Shanghai Academy of Social Science, proposed a NATO-SCO mechanism

⁷¹ Andrew Grice, "Islamic Sate: Air strikes on Isis in Syria could be illegal", *The Independent*, September 15, 2014.

⁷² Steven Woolfe MEP, "My plan for Syria: keep Assad in power, deploy ground troops and send back the refugees," *Daily Telegraph*, September 9, 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11851339/plan-for-syria-keep-assyad-in-power-deploy-ground-troops-and-send-back-the-refugees.html>

⁷³ Emma Scott, "China's Silk Road Strategy: A Foothold in the Suez, But Looking to Israel", *China Brief*, Vol. 14, Issue 19, October 10, 2014.

to enhance U.S.-China cooperation and reduce conflicts in Central Asia, which can be extended to Middle East-North Africa (MENA) given Egypt – also a NATO Mediterranean Dialogue partner – in June 2015 applied to join SCO.⁷⁴ The liaison mechanism is to begin with coordinating anti-terror issues between US/NATO and the SCO, which could be progressively upgraded to SCO + U.S. (SCO + 1) dialog or SCO + U.S., EU/NATO, Japan (SCO + 3) dialog. Since NATO already has cooperation with most SCO members (e.g., PfP with Central Asia, Pakistan as global partner, NATO-Russia Council with Russia, and close anti-piracy cooperation with India), NATO engagement with China in Central Asia as well as in MENA (e.g., greater Middle East) would be a logical development.

For Syria, SCO could operate under a UN mandate, similar to NATO-ISAF model (NATO members plus additional *ad hoc* troop contributing partners from Gulf states, Australia, Mongolia, Singapore, South Korea etc. totaling 50) that operated under a UN mandate to combat terrorism and stabilize Afghanistan. Absent a UN mandate, some hybrid multinational format would work similar to SHADE (Shared awareness Deconfliction) forum in Gulf of Aden, whereby a motley crew of US-led Combined Maritime Force (CMF), NATO, EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR), other independent Chinese, Russian, Iranian, Indian vessels are all combating **maritime terrorism** of piracy and coordinating/deconflicting in this clearing house.⁷⁵

As such a SHADE type forum could work in Syria to combat **overland terrorism** against ISIS

⁷⁴ Pan Guang, "China and US in Central Asia: Role of the SCO and Possibility of Cooperation in Afghanistan", *China-US Focus*, September 7, 2011, <http://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/%EF%BB%BFchina-and-us-in-central-asia-role-of-the-sco-and-possibility-of-cooperation-in-afghanistan/>

⁷⁵ Christina Lin, "NATO-China Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges", Congressional Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, April 19, 2012, <http://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/4.19.12.Lin%2CChristina.pdf>.

and other terrorist groups (Al Nusra, TIP, other al Qaeda affiliates), similar to US/NATO combating Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups (Taliban, Haqqani network, etc.) in Afghanistan. Since China prefers not to be under a U.S. banner whether in the US-led CMF to counter piracy nor US-led anti-ISIS coalition to counter terrorism, but still desires to engage in cooperative security with the US coalition, as such Dr. Pan's proposal of SCO-US-EU/NATO type cooperation in Afghanistan could be applied in Syria.

Thus SCO, US, Europe all have shared interest in combating ISIS and other terrorist groups as well as restoring Syrian stability to stem the refugee problem. In fact NATO (US, Europe) has been looking for ways to cooperate with China on nontraditional security challenges such as counterterrorism, arresting WMD proliferation and maritime/energy security, and NATO Defense College has a forthcoming book on this topic.⁷⁶ Moreover, this supports NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept that commits the Atlantic Alliance to work more closely with international partners such as the UN and EU, given China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council that provides the mandate for NATO operations (e.g. Western Balkans, Afghanistan, Libya, framework for NATO's training mission in Iraq) and is already engaged in cooperative security with EU. For example, in March 2014 China and EUNAVFOR conducted joint counter-piracy exercises in the Gulf of Aden after a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) delegation visited the EU's flagship.⁷⁷ To this end, SHADE can perhaps be an effective template for SCO – US-Europe cooperation on overland terrorism to combat ISIS and Islamic extremism in Syria, modeled after its coopera-

⁷⁶ Christina Lin, "China's Pivot West—Opportunities for Cooperative Security", in *Euro-Atlantic Meets Asia Pacific—NATO, Partners, and the US Rebalance*, NATO Defense College, forthcoming 2015.

⁷⁷ EUNAVFOR, "EU Naval Force and Chinese Navy Warships Work Together in Counter Piracy Exercise At Sea in Gulf of Aden", March 28, 2014, <http://eunavfor.eu/eu-naval-force-and-chinese-navy-warships-work-together-in-counter-piracy-exercise-at-sea-in-gulf-of-aden/>

tion on maritime terrorism in Gulf of Aden.

Conclusion

Given US-led coalition airstrikes have not been able to degrade and destroy ISIS, SCO can provide much needed boots on the ground. And as China increases burden sharing to help maintain Mideast regional stability, becoming a "responsible stakeholder" and no longer accused by President Obama of being a "free-rider" regarding countering ISIS, this could be a step towards eventually forging a US-China "new type of great power relationship" in the Middle East.⁷⁸

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Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.

THEMEN

Übergabe des Berichts der unabhängigen Kommission „Untersuchung des Einsatzes des G36-Sturmgewehrs in Gefechtsituationen“

Eindeutige und klare Ergebnisse

Anfang Juni begann die von Verteidigungsministerin von der Leyen berufene und von mir geleitete Kommission mit ihrer Arbeit. Am 14. Oktober stellte ich zusammen mit Hellmut Königshaus den Abschlussbericht erst im Verteidigungsausschuss des Bundestages und dann der Presse in einem Hintergrundgespräch vor.

⁷⁸ Ree Feng, "Obama's 'Free-Rider' Comment Draws Chinese Criticism", *The New York Times*, August 13, 2014.

Danach überreichte ich der Ministerin vor der Presse unseren Bericht, zusammen mit Dr. h.c. Klaus-Peter Müller, Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats der Commerzbank, der die Organisationsstudie G36 überreichte. (Zum Start der Kommission vgl. <http://nachtwei.de/index.php?module=articles&func=display&aid=1357>)

Unser Auftrag

war zu untersuchen, ob deutsche Soldaten im Zusammenhang mit Präzisionsabweichungen des G36 in Einsätzen zu Schaden gekommen oder einem erhöhten Risiko ausgesetzt worden sind.

Das Untersuchungsergebnis

war eindeutig, klar – und erleichternd: Kein deutscher Soldat ist im Zusammenhang mit Präzisionsabweichungen des G36 gefallen, verwundet worden oder einem konkreten erhöhten Risiko ausgesetzt gewesen.

Unser leitender Grundsatz

war: Soldaten sollen ihren demokratisch legitimierten Auftrag bestmöglich erfüllen können; ihre Risiken sollen dabei soweit möglich in Grenzen gehalten werden. Das gilt unabhängig vom völlig legitimen Streit um die Sinnhaftigkeit einzelner Einsätze. Dementsprechend gab es auch von keiner Fraktion im Bundestag irgendeinen Widerspruch gegen den Auftrag der Kommission. Mit uneingeschränktem Akteneinsichts- und Befragungsrecht verfolgten wir den Untersuchungsauftrag in voller Unabhängigkeit und ohne politische Rücksichtnahme.

Die Kommission

bestand aus dem ehemaligen Wehrbeauftragten des Bundestages Hellmut Königshaus und mir als Vorsitzendem. Als militärische Berater beigelegt waren uns Generalmajor Johann Langenegger, Kommandeur der 1. Panzerdivision, und Oberstleutnant i.G. Lutz Kuhn. Unterstützt wurden wir von einem siebenköpfigen Sekretariat mit zwei einsatzerfahrenen Referenten unter Leitung von Oberst i.G. Oliver Kohl.

Die Methode

Durchforscht wurden alle ca. 150 Sachverhaltsfeststellungen nach Gefechten und weitere Gefechtsberichte der Bundeswehr, die Datenbank des Informationssystems Einsatzerfahrungen der Bundeswehr, alle über 150 Feldjägerberichte (wenn deutsche Soldaten zu Schaden gekommen sind oder deutsche Soldaten anderen Personen geschädigt haben), Jahresberichte über besondere Vorkommnisse und Mängel mit bzw. an Waffen und Munition, das Meldeaufkommen der Zentralen Ansprechstelle G36 im BMVg, Erkenntnisse anderer Nutzerstaaten (incl. Peschmerga im Nordirak) und Berichte in Medien.

Ausführliche Einweisungen in die Schieß- und Gefechtsausbildung erhielt die Kommission am Ausbildungszentrum Infanterie in Hammelburg und beim Kommando Spezialkräfte in Calw.

Im Zentrum der Untersuchungen stand dann die Befragung von einsatz- und gefechtserfahrenen Soldaten. Über 500 Soldatinnen und Soldaten wurden identifiziert, über 150 wurden befragt (an ihren Standorten Bad Reichenhall, Calw, Seedorf, Zweibrücken, Hamburg und in Berlin), 350 weitere angeschrieben. Etliche antworteten schriftlich. Die Soldaten aller Dienstgradgruppen berichteten aus allen größeren Einsätzen, der Schwerpunkt lag beim Afghanistaneinsatz der Jahre 2009-2012. Viele waren mehrfach in Afghanistan im Einsatz, etliche hatten 15, 20 Gefechte durchgemacht. Die Soldaten waren in ihren freiwilligen Stellungnahmen uneingeschränkt offen. Es bestätigte sich die Erfahrung der Kommissionsmitglieder, dass Soldaten keinerlei Hemmungen haben, sich kritisch zu Ausrüstung und Bewaffnung zu äußern.

Oft betonten sie, vorher mit Kameraden über ihre G36-Erfahrungen gesprochen zu haben – und dabei zu einem einhelligen Urteil gekommen zu sein. Einzelne bedankten sich ausdrücklich, dass jetzt endlich ihre praktischen Erfahrungen gefragt waren.

Die Kommission konnte nicht auf die militärische Fachsprache verzichten, wandte sie aber möglichst allgemein verständlich an. Bewusst war dabei der Spagat zwischen formalisierter militärischer Fachsprache einerseits und der Einsatzrealität und ihrer menschlichen Dimension andererseits, wo zum Beispiel „Wirken im Ziel“ – unabhängig von der Legitimität eines Auftrags – Tod, Verwundung, Zerstörung bedeutet.

Schwerpunkt der Untersuchungen

Die Kommission verschaffte sich auch einen Überblick über Erfahrungen mit dem G36 in der Ausbildung und in Übungen. Angesichts der Tatsache, dass es beim Bosnieneinsatz maximal zu einigen wenigen Warnschüssen, beim KFOR-Einsatz zu vereinzelt Schusswechseln gekommen war und aus dem Kongoeinsatz und den Marineeinsätzen keine Schusswaffeneinsätze gemeldet wurden, konzentrierten sich die Untersuchungen auf den Afghanistaneinsatz ab 2006 und insbesondere ab 2009. In Afghanistan waren Bundeswehrsoldaten insgesamt ca. 380 Mal mit gegnerischen Angriffen konfrontiert, mindestens 150 Mal kam es dabei zu Schusswechseln und Gefechten.

Feststellungen & Erkenntnisse

(1) Die in den wissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen festgestellten Präzisionseinschränkungen des G36 bei schussinduzierter Erhitzung und sich ändernden Umweltbedingungen stehen nicht in Zweifel.

(2) Kein deutscher Soldat ist im Kontext von technischen Präzisionsabweichungen des G36 gefallen oder verwundet worden. Es ergaben sich auch keinerlei Hinweise auf konkrete Gefährdungen in dem Zusammenhang. Die Untersuchung der Gefechtsverläufe ergab, dass die meisten Soldaten bei gegnerischer Feuereröffnung durch IED oder RPG-Beschuss gefallen oder verwundet wurden waren, also bevor ein einziger G36-Schuss gefallen war. In solchen Fällen war also ein G36-Zusammenhang eindeutig auszuschließen. Die an Gefechten beteiligten Soldaten schlossen einen

solchen Zusammenhang kategorisch auch für die anderen Gefallenen und Verwundeten aus.

(3) Durchweg verneinten die befragten Soldaten, im Gefecht Präzisionsmängel beim G36 gespürt zu haben. Die Kluft zwischen Testergebnissen einerseits und Gefechtserfahrung andererseits sind auffällig. Gründe für die unterschiedlichen Wahrnehmungswirklichkeiten sind:

- Soldaten sind geübt darin, gewisse Präzisionsabweichungen ihres Sturmgewehrs im „Haltepunktverfahren“ auszugleichen;
- Die Treffgenauigkeit hängt außer von der technischen Präzision eines Gewehres von etlichen weiteren Faktoren ab: Umweltbedingungen, Schießfertigkeit und -haltung, momentane Verfassung des Schützen (Stress), Gegnerverhalten. „Der Schütze ist kein Schraubstock.“

Soldaten sind in ihrer ganzen Ausbildung trainiert auf (schnelle) Einzelschüsse, ausdrücklich nicht auf Feuerstöße. Zu denen sollte es nur zum „Niederhalten“ des Gegners und im Nahbereich kommen, wo es vor allem auf die Streuwirkung ankommt.

- Jenseits der Hauptkampferfernung von 200m sind möglichst andere Waffen des sog. Waffenmix einzusetzen. Das Sturmgewehr ist kein Alleskönner, kein MG, kein Scharfschützengewehr.
- Die Befragten betonten durchweg, dass der G36-Schütze im Gefecht zu seiner verlässlichen Wirkungsbeobachtung meist nicht in der Lage ist (im Unterschied zu Scharfschützen, Artillerie und Luftwaffe). Das liegt an der guten Deckung der Gegner, ihrem Stellungswechsel, an Staub, Hitzeblimmern, am schnellen Abtransport verwundeter oder getöteter Aufständischer. Entscheidender Indikator für Wirkung ist für G36-Schützen, ob Feuer aus bestimmter Richtung eingestellt wird.

(4) Seit Jahren bekannt und immer wieder angesprochen wurden die mangelnde „Mannstoppwirkung“ und Durchschlagkraft des G36 mit seinem kleinen NATO-Kaliber 5,56mm. Das aber ist kein Mangel, sondern die „Kehrseite“ des geringeren G36-Gewichts.

(5) Das G36 wurde ab 1996 in der Bundeswehr eingeführt. Seine Nutzungsdauer wurde auf 20 Jahre angesetzt. Die Schussbelastung der einzelnen Gewehre wird nicht dokumentiert, sie ist aber mit dem neuen Schießausbildungskonzept seit 2010 enorm gestiegen. Vor diesem Hintergrund verdienen die Fragen des Verschleißes und der Regeneration besondere Beachtung.

(6) Insgesamt bewerteten die Soldaten das G36 ausnahmslos als bedienungsfreundlich, störunanfällig und verlässlich (gerade auch im internationalen Vergleich). Im Bewusstsein der Grenzen des G36 betonten sie ihr volles Vertrauen in die Waffe. Die öffentliche Darstellung des G36 als „Pannengewehr“ stieß bei den Soldaten einhellig auf großes Unverständnis.

(7) Die Untersuchungen ergaben über das Thema G36 hinaus weitere wichtige Erkenntnisse:

- zum Schusswaffeneinsatz in den Bundeswehreinmärschen insgesamt, der – auer bei Afghanistan 2006 ff. – ausgesprochen selten war und die verzerrte Darstellung von Auslandseinsätzen der Bundeswehr unterschiedslos als Kriegseinsätze widerlegt;
- zu Gefechtsverläufen, die jetzt erstmalig systematisch „von auen“ untersucht wurden, und dem Gefechtsverhalten deutscher Soldaten in asymmetrischen Szenarien;
- zur Professionalität, Einsatzmotivation und –belastung, zur Besonnenheit und Rechtstreue der Bundeswehrsoldaten im Einsatz, im Gefecht.

Allerdings: Eine systematische Untersuchung der Wirkungen der deutschen Beteiligungen an internationalen Krisenengagements, insbesondere in Afghanistan, steht noch aus!

Persönlich-politische Anmerkung

Am 2. April erreichte mich völlig überraschend der Anruf von Verteidigungsministerin von der Leyen mit der Bitte, ob ich den Vorsitz der geplanten G36-Kommission übernehmen könne. Ich sagte noch am selben Tag zu.

Ausschlaggebend waren für mich mehrere Aspekte:

Als Mitglied des Bundestages und des Verteidigungsausschusses war ich bis 2009 an 70 Mandatsentscheidungen zu Auslandseinsätzen der Bundeswehr beteiligt, davon allein 20 zu Afghanistan. Das Land besuchte ich bisher 18 Mal, zuletzt im Februar. Meine Mitverantwortung für die entsandten Soldatinnen und Soldaten (aber auch Polizisten und Entwicklungsexperten) endete nicht 2009, sondern hält bis heute an. Sie schlug sich erstens nieder im ständigen Drängen auf systematische Einsetzevaluierungen und Stärkung ziviler und präventiver Fähigkeiten. Sie schlug sich zweitens nieder im Beirat Innere Führung beim BMVg, in dem ich erst die AG „PTBS“ leitete, und ab 2014 mit Generalleutnant a.D. Rainer Glatz die AG „Einsatzrückkehrer und –folgen“. Die Untersuchung möglicher Schädigung deutscher Soldaten im Zusammenhang mit Präzisionsmängeln des G36 im Einsatz betrifft die Soldatinnen und Soldaten, ihre Auftragerfüllung und ihre Risikobelastung, die Einsatzrückkehrer und Angehörigen ganz zentral.

Weil der Afghanistaneinsatz gerade in meiner Fraktion hoch umstritten war und weil die ministeriellen Informationen ausgesprochen unzureichend waren, recherchierte und veröffentlichte ich seit 2003, verstärkt seit 2007 intensiv zur Entwicklung der Sicherheits- und Aufbaufrage in Afghanistan. Ich bemühte mich um kritisch-unabhängige Lagebeurteilungen und Wirkungsorientierung.

Die Kommissionsarbeit sah ich als Herausforderung, Einblick in die schärfsten Seiten der deutschen Auslandseinsätze, insbesondere des Afghanistaneinsatzes zu bekommen und dabei mit den blutigen Konsequenzen der eigenen politischen Aufträge konfrontiert zu werden. Gerade bei hochmoralisch legitimierten Einsätzen werden diese Konsequenzen oft ausgeblendet.

Die Gespräche mit Soldaten des Karfreitagsgefehchts, des komplexen Hinterhalts vom 29. April 2009

und vieler anderer Gefechte empfand ich immer wieder als ausgesprochen aufwühlend.

Den Kommissionsmitgliedern wurde erneut eindringlich deutlich, wie extrem die Anforderungen an Einsatzsoldaten in Bodenkämpfen sind. Unsere persönliche Begegnung mit der kriegerischen Einsatzrealität der Bundeswehrsoldaten in Afghanistan bekräftigte unsere Grundhaltung, dass Bundesregierung und Bundestag höchst verantwortlich mit dem Einsatz von Soldatinnen und Soldaten der Bundeswehr umgehen müssen: bei der Einsatzentscheidung, bei der Einsatzausstattung und –führung, bei der Wirkungskontrolle und insbesondere auch gegenüber den Einsatzrückkehrern und ihren Familien. Von diesen tragen etliche oft noch lange an den Einsatzfolgen, während ihre Auftraggeber längst mit anderen Aufgaben befasst sind.

Am Ende der Interviews wünschte ich den Soldaten regelmäßig für die Zukunft klare, glaubwürdige und erfüllbare Aufträge mit dem Eingeständnis, dass dies in der Vergangenheit längst nicht immer gegeben war.

Die besondere politische Sorgfaltspflicht gilt meines Erachtens genauso für den Export des G36. Dass ab Dezember 2005 immer wieder der Export von Tausenden G36 nach Mexiko genehmigt wurde und ab 2006 der von vielen Tausenden G36 nach Saudi-Arabien, war ein eklatanter Verstoß gegen diese friedens- und sicherheitspolitische Sorgfaltspflicht.

Herzlichen Dank

verdienen die uns beratenden und unterstützenden Bundeswehrangehörigen in Uniform und Zivil. Die Zusammenarbeit mit diesen einsatzerfahrenen, hoch kompetenten und geistig unabhängigen Menschen war bestens organisiert, ausgesprochen offen, produktiv und bereichernd. Diese viereinhalb Monate politisch-militärischer Zusammenarbeit waren ein besonderes Erlebnis.

Der Kommissionsbericht in den Medien

Die Medienresonanz auf die Übergabe der Berichte am 14. Oktober war flächendeckend und unübersehbar. Ausschlaggebend war, dass unsere brisante Frage eindeutig und positiv beantwortet werden konnte und dass wirklich unabhängige, sachdienliche und ganz und gar keine Gefälligkeitsgutachten vorgelegt wurden. Dass eine Verteidigungsministerin solche Aufklärung ohne Rücksicht auf eventuelle eigene Kommunikationsprobleme wagte, ist ausgesprochen selten und hoch anzurechnen. Bei vielen Kommentatoren blieb dieser Aspekt unberücksichtigt. Hier eine kleine Auswahl der Medienresonanz:

Auf der Seite des Verteidigungsministeriums: „Berichte zum G36 an Ministerin von der Leyen übergeben“ mit Handouts zu den einzelnen Berichten: [http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/lut/p/c4/NYuxDslwDET_yE5AQoltpQysLFC2tl0ioyaujFMWPP5k4E56wz0dPrE2-42iV-LsF3zgMNFp_MCYtggvLIJXSJTprUGoJLy3zxxg4hy0UUNWqozilQVWFI2aKSLVAM04GNt3xpp_7Nftnbucd8dDf-1uuKbkfksK-Jw/!](http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/lut/p/c4/NYuxDslwDET_yE5AQoltpQysLFC2tl0ioyaujFMWPP5k4E56wz0dPrE2-42iV-LsF3zgMNFp_MCYtggvLIJXSJTprUGoJLy3zxxg4hy0UUNWqozilQVWFI2aKSLVAM04GNt3xpp_7Nftnbucd8dDf-1uuKbkfksK-Jw!/) und „Bundeswehr aktuell“ Nr. 41 vom 19.10.2015

ARD-Tagesschau, Christian Thiels:

<https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/g36-bundeswehr-109.html>

Ruhr-Nachrichten 15.10.2015: Interview von Andreas Herholz:

http://www.ruhrnachrichten.de/nachrichten/vermischtes/aktuelles_berichte/Interview-mit-Winfried-Nachtwei-G36-Kein-Soldat-wurde-durch-Präzisionsabweichung-getoetet:art29854.2844644

Tagesspiegel, Robert Birnbaum: <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/bericht-ueber-g36-gewehr-zuverlaessig-statt-ungenau/12451946.html>

Bonner Generalanzeiger: <http://www.general-anzeiger-bonn.de/news/politik/national/soldaten-sehen-keine-probleme-bei-der-waffe-article1743137.html>

Winfried Nachtwei

Winfried Nachtwei ist Winfried Nachtwei ist Mitglied des Bundestags a.D.. Der Beitrag gibt die persönliche Auffassung des Autors wieder.

THEMEN

The Land that Never Sleeps

*What is it in that holy ancient land?
That would drive every single man mad?*

*What is it that the eyes can't figure?
What is that motivation, what is that trigger?*

*To kill a soul or sacrifice his own
To hold his ground of his invaded home*

*Is it the sweet taste of the olive it grows?
Or the feeling it brings when its wind blows?*

*Is it to honor his God, or to attain his own needs?
Is it out of religion, or is out of greed?*

*A land next to Egypt which lies so small
How can such a land blind them all?*

*Questions lingered for thousands of years
Answers foreshadowed with blood and tears*

*Cradled by war ever since it was born
Trees so tired from the armor it had worn*

*Hands pulling on its grounds so tight
Tearing its rivers, scratching its night*

*Soldiers march upon its mountains and fields
Lives forsaken as its swords and shields*

*A land where God's holy voice was heard
A land where Moses spread God's words*

*A land where Christ gave miracles which led
To healing the blind and reliving the dead*

*A land where Mohammad rose skies of seven
To see what there is of hell and heaven*

*A land where the first kneel to God was made
A land where the mosque's first stone was laid*

*A land where Romans flipped its earth from under
A land where the Crusades began to thunder*

*Rivers and rain colored in red ever since
Peace became a ghost which tales reminisce*

*A land where minarets, horns, and bells
Call out for the man who to God he dwells*

*A land where vinegar, water, and oil
Try to combine between its canyons and soil*

*Muslims, Christians, and Jews altogether
Different Holy stones on top of each other*

*They kneel for a God with the same name
Then blindly fight as if they weren't the same*

*A land where bullets face shattered stones
Wounds reopen after barely being sown*

*Earth shakes as a man bends to pray
Screams of bombs hold the mind astray*

*Graves topple the graves from the past
Will there be an end? Will there be a last?*

*Children, women, men with empty hands
Turn to their dreams to see their green lands*

*With olives reflecting the sun's warm rays
As milk and honey swim across its bays*

*Poems of the past they would sing to sleep
While poems about the present are buried deep*

*Peace had left, for it had gone mad...
Please don't leave, please, come back...*

Nada S. Malki

Nada S. Malki, A girl from Mecca
Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.