



NATO RAPID DEPLOYABLE CORPS – ITALY
- Public Affairs Office -



DAILY MEDIA

FRIDAY 13 MARCH 2015

Titoli:

- Accordo di collaborazione NATO-LIUC

[La Prealpina, pag. 33](#)

- Liuc-Nato, siglata la collaborazione

<http://www.informazioneonline.it/LAY009/L00908.aspx?arg=1009&id=19202>

- Liuc e Nato firmano un memorandum di cooperazione

<http://www3.varesenews.it/busto/liuc-e-nato-firmano-un-memorandum-di-cooperazione-308216.html>

- Who will police Afghanistan's policemen?

<http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/3/who-will-police-afghanistans-policemen.html>

-Pakistan's Fight With Extremism: Are Things Really Changing?

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/raza-habib-raja/pakistans-fight-with-extremism_b_6833486.html

- The weaving of peace

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/851585/the-weaving-of-peace/>

- Terrorism is price worth paying, says liberty lobby

[The Time, pag. 1](#)

- EU plans new team to tackle cyber-terrorism

<http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-31851119>

- Nuclear Deterrence Is Relevant Again

<https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/nuclear-deterrence-relevant-again>

- ISIS Accepts Boko Haram's Allegiance

<http://www.newsweek.com/isis-accepts-boko-harams-allegiance-313426>

- ISIS today dominates Libyan port city of Sirte, that may be used to attack Europe

<http://islamedianalysis.blogspot.it/>

- Attacking Energy in Libya- A New ISIS Strategy?

<http://www.americansecurityproject.org/attacking-energy-in-libya-a-new-isis-strategy/>

- This is how we failed Syria

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/03/failed-syria-150311084958399.html>

-Iraqi forces tighten siege of Tikrit

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/iraqi-forces-tighten-siege-tikrit-150312130150939.html>

- A Bipartisan Cause In Washington: Arming Ukraine Against Russia

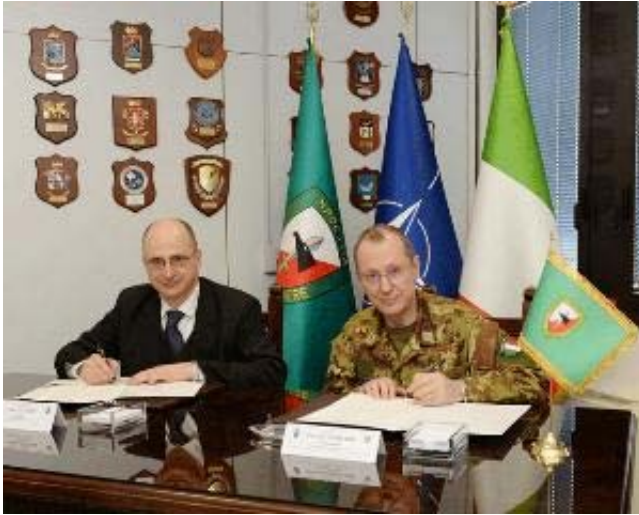
<http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/26896652.html>

- Battle of the memes

<http://www.economist.com/node/21646280/print>

LA FIRMA PRESSO LA CASERMA "UGO MARA" DI SOLBIATE

Liuc-Nato, siglata la collaborazione



SOLBIATE OLONA - È stato firmato presso la sede della Caserma "Ugo Mara" di Solbiate Olona un **Memorandum of Cooperation** tra il Comando Nato e la Liuc - Università Cattaneo di Castellanza. L'accordo di collaborazione nasce dal riconoscimento del fatto che per risolvere i moderni conflitti e crisi internazionali lo strumento militare deve avvalersi dell'interazione con esperti di Entità non Nato (Istituzioni, Università, Organizzazioni internazionali e non governative, ecc.), per ottenere una più **profonda conoscenza e consapevolezza della dimensione umana**,

sviluppando un approccio focalizzato allo studio delle dimensioni politica, economica, sociale, delle infrastrutture e dei mezzi di comunicazione dell'area di crisi.

L'interazione del Knowledge Development Team di NRDC (Nato Rapid Deployable Corps Italy) con le Entità non Nato si basa sullo scambio di informazioni per lo sviluppo, quindi, di una conoscenza omnicomprensiva di un ambiente complesso, a beneficio non solo del Comandante militare e del suo Staff, ma anche dei funzionari e decisori non militari.

NRDC-ITA e la Liuc hanno già interagito con un esperimento forse unico nel suo genere, nell'ottobre dello scorso anno, durante l'esercitazione Eagle Joker 14, condotta da NRDC-ITA nell'area addestrativa di Torre Veneri (Lecce).

Durante la fase attiva dell'esercitazione il Knowledge Development Team di NRDC-ITA ha interagito in videoconferenza con un gruppo di studenti del Corso di Laurea in Economia della Liuc, guidati dai professori Gianfranco Benedetto ed Eliana Minelli, allo scopo di avere una maggiore capacità di analisi della dimensione economica dell'area di crisi.

La firma dell'accordo tra NRDC-ITA e la Liuc permetterà di interagire a scopo didattico non solo durante le esercitazioni NATO, ma anche per l'organizzazione di conferenze, seminari e lezioni su argomenti di comune interesse.

Con la firma di questo accordo NRDC-ITA compie un ulteriore passo avanti nell'implementazione dei concetti del Comprehensive Approach e del Knowledge Development, per migliorare le proprie capacità nell'ambito Crisis Management e soddisfare i requisiti stabiliti dal nuovo concetto strategico della Nato.

pubblicato il: 12/03/2015

Liuc e Nato firmano un memorandum di cooperazione

L'ateneo castellanese e la caserma Ugo Mara collaboreranno al fine di creare valore aggiunto nella risoluzione di conflitti e crisi internazionali

Annunci PPN



7.650 euro al mese!
Madre single di Roma guadagna 7.650 euro al mese da casa!
[Scopri come](#)



iPad al 90% in
Sito di aste dice di offrire sconti pazzi, l'abbiamo testato
[Leggi il nostro report](#)



Offerte Meridiana fly
Vola per destinazioni Nazionali, Europee a prezzi low cost!
meridiana.it/Offerte-Voli



Stampa |

Invia |

Scrivi



E' stato firmato presso la sede della Caserma "Ugo Mara" di Solbiate Olona un **Memorandum of Cooperation** tra il **Comando NATO** e la **LIUC - Università Cattaneo**. L'accordo di collaborazione nasce dal riconoscimento del fatto che per risolvere i moderni conflitti e crisi internazionali lo strumento militare deve avvalersi dell'interazione con esperti di Entità non NATO (Istituzioni, Università, Organizzazioni Internazionali, Organizzazioni non governative, ecc.), per ottenere una più profonda conoscenza e consapevolezza della dimensione umana, sviluppando un approccio focalizzato allo studio delle dimensioni politica, economica, sociale, delle infrastrutture e dei mezzi di comunicazione dell'area di crisi.

L'interazione del Knowledge Development Team di NRDC (NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy) con le Entità non NATO si basa sullo scambio di informazioni per lo sviluppo, quindi, di una conoscenza omnicomprensiva di un ambiente complesso, a beneficio non solo del Comandante militare e del suo

Staff, ma anche dei funzionari e decisori non militari.

NRDC-ITA e la LIUC hanno già interagito con un esperimento forse unico nel suo genere, nell'ottobre dello scorso anno, durante l'esercitazione Eagle Joker 14, condotta da NRDC-ITA nell'area addestrativa di Torre Veneri (LE).

Durante la fase attiva dell'esercitazione il Knowledge Development Team di NRDC-ITA ha interagito in videoconferenza con un gruppo di studenti del Corso di Laurea in Economia della LIUC, guidati dai professori Gianfranco Benedetto ed Eliana Minelli, allo scopo di avere una maggiore capacità di analisi della dimensione economica dell'area di crisi.

La firma dell'accordo tra NRDC-IA e la LIUC permetterà di interagire a scopo didattico non solo durante le esercitazioni NATO, ma anche per l'organizzazione di conferenze, seminari e lezioni su argomenti di comune interesse. Con la firma di questo accordo NRDC-ITA compie un ulteriore passo avanti nell'implementazione dei concetti del Comprehensive Approach e del Knowledge Development, per migliorare le proprie capacità nell'ambito Crisis Management e soddisfare i requisiti stabiliti dal nuovo concetto strategico della NATO.

12/03/2015

redazione@varesenews.it

Accordo di collaborazione Nato-Liuc

SOLBIATE OLONA - E' stato firmato alla Caserma "Ugo Mara" di Solbiate Olona un Memorandum of Cooperation tra il Comando Nato e l'Università Cattaneo. L'intesa nasce dal riconoscimento del fatto che per risolvere i moderni conflitti e crisi internazionali lo strumento militare deve avvalersi dell'interazione con esperti di Enti non Nato (Istituzioni, Università, Organizzazioni Internazionali, Organizzazioni non governative, ecc.), per «ottenere una più profonda conoscenza della dimensione umana, sviluppando un approccio focalizzato allo studio delle dimensioni politica, economica, sociale, delle infrastrutture e dei mezzi di comunicazione dell'area di crisi».

L'interazione del Knowledge Development Team di NRDC si basa sullo scambio di informazioni per lo sviluppo, quindi, di «una conoscenza omnicomprensiva di un ambiente complesso, a beneficio non solo del comandante militare e del suo staff, ma anche dei funzionari e decisori non militari». NRDC-ITA e Liuc hanno già interagito con un esperimento nell'ottobre scorso, durante l'esercitazione Eagle Joker 14, condotta nell'area addestrativa di Torre Venere (LE). Durante la fase attiva dell'esercitazione il Knowledge Development Team di NRDC-ITA ha interagito in videoconferenza con un gruppo di studenti del corso di laurea in Economia della Liuc, guidati dai

professori **Gianfranco Benedetto ed Eliana Minelli**, per raggiungere una maggiore capacità di analisi della dimensione economica dell'area di crisi. La firma dell'accordo permetterà di interagire a scopo didattico non solo durante le esercitazioni Nato, ma anche per l'organizzazione di conferenze, seminari e lezioni su argomenti di comune interesse. Con la firma, il comando di Solbiate Olona compie un ulteriore passo avanti nell'implementazione dei concetti del Comprehensive Approach e del Knowledge Development, per migliorare le proprie capacità nell'ambito Crisis Management e soddisfare i requisiti stabiliti dal nuovo concetto strategico della Nato.



Il rettore **Valter Lazzari** con il generale **Riccardo Marchiò** (SIR)

Who will police Afghanistan's policemen?

Impunity for Afghan security forces is hampering the country's counterinsurgency campaign

March 12, 2015 2:00AM ET

by [Phelim Kine](#) @PhelimKine

The commander of U.S. military forces in Afghanistan, Gen. John F. Campbell, is [bullish](#) about the country's future. Last month he cited the Afghan people's trust for their security forces as one of the positive trends in Afghanistan.

But Campbell was clearly not referring to [Commander Azizullah](#), the longtime leader of the Afghan Local Police (ALP) in the country's southeastern province of Paktika. As with all other [ALP](#) units, Azizullah and his forces have been armed and equipped with a portion of the \$104 billion that the United States has spent on Afghanistan since 2002. His hallmark is fear, not trust.

For example, in 2009 his forces shot dead three farmers during a search operation for the Taliban in Paktika's Urgun district. Azizullah then strapped the men's corpses to the hood of one of his vehicles and drove through a local market proclaiming the dead men as terrorists. He refused to allow the family to bury them until eight days later. The incident was not an aberration: His forces have been linked to thefts, kidnappings, beatings and the arbitrary killing of civilians, including children.

Former President Hamid Karzai's government turned a blind eye to Azizullah's viciousness. The U.S. military is as myopic about his counterinsurgency efforts as the Afghan government. Azizullah has worked closely with U.S. special forces on anti-insurgency in Urgun. But in 2011 the U.S. military [dismissed](#) calls for a probe of its relationship with him, saying there was "little information to substantiate what were essentially claims."

The cozy relationship between the U.S. and other Afghanistan allies and Afghan commanders implicated in human rights abuses are not exceptional. In a [report](#) released on March 3, Human Rights Watch details the abuses of eight strongmen from the Afghan National Police, the ALP and government-affiliated militias. The atrocities perpetrated by people, from local militia commanders to ministerial rank officials, underscore a [pervasive lack of accountability](#) for Afghanistan's security forces.

Among them is Brig. Gen. Abdul Raziq, the Kandahar province chief of police who has

government largesse has been the former head of Afghanistan's security agency, Asadullah Khalid, who maintains a close relationship with the U.S. government despite numerous credible [reports](#) that he has participated in torture, extrajudicial killings and sexual violence against women and girls. In December 2013, when he sought medical care in the United States for wounds incurred in a suicide bomb attack, he received a [visit](#) from President Barack Obama, reaffirming U.S. support for a notorious human rights violator.

Strongmen such as Azizullah, Razik and Khalid should be fully and fairly prosecuted for their crimes, not enlisted in a counterinsurgency strategy.

That impunity is no accident. It is rooted in the failure of Karzai's government and his foreign donors to disarm various militias that formed in the wake of the collapse of the Taliban government in 2001. Instead of taking steps to address the lack of impunity, the international community and Afghan political leaders have routinely dismissed accountability as a [luxury](#) that the country cannot afford. For example, in August 2002 the United Nation's special representative for Afghanistan at the time, Lakhdar Brahimi, [asserted](#) accountability had to take "second place to peace and stability."

But instead of peace and stability, the toxic codependency between the Afghan government, its allies and strongmen such as Azizullah has deepened the country's insecurity. At a time when the Taliban insurgency is [intensifying](#), this tolerance for violence, corruption and unaccountability is undermining support for the new Afghan government.

Afghanistan's new president, Ashraf Ghani, appears to have made the connection between accountability and security. In a Jan. 7 [letter](#) to Human Rights Watch he pledged that his government is "serious about addressing allegations of torture in our security sector."

But his administration needs the full support of Afghanistan's international backers, particularly the United States, to carry out this politically sensitive task. That will require the U.S. and other donors to the Afghan security forces to link continued funding to improved accountability, including prosecutions for killings, enforced disappearances and torture. For its part, the U.S. should fully implement the [Leahy Law](#), which prohibits the U.S. government from providing military assistance to abusive foreign military units.

Strongmen such as Azizullah, Razik and Khalid should be fully and fairly prosecuted for their crimes, not enlisted in a counterinsurgency strategy. Until the Afghan government and its

allies take decisive steps against those who kill, rape and kidnap without consequence, the security dividend sought by the Afghan people will remain ever elusive.

Phelim Kine is the deputy director of the Asia division at Human Rights Watch.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera America's editorial policy

Pakistan's Fight With Extremism: Are Things Really Changing?

Posted: 03/11/2015 12:13 pm EDT | Updated: 03/11/2015 12:59 pm EDT

[December 16, 2014](#) in some ways could be called the darkest day in Pakistan's history. That day the Taliban militants killed countless innocent children in order to "seek" revenge against the ongoing military operation against them.

Before that fateful day, a substantial part of the population had doubts whether launching an operation was good idea. In fact over the years, Pakistani population had by and large opposed the military action as it had considered terrorism merely a "reaction" against Pakistan's support for U.S. instigated "War on Terror".

The horrific incident eliminated all the apprehensions against the military action and in fact united the Pakistani nation. Finally the government has acquired the support which had previously eluded it. With the public support behind it, the Government has taken a series of actions to bolster the ongoing action against terrorists such as establishment of military courts and removal of the moratorium on the death penalty.

But are things really changing? Are these steps really adequate to counter a menace which has become deeply entrenched in Pakistan's social fabric?

A closer scrutiny would reveal that these measures though a welcome change from the past are still inadequate. A real long term solution would actually require a multi-pronged approach aimed at: significant enhancement of the state capacity; revamping the entire Madrassa system; complete overhaul of the existing security doctrine; and at least some rectification of civil military imbalance.

Pakistan needs its state capacity to be enhanced because essentially it has a weak state which has not been able to really penetrate into the society. Due to low tax base coupled with bureaucratic incompetence, state has not been able to provide even basic facilities to a large chunk of population.

Moreover, the writ of the state is also largely absent. These weaknesses have allowed many Madrassas (religious schools) and other organizations to become extremely prominent throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan. These Madrassas operate at the grassroots level helping the poor by giving them financial assistance and inducting their young ones as students.

Due to low development spending by the government, these Madrassas have ended up filling in the gaps left by the state. For many poverty struck parents, these Madrassas give their young children some shot at life. Many of these Madrassas indulge in radical indoctrination of the students which end up being thoroughly radicalized.

provide them with the indoctrinated foot soldiers. In fact, the word "Taliban" means students.

According to an estimate, presently about 15,000 to 20,000 thousands of Madrassas are operating in Pakistan and largely without any sort of proper governmental oversight. Government does not regulate their education curriculum and nor does it monitor their sources of funding.

But the poor state capacity is just one part of the story. The worst part is that some of the Madrassas and their associated religious political outfits have also been used by the military establishment for "strategic" purposes in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

What has happened is that though initially some of the Madrassas and affiliated religious parties were under some sort of supervision but over the years state has lost control of these. The "agents" are now largely independent and their relationship with the government has changed drastically. Apart from that there has also been a mushroom growth of completely independent Madrassas which do not have any sort of supervisory oversight. The so called "Bad Taliban" are the product of such Madrassas.

In many ways, the present climate also owes a lot to state's seriously flawed security doctrine which has ended up creating a breeding ground of religious extremism and establishment of thousands of radical Madrassas with many completely out of the state's control.

Today, it is largely due to prevalence of these Madrassas and their associated extremist outfits that the menace of extremism is not just concentrated in the bordering area of Afghanistan (where military action is taking place) but is spread all over Pakistan. The action against Taliban is relatively easy because they had virtual control over those areas and Pakistan had to "liberate" its own territory and reestablish its writ. However, countering those extremists which are present throughout the rest of the Pakistan is going to be a herculean task.

Pakistan has to start with dismantling and revamping the entire Madrassa system. However, for that it also needs to build its state capacity so that it is able to properly discharge its duties at the grassroots level. Once the state capacity starts increasing the appeal of these Madrassas will also diminish.

And above all, it has to change the entire security paradigm which in the past has focused on using Islamic militants as proxy warriors. Even now some political analysts are of the view that state is still being selective in its action. It is targeting some while sparing others. Pakistani Taliban are being targeted while Jamat Dawa and Afghan Taliban are being spared.

As USA and India come closer, Pakistan is trying desperately to counter balance by moving closer towards China while trying to regain some lost influence in Afghanistan. Its current policy of selective action against the militants can be understood from that angle. However, history has proved that the entire concept of using these religious outfits was flawed. Pakistan has to discontinue this policy and

Without improving it, Pakistan will not be addressing its real problem.

December 16 may have united the Pakistani nation for military action against Taliban, but much more is needed if Pakistan has to come out of this quagmire.

The weaving of peace

By Editorial Published: March 11, 2015

26
SHARES

FACEBOOK

TWITTER

EMAIL



Despite the protestations to the contrary, Mr Karzai and those around him have a developing capacity to throw several spanners in the works of any future peace deals with the Afghan Taliban.

As the days and weeks pass it is ever clearer that there really is a change in the nature of the relationship that exists between Pakistan and Afghanistan — which may give pause for reflection on how much more may have been achieved and sooner were it not for the obstructions of the Karzai years. It appears that the [Afghan government and the Afghan Taliban are to hold face-to-face talks](#) in the coming days, in part at the urging of Pakistan, among other players. There have been indirect contacts for some time, and there seems to be consensus that this is a positive move. The Americans are not going to be directly involved but their representative in the form of [Daniel F Feldman travelled to Pakistan on March 10](#) — and has given his nod of approval. A possible venue for the talks is yet to be finalised, with Beijing, Kabul and Dubai

all ‘possibles’. Interestingly, China is reportedly the guarantor for any deal that may be reached.

None of this is to the liking of the erstwhile ruler of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, who still holds court and considerable sway in Kabul. [Mr Karzai has warned against Afghanistan succumbing to pressure](#) from Pakistan, and deplored what he sees as unacceptable concessions by his successor Ashraf Ghani. Mr Karzai has said that he will not openly criticise his successor, but will “offer advice in private”. It is impossible to ignore Mr Karzai, who still has his supporters, and as the Ghani government moves towards rapprochement the ‘mafias’ are gravitating in the direction of the man who was their protector for so many years — Hamid Karzai. Despite the protestations to the contrary, Mr Karzai and those around him have a developing capacity to throw several spanners in the works of any future peace deals with the Afghan Taliban. Whilst we are to a degree in uncharted waters with Afghanistan in these precarious times, and there are undoubtedly emerging relationships, the viability and durability of which are untested by time or circumstance; the weaving of a durable peace must continue — and Mr Karzai needs to keep his meddling fingers to himself.

Published in The Express Tribune, March 12th, 2015.

Like [Opinion & Editorial on Facebook](#), follow [@ETOpEd](#) on Twitter to receive all updates on all our daily pieces.



DATA: 13/03/2015

TESTATA: THE TIMES

PAG: 1

Terrorism is price worth paying, says liberty lobby

By Deborah Haynes, Sean O'Neill Fiona Hamilton and Gabriella Swerling,

Leading civil liberty groups declared that a terrorist attack in Britain was a price worth paying to protect mass personal data from being intercepted, it has been revealed.

Victims of atrocities accused the privacy campaigners of protecting terrorists after the comments were exposed in a major report on the snooping activities of Britain's spy agencies.

MPs and peers who compiled the report also criticised the groups, which include Liberty, Big Brother Watch, Justice and Rights Watch UK.

"We do not subscribe to the point of view that it is acceptable to let some terrorist attacks happen to uphold the individual right to privacy — nor do we believe that the vast majority of the British public would," parliament's intelligence and security committee (ISC) said.

MI6, MI5 and GCHQ should instead retain the ability to intercept large volumes of data in the hunt for terrorist suspects and plots, provided that such power was tightly controlled and subjected to safeguards, they said in the report.

The row emerged as the ISC called for a single act of parliament to cover the work of Britain's three spy agencies, to make their operations more transparent and abolish the present complex grid of laws. In an unprecedented account of the surveillance state, reports disclosed that:

- Intelligence officials hold a trove of personal data containing millions of records on a wide range of people without statutory oversight.
- Spy agencies use little-known "national security directions" from a 1984 law to compel communications companies to obey their orders.
- Police, spy agencies and public bodies were granted more than half a million warrants to gather communications data last year.
- MI5, MI6 and GCHQ were ordered to destroy large amounts of material gathered from wire taps that they had held for too long.

Hazel Blears, the Labour MP who is a leading member of the ISC, rejected the allegation made by the whistleblower Edward Snowden and his supporters that Britain conducted "mass surveillance". "GCHQ is not collecting or reading everyone's emails," she said. "They do not have the legal authority, resources or the technical capability."

An evidence session last October recorded Ms Blears asking Isabella Sankey, the director of policy for Liberty, whether she would change her mind if there were evidence that showed bulk data collection had helped to prevent terrorist plots. Ms Sankey was quoted as saying: "No."

She was asked by a second committee member whether "you believe so strongly that bulk interception is unacceptable in a free society that you would say that was a price we should be willing to pay?" Ms Sankey was quoted as responding: "Yes."

Also present at the hearing were Emma Carr, the director of Big Brother Watch, Eric Metcalfe, of Justice, and Hanne Stevens, the interim director of Rights Watch UK. When Ms Blears asked whether Ms Sankey's colleagues shared that view, Ms Carr said: "Yes."

The bulk interception of internet data — emails, web posts, YouTube chats, texts and any other digital communication — was a focus of the inquiry.

Ms Blears said that she and other committee members, who were given access to thousands of classified documents, were told of cases that she said demonstrated that such interception had exposed threats and plots.

Ms Sankey said the committee had not shown any evidence that mass surveillance saved lives.

One of the relatives of the 2005 London bombing victims said, however, that the civil rights campaigners had their priorities wrong. "The question that should be asked is what's the minimum interference in

our freedom that gives us maximum protection?” said Graham Foulkes, whose son David, 22, was killed. “Liberty is isolated from the real world. Because it is so lauded and courted by politicians, it has lost sense of what it’s all about.”

Ray McClure, the uncle of Lee Rigby, the soldier murdered by Islamists, said that privacy groups were protecting terrorists and that their comments showed “how little they value life”.

Leading civil liberty groups declared that a terrorist attack in Britain was a price worth paying to protect mass personal data from being intercepted, it has been revealed.

Victims of atrocities accused the privacy campaigners of protecting terrorists after the comments were exposed in a major report on the snooping activities of Britain’s spy agencies.

MPs and peers who compiled the report also criticised the groups, which include Liberty, Big Brother Watch, Justice and Rights Watch UK.

“We do not subscribe to the point of view that it is acceptable to let some terrorist attacks happen to uphold the individual right to privacy — nor do we believe that the vast majority of the British public would,” the intelligence and security committee (ISC) said.

MI6, MI5 and GCHQ should instead retain the ability to intercept large volumes of data in the hunt for terrorist suspects and plots, provided that such power was tightly controlled and subjected to safeguards, they said in the report.

The row emerged as the ISC called for a single act of parliament to cover the work of Britain’s three spy agencies, to make their operations more transparent and abolish the present complex grid of laws. In an unprecedented account of the surveillance state, reports disclosed that:

Intelligence officials hold a trove of personal data containing millions of records on a wide range of people without statutory oversight.

Spy agencies use little-known “national security directions” from a 1984 law to compel communications companies to obey their orders.

Police, spy agencies and public bodies were granted more than half a million warrants to gather communications data last year.

MI5, MI6 and GCHQ were ordered to destroy large amounts of material gathered from wire taps that they had held for too long.

Hazel Blears, the Labour MP who is a leading member of the ISC, rejected the allegation made by the whistleblower Edward Snowden and his supporters that Britain conducted “mass surveillance”. “GCHQ is not collecting or reading everyone’s emails,” she said. “They do not have the legal authority, resources or the technical capability.”

An evidence session last October recorded Ms Blears asking Isabella Sankey, the director of policy for Liberty, whether she would change her mind if there were evidence that showed bulk data collection had helped to prevent terrorist plots. Ms Sankey was quoted as saying: “No.”

She was asked by a second committee member whether “you believe so strongly that bulk interception is unacceptable in a free society that you would say that was a price we should be willing to pay?” Ms Sankey was quoted as responding: “Yes.”

Also present at the hearing were Emma Carr, the director of Big Brother Watch, Eric Metcalfe, of Justice, and Hanne Stevens, the interim director of Rights Watch UK. When Ms Blears asked whether Ms Sankey’s colleagues shared that view, Ms Carr said: “Yes.”

The bulk interception of internet data — emails, web posts, YouTube chats, texts and any other digital communication — was a focus of the inquiry.

Ms Blears said that she and other committee members, who were given access to thousands of classified documents, were told of cases that she said demonstrated that such interception had exposed threats and plots.

Ms Sankey said the committee had not shown any evidence that mass surveillance saved lives.

One of the relatives of the 2005 London bombing victims said, however, that the civil rights campaigners had their priorities wrong. “The question that should be asked is, what’s the minimum interference in our freedom that gives us maximum protection?” said Graham Foulkes, whose son David, 22, was killed. “Liberty is isolated from the real world. Because it is so lauded and courted by politicians, it has lost sense of what it’s all about.”

Ray McClure, the uncle of Lee Rigby, the soldier murdered by Islamists, said that privacy groups were protecting terrorists and that their comments showed “how little they value life”.

EU plans new team to tackle cyber-terrorism

By Kevin Rawlinson

BBC News



The "sheer volume" of content online from groups such as Islamic State requires action, policy makers have said

Plans for a new Europe-wide counter-terrorism unit are being presented to European ministers.

The Internet Referral Unit would be part of law enforcement agency Europol and would seek to remove jihadist content from the internet.

EU policy makers want to pool member states' resources to deal with the "sheer volume" of such material.

The Paris terror attacks had pushed the item up the EU's agenda, said a senior official.

"The internet is a major facilitator for radicalisation to terrorism. Addressing this matter poses a number of different challenges," a briefing document detailing the plans says.

It adds: "The sheer volume of internet content promoting terrorism and extremism requires pooling of resources and a close cooperation with the industry."

Extremist content

The proposal from European security officials is for an extension of an existing Europol tool used to store information on Islamist extremist websites into a continent-wide referral unit.

It will be presented to ministers from the governments of EU member states at a meeting of the EU's Justice and Home Affairs Council.

The new unit will be expected to flag "terrorist and extremist online content" and to support investigations by law enforcement agencies.

Under the proposals, which have come from the Latvian presidency of the council, each member state would be expected to nominate a partner authority to work with the new unit.

"This can be the national cybercrime or internet safety department, or a dedicated unit dealing with terrorist content on-line," the document says.

The council wants the unit to be operational by 1 June this year, with the funds being provided by member states.

'Urgency'

The news follows the attacks in Paris and the unmasking of Jihadi John as Mohammed Emwazi, who has appeared in numerous Islamic State propaganda videos posted online.

According to the Financial Times, Gilles de Kerchove - the EU's counter-terrorism chief - said: "[The Paris attacks] have added... urgency to countering the extremism problem. Dealing with material online is the first item on the agenda."

The newspaper reported that the EU unit would be modelled on the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU), which was set up in 2010 by the UK's Home Office and Scotland Yard to prevent the spread of extremist content online.

The Home Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Related Stories

[The agents fighting online jihadists](#)

[Female jihadists 'drawn in online'](#)

['Jihad reporting' button for ISPs](#)

Mi piace

3

Tweet

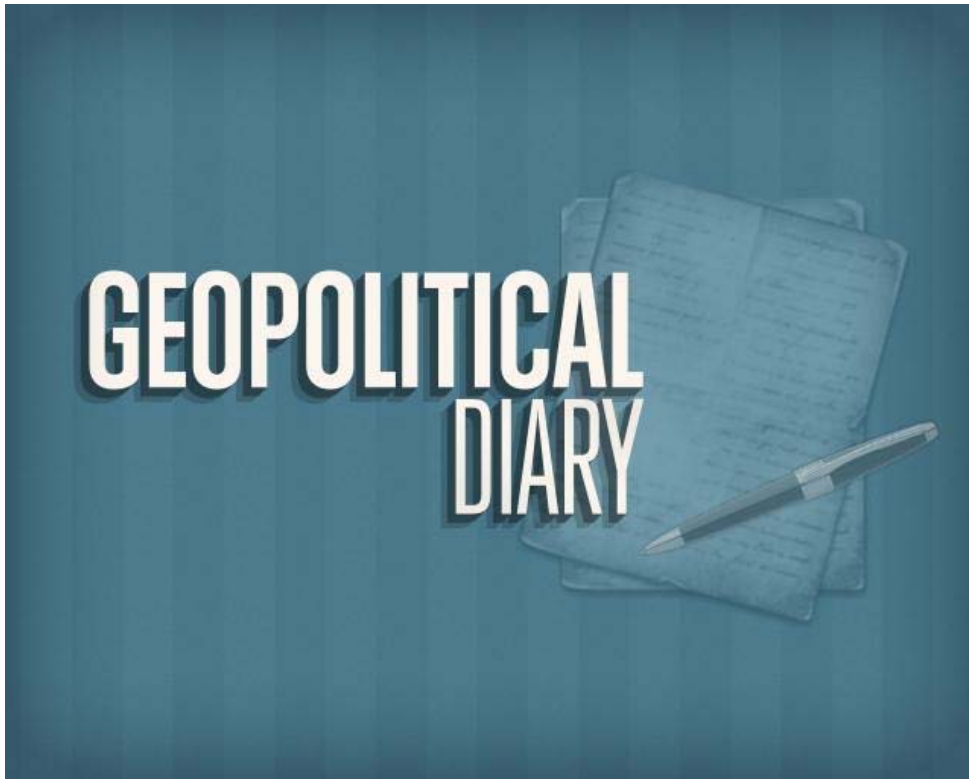
8

g+1

0

 Share

Nuclear Deterrence Is Relevant Again

 Geopolitical Diary | MARCH 13, 2015 | 01:11 GMT |  Text Size  |  [Print](#)


U.S. Adm. William Gortney, commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, warned Congress in written testimony Thursday of the threat posed by Russian bombers and missiles. Having written yesterday about the [uncertainty in Moscow surrounding the status of Russian President Vladimir Putin](#), we deemed it worthwhile to consider Gortney's testimony more seriously than we might under other circumstances.

Gortney wrote: "Russian heavy bombers flew more out-of-area patrols in 2014 than in any year since the Cold War. We have also witnessed improved

interoperability between Russian long-range aviation and other elements of the Russian military, including air and maritime intelligence collection platforms positioned to monitor NORAD responses." The patrols help to train Russian air crews, but some are "clearly intended to underscore Moscow's global reach and communicate its displeasure with Western policies, particularly with regard to Ukraine."

"Russia is progressing toward its goal of deploying long-range, conventionally-armed cruise missiles with ever increasing stand-off launch distances on its heavy bombers, submarines and surface combatants," Gortney said. "Should these trends continue, over time NORAD will face increased risk in our ability to defend North America against Russian air, maritime, and cruise missile threats."

We are again focusing on the changing concerns and rhetoric of all parties. Statements such as this would have been unthinkable a few years ago. While we understand that the head of NORAD is charged with monitoring the threats — and that may distort his outlook — and while we accept that testimony to Congress involves the important matter of the budget, it is still important to take this statement seriously.

What is a Geopolitical Diary?
[George Friedman Explains.](#)

The question is how seriously? The Russians still have their nuclear capability from the Cold War. We will assume that at least some, perhaps most, of the missiles and warheads have been maintained in

operational condition. In any case, the Russians retain a nuclear intercontinental ballistic missile capability, and can strike the United States, with the only counter being a strike on Russia.

A Russian Foreign Ministry official reminded the world of this fact in a comment to Russian media outlet Interfax on Wednesday. Referencing Moscow's right to deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea, Mikhail Ulyanov, head of the ministry's Department on Arms Control, said, "I don't know if there are nuclear weapons there now. I don't know about any plans, but in principle Russia can do it."

It has long been taken for granted that the nuclear balance was not relevant, and indeed it hasn't been. During the Cold War, the most likely scenario for the use of nuclear weapons would have been that the Soviets would have attacked Germany, overwhelming it and moving toward the channel ports. With no conventional option for the United States in response, the United States would have lived up to its pledge to protect Europe with nuclear weapons.

There were other scenarios for nuclear war, including the spasmodic launching of all missiles in each arsenal. That was unlikely, however, because it invoked mutual assured destruction. It was never clear to us why a nuclear strike at the Soviet Union would have stopped a Soviet advance, or why it would not have triggered a spasmodic Russian strike. Indeed, it was never clear that the United States would have used nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Charles de Gaulle used to argue that the United States could not be relied on to risk American cities to protect Europe. He may well have been right.

For Russia's part, there were also discussions of using nuclear weapons to facilitate a conventional advance. Russian ground forces during the Cold War practiced intensively, and in fact still do occasionally, on operating in contaminated areas following a nuclear strike that would have severely weakened enemy positions. In such a case, of course, a conventional conflict would quickly have escalated by inviting a nuclear response from the United States.

The point of it all was that the Soviets could not be certain of what the Americans would do in response to a nuclear strike, so the U.S. nuclear threat served, along with other factors, to deter a Soviet invasion. The Russians are now concerned, rightly or wrongly, that a U.S. presence in Ukraine might threaten Russia's territorial integrity. The U.S. response — that the United States does not intend to insert massive force into Ukraine in the first place, and in the second place does not intend to invade Russia — does not soothe Russian war planners. They see the United States much as the United States sees Russia: unpredictable, ruthless and dangerous.

To assure themselves that they can deter the United States, particularly given [their conventional weaknesses](#), they have several times publicly reminded the Americans that in engaging Russia, they are engaging a peer nuclear adversary. The various missions that Gortney has cited simply represent an extension of that capability.

We have come a long way to reach the point where Russia chooses to assert its strategic nuclear capability, and where the commander of NORAD regards this capability as a significant risk. But the point is that we have come far indeed in the past year. For the Russians, the overthrow of the government in Ukraine was a threat to their national security. What the Russians did in Ukraine is seen as a threat at least to U.S. interests.

In the old Cold War, both sides used their nuclear capability to check conventional conflicts. The Russians at this point appear to be at least calling attention to their nuclear capability. Unconnected to this, to be sure, is Putin's odd absence. In a world where nuclear threats are returning to prominence, the disappearance of one side's commander-in-chief is more worrisome than it would be at other times.

Send us your thoughts on this report.

ISIS Accepts Boko Haram's Allegiance

BY POLLY MOSENDZ 3/12/15 AT 7:59 PM



WORLD

A Chadian soldier peers into a burned armored vehicle, which the Chadian military said belongs to insurgent group Boko Haram, on February 26, 2015, after the Chadians destroyed it during a battle in Gambaru, Nigeria. EMMANUEL BRAUN/REUTERS

FILED UNDER: [World](#), [Boko Haram](#), [ISIS](#), [Islamic State](#)

The Islamic State (ISIS) has accepted the allegiance offer of Nigerian terrorist organization Boko Haram, according to an audio file released on social media. The file, titled "Kill and Be Killed," also appeared on file-sharing websites. The Al-Furqan Media Foundation, ISIS's media group, took responsibility for the message.

The message was delivered in Arabic by spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, [according to Rita Katz, director of the SITE Intel Group, a jihadist watchdog](#). In addition to accepting Boko Haram's loyalty to ISIS, al-Adnani threatens Jewish and Christian people. He last released a speech in late January.

Impossibile caricare il plug-in.

Boko Haram first offered its allegiance to the Syria- and Iraq-based ISIS [over the weekend in an audio message](#). "We announce our allegiance to the caliph...and will hear and obey in times of difficulty and prosperity, in hardship and ease," a Boko Haram member says in the message.

Try Newsweek: [12 week subscription offer just € 12 / £12](#)

In Boko Haram's [most recent execution video](#), the group performs two beheadings in a style similar to what ISIS does and filmed them in a similar manner. Over the past several weeks, both groups have executed men [they claim were spies](#), forcing lengthy confessions from them before the killings. Boko Haram has also started including a watermark of the Black Standard flag, a symbol of ISIS, in its videos. Due to the geographical distance between the groups, the unification is mostly a matter of propaganda at this time.

ISIS today dominates Libyan port city of Sirte, that may be used to attack Europe



ISIS “has established more than a foothold in this Mediterranean port,” mentions the article. “Its fighters dominate the city center so thoroughly that a Libyan brigade sent to dislodge the group remains camped on the outskirts, visibly afraid to enter and allowing the extremists to come and go as they please.”

The *NYT* report echoes comments Libyan diplomat, Dr. Aref Nayed, recently made during an interview with David Webb, a Breitbart News contributor.

Mr. Nayed said ISIS was in control of Sirte (also spelled Surt) and warned that the jihadist group could use the coastal city to launch attacks against Europe, namely Italy.

NYT notes:

Nearly four years after the ouster of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, Libya’s warring cities and towns have become so entangled in internal conflicts over money and power that they have opened a door for the Islamic State to expand into the country’s oil-rich deserts and sprawling coastline. Libya has become a new frontier for the radical group as it comes under increasing pressure from American-led airstrikes on its original strongholds in Iraq and Syria.

The Obama administration backed the overthrow of Qaddafi in 2011.

Unlike jihadists in Afghanistan, Algeria, Nigeria, Egypt, and Libya’s southern and eastern provinces, who have pledged their allegiance to ISIS, the ISIS faction in Sirte coordinates closely with the parent organization based in Syria, explains *NYT*.

A recent video showing the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians taken captive from Sirte appears to have been filmed on the Libyan coast with the blessing of the parent ISIS organization, adds the newspaper.

Mohamed Omar el-Hassan, a 28-year-old who leads an anti-ISIS Libyan brigade, and other local militia leaders told *NYT* that there may be 200 or fewer ISIS fighters inside Sirte.

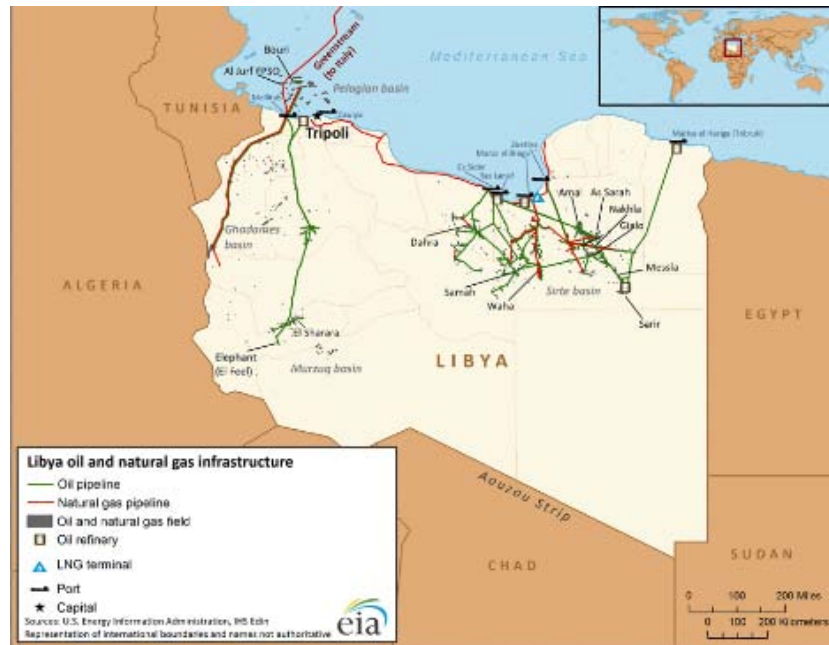
ISIS uses its control of the local radio station to attract fighters, according to Mr. Hassan.

“Surt, near Colonel Qaddafi’s birthplace, was the site of his last stand in 2011, when rebels from the city of Misurata joined a battle that destroyed much of the city,” mentions the article. “They ultimately captured Colonel Qaddafi and killed him.”

The Misuratan brigades that moved into the port city in 2011 eventually became the extremist group Ansar al-Shariah of Sirte.

That group eventually split up over pledging loyalty to ISIS. Those who did emerged as the dominant players, explains *The New York Times*.

Suliman Ali Mousa, a 58-year-old fighter, suggested that ISIS in Sirte was made up of Qaddafi loyalists.



Attacking Energy in Libya- A New ISIS Strategy?

Posted By *William George* on Mar 12, 2015

Twitter

Facebook

Google+

Stumble Upon

LinkedIn

Last month, affiliates of the terrorist group ISIS [attacked](#) key oil fields and pipelines in Libya. On February 4th the group attacked the al-Mabrook oil field, killing 12 people, and a February 14th bombing of a pipeline connecting the El Sarir field to the Hariga oil port led to significant damage. These attacks prompted Libya's state-run National Oil Corp to issue a statement calling for the nationwide shutdown of oil production if attacks continue. Foreign operators are also withdrawing workers, citing a lack of security and growing civil unrest in the country. The brutal [beheading](#) of 21 Egyptian Christians in Libya also prompted retaliatory Egyptian airstrikes, further adding to the discord.

Are these recent attacks aimed at Libya's energy infrastructures indicative of a new ISIS strategy? Would attacking energy installations reap more benefits in the long term than capturing them?

The dangers of increased attacks against a country's energy installations are clear. For example, attacks on a country's oil infrastructure [leads](#) to an increase in crude oil prices. In Nigeria in 2006, a sequence of low-key attacks against energy installations led to a decrease of nearly 1 million barrels per day (bpd) and a subsequent increase in the price of crude. Disruptions in the price of oil (that we are seeing today, albeit for multiple reasons) lead to volatility in global markets, promote political instability in producer regions, and drive away foreign investment opportunities.

The recent attacks in Libya are a case study in what can, and has, happened. Following ISIS attacks at al-Mabrook and the El Sarir pipeline, oil prices [increased](#) to \$62 dollars per

barrel. Additionally, the group's recent [takeover](#) of the Mabrook and Bahi fields has led to decreased oil production in the country. Current production sits at less than 350,000 bpd, a [significant drop](#) from the peak of roughly 1.6 million bpd before the ouster of Muammar Gaddafi. Although other factors contribute to fluctuating oil prices in the region, ISIS's impact in Libya is clear. As oil analyst Olivier Jakob notes:

“The geopolitical risk [ISIS] is not something to write off.”

Should ISIS continue to move toward this type of campaign, the long-term effects of these attacks will be largely dependent upon the extent to which they can maintain their current hold over the areas they control. By destabilizing **energy security** in countries, which may be in their interest, they are faced with the dual problem of trying to enhance their own energy security. The same results could be attained by capturing- as opposed to destroying- energy installations throughout the Middle East. It will be important to keep an eye on the development of this strategy, as attacks on energy installations may be a precursor to more sustained efforts for their eventual capture and use by the terrorist group.

Can ISIS sustain a long-term campaign of attacking energy? Not likely. But a taste for the macabre is ISIS's modus operandi, and should be expected at this point.

For more info on the current state of Libya, check out ASP's official report [here](#).

LEAVE A REPLY

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Name *

Email *

Website

Comment

POST COMMENT



This is how we failed Syria

Four years into the largest humanitarian crisis on our watch, the conflict in Syria is worsening.

12 Mar 2015 06:02 GMT | [War & Conflict](#), [Human Rights](#), [Politics](#), [Middle East](#), [Syrian crisis](#)



[Jan Egeland](#)

Jan Egeland is secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council. In 2006, Time magazine named him one of the 100 'people who shape our world'.

Last year three UN Security Council resolutions were passed aiming to protect and assist civilians in Syria. But, a year after the first resolution was passed, the words ring hollow.

In a report being released today, my organisation, Norwegian Refugee Council, along with several other organisations, present a report card that compares the demands made in the resolutions with the reality we see on the ground. The grim statistics reveal how the warring parties, countries with influence in the region and other UN member states have completely failed to implement the resolutions - and by doing so, have also utterly failed Syrian civilians.

We have failed to protect people from indiscriminate attacks and displacement.

The resolutions and international law demand that that the parties to the conflict cease all attacks against civilians, that they stop shelling and bombarding populated areas, and cease firing on schools and medical facilities.

Increase in attacks

Still, at least 160 children were killed at school last year. There was an increase in attacks on health facilities. The use of explosives worsened, claiming thousands of civilian lives. Innocent men, women and children were murdered, raped and tortured.

Regional and international powers continue to fuel the conflict, by sending in arms and ammunition. We urgently need to halt the supply of arms and ammunition to groups who are using these weapons to commit horrifying crimes against civilians. And the people committing these crimes need to be held accountable.

We have also failed to assist those who need our help the most.

The resolutions demand that parties to the conflict immediately lift sieges of populated areas, and allow aid agencies rapid, unhindered and safe access to people in need. It furthermore urges all UN member states to increase their humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian access

Still, humanitarian access to large parts of Syria actually diminished last year. Some 4.8 million people are currently living in areas defined by the UN as "hard to reach", and too many of them receive only sporadic or no support. People are dying not only from bullets, but also from the recent cold winter weather, from a lack of clean drinking water and a lack of access to medical assistance. Some 212,000 people are still trapped in besieged areas, where parties to the conflict are using hunger as a barbaric tool of war.

The government of Syria, and often some neighbouring countries, continue to hamper humanitarian work by imposing bureaucratic hurdles, restricting travel across borders and across frontlines, and making it difficult for civilians to access aid. The worsening security situation and lack of respect of the humanitarian work is furthermore blocking us from delivering assistance to many of those who need it the most.

That said, heroic aid workers, most of them Syrian, are every day continuing to deliver assistance to people in need. And we could do much more, if it was not for the chronic lack of funding.

About \$8.4bn are needed for all relief work inside Syria and in neighbouring countries this year. It is less than the price of the Olympic Games in London, about a fifth of the price of the Olympic Games in Beijing, and a sixth of the price of the winter games in Sochi. While these Olympic Games were fully funded, the international community has not been willing to provide even the minimum of assistance to the more than 16 million Syrian civilians in need inside Syria and in neighbouring countries. Last year's appeals became only about half funded, resulting in severe cuts in the assistance.

A generation of Syrians

We need to understand that a generation of Syrians living in precarious conditions, without access to education and without any hope for the future, is a recipe for disaster. Additionally, countries with influence in the region need to put pressure on the parties to the conflict, to make them end the attacks on humanitarian workers, and they need to demand that the government of Syria and neighbouring countries remove the red tape that is currently hampering assistance.

Last, but not least, we have failed to find a political solution.

The Security Council's demand for all parties to work towards a genuine political solution has been met with piecemeal efforts and little progress. The talks in Moscow in January were not attended by the major opposition groups. UN Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura's plan for a freeze in Aleppo may provide a glimmer of hope, but is currently in jeopardy.

Those with influence, including Russia, Iran, the US, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, all who have leverage on key actors, need to put pressure on parties to the conflict - for them to come to the table and negotiate a political solution. This political process needs to be inclusive, allowing those without guns to be heard so that the future of the country respects the rights and aspirations of the Syrian people.

Time for action

In short, the score card shows how the Security Council, and the parties to the conflict bound by these resolutions, have failed. The resolutions, which provided a framework for how we could end the suffering - have been ignored or undermined by parties to the conflict, powerful members of the Security Council and other UN member states.

And the bitter reality is that we are failing not because we lack solutions, we are failing because we are unwilling to do what is needed.

Russia, the US, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar and other UN member states together have the necessary influence to make the changes set out in the resolutions a reality.

It is about time we end the civilians' suffering.

Jan Egeland is secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council. In 2006, Time magazine named him one of the 100 'people who shape our world'.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial policy.

Source: Al Jazeera

Iraqi forces tighten siege of Tikrit

Iraqi commanders say that time is on their side and they will not be rushed into a final assault on city.

13 Mar 2015 01:44 GMT | [War & Conflict](#), [Iraq](#), [Middle East](#), [ISIL](#)

Iraqi commanders have said that time is on their side as government forces tightened their siege of Tikrit and warned they would not be rushed into a final assault.

Since the operation to retake Tikrit from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group was launched at the start of the month, thousands of troops and Shia militia have re-conquered the land around the city.

On Wednesday, they moved deep into Tikrit's sprawling northern district of Qadisiyah and closed in on the few hundred ISIL fighters holed up in the city centre.

But Police Staff Major General Bahaa al-Azzawi said on Thursday that government forces would refrain from advancing too fast to avoid unnecessary losses.

"We don't want to be rushed because we want to avoid casualties," he told the AFP news agency in Albu Ajil, a village from which Tikrit can be seen across the Tigris river. "Tikrit is sealed off from all sides."

Police sources told Al Jazeera on Thursday that on the southeastern side of the city, clashes between Iraqi forces and ISIL fighters were continuing near the former presidential palaces of Saddam Hussein - adjacent to the local government compound.

Iraqi troops were shelling Tikrit's centre as army helicopters targeted ISIL hideouts, the sources said.

'No way out'

Hadi al-Ameri, the commander of the volunteer Popular Mobilisation units, told reporters on the front lines that there was no way out for the ISIL fighters trapped in Tikrit.

"They have two choices, surrender or death," said Ameri, whose Badr organisation is one of the largest Iranian-backed Shia militias in Iraq and controls the interior ministry.

"We do not need to attack. That could lead to victims in the ranks of the fighters," he said.

None of the Iraqi fighting forces involved in the battle have provided casualty figures since the start of the operation to wrest back Tikrit, the largest since ISIL captured the city nine months ago.

Dozens of bodies are being driven down to Baghdad and the Shia holy city of Najaf almost every day, however, and, while government forces have had the upper hand, ISIL has done damage with suicide car bombs, booby traps and snipers.

Source: Al Jazeera And AFP



March 12, 2015

A Bipartisan Cause In Washington: Arming Ukraine Against Russia

by Carl Schreck

WASHINGTON -- Bipartisan consensus is often elusive in Washington's highly polarized political environment. But consensus appears to be snowballing among Democratic and Republican lawmakers in the U.S. capital on at least one issue: arming Ukraine.

One exception, however, is the figure who matters most: President Barack Obama.

"This is a great stain on us," U.S. Representative Eliot Engel (Democrat-New York) said of the White House's reluctance to provide weapons to Kyiv in its standoff with Moscow and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine. "I just think it's woefully inadequate, and I think it will have repercussions beyond Ukraine down the line."

Engel, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is among the numerous U.S. lawmakers voicing mounting frustration with the White House over its reluctance to send weapons to Ukraine.

He said the nearly \$200 million in nonlethal military aid earmarked for Kyiv so far -- including a **\$75 million package** announced on March 11 -- will do little to help Ukraine defend itself against separatist forces that Western governments accuse Moscow of backing with arms and personnel.

The new package is slated to include what the White House called "nonlethal defensive security assistance," including communications equipment, counter-mortar radars, night-vision devices, medical supplies, and Raven surveillance drones that can be launched by hand.

Speaking to RFE/RL on March 11 after the White House announced the new round of assistance, Engel allowed that Kyiv needs that equipment. But added, "It's not really going to help them in the long run."

This exasperation has crossed party lines, even amid acrimony between Democrats and Republicans over **negotiations to restrict Iran's nuclear program** and a range of domestic issues.

At a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on March 10, the committee's Republican chairman, Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee, said "the refusal of the administration to step up with more robust support for Ukraine and further pressure on Russia is a blight on U.S. policy."

"Any strategy will not be effective unless the United States begins to provide Ukraine with the ability to inflict serious military costs using defensive weapons on the thousands of Russian troops operating in its eastern regions," Corker said.

Russia has repeatedly denied accusations by the United States, the EU, Ukraine, and NATO that its troops are fighting in Ukraine and that Moscow is providing weapons to the separatists.

Last week, Engel and 10 other U.S. representatives -- including Republican House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio, **signed a letter** urging Obama to "quickly approve additional efforts to support Ukraine's efforts to defend its sovereign territory, including through the transfer of lethal, defensive weapons systems to the Ukrainian military."

Engel noted that during a House Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Ukraine earlier this month, "the overwhelming sentiment on both sides of the aisle was for the United States to arm Ukraine with defensive weapons."

"That was true of the Democratic side as well as the Republican side. I mean, it wasn't unanimous, but it was, I think, pretty overwhelming," he told RFE/RL.

Avoiding 'Greater Bloodshed'

In December, Obama signed legislation passed with bipartisan support that authorizes -- but does not require -- the U.S. president to provide lethal military aid to Ukraine.

But Obama has resisted providing such assistance despite the pressure from lawmakers and public statements by top military brass, including U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, supporting lethal aid to Kyiv.

"The president has all the authority he needs to do it. He just needs to have the will to do it," Engel told RFE/RL. "Even the new defense secretary has indicated that this is what we should be doing. There are lots of people who believe that this is what we should be doing."

The White House, however, is also facing counterpressure from key European allies that oppose sending weapons to Kyiv. The allies fear that the arms could fuel an escalation in eastern Ukraine, where a fragile cease-fire has been in place since February 15 under a peace agreement brokered in Minsk.

Germany's ambassador to the United States, Peter Wittig, told The Associated Press in a March 9 interview that in a February meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the two leaders agreed not to deliver "lethal defensive weapons [to Ukraine] at this time."

At the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing the day after the interview, Corker accused the Obama administration of duplicity in its handling of the issue.

"Germany's ambassador to the United States says that President Obama privately pledged to Chancellor Merkel in February that the United States will not deliver lethal military assistance to Ukraine despite the fact that he and other administration officials continue to tell the American public that they are seriously considering this policy," Corker said.

The committee's ranking Democrat, Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey, told the hearing that a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Ukraine was only possible if Russian President Vladimir Putin "believes that the cost of continuing to ravage Ukraine is simply too high."

"Providing nonlethal equipment, like night-vision goggles, is all well and good, but giving Ukrainians the ability to see Russians coming -- but not the weapons to stop them -- is not the answer," Menendez said.

The White House, meanwhile, has yet to budge publicly from its stance on arming Ukraine despite the calls to do so. White House spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters in Washington on March 11 that lethal military assistance "almost by definition" would "lead to greater bloodshed."

"The fact is, our engagement here and our support for these ongoing diplomatic negotiations is that we are trying to avoid greater bloodshed," Earnest said. "So that is one thing that President [Obama] is mindful of."

He added that it was unlikely that the United States "would be able to provide enough military support to the Ukrainian military that they could overwhelm the military operations that are currently being backed by Russia."

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty © 2015 RFE/RL, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/us-bipartisan-support-for-arming-ukraine/26896652.html>

Ukraine's media war

[All latest updates](#)

Battle of the memes

Russia has shown its mastery of the propaganda war. Ukraine is struggling to catch up

Mar 12th 2015 | KIEV | Europe



A Russian propaganda video (left) and the Ukrainian response video (right).

IN LATE 2013, early in the Maidan demonstrations, Savik Shuster, one of Ukraine's most influential television hosts, made the mistake of inviting opposition leaders onto his talk show. Mr Shuster's network, whose owners were aligned with Viktor Yanukovich, then the president, promptly dropped Mr Shuster's programme "Savik Live". It was picked up by Channel 5, a station owned by a western-leaning oligarch named Petro Poroshenko. Last month, Mr Shuster again found himself under pressure—this time, he says, from Mr Poroshenko, who is now Ukraine's president.

Mr Shuster's offence was to invite on air a Russian journalist who criticised the Ukrainian government for killing civilians in a "fratricidal war". Ukraine's National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting [issued him a warning](#) (<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/251501.html>) for violating a law against war propaganda and incitement of hatred. In today's atmosphere, Mr Shuster says, his attempt at bringing balance to the discussion proved a step too far: "There are now people who

shouldn't be on the air, and things that shouldn't be discussed.” As one of his other guests, a deputy from Mr Poroshenko’s party, remarked later in the show: “Today, an information war is being waged against Ukraine...Our task is to be united, to comment as one.”

Information warfare, like the shooting kind, is a new art for Ukraine, and the learning curve is steep. Faced with a finely-tuned and well-funded Russian propaganda machine, truth and openness ought to be Ukraine’s most powerful weapons. But truth-telling is slow and painful work, and Kiev often opts for misinformation of its own instead. The Ukrainian authorities gloss over military losses, so much so that domestic observers now interpret the government's daily situation briefings as a euphemistic code: "14 [killed] means there was lots of fighting, two means it was a relatively quiet day," says Vitaly Sych, editor of *Novoe Vremya*, a weekly.

Ukraine’s leaders consistently and implausibly deny any responsibility for civilian deaths, further undermining trust, especially among the population in separatist-held territory. Criticism of the government is dismissed as mudslinging by Kremlin agents. Last month authorities jailed Ruslan Kotsaba, a western Ukrainian blogger who had spoken out against mobilisation. Ukrainian authorities accused him of working in Russia’s interests; Amnesty International labeled him a prisoner of conscience. "We're becoming just like them," one senior Ukrainian official laments.

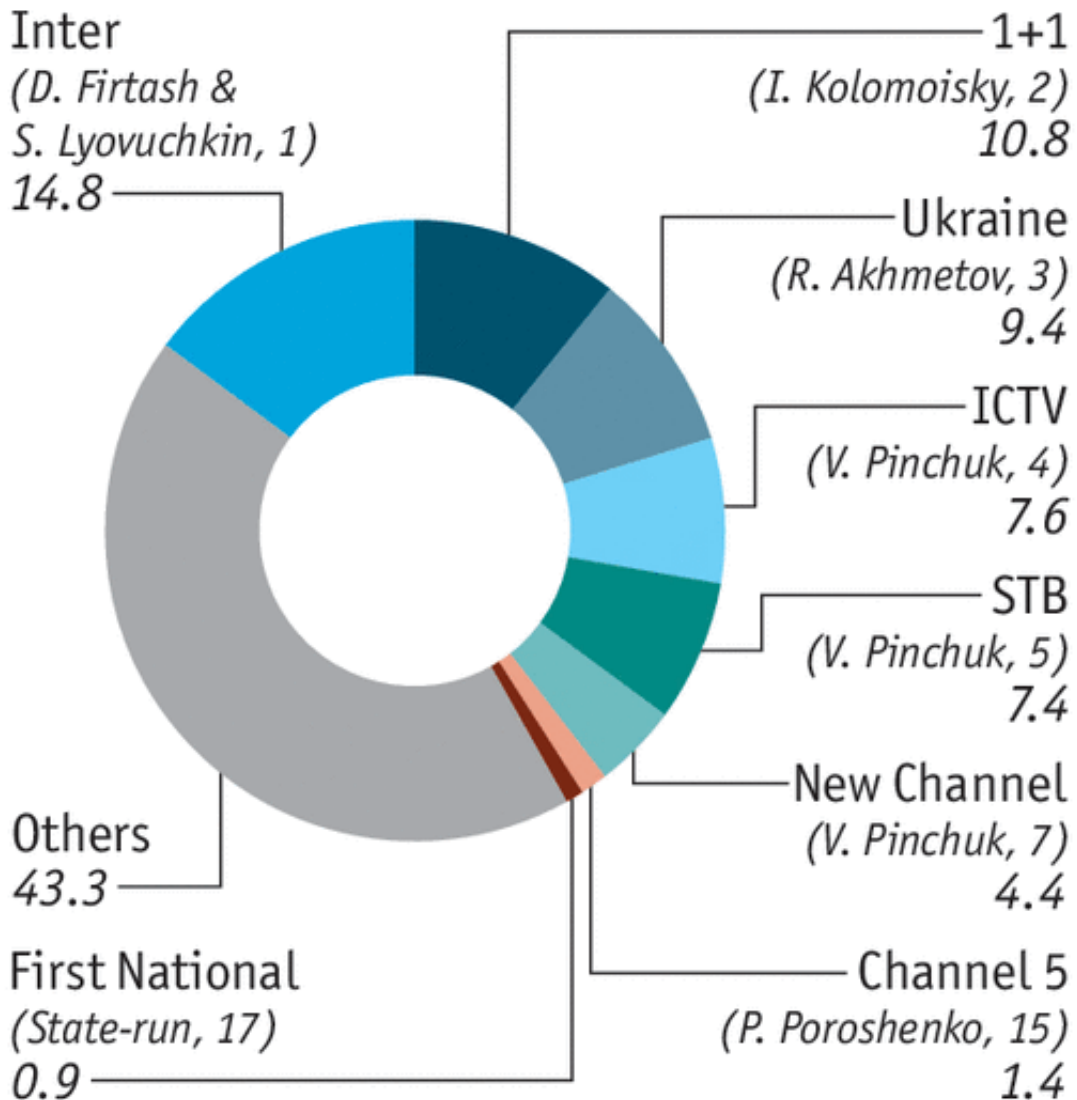
Tasked with bringing order to the information front is the newly-created Ministry of Information Politics, led by Yuriy Stets, a former producer at Channel 5 and a close personal friend of Mr Poroshenko. Journalists and civil-society activists derided the ministry's creation, dubbing it the “Ministry of Truth”. Mr Stets says his critics "read Orwell but not Churchill," and compares his information ministry to the one Britain operated during the second world war. Mr Stets aims to fix poor coordination between often contradictory government agencies and develop tools for resisting Russian information warfare. “We must teach the authorities to tell the truth,” he insists, promising not to engage in propaganda or censorship. Heavy censorship in Ukraine is, indeed, unlikely—not least because the media remains in the hands of powerful oligarchs.

Yet the ministry’s first steps suggest it may be unwisely trying to imitate the better-funded, more professional Russians. “They see what Russia does and think they can bring it to Ukraine,” says Oksana Romaniuk of Kiev's Institute of Mass Information. “We’re battling propaganda with propaganda.” The ministry has announced plans to create a worldwide television channel to counter Moscow's Russia Today network; it will be called Ukraine Tomorrow. Mr Stets has also launched the "Ukrainian Information Army", a volunteer force of internet commenters tasked with spreading government-approved content and combatting Russian trolls. A recent mission asked the troops to post a propagandistic [Ukrainian response](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJwH1Fdtl3Y) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJwH1Fdtl3Y) to a [Russian-made propaganda video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T65SwzHAbes) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T65SwzHAbes) .

Media moguls

Audience share of Ukraine's television channels
February 2015, %

(Owners, rank out of top 20)



Source: Ukraine Television Industry Committee

Economist.com

Meanwhile, Ukrainian journalists have been struggling with how to carry themselves in a war where the media plays an outsized role. Inside the newsroom of 1+1, one of Ukraine's top television stations, Ukrainian flags signed by soldiers hang on the walls. Spent shells rest on bookshelves, and on the floor lie fragments of the ruined Donetsk airport. Next to a target-practice mannequin dressed in a separatist uniform and labeled "Putin", a donation box calls out: "Help Protect Ukraine". Aleksander Tkachenko, chief executive of 1+1 Media, says journalists have found themselves "participants in a war. Not physically, but a new type of

war."

Journalists constantly debate whether they can help Ukraine without contradicting their professional standards. "Ukrainian journalism is undergoing a crisis of values," says Olga Chervakova, a television journalist turned politician, who now sits on the parliamentary Committee for Freedom of Speech and Information. Threats to Ukrainian journalists from separatist forces have made traveling to Donetsk and Luhansk too dangerous for most. As a result, news reports are often one-sided, sometimes lumping together all residents of rebel-held areas as "terrorists". Such generalisations prevent Ukrainians from truly understanding the crisis, [writes Nataliya Gumenyuk](http://nv.ua/opinion/gumenyuk/pochemu-my-reshili-cto-v-donbasse-zhivut-drugie-lyudi--35574.html) (<http://nv.ua/opinion/gumenyuk/pochemu-my-reshili-cto-v-donbasse-zhivut-drugie-lyudi--35574.html>) of Hromadske TV, one of the few Ukrainian journalists who travels to separatist-held territory.

Covering a conflict in one's own country raises complex moral dilemmas. "When you are being attacked, there is a natural human instinct to defend oneself," says Olexandr Martynenko, director of Interfax-Ukraine, the country's leading news wire. More often than not, Mr Martynenko notes, Ukrainian journalists are choosing patriotism over professional standards. For many, including Andrei Tsaplienko, a war correspondent at 1+1, remaining above the fray is close to impossible. Before the war, when Mr Tsaplienko covered conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, he witnessed human suffering but could do nothing about it. In Ukraine, parallel with his journalism, he has begun collecting and delivering aid to the front: "Here, I understand that I can help." At one point Mr Tsaplienko considered joining the army, but was dissuaded when soldiers told him he could do more good as a journalist. How much Ukraine's journalists are aiding its cause by forgoing impartiality is debatable.