

# Counterterrorism, Rules of Engagement and International Order in a UN Context

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the Third Joint AMS-RDDC Conference  
at the Royal Danish Defence College co-hosted by  
the Danish Foreign Policy Society  
in Copenhagen 12 December 2017



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Liselotte Odgaard and Charlotte Flindt Pedersen (eds.)

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## **Counterterrorism, Rules of Engagement and International Order in a UN Context**

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# Preface

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**Liselotte Odgaard**

Associate Professor, Royal Danish Defence College

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This collection of papers was presented at the 3rd joint conference between the Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC) and the Academy of Military Science (AMS) held at RDDC 12 December 2017 and co-hosted by the Danish Foreign Policy Society.

The papers offer unique insights into Chinese and Danish views on counterterrorist operations, rules of engagement and international order, exploring the extent to which the UN will provide platforms for common action in these areas in future. In this way, this publication allows a Chinese and Danish audience to understand how both Danish and Chinese researchers and military personnel think about the issue at hand and detect emerging trends within this area: Is the UN and its multilateral set-up able to contribute to managing the challenges that stem from terrorist threats, from fundamental differences of interest, and from different views on world order between significant state and non-state actors in the international system? Four officers and one civilian from Danish Defence and four officers from China's Academy of Military Science in Beijing discuss these questions in the papers.

The Chinese papers focus on how these challenges look from the perspective of the Chinese military, and the Danish papers focus on how these challenges look from the perspective of the Danish military and NATO. Major General Wang Weixing discusses the historical background, the security concept of a community of shared future for mankind, and the key strategic doctrine of active defence underpinning China's defence policy. Senior Colonel Wang Yisheng discusses Chinese views on the security challenges in the Asia-Pacific and how these challenges are to be handled by China and its neighbours. Commander Sune Lund and Associate Professor Liselotte Odgaard investigate the use of rules for unplanned encounters in the South China Sea and examine whether such rules might help lower tension levels between NATO and Russia

in the Baltic Sea. Colonel Jiao Liang analyses the prospects and challenges of Chinese military participation in UN peacekeeping operations, focusing on Chinese experiences from operations in Mali, Syria, and China's Asian neighbourhood. Colonel Yan Wenhui investigates strategies and instruments for enhancing international cooperation on counter-terrorism.

Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard discusses the challenges of UN troops operating in areas with high levels of terrorist threats and how these challenges can be met. Major Casper Emil Holland examines the role of intelligence in the UN's counterterrorism strategy in the Sahel region in Africa, drawing on experiences from the UN operation in Mali. Major Martin Waldén Jespersen uses the example of Turkey's Erdoğan regime to describe how political opponents are labelled as terrorists to legitimize the use of force against them.

The Academy of Military Science is China's primary military strategic institution. AMS advises China's Central Military Commission, chaired by President Xi Jinping, about the role of the Chinese military in implementing China's defence, security and foreign policy. AMS plays a main role in the publication of China's defence white papers.

The Royal Danish Defence College develops the future leaders of Danish Defence. It offers research-based education, and the research is used widely within and outside Danish Defence for the benefit of Danish society and our allies and partners.

# Introductory remarks

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**Rear Admiral Nils Wang**

Commander, Royal Danish Defence College

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Both Denmark and China are nations with global engagements aimed at contributing to welfare and security across the world. These efforts reflect that states have global responsibilities for the basic welfare and security of all. Both countries have made significant contributions to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSMA) in Mali established in 2013 to support domestic political processes, protect civilians, and ensure security, stabilization and reconciliation. Similarly, Denmark and China have worked alongside each other in Operation Removal of Chemical Weapons from Syria (RECSYR) established in 2013. Both Denmark and China are also signatory states to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, thereby demonstrating our commitment to respect global rights and responsibilities concerning the use of seas.

As a small state, Denmark attempts to couple its ideas on how to promote welfare and security to the objectives and interests of the multilateral institutions of which we form part, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). Such efforts include countering terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). They also involve contributing to stability in regions such as North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe where civil wars and totalitarian leaders in some countries have undermined welfare and security.

As an Asian great power, China has begun to take initiatives with the potential to enhance global welfare and security. The Belt and Road initiative attempts to enhance welfare and security by means of development, communication and infrastructure projects that link Asia with the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

China has established an 8,000-strong UN standby peacekeeping force to assist in maintaining world peace and stability. China is also gradually becoming a global maritime power with the establishment of its first overseas military base in Djibouti in 2016; its participation in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden; its worldwide access to port facilities; and its joint exercises with countries across the world. Insofar as universal principles of lawful conduct form the basis for China's global engagements, its initiatives create great potential for cooperation with Denmark.

To this end, the establishment of cooperation between the Royal Danish Defence College and the Academy of Military Science for the purpose of exchanging experiences and ideas on counterterrorism, rules of engagement, and international order in a UN context, constitutes an important contribution to identify common interests between the militaries of Denmark and China. Since 2012, continuous exchanges between students and staff from our two institutions have provided concrete ideas for how to enhance cooperation with mutual respect for the existence of different outlooks in some areas. At this conference, we will continue the efforts to identify areas for defence dialogue and cooperation between Denmark and China.



# Introductory remarks

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**Major General Wang Weixing**

Deputy Political Commissar, Academy of Military Science

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Distinguished Rear Admiral Nils Wang, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends:

I'd like to thank Rear Admiral Nils Wang for his sincere invitation. I'm very pleased to head a delegation to visit here and hold this joint conference with the Royal Danish Defence College.

Although it is very cold in December in Copenhagen, I was touched by the passion of Danish friends. 68 years ago, in May, just six months after the founding of the

People's Republic of China, Denmark was one of the first countries in the West to establish diplomatic relations with China together with the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway and Finland. Diplomatic relations opened the door for exchanges and cooperation between Denmark and China. In recent years, the Royal Danish Defence College and the PLA Academy of Military Sciences have established close academic ties and opened the door for exchanges and cooperation between the two research institutes.

I take this opportunity to talk about some personal ideas:

The world today is in a period of great progress, great transformation and profound changes. The relations and interdependence of all countries in the world are increasingly strengthened, international forces are more balanced, and the general trend of peaceful development is irreversible. During this process, when some countries are engaged in "boxing matches", China is focusing on building a cooperative community of states. International cooperation and engagement is the fundamental reason why China can maintain its sustainable development. Humankind lives on the same earth. The earth is the common homeland of us all, and also the unique homeland for human beings.



The future and destiny of every nation and country are closely linked. Only if the world develops into a better place to live can China continue to improve living conditions in China and in turn, only if China continues its sustainable development path can the world do the same.

Most people can only see what is immediately before them, but not the long-term vision that can help guide the efforts of the international community to preserve peace and stability. Think tanks are a country's hope – able to clarify a long-term vision and provide guidance. The far-sighted analyses of think tanks not only determine the present state of our countries, but also determine their future. Our two think tanks assume such a responsibility. I sincerely hope that AMS and the Royal Danish Defence College can contribute to the concept of Building a Community of Shared Future for Mankind and safeguard world and regional peace.

I hope the friendship between China and Denmark lasts forever and I trust that cooperation between AMS and the Royal Danish Defence College will continue to develop. Finally, I wish the conference great success! Thank you.

# Can UN troops operate in areas with a high level of terrorist threats?

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**Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard**

Former Force Commander in MINUSMA<sup>1</sup>

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*It is a dusty day in the desert. A convoy of 10 white vehicles deployed on a patrol is advancing on the dirt road towards the forward operating base situated in a remote village. Suddenly, the first vehicle hits an improvised explosive device (IED) after which all hell breaks loose. The patrol is caught in an ambush and from several directions machine guns are targeting the vehicles. A rocket propelled grenade (RPG) hits a vehicle in the middle of the convoy and smoke comes from the engine room. The soldiers dismount but they seem confused and disoriented and they lack the initiative, meaning that the return of fire is unfocused and without real effect.*

*Even though the enemy are heavily outnumbered, they are not under significant pressure.*

*After 15 minutes, the enemy fire stops as they are apparently withdrawing. The only noise you hear is the mourning of the wounded. The commander regains his posture and makes the effort to re-organize the patrol and call on the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC). Two killed, 5 wounded and two vehicles destroyed – no enemy killed or captured.*

Should the United Nations (UN) have operated in such an environment with a terrorist threat? Difficult question!

Could the incident have been avoided? Perhaps.

Was the patrol properly prepared for the task? Probably not.

<sup>1</sup> Mission Multidimensionele Intégrée des Nations Unies pour la Stabilisation au Mali. This paper is based on two speeches I delivered in the Security Council in 2015 and 2016.

This paper will not address the first question. UN peacekeeping and counter-terrorism is a highly topical issue being debated in- and outside the Security Council framework. However, if the UN force does not have a counter-terrorist mandate, others should be executing this task – as seen in Mali, where the French Operation Barkhane<sup>2</sup> is fighting terrorism while the UN force is supporting the implementation of the peace agreement.

When conducting peacekeeping in such an environment, normally the Force cannot – and is not mandated to – conduct real offensive operations against the threats. It is restricted to trying, in the best possible way, to defensively protect itself and the population. However, under certain circumstances Rules of Engagements (ROEs) should allow for the execution of pre-emptive strikes against imminent threats.

Operating therefore requires the ability to

- Understand the environment - who, when, where, how etc. – only through understanding can we prevent attacks by deterring the groups and influencing their environment,
- convince the population to believe in a future without the armed groups; and while doing the above the Force must
- protect itself (with an offensive mind-set).

## **Understand**

Working with information and intelligence requires expertise and resources. And this is not always what is available in most peacekeeping missions. Most missions are not yet geared to produce intelligence at all levels, in proper quality, and in due time.

MINUSMA is at the forefront in developing intelligence concepts. The Force has established parts of a good intelligence organization and it has gained much experience that forms the basis for further improvement. But generally the peacekeeping missions are too limited in their resources, in particular at

<sup>2</sup> The G5 Sahel Force will complement this mission shortly.

lower levels – especially the tactical level. And the tactical level is where things really matter; this is where lives are lived and where losses are suffered.

The cycle of intelligence starts with the definition of requests for information – the so-called RFI – followed by the collection phase. The gathered information is reported to the intelligence cell or branch; it is then analysed and finally generated into intelligence, designed for one or more levels in the organization.

Firstly, the information collecting sub-units – the sensors – must be deployed in a focused way. This is called the multi-sensor concept: the limitations of one sensor are being mitigated by the specific capabilities of another sensor. The deployment of the different sensors therefore should not be spread out in time and space, but should be concentrated in order to achieve this. Simply put: you cannot make do only with UAVs – drones – you also have to have access to human intelligence (HUMINT) and signal intelligence (SIGINT).

Secondly, in modern irregular conflicts, the multi-dimensional approach should be used when producing intelligence. This means that certain aspects of conflict should not only be viewed from a military point of view, but also – or even primarily – from a political, economic, social-cultural, infrastructural or information point of view.

The multi-dimensional approach to intelligence is crucial in a multi-dimensional mission like MINUSMA and it requires a variety of experts and analytical manpower.

Thirdly, when planning the intelligence work you should also guarantee that intelligence activities are not only initiated in order to respond to incidents, but also to detect trends and to counter those trends if necessary.

## **The Intelligence set-up in MINUSMA**

MINUSMA deals with a multifaceted picture at all levels. There are compliant armed groups, terrorist armed groups, self-defence groups, bandit groups and others – and then there are numerous sub-groups to many of those groups. This truly makes it a challenge to keep up with information about all elements, in particular since their aims and alliances shift regularly. MINUSMA focuses its intelligence gathering on the terrorist groups since they conduct most of the attacks and harass the population, the Force, and the local security forces.

But who is who? And who does what, when, and where? To establish this, it is necessary to execute information collection and intelligence production at three levels: strategically, operationally and tactically.

At the strategic level the Mission has the Joint Mission Analysis Cell – the JMAC. It focuses on the coordination and synchronization of intelligence coming from all sources in and outside Mali. This enables them to provide the Mission leadership with an updated picture and interpretation of politico-strategic developments impacting on the general security situation. A step forward was the creation of the so- called Joint Coordination Board (JCB) involving all intelligence organizations and designed to steer the Mission Intelligence System. Within the JCB the intelligence activities are synchronized, working groups are formed, and visions are compared.

Synchronization is complex and there needs to be a mission-wide understanding of ‘how intelligence is developed’.

At the operational level - the Force has the ASIFU (All Source Information Fusion Unit) that works closely with the U2 branch in the Force Headquarters.<sup>3</sup> The ASIFU gathers information and generates intelligence through its own sources as well as from any other available sources in Mali. The ASIFU’s own sources consist primarily of its Intelligence-, Surveillance and Reconnaissance units (the so-called ISR units) who conduct long range information collection both by land and by air.

One of the challenges at the operational level is the limited coverage of the ISR units. The Force Commander therefore has a limited number of ‘eyes and ears’ in parts of Mali. Signal intelligence (SIGINT) and human intelligence (HUMINT) are also rather weak.

At the tactical level – this means that within the sectors and their sub-units the intelligence resources are almost absent. This is, by far, where the Mission faces the biggest challenges. Neither the sectors nor their infantry battalions possess their own reconnaissance or surveillance units. Therefore, they have no special means to collect information. In an infantry battalion staff there will be 2 staff officers in the intelligence cell on average. In comparison, a battle group of the same size in Afghanistan had approximately 15-20 staff officers in their intelligence cell. And while a Sector staff in MINUSMA has 4 staff officers in its intelligence branch, a similar Sector intelligence branch in Afghanistan had around 30.

<sup>3</sup> ASIFU and U2 will be merged to one entity.

While we should not necessarily compare UN peacekeeping with NATO stabilization, we should recognize that when it comes to the threat level and the complexity of the environment, there are significant similarities between Mali and Afghanistan. Yet the means available are enormously different. Adding to the diminutive tactical intelligence capacity in MINUSMA, many units also lack the skills to analyse information and to report properly. And most of them also lack a military tradition for working with intelligence.

The Force should have collection means; but it should also improve its ability to absorb, analyse, or report the information it gets from others. As long as this is not changed, it will remain unable to properly predict where the enemy will strike locally; and, equally, it will remain unable to conduct a proper investigation and assessment of committed hostilities.

### **What to do about it?**

It is my firm belief that to solve this we need a bottom up approach. In particular, the infantry battalion, the core unit of any UN military force, must be strengthened with personnel, equipment and – perhaps most importantly – training that better enables the battalion to conduct quick and relevant intelligence work. This requires that the intelligence cell of the battalion staff must be strengthened with staff officers who have intelligence experience. Moreover, the battalion itself should possess at least some means for the collection of information; for instance, they could be equipped with short range UAVs and a reconnaissance section.

Equally, the intelligence branch of the Sector Headquarters must be expanded significantly. In addition, the sector must possess the means to utilize human intelligence sources. Human beings are the best intelligence source of all, and much would be achieved if we improved our skills and had the means to better build local human networks. In this regard, I should mention that MINUSMA during my tenure only had 1.76% women in the Force. Therefore, on patrols we rarely saw women soldiers and hence were only to a limited degree engaging the female population.

From an intelligence point of view this is not good.

It would also be vital if the Sector had the means and the authorization to collect signals information – the so-called SIGINT. More specifically, we need

to be able to tap into the cell phone communication between and within those groups that try to harm us or harm the civil population.

Finally, any sector – at least the size of a sector in Mali – must possess long range information collection means, and this would involve equipping the Sector with long range UAVs and long-range reconnaissance units.<sup>4</sup>

## **Convince**

Throughout the execution of a mandate it is crucial to maintain popular support. The population should understand 'why the UN is in their country' and 'what the Mission is trying to achieve'. A strong narrative is needed, supported by easily understood messages that can be delivered by all members of the mission and, of course, consolidated by all the activities of the mission.

All soldiers should fully understand why they are in the target country and they should all be encouraged to interact with the population in order to gain trust and understanding. Too many units are hiding in their camps, only showing themselves in heavy armour. Too many patrols are passing through villages at high speed without interacting with the population. If the population does not understand the mission, and if the soldiers act like aliens, there is a risk people will choose to support the armed groups.

Through messaging we can influence the perceptions of the population. We are not deceiving, we are not misinforming; rather, through focused messaging and the execution of stability activities, we can influence certain groups or specific areas in order to regain popular support. Following our understanding of the different actors in the area of operations we must synchronize our messaging. The term information operations – or activities – should be an integrated part of UN operations. We need to have a stronger 'information footprint'. Already when we conduct the planning for an operation, and later on when we execute it, we need to fully integrate how we inform the population about what we are doing and why we are doing it. This is different from regular press and information efforts, although these forms of communication are, of course, also necessary. However, they should not be mixed. Separate branches for 'Information Activities' should be established.

<sup>4</sup> This was introduced in 2016, however with limited tasking- and imagery intelligence capacity.



## **Protect**

Good protection not only requires sufficient equipment; it also requires rigorously trained soldiers. It is of the utmost importance that the UN forces are properly trained before deployment, not only in their primary military skills, but also in a number of supplementary skills. Among the most important of these skills are training in Rules of Engagement; Basic Counter IED (search – detect – avoid); how to call for helicopters to evacuate casualties; a Code of Conduct and Discipline; as well as weapons training. Additional important skills would include how to conduct crowd control.

In my experience, many troops are not good enough at these basic skills. And I am sorry to say that because of insufficient pre-deployment training, which is a national responsibility, we have had losses that could have been avoided. As a consequence, counter-IED training is more important than any other skill. Every single soldier needs to be able to search, detect and avoid IEDs and mines at a basic level. This is very easy to obtain; it is not a demanding training programme. Any infantry soldier can learn this in 3 weeks. And it will save lives. Normally, the Force does not have the resources to conduct in-mission training of new skills. It can only maintain the skills of troops once they have arrived in mission.

Another important element is having the right mind-set. UN troops have traditionally had an observing and monitoring role. In general, they have avoided fighting.

However, in this new environment the UN troops will be ‘sitting ducks’ if they do not act with an aggressive and offensive mind-set when attacked. If we realize we are about to be attacked, we must conduct a pre-emptive attack! If we are under attack, we must counterattack! If not, the enemy will return again and again, perceiving no risk in conducting attacks.

## **Capacity requirements are numerous**

Firstly, anything that moves by road in a hostile environment needs to be protected. That means armoured, protected vehicles – manned with soldiers able to search, detect and avoid mines and IEDs. It goes without saying that 8 UN soldiers sitting in the open air on top of a soft Landcruiser pick-up do not

stand much of a chance when the vehicle is hit by a mine or an IED. The same problem applies to civilian unprotected supply trucks. To put it briefly, we need to make sure that any contingent operating in a hostile environment is equipped with armoured vehicles for those troops that operate outside the camps in areas where the enemy is likely to attack. If the Troop Contributing nation is not able to handle this themselves, the UN should contribute this form of protection. And if that is also not possible, then we must consider whether we can accept such a unit in mission areas. And if we must accept it – for political reasons – then it should be deployed to more safe areas of the mission.

Secondly, we need robust logistics. What do I mean by that? The well proven UN system –where Mission Support delivers supplies by the use of civil contractors all over the mission area – might work well in certain well-established or symmetric missions. But it does not work in a hostile environment.

In the northern part of Mali, hostilities were so imminent and the road conditions so poor that it was irresponsible to keep on going there with old, fragile civilian trucks that were unprotected and driven by people that were not soldiers. That was one of the main reasons why we could not sufficiently support our troops and our camps in the North. Therefore, we urgently need to establish military logistics battalions to work in the most hostile parts of our mission areas. It is not so important who commands it – but the capacity is important.

Some of the contingents, specifically the ISR- and Special Operations Units, did use camouflaged vehicles instead of the white UN colour. They avoided white vehicles as they saw a need for being able to quickly transform units into combat-mode – and for this purpose they considered the white vehicles to be too visible in the desert. By refraining from using white, these units lost the indirect protection provided by the legitimacy of the ‘UN colour,’ but more importantly, they were ready to fight if necessary. I found it was the right decision taken by the nations contributing these units.

Finally, well-protected camps with good living conditions are necessary. In particular, when we put up camps in contested areas where troops conduct risky operations outside their camps on a daily basis, they need to be able to come home to a safe haven. We can never achieve full protection against all possible threats.

However, our troops deserve to be well protected in their camps against shelling and, unfortunately, this is not always the case. They also need to have access to proper accommodation, water, energy and a basic degree of welfare. I am aware that

much of this is basically a national responsibility. And fundamentally, I believe that this should be assessed and certified before the contingent is allowed to deploy. But to the extent that the unit does not bring these capacities to the mission, the UN is the only backup institution able to contribute these basic supplies.

## **Conclusion**

Generally, most current peacekeeping troops are not fully capable of operating in areas where terrorist groups frequently attack. It requires the right mind-set, good skills, and proper equipment. Proper collection of information and intelligence gathering in a complex mission is crucial to the mission's success. These aspects of UN peacekeeping missions have gradually been improved, but a lot of work remains to be done before we are able to carry out these tasks. Everybody needs to realize that these capabilities are not 'free' – intelligence systems are costly. The UN has developed a policy on 'Peacekeeping Intelligence', but complete implementation is yet to be achieved.

Unfortunately, the standard UN 'Statement of Unit Requirements' often does not reflect the 'real' requirements. If it did, this would significantly limit the number of potential contributors and increase the costs of peacekeeping.

I strongly believe that the UN should continue to insist on operating in all areas where 'peace has a chance'. However, with the emergence of more and more terrorist groups globally, the UN and traditional troop contributing nations must also accept taking additional risks and must adapt to the new threats.

The cost of peacekeeping is bound to rise. By means of strong partnerships we will have to make the troop contributing countries more capable of achieving mission objectives. In addition, more capable nations need to contribute, either directly in the missions or indirectly by establishing partnerships.

If UN peacekeeping does not adapt, it may find itself increasingly irrelevant for global peace and security.

# Why China adopts a defensive defence policy?

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**Major General Wang Weixing**

Deputy Political Commissar, Academy of Military Science

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As a country with a population of 1.3 billion and with a sustained rapid development, China is moving towards the centre of the world stage in a more open and peaceful manner. Which development path will China follow in future? Will China repeat the historical mistakes of past powers, fighting for hegemony? These are the key concerns of some countries. In fact, such concerns existed more than 400 years ago.

During the Ming Dynasty, China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accounted for 80% of the world's GDP. And of the world's population of less than 400 million, the Ming Dynasty ruled over more than 80 million people. A third of the world's silver flowed to China through international trade. At the time, there was a European missionary named Matteo Ricci. Before he left for China, everyone around him thought the Ming Dynasty was so strong that sooner or later, it would attack Europe. After arriving in China, Matteo Ricci carried out a full investigation on this issue for 30 years. And in the book *Regni Chinensis Descriptio*, Matteo Ricci concluded that the Ming Dynasty had no intention of sending troops to occupy distant Europe.

More than 1200 years ago, the Chinese poet Du Fu wrote a very famous poem: "Killings have limits, and all countries have borders. As long as we can stop the enemy's invasion, we should not kill more." This poem profoundly reflects the Chinese way of thinking and their logic of behaviour; and the defensive thinking of the Chinese military is also a concrete manifestation of this way of thinking.

Why do Chinese people think this way?

First of all, it is due to the strong consciousness of the Chinese farming people about protecting the land. Chinese traditional ways of thinking are based on intuition, and Chinese culture has nature as a starting point. China has been a typical agricultural society, and the land has been the lifeblood of the Chinese people. To keep the land is to safeguard life: this idea is deeply ingrained in China. The traditional Chinese are satisfied to live in their native land and dislike migrating or travelling far away. Its reflection in military culture is that the Chinese have adopted a strategic defence culture that emphasizes protection of the homeland and embracing distant countries in a virtuous manner. Based on this thinking, China established a defensive defence line——the Great Wall—— two thousand years ago.

The different ways of living between the East and the West have an impact on the respective military cultures. The East attaches importance to tactics, and the West relies on technology. China’s military theory is introvert and defensive and has prioritized tactics. Western military theory is extrovert, offensive, and has relied on technology.

Secondly, Chinese military culture is influenced by the unique thought of “harmony” in Chinese history and culture. Friends familiar with Chinese history will find that Chinese culture has not been aggressive for thousands of years. The Chinese nation has always loved peace and emphasized that “harmony is the most precious quality”. As early as 2000 years ago, China regarded “harmony but not sameness” as “the Way of the world to be”, viewed the “unity of heaven and human” as the highest level of positive interpersonal relationships, and took “indiscriminate love and non- offensiveness” as the fundamental way to realize the interpersonal harmony and international peace.

The scale of ancient Chinese literature is extremely large, but there is no single word in the literature expressing the idea of conquering the world by force. China’s defensive defence thought originates from its historical and cultural genes and has remained a pervasive feature of the long history of China. It has become an important concept and value orientation for China to manage its relations with the world.

Third, it is a historical lesson that as long as a country keeps on pursuing hegemony, it will eventually fall into decline. Throughout history, we can find examples of great powers that tried to change the old international pattern and created a new international order through the expansion of force and the launching of aggressive wars. However, historical facts show that expansion

beyond national strength can only cause the decline of the country. If a country adheres to a defence policy of aggression and expansion, it will not achieve hegemony or perpetuate its hegemonic position. On the contrary, by doing so, its national strength will therefore be greatly weakened. For those past glorious empires, the key to their failure is that they relied blindly on expansion, and did not know the strategy of maintaining their favourable position by restraint. China will never repeat such mistakes.

It is based on the thought processes above that contemporary China has adopted defensive military thinking. Three other important factors also form the basis of this defensive military thinking.

First, China's national development strategy. China has a large population, and if there is a war, the loss of life and property will be huge. Peaceful development is China's development strategy, and the core of this strategy is to develop China by maintaining world peace and to promote world peace by maintaining China's development. Hans Christian Andersen said that "without suffering, we cannot understand the suffering of the weak." China has suffered a lot from wars, knows the taste of suffering, and will never impose upon others the suffering China has experienced. Rising by force is a road to destruction both for China and for the world, and China will never follow such a road.

Second, China's assessment of the security environment. At present, the security environment around China is basically stable, but some unfavourable factors remain. China has not completed its national reunification. China and a few countries have disputes on territory and maritime rights that have remained issues for a long time in history. China faces very serious non-traditional security threats. In addition, the United States has put a lot of pressure on China by adopting strategic containment and interference. For the foreseeable future, China is unlikely to face a large-scale war, but the possibility of a limited-scale conflict still exists. Thus, China will stick to the policy of "building friendships and partnerships with neighbours" and will be committed to developing good neighbourliness, mutual trust and friendly cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Third, China's new security concept. President Xi Jinping has put forward the important concept of a "Community of Shared Future for Mankind", and made clear the five elements of the meaning of this concept and how to implement it: to build partnerships in which countries treat each other as equals, engaging in mutual consultation and showing mutual understanding; to create a security



environment characterized by fairness, justice, joint participation and shared benefits; to promote open, innovative and inclusive development that benefits all; to increase inter- civilizational exchanges to promote harmony, inclusiveness and respect for differences; to build an ecosystem that puts Mother Nature and green development first. The concept of a “Community of Shared Future for Mankind” combines China’s own development with the common development of all countries, closely linking the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with the common progress of human society. The concept has opened up a new vision of international relations, outlined a new blueprint for international order, and fully demonstrated China’s responsibility and determination to work with the rest of the world to handle various common challenges. The concept has been widely endorsed by the international community. China will adhere to the new security concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable development, and will continue to participate in building world peace, to contribute to global development, and to uphold international order.

Some friends may ask: What is China’s defensive national defence policy? In my opinion, there are four essential aspects:

First, safeguarding national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, and supporting the country’s peaceful development. This is stipulated in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China and other relevant laws. China’s armed forces resolutely contain and win wars, resolutely safeguard border, coastal and territorial air security, and protect national maritime rights and interests and national security interests in outer space and cyber space, resolutely protect socialism with Chinese characteristics, protect the important period of strategic opportunities for national development, maintain regional stability and world peace, provide a strong guarantee for the realization of comprehensively building a well-off society and realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

Second, implementing the military strategic guideline of active defence. The core of the guideline is the emphasis on strategic defence, self-defence and post-emptive strikes. Strategic defence means emphasizing the containment of wars, the preparation for military conflict, and acquiring the capabilities necessary to win wars. It also means adhering to the position of self-defence, which involves not taking the initiative to spread disorder or provoke war. Strategic defence also implies adhering to the principle of post-emptive strikes, meaning that when the enemy impose war on us, we must rise up against them and firmly



fight the invaders. We never ask for an inch of land, nor allow others to occupy an inch of our land.

Third, Chinese defence policy involves accelerating the modernization of national defence and the armed forces. The level of modernization of our armed forces still lags far behind China's national security needs and the advanced military standards of other states in the world. It requires that the modernization of China's national defence and the armed forces should be adapted to the global trend of new military revolution and the needs of national defence. We must improve the quality and efficiency of modernization, building a powerful modern Army, Navy, Air force, Rocket force and Strategic support force, create strong and efficient theatre joint operational command structures, build modern warfare systems with Chinese characteristics, take on the mission of the new era entrusted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the people, ensure that modernization of the armed forces will basically be achieved by 2020. At this point in time, major progress will also have been achieved in making the Chinese military an organization based on advanced information technology, and by then our strategic capabilities will be enhanced greatly. In line with the process of national modernization, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) will advance the modernization of military theories, the modernization of its military organization, the modernization of military personnel and the modernization of armaments and equipment, striving to basically realize the modernization of national defence and the armed forces by 2035. By the mid-21st century, the PLA will be fully transformed into a world-class force.

Fourth, China's defence policy aims to maintain world peace and regional stability. China's security and development are related to the peace of the world. The PLA has always been a staunch force in safeguarding world peace and regional stability. The PLA deepens international security cooperation, participates in UN peacekeeping operations, international anti-terrorism cooperation, as well as international escort and relief operations. It holds joint training exercises with foreign countries, and it actively assumes corresponding international military security responsibilities and obligations, while providing numerous public security assets that enhance international security. China supports the realization of effective disarmament and arms control in accordance with the principles of fairness, reasonableness, comprehensiveness and balance to maintain global strategic stability.

The People's Liberation Army has a 90-year history and has experienced countless victories. In particular, in recent years the reforms of national defence

and the armed forces have made historic breakthroughs, and a new pattern has been formed. The Central Military Commission (CMC) is mainly responsible for managing China's military, the theatre level is mainly responsible for commanding operations, and the services are responsible for the organization and development of forces. The organizational structure of the PLA is undergoing a revolutionary transformation. We are looking forward to making more contributions to maintaining global peace and development.

In my opinion, in the coming period, the modernization of the PLA will focus on four aspects.

First, progressing with the reform of national defence and the armed forces. We will continue to adjust and optimize the size and structure of the various services and arms, to make operational forces lean, joint, multi-functional and efficient; deepen the reform of the national defence sciences and technology industry and form a pattern of in-depth development of civil-military integration; improve the national defence mobilization system and build a strong and stable modern defence of border, coastal and territorial air forces; establish a safeguarding agency for the management of war veterans, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of the military and their relatives.

Second, we will improve the ability to accomplish diversified military tasks. We will emphasize that the armed forces are able to carry out both operations of war and operations that are not part of a war, tasks of combat as well as tasks of supporting local construction and disaster relief and humanitarian aid; and tasks of protecting domestic stability, anti-terrorist operations, and UN peacekeeping operations including joint escorts.

Third, we will prepare for military conflicts in all strategic areas. We will comprehensively promote preparations for military struggles in traditional security and new security fields, develop new types of combat forces and logistical support forces, conduct actual combat training, and effectively shape situations, control crises, contain wars and win wars.

Fourth, we will strengthen the education of qualified personnel. Personnel is the most dynamic factor in wars and is also the foundation that affects the outcome of the war. The PLA will proceed with the strategic project of focusing on the education of talented personnel, striving to raise the cultural, military, scientific and technological qualities of military personnel and cultivating new types of high-quality military professionals in large numbers.

# Code for Unplanned Encounters in the South China Sea – A Useful De- Escalation Instrument in the Baltic Sea?

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## Introduction

On 19 June 2017, a Russian fighter jet flew within five feet of a US electronic intelligence aircraft as it passed through international airspace above the Baltic Sea. US officials reported that the Russian pilot was acting provocatively and moving erratically near the much larger and less manoeuvrable intelligence aircraft.

Subsequently, the Russian Defence Ministry blamed the US aircraft for unsafe and provocative manoeuvring. This was only one of numerous similar incidents involving both military aircraft and naval vessels – incidents which at times put at risk civilian aircrafts above the Baltic Sea.

The South China Sea has been rife with similar incidents. To lower the risk of escalation of such incidents, in 2014 the member states of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) agreed on the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES).<sup>5</sup> This agreement formed the basis of the US-Chinese bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the safety of air and maritime encounters between the two great powers.

<sup>5</sup> WPNS member states are Australia, Bahrain, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Djibouti, Germany, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Oman, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, UK, the US and Vietnam.

The CUES have since formed the foundation for US-China naval drills in the Gulf of Aden in 2015 and the Yellow Sea in 2016. The 2016 drill formed part of the US Navy visiting the homeport of the People's Liberation Army Navy's (PLAN) North Sea Fleet, attempting to increase transparency in the region and improve relationships between the two navies.

These agreements have not changed the underlying conflicts in the South China Sea. Conflicting strategic objectives, fundamental differences of interest, and divergent concepts of deterrence characterize Western-Chinese relations and influence interactions in the South China Sea. Interactions become unpredictable because of concern that the respective core values of the nations involved will be damaged as a result of conflicting views on regional order and on the principles of right and wrong conduct forming part of that order. However, war remains avoidable. Codes for unplanned encounters used in an environment of mutual deterrence are intended to add elements of reassurance to the mix. Reassurance involves taking concrete measures to allay mutual concerns about strategic intentions.<sup>6</sup> Codes for unplanned encounters are a very limited form of reassurance intended to communicate to an opponent that force will not be used against it, thus protecting interests and values.

Debates on deterrence and strategic reassurance in Asia emerged in the post-Cold War era as it became clear that the US and China were strategic opponents with fundamental differences of interest that risked engendering the use of force. The presence of a security dilemma became manifest in their relations, involving unbalanced mutual perceptions of the threats posed to the other that fuelled an escalatory cycle of provocation and overreaction between Washington and Beijing.<sup>7</sup>

As subscribers to the same fundamental understanding of world order as the US, Western states such as France, the UK, Australia and New Zealand have become increasingly engaged in the South China Sea. The principal challenge for all powers involved is to reassure the other side of one's strategic intentions without appearing overly weak or compromising in the process.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> James Steinberg and Michael O'Hanlon, *Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: U.S.- China Relations in the Twenty-First Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014, pp. 5-14.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2015, pp. 251-266, 296.

Discovering how to reduce the security dilemma without undercutting the credibility of the deterrent threat is the art of the coercive diplomacy that is undertaken in the South China Sea.<sup>9</sup>

CUES are instruments designed to reduce the risk of minor incidents that may result in escalation between states. Deterrence remains possible despite increasingly intense great power rivalry, but it is complex due to concerns that the competitor intends to damage one's core values, potentially resulting in unplanned encounters escalating into unsafe and highly provocative incidents in theatres where the core interests of great powers clash. In the South China Sea, the US and its allies and partners are conducting freedom of navigation operations and actions upholding freedom of navigation in an environment where PLAN is gradually increasing counter-pressures and will continue to do so in future. It is essential to consider how both sides can implement their interpretation of international law without fuelling tensions.<sup>10</sup> CUES are helpful instruments to meet this objective by reducing the risk of unplanned encounters spiralling out of control and spoiling diplomatic efforts in the region.

Precursors exist to the 2014 WPNS CUES agreement and the US-Chinese MoU. In 1972, the US and the Soviet Union signed an agreement on the prevention of incidents on and over the high seas.<sup>11</sup> This agreement helped avoid and control crises involving the risk of great power war, preserving the existing world order in which Washington and Moscow enjoyed a privileged position.<sup>12</sup> According to Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, by 1985 the frequency of incidents between the US and the Soviet navy was markedly down from what it was in the 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>13</sup>

This paper analyses the consequences of CUES for tension levels between China and the US and its allies and strategic partners. We use the South China Sea as a representative case of Western-Chinese conflicts of interest over jurisdictional entitlement, strategic space and appropriate deterrence measures in maritime Asia.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. Christensen, "The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict", *The Washington Quarterly*, 25:4, Autumn 2002, pp. 7-21.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with European naval officer with current operational experience in Asia and Europe, October 2017.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Agreement Between the Government of The United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas", Moscow, 25 May 1972, <https://www.state.gov/t/isn/4791.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005 (1st ed. 1977), pp. 194-222.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents On and Over the High Seas".

Moreover, we discuss whether this instrument could be useful to lower tension levels between Russia and NATO and its strategic partners.<sup>14</sup> We use the Baltic Sea as a representative case of Western-Russian conflicts of interest over spheres of interest, strategic space and appropriate deterrence measures in maritime Europe.

## **CUES in the South China Sea – the context and consequences**

With the rise of China on the international stage vis-à-vis the US, the South China Sea is increasingly seen as an area where the core interests of great powers collide. Here, US values of the freedom of the high seas and air and the right of military vessels and aircraft to pass through the exclusive economic zones of other states runs counter to China's demands that the US refrain from treating China's alleged exclusive economic zones and territorial waters as international waters, where military vessels and aircraft can move around freely. Moreover, the dominant presence of the US in the South China Sea runs counter to China's objective of expanding its strategic presence in Southeast Asia. In addition, US extended deterrence with allies and strategic partnerships throughout Southeast Asia, designed to deter the use of force by a strong defence, feeds Chinese perceptions of a US determined to encircle and contain China. China's concept of deterrence involves responding to non-military threats with the use of offensive force if necessary to defend Chinese core values, confirming US perceptions that China is waiting for an excuse to expand its presence in the South China Sea, if necessary by using force.

Identity issues, coercion and deterrence elements influence Western-Chinese interaction in the South China Sea, giving rise to conflicting legal, strategic and tactical interpretations, objectives, and perceptions. These engender increased risks of unplanned encounters at sea and in the air escalating into unsafe situations or unintended armed conflict. It is against this background that the Western Pacific Naval Symposium in April 2014 issued a CUES agreement to

<sup>14</sup> A similar idea was expressed in a 2015 paper by the Task Force on Cooperation in Greater Europe, made of up senior figures from Russia and Europe. Ian Kearns, "Avoiding War in Europe: The Risks From NATO-Russian Close Military Encounters", *Arms Control Today*. November 2015. [www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2015\\_11/Features/Avoiding-War-in-Europe-The-Risks-From-NATO-Russian-Close-Military-Encounters](http://www.armscontrol.org/ACT/2015_11/Features/Avoiding-War-in-Europe-The-Risks-From-NATO-Russian-Close-Military-Encounters)



develop better communication channels between navies to reduce the chance of incidents at sea and in the air; and, in the event that incidents take place, to prevent them from escalating. Twenty-four countries have joined the agreement, including countries that undertake actions upholding freedom of navigation in the South China Sea such as Australia, France, New Zealand and the US, as well as China and Russia.

In contrast to the US-Soviet CUES agreement, numerous countries use the instrument. The 2014 CUES are essentially a confirmation that the countries intend to respect ordinary rules for proper conduct at sea and in the air. The communication rules seem to be used to lower the risk of unplanned encounters spinning out of control due to misunderstandings. For example, when a French navy vessel encountered a Chinese ship during its actions upholding freedom of navigation in the Spratlys in the South China Sea in April 2017, the French navy used the CUES to avoid incidents. This is but one example out of many that the CUES are used for unplanned encounters to help prevent incidents. Even countries that are not signatory states to the agreement use them. For example, in September and October when a Chinese naval task group visited Europe, not only France but also Denmark conducted drills with the Chinese task group, using the CUES.

The US-Chinese MoU recognizes the CUES agreement and establishes a specific annex for air-to-air encounters, which for the past two decades have given rise to a number of serious incidents between the two countries. Moreover, Washington and Beijing host annual assessment meetings with the purpose of revising the rules.<sup>15</sup> The main consequence of the CUES for US-China relations is that it establishes mutual agreement on a specific set of rules and procedures for communicating, which makes dialogue on thorny issues easier. In this sense, the CUES agreement is a confidence- building measure with implications for relations beyond strict communication issues. For example, before the CUES agreement the US and China used translators.

However, now there is mutual agreement that the language of communication is English.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of National Defence of the People’s Republic of China Regarding the Rules of Behavior for Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters”, Washington, Beijing, 9-10 November 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Interview, Brigadier Carsten Rasmussen, Danish Defence Attaché to the PRC, 9 October 2017.



One caveat to the CUES agreements is that they only regulate interaction between navies and not between law enforcement agencies such as coastguards, despite the fact that most of the incidents occurring in the South China Sea involve this type of governmental maritime institution. The CUES agreement also does not cover activity under water. Consequently, the risk that unplanned encounters engender the unintended use of force remains high. According to some European active duty officers in the South China Sea, CUES have not had an effect on incidents.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, the agreements do not apply to territorial waters.<sup>18</sup> Since China and the US, as well as other claimant states in the area, disagree on the location of territorial waters in the South China Sea, it is unclear where the communication protocols apply. The agreements do, however, acknowledge that different policy perspectives exist concerning the conduct of military activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone, thereby seeking to negate the effects of disagreement regarding the interpretation of international law and consequently potentially elevating the implementation of the agreements above such differences.

Furthermore, the CUES agreement and the US-China MoU are not legally binding documents. This means that only if used consistently by numerous countries over a longer period does the code engender a state practice that is legally binding.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, states need to actively commit to the rules because they have an interest in adhering to them. The fact that even states outside of the formal agreement commit to respecting the CUES in practice is a sign that they are considered useful for lowering tension levels by enhancing the level of predictability and preventing unplanned confrontations at tactical and sub-tactical level.<sup>20</sup>

Another caveat to the agreements is that they do not regulate all types of encounters and they do not regulate behaviour: they merely recommend

<sup>17</sup> Interview with European naval officer with current operational experience in Asia and Europe, October 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Christian Le Mière, “Managing unplanned encounters at sea”, *Military Balance Blog: International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 1 May 2014, <http://www.iiss.org/en/militarybalanceblog/blogsections/2014-3bea/april-7347/managing-unplanned-encounters-at-sea-087b>

<sup>19</sup> Western Pacific Naval Symposium, “Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea: Version 1.0”, Para 1.6.2, Qingdao, PRC, 22 April 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Interview, Brigadier Carsten Rasmussen, Danish Defence Attaché to the PRC, 9 October 2017.

certain actions that should be avoided. Vessels and aircraft can therefore continue to give rise to dangerous incidents, for example by sailing close by other vessels or by engaging in threatening behaviour, as long as they use the communication signals in the agreements. The upside of the lack of behavioural regulation is that more countries are able to sign up to the agreement because they are not restricted in their actions at sea, but merely in the methods used to communicate their actions. This is important in theatres such as the South China Sea, where incidents occur between numerous states with different interests. It seems more important to have a large number of states on board, demonstrating respect for the rules through their communication, than it is to have an ambitious set of rules that very few states involved in unplanned encounters will respect.

A final caveat is that China, in contrast to Western signatory states, has been slow to adopt the CUES in practice. When Europe conducts actions upholding freedom of navigation, they use the CUES. For example, in 2014 when a frigate sent off a helicopter in the Spratlys, they used the CUES for communication purposes when contacted by the Chinese South Sea Fleet who escorted them. The Chinese navy officers understood the CUES, but they did not use them to answer. Similarly, in a non-sensitive part of the South China Sea, the same frigate conducted a firing exercise using the CUES. The Chinese did not use the CUES, but nor did they protest, and when the Chinese escort was asked to move, it adhered to the request, allowing the exercise to take place unhindered. As the European frigate entered the East China Sea, it tested the CUES again. However, China's East Sea Fleet did not respond and appeared to have no understanding of the CUES.

Reasons for the lack of response from the East Sea Fleet might be numerous. Perhaps for unknown reasons the crew was told not to use the CUES; perhaps it is not a priority for the East Sea Fleet since initially the CUES were mainly designed for the South China Sea; perhaps it takes time to educate the Chinese navy personnel in using the CUES; or perhaps it is a testament to the challenges the Chinese navy is facing as an aspiring blue-water navy. The Chinese navy's limited use of the CUES indicates that in the short term, in the event of real incidents, the CUES are not likely to be used. Nevertheless, the fact that parts of the Chinese navy demonstrate understanding of and respect for navies using the CUES is an important step forward in lowering the risk of unplanned encounters escalating into forceful incidents. If viewed positively, it is a matter of time and resources before the Chinese navy use the CUES as standard communication tools.

Even if CUES do not contribute to decreasing the number of incidents, CUES are an important method for papering over cracks in areas where states subscribe to different perceptions of right and wrong conduct; have fundamental conflicts of interest; or proceed based on opposed strategic concepts. Recommendations and communication protocols do not solve these underlying issues, but they do help prevent conflicts from getting out of hand by lowering the risk of unintended use of force. Perhaps more importantly, this allows the US and China to discuss thorny issues such as the conduct of vessels or aircraft in unplanned encounters, even if these issues are not regulated by the agreements. As tension levels rise in Europe due to identity issues, coercive behaviour, and different interpretations of deterrence, it is worth considering whether CUES might help prevent conflict and build confidence in this part of the world. One area that might benefit from CUES is the Baltic Sea.

### **CUES in the Baltic Sea – can they contribute to lowering tension levels?**

This region encompasses Russia; the NATO members Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Germany; and NATO's strategic partners Sweden and Finland. Identity issues, coercive behaviour, and conflicting deterrence concepts also influence Western-Russian interaction in the Baltic Sea. Seen from a Russian perspective, NATO's growing influence is in the Russian mind-set a continuation of a historic zero-sum game between Russia and other great powers, which concerns Russia's core interest in ensuring a security buffer against the expansionary objectives of potentially hostile opponents. By contrast, in NATO's view, the Baltic Sea region is a first line of defence against an increasingly threatening Russia that since 2008 has demonstrated willingness to use hard power to annex territory and use force to rebuild the post-Soviet borderlands as a Russian sphere of interest.

Moreover, Russia as well as NATO and its partners have conflicting views on the status quo. Moscow is trying to question NATO's presence and undermine its influence in what it sees as a Russian sphere of influence. In NATO's view, the Baltic Sea has become a contested arena due to Moscow's aggression in areas such as Georgia and Ukraine. Finally, Russia's concept of strategic deterrence includes the possibility of deliberate escalation, which involves the risk of unintended initiation of military conflict, as it may be interpreted as offensive use of force without provocation. NATO has increased its deterrence posture,

using forward deployed NATO battalions in each of the Baltic States and Poland. This is perceived by Moscow as aggressive infringement on Russian borders.

Moscow is seemingly testing the weak links in the Western alignment system's resolve to maintain a forward military presence in its alleged sphere of influence. Since 2014, Russia has tested NATO and its partners, Finland and Sweden, with increased air and naval activity. Russia's Baltic Fleet is not a match for NATO's fleet. Consequently, Russia predominantly uses its air force for testing purposes, combined with other non-kinetic activities such as cyber-attacks and propaganda. Dangerous unplanned encounters in the air occur regularly when Russia turns off its transponders to remain unidentified, resulting in risks of air collision with commercial and military planes. Serious incidents continue to occur, with the overall number of deployments from European air bases against Russian aircraft reaching 780 in 2016 compared with 410 in 2015.<sup>21</sup> Between 12 and 18 June 2017 alone, NATO and its partners intercepted 32 Russian aircraft nearing allied airspace above the Baltic Sea from Kaliningrad. Russia has suggested a technical agreement concerning the use of transponders. However, the form and substance of the proposed deal was reported by NATO sources to be inherently impractical to implement while placing too many limits on NATO's ability to employ its forces freely.<sup>22</sup>

Increased tension levels and mutual deterrence occurs in a context of minimal reassurance between the two adversaries. Russia is no longer a NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) partner; indeed, NATO and its partners have adopted sanctions against Russia since 2014 to demonstrate their disapproval of Russia's annexation of Crimea. Furthermore, both parties increasingly conduct exercises in which reactions to the opponent's potential war plans are being tested. In 2017, both Russia and NATO were involved in such exercises in the Baltic Sea, focusing on amphibious exercises against the potential invasion of respectively Kaliningrad Oblast and the Swedish archipelago.<sup>23</sup> This behaviour reflects a climate starved of trust due to enhanced underlying conflicts of interest between Russia and NATO. In such an environment, encounters at the tactical and sub-tactical levels have the potential to spiral out of control.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/nato-russian-planes-intercepted-eu-europe-fighter-jets-scrambled-bombers-raf-typhoons-alaska-putin-a7696561.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with European naval officer in NATO, November 2017.

<sup>23</sup> NATO countries participated in the Swedish hosted Exercise Aurora and Russia conducted Zapad 2017 in the western part of Russia, Belarus, Murmansk, and Kaliningrad Oblast.

The introduction of CUES in and around the Baltic Sea would not directly influence the underlying conflicts of interest between Russia and NATO. However, discussion of a CUES agreement could be a way of reintroducing positive aspects in relations between Russia and NATO and its partners, sending a clear signal that all parties realize the dangers involved in an evolving security dilemma. Mutual deterrence is a risky strategy for keeping the opponent at bay, especially when identity issues, strategic perceptions and interests, as well as deterrence concepts are as wrought with the potential for conflict as is the case between Russia and NATO and its partners.

The introduction of CUES would be a practical way of reducing the risk that tactical and sub-tactical incidents veer out of control thereby worsening the underlying conflicts of interest.

## **Conclusion**

The security dilemmas and deteriorating security situations in the South China Sea and the Baltic Sea reflect a wider tendency in Western relations with China and Russia. Relations are increasingly characterized by geostrategic rivalry that engenders a resurrection of mutual conventional and nuclear deterrence with inadequate reassurance elements, thereby enhancing the risk of unplanned use of force and, at worst, war.

Both China and Russia are also signatory states to the 2014 CUES agreement, and numerous European states use the CUES agreement in their interactions with China, describing the agreement as successfully introducing elements of reassurance into an otherwise increasingly threat-based interaction pattern between the West and China in China's neighbourhood. The tendency for the maritime theatres of Asia and Europe to become increasingly connected in a strategic sense, implies that introducing a CUES type of code to Western-Russian relations might be potentially helpful in mitigating rising tension levels.

Western-Russian incidents primarily take place in the Baltic Sea because this is where Russia is capable of challenging the US alliance system (not because this sea has a status different from that of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, or the Arctic Sea). Consequently, CUES should not be introduced to Europe

with the particular situation in the Baltic Sea in mind. Rather, CUES should encompass the Western hemisphere as a whole. Such an application to the Western hemisphere should seek to encompass the obvious weaknesses in the WPNS CUES, such as including non-naval entities like coastguards and border control agencies. Furthermore, a balanced approach should be used regarding the regulatory character of CUES. By agreeing to refrain from using a defined set of the most provocative and risky actions and at the same time providing recommendations regarding the less confrontational actions, the risk of unplanned encounters evolving into unsafe situations or escalating into the use of force is likely to decrease. In order to reach common ground across Eurasia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) might provide the best framework for a future agreement. Such an approach would echo the approach used in the Pacific, which provided a regional framework instead of a common framework based on the global order backed by the West. However, the OSCE remains the only security framework in which Russia and the West meet regularly, making OSCE the only viable forum for such discussions. Furthermore, the OSCE has historically been the organizing forum for many confidence-building measures that underpin the current regional order in Europe.



# Security Challenges and Countermeasures of the Asia-Pacific Region

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The Asia-Pacific region is at the junction of the Eurasian geo-strategic maritime region, at the intersection of Eastern and Western civilizations, and it occupies a central position with regard to the strategic interests of great powers. Currently, with the continuous advancement of regional economic integration, the scope and depth of national interests that converge in the Asia-Pacific has never occurred before in history on such a grand scale. The region is a community with a shared future, and we stand together in difficult and insecure times. Therefore, grasping the historical opportunity for cooperation and mutual benefit, coping with various security challenges with united efforts and jointly promoting peaceful development in the Asia-Pacific is the common responsibility of all Asia-Pacific countries, including China. Four characteristics of the present security situation in the Asia-Pacific bear mentioning.

Firstly, adjustment of the international strategic landscape provides an important background for the development of the regional security situation. The current world is in a period of great development, great changes and great adjustments. The countries of the world are becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent, the global balance of power is becoming more stable, and the general trend of peaceful development is irreversible. In this context, the Asia-Pacific countries have been actively searching for development paths suited to their national conditions and realities, solidly promoting a process of regional economic integration which has provided powerful guarantees for regional peace and stability.

Secondly, China's economy continues to grow, providing attractive development opportunities for regional countries. Over the years, China has contributed to around 30% of world economic growth, and China's development has provided attractive opportunities for Asia-Pacific countries.



With the initiative of the “Belt and Road”, the initiation and establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the establishment of the Silk Road Fund, China has enhanced its efforts to aid developing countries, especially the least developed countries, and has actively made new and bigger contributions to regional peace and development.

Thirdly, with the continuous deepening of regional economic cooperation, China has become increasingly integrated into the Asia-Pacific. With the continuous deepening of globalization and regional economic integration, China has carried out increasingly extensive and in-depth cooperation with regional organizations, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the South Asian Cooperation Alliance. The course of China’s development is a process interwoven with its integration into the Asia-Pacific and the world. Arguably, China cannot develop itself in isolation from the Asia-Pacific, and the Asia-Pacific cannot achieve development without China.

Fourthly, seeking peace, development and cooperation is the common pursuit of Asia-Pacific countries. Currently, the political relationships between major countries in the Asia-Pacific are characterized by stability, and strategic mutual trust has been strengthened. China, America, Russia, Japan and India have carried out extensive cooperation in the areas of crisis management and control, regional peace and stability maintenance and other aspects; while peace, development and cooperation remain the common goals of the Asia-Pacific countries.

Due to a complicated historical background, many unresolved issues remain present in the Asia-Pacific. As a result, security and stability are facing various challenges.

Firstly, North Korea continues to be determined to acquire nuclear weapons, and the risk of war has increased significantly. In recent years, despite strong opposition from the international community, North Korea has repeatedly conducted high-intensity nuclear and missile tests, challenging the international non-proliferation system, and threatening regional peace and stability. Currently, North Korea possesses the initial capability of building nuclear weapons and has achieved major breakthroughs in medium and long-range missile technology at the same time. Some American think tanks say the risk of the “Strategic Tolerance” policy towards North Korea might be even greater than launching a war against North Korea.

Secondly, a further rise in American unilateral policy has posed new challenges to regional peace and stability. Since the Trump Administration took office, it has adopted a series of unilateral policies, including exiting from the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, and forcing South Korea to renegotiate the Republic of Korea (ROK)-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. At the same time, the US has continued to increase its military presence in the Asia-Pacific, expanding the scope of alliance cooperation and interference in regional conflicts over territorial and maritime rights and interests. There are multiple signs that America's unilateralism, isolationism and "America First approach/doctrine" have been increasing day by day, which might shake the foundations of regional security cooperation and worsen regional tensions.

Thirdly, in Japan the right-wing turn has been strengthened and Japan is seeking to become a political and military power, and these developments influence regional peace and stability. The Japanese right-wing turn is supported by America. Moreover, the international community's lack of effective restrictions on Japan's emergence as a political and military power implies that Japan will continue to challenge human morality as they have done for decades on the issue of so-called "comfort women." This issue stems from the Japanese occupation of parts of Asia in the first half of the twentieth century. Other issues include how the Japanese invasion is presented in history textbooks as well as the continuous recognition of World War II war criminals as war heroes. This is done by politicians conducting repeated visits to the Yasukuni shrine where the Japanese war criminals are enshrined. In addition, Japan is now taking swift steps towards revising its pacifist constitution, towards lifting restrictions on Japan's right to exercise collective self-defence, and towards removing restrictions on other issues. Arguably, Japan's intention of being a political and military power has created major uncertainty, influencing regional peace and stability. If Japan cannot fully reflect upon the disasters it brought to other Asian countries in World War II, Japan will step into the same river again as a result of its actions to break the post-war mechanism and recklessly challenge the international order.

Fourthly, various disputes over territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests prevail among regional countries. For instance, the South Kuril Islands issue between Russia and Japan, the Dokdo Islands issue between South Korea and Japan, the Diaoyu Islands issue between China and Japan, the West Five Island issue between North Korea and South Korea, and the South China Sea issue all continue to be influenced by differences of interest. These disputes have complicated historical backgrounds.

Also, interference and the involvement of external countries' forces in regional disputes in Asia is growing. It has become more and more difficult to solve, manage and control these disputes. At any time, there is a risk of intensifying or even causing serious crises.

Faced with the risks and challenges of Asia-Pacific security, China will continue to uphold its policy of safeguarding world peace and promoting common development, developing friendly cooperation on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and promoting the establishment of a new model of international relations centred on mutual respect, justice and legitimacy and win-win cooperation. To this end, I have four suggestions.

Firstly, we should establish a new type of security vision. I think old security concepts based on Cold War mentality, zero-sum games, and emphasis on the use of force are outdated. Asia-Pacific countries should keep up with the times, strengthen solidarity and cooperation via openness and inclusiveness, and explore a new path for an Asia-Pacific security with new visions and new methods. Chinese President Xi Jinping called for an Asian concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. On this basis, Asia-Pacific countries should promote regional integration, sustainable economic growth, social progress and national development in accordance with the principles of equality and mutual benefit and win-win cooperation.

Secondly, we should properly deal with regional hot spots. Resolving these issues with the parties directly involved through negotiation and consultation is the recommendation that comes from more than 60 years of experience accumulated by China and other parties to disputes in dealing with border and maritime issues in Asia.

China and ASEAN countries have maintained effective communication on the South China Sea issue and reached extensive consensus. All parties have been committed to fully and effectively implementing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and have agreed to reach a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea on the basis of consensus as early as possible.

China is committed to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, to maintaining peace and stability, and to settling the issue through dialogue and consultation. To stop things from getting worse, China has proposed a solution based on the "double suspension" initiative and the "dual track approach".

The “double suspension” initiative involves that North Korea suspends its nuclear and missile tests, and America and South Korea pause military drills on the Korean peninsula. The “dual track approach” is to promote denuclearization and the establishment of a peace regime on the peninsula on the basis of the principle of synchronization and reciprocity. Although this solution cannot eliminate the crisis, it objectively reflects the realities of the Korean issue, respecting the concerns of all parties involved. It is a logical and reasonable crisis management solution with objectivity, justice and realistic feasibility. This solution has currently received positive response from Russia, South Korea and many other countries.

The Diaoyu Islands have been an inseparable part of China’s territory since ancient times. In recent years, Japan’s “illegal purchase of islands” has caused serious difficulties in Sino-Japanese relations. China has been committed to managing, controlling and resolving the Diaoyu Islands issue through dialogue and negotiation, urging Japan to face history and realities squarely, speak and act cautiously, and take practical steps to improve Sino-Japanese relations.

At the same time, we suggest that Asia-Pacific countries involved in other territorial sovereignty and maritime interest disputes take positive measures, effectively manage and control contradictions and differences, and remain committed to resolving disputes peacefully through dialogue.

Thirdly, we should build stable major-country relations. The Asia-Pacific is a region where major powers come into frequent contact and where their main interests meet. Building stable major-country relations is an important guarantee for regional peace and stability.

For this purpose, China and Russia have built a strategic partnership of cooperation in all areas. China-Russia relations have reached a high level of development, and cooperation in various fields continues to deepen. China and America have been committed to building a new model of major-country relations of “no conflict, no confrontation, mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation”, as is expected of them by the other countries in the Asia-Pacific. Positive developments in Sino- Japanese relations are not only beneficial to both countries, but also very important to peaceful regional development. We hope that Japan will take seriously the four principles that we have agreed to with regard to managing and improving bilateral relations

between our two countries in November 2014, and that Japan will move in the same direction as China, working on gradually improving bilateral relations.

China and India are also promoting cooperation for their mutual benefit, focusing on the effective management and control of contradictions and disputes, and China and India have achieved a series of important consensus agreements.

Fourthly, we should foster a new regional security framework. With the continued advancement of regional economic integration, the willingness of regional countries to resolve regional security issues through multilateral cooperation has been further strengthened. The conditions for building a new regional security framework have gradually taken shape. We believe that we should fully consider the diversity of interests and world outlooks in Asia and gradually build a regional security framework that is in line with regional realities and meets all parties' needs. A regional security framework should be based on universally recognized international rules, on bilateral trust and confidence-building measures, and on the goal of safeguarding the common interests of regional countries. We should start building consensus agreements in the field of non-traditional security, strengthen mutual trust, improve institution-building, and continue to expand the scope for cooperation on traditional security issues.

# Identities and the Legitimization of the Use of Force

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## Introduction

In recent years states across the globe have increasingly been involved in armed conflict and war with non-state actors and failed state regimes<sup>24</sup>. This involvement has been undertaken by individual states, through established alliances or organizations and through ad hoc coalitions of the willing. Since “international humanitarian law (IHL) does not provide a clear definition of armed conflict”<sup>25</sup>, the application of IHL with regard to formal or legal authorization of the use of force has been unclear, and the legitimization of the use of force and the derived rules of engagement have been drafted by the participating state actors, often resulting in national caveats regarding the contribution of the individual participating states. The author of this article has a background as a fighter pilot (both in the cockpit and in leadership roles) and has been subjected to this reality and has witnessed first-hand how the participation in an armed conflict in the 21st century requires an ongoing “negotiation of reality”<sup>26</sup>. The security environment of the 21st century is arguably characterized by the deliberate use of identities and narratives which are formed in the dynamic interaction between actors. In this article, the author will use the example of the 21st century Republic of Turkey to show how identities and narratives have been deliberately used – particularly by the Erdoğan administration – to consolidate power and persecute political opponents, and how the concept of identities can also be applied on the inter-state level in the narrative on terrorism.

<sup>24</sup> Paulus and Vashakmazde 2009, p. 95

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 97

<sup>26</sup> Berger, 1996, p. 325



## The Construction of a New Narrative

Terrorism is not new. Previously, terrorism was a local problem to a large extent; but in the current world order transnational terrorism is on the rise.<sup>27</sup> Many terrorist groups of the 21st century know no borders and form international networks, often necessitating multilateral cooperation between states that seek to combat these groups. The legitimization of the use of force against terrorist groups is therefore now more than ever an international issue, especially since IHL fails to provide the legal clarity needed to guide public policy-making. The Hague conventions of 1907 state that, in terms of legality, hostilities cannot be commenced between two parties without “previous and explicit warning, in the form either of a declaration of war, giving reasons, or of an ultimatum with conditional declaration of war.”<sup>28</sup> Whether or not the Hague conventions were on President George W. Bush’s mind on 20th September 2001 when he declared the “War on Terror” in an address to Congress is debatable; but it was a remarkable turning point to declare war on a concept and not on a country, a situation likely not envisioned by the authors of the conventions. Not only did his speech mark the beginning of the 21st century where globalized terrorism transcending borders would continue to grow (see figure below), but it also built a narrative, the Global War on Terror (GWOt), which arguably has been utilized to claim international legitimacy for the use of force in a number of conflicts, even though this legitimacy is debatable.<sup>29</sup> On 7th February 2002, President Bush argued that IHL did not apply to Al-Qaeda and Taleban fighters<sup>30</sup>, further highlighting the problems with IHL and necessitating other ways to legitimize the use of force.

The war-on-terror-narrative has been used by a majority of leaders in the western world to claim legitimacy for the use of force (internationally) and to build political support (nationally) for the deployment of troops during the last decade-and-a-half. There is a clear interest in applying the terrorist identity to enemies of the state, since this legitimizes the use of force against groups where IHL provides insufficient or unclear formal justification. While it is rather easy to agree that terrorism in a broad sense must be countered, it is much harder reaching agreement on a definition of terrorism or a terrorist.

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/global-terrorism-index-2016-developed-countries-suffer-dramatic-rise-deaths-a7419396.html>

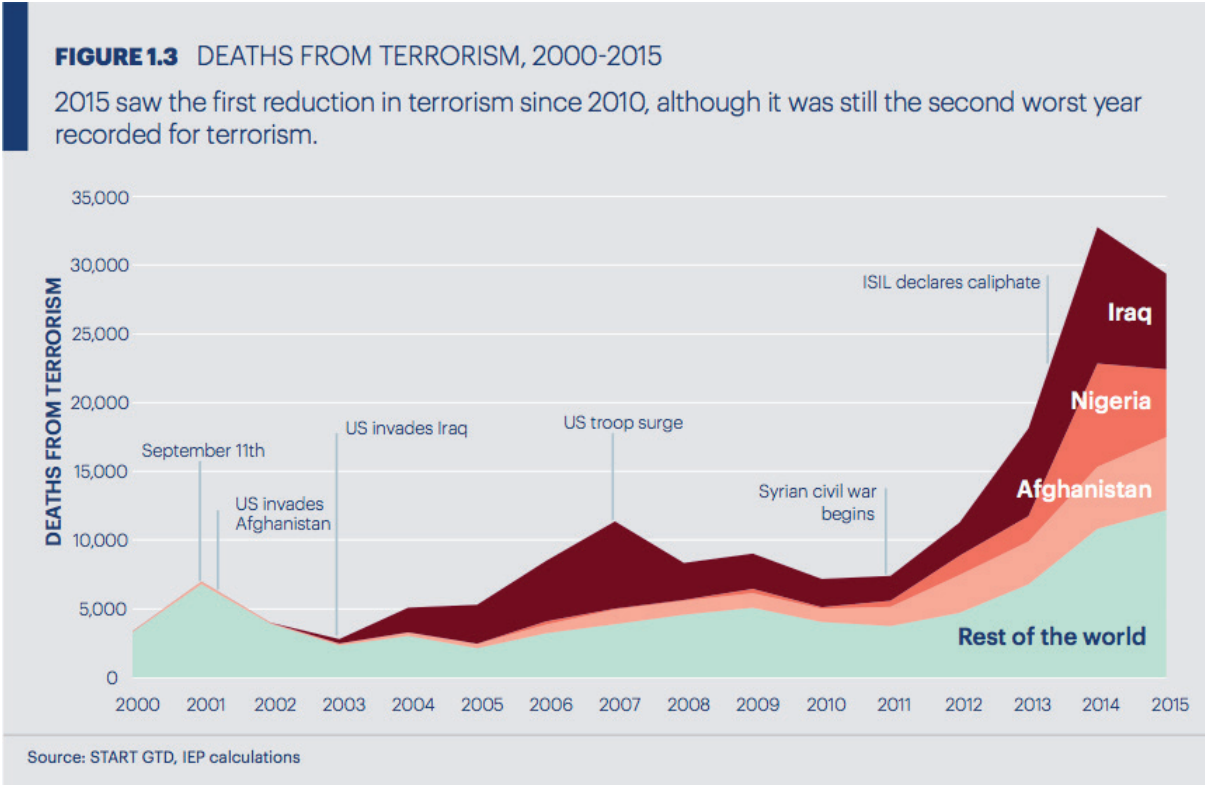
<sup>28</sup> Hague Convention III (1907) Article 1

<sup>29</sup> “There is no legal notion of a general or global ‘war on terror.’” - (Paulus and Vashakmazde 2009, p. 124)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=79402>



The definition of terrorism and the classification of individuals or acts in particular seems to be fluid and often defined by stakeholders in a conflict. As stated by the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and counter-terrorism: “As long as there is no internationally agreed understanding of what terrorism is, and is not, governments often feel free to define as terrorist whatever they wish to outlaw. This leads to a huge degree of abuse....minorities, indigenous people, religious movements...may all be stigmatized as terrorists and then authoritarian governments tend to criminalize their actions.”<sup>31</sup>



The war-on-terror-narrative and constructions of terrorist identity are however, important, as they seem to have prevailed despite wide-spread criticism, and they still constitute cornerstones when states claim the legitimate use of force in many conflicts worldwide.

<sup>31</sup> Scheinin in Kessing 2008 p.27

## Identities

Why are identities important? The above paragraphs seem to suggest that most states, and even superpowers and authoritarian regimes<sup>32</sup>, seek legitimacy to use force by using the terrorist identity. Furthermore, the GWoT narrative has set “deep institutional roots both in government and popular culture,” leading to actual changes in policies (and actually leading directly to the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan) while simultaneously inscribing fear in civil society. “A fearful citizenry will not only permit, but also support violations of its own best ideals”<sup>33</sup>, which is evident, for instance, in the continuous American support for the Guantanamo Bay prisons<sup>34</sup>.

This alludes to the notion that the security environment can be viewed as “cultural and institutional” and that the “cultural environment affects not only the incentives for different kinds of state behavior but also the basic character of the state”<sup>35</sup>. This constitutes a fundamentally different perspective compared to the neorealist materialistic view where actor properties are “intrinsic to states [...] (rather than socially contingent) and exogenous to the environment”<sup>36</sup>. The relationship between actors, be they states, organizations or the public, can therefore be viewed as recursive, where identities are constantly built and rebuilt. Wendt’s original concept of role identity, which is “not based on intrinsic properties and as such exists only in relation to Others”<sup>37</sup> forms the basis of the understanding of the mutually constitutive (recursive) environment in which identities are formed. Wendt (together with Jepperson and Katzenstein) indirectly applies role identities to national security interests by stating that the latter “depend on a particular construction of self-identity in relation to the conceived identity of others”<sup>38</sup>, which supports the argument that states actively can use the (construction of) a terrorist narrative (or identity) when forming national security policy.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. Russia and Turkey

<sup>33</sup> Zalman, 2009

<sup>34</sup> Gallup, 2014

<sup>35</sup> Jepperson, Wendt, & Katzenstein, 1996, p. 33

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* p.34

<sup>37</sup> Wendt, 1999, p. 227

<sup>38</sup> Jepperson, Wendt, & Katzenstein, 1996, p. 60

## **The Example of Turkey<sup>39</sup>**

The history of Turkey has been shaped by culture, national identity and charismatic leaders to a significant degree. The modern republic of Turkey was formed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who discarded the ‘Mustafa’ due to its Islamic associations<sup>40</sup> – one part of the construction of the secularist narrative he sought to build – despite the fact that he used religion vigorously to rally public support during the early formation of the republic. After World War I and the humiliating Sèvres treaty, Atatürk needed the support of the masses to expel the occupiers. Yet the majority of the Anatolian part of the resistance movement did not identify their participation as an expression of a Turkish nationalistic, secular freedom-struggle but rather a struggle to free the Caliphate from its European occupiers<sup>41</sup>. Atatürk thereby utilized the Islamic identity to legitimize his struggle against the foreign invaders notwithstanding the fact that his articulated aim was to create an independent, secular and transparent republic. Although Islam was and has continued to play “a pivotal role in constituting Turkish national identity”<sup>42</sup>, the deliberate use of (Islamic) identity as a legitimizing means to an end has been widespread to this day by Turkish leaders and politicians, irrespective of party affiliations.

## **Enter Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**

Atatürk’s aspirations of building Turkey as a secular republic in the image of Western Europe (Laïcité) needed a firm supporting hand, which was provided by the Turkish military. The military has traditionally been regarded as the protector of the secular republic, leading to four military interventions in the second half of the 20th century. The changing Turkish heads of state in turn adapted or dismissed Islam.

<sup>39</sup> A thorough analysis of the importance of identities in Turkey’s political-military culture can be found here: [http://pure.fak.dk/portal/da/studentthesis/business-as-usual\(4c5bd060-57ef-484c-8771-b20c9112e34f\).html](http://pure.fak.dk/portal/da/studentthesis/business-as-usual(4c5bd060-57ef-484c-8771-b20c9112e34f).html)

<sup>40</sup> Kinzer 2001, p. 39

<sup>41</sup> Sørensen & Boel, 2005, p. 25-26)

<sup>42</sup> Waxman, 2000, p. 4

However, during the last three decades, Islam has played an increasingly important role in Turkish society in general, and among the ruling elite in particular. Since Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took power in 2002, the military's role as the protectors of the secular republic has been systematically eroded. This has not been because the Turks necessarily wanted increased Islamization at all costs, but because "most Turks had begun to chafe under the restrictive nature of their state. Many doubted that the threats facing their nation were as dire as military men made them out to be"<sup>43</sup>, and started to question the anti-democratic nature of the political military culture and the norms under which the military acted. A "new reality" needed to be negotiated.

The Islamists exploited this void to establish a new and more moderate narrative, which appealed to larger groups of the population, and embraced the importance of democracy - an example affirming that "Islamic identity can [...] provide a framework for the negotiation of other identities"<sup>44</sup>. Although in conflict with their historic Islamic roots, Erdoğan's party the AKP successfully reconstructed their identity as pro-democratic and adopted an identity, which was "attractive to broad sectors of the Turkish public and also something to which the military [...] could not object"<sup>45</sup> (Eldem, 2013, p. 154).

## **The Fetullah Gülen Movement**

Throughout the 1990s, the Fethullah Gülen Movement (FGH) grew and "established hundreds of high-schools and universities in 110 countries on five continents"<sup>46</sup>. In 1999, "Gülen was charged with systematically trying to penetrate the most vital points of the secular state, including the army, and with founding a gang that sought to change the secular government into a theocratic state."<sup>47</sup> Gülen was later acquitted of the charges, not because they were false<sup>48</sup> - but the victory of Erdoğan's AKP "cleared the way for Mr. Gülen's rehabilitation"<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Kinzer, 2001, p. 167

<sup>44</sup> Waxman, 2000, p. 13

<sup>45</sup> Eldem, 2013, p. 154

<sup>46</sup> *ibid* p.157

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> "The question is no longer whether the Gulenists influence the police, the prosecutors and other state bodies behind the scenes. The relevant question now is how pervasive and strong their influence is" (Sami Faltas from Centre of European Security Studies quoted in Eldem (2013) p 252)

<sup>49</sup> Economist, 2016

Despite Gülen's self-imposed exile in the US, his community continued to grow and infiltrate the Turkish state apparatus: "When the AKP [...] came to power in 2002, the FGH positioned its media, voters, and business lobby in support of the ruling party. In return, the AKP appointed FGH members to prominent positions in the judiciary and the bureaucracy, including the police's intelligence branch"<sup>50</sup>

Having their common roots in the former Welfare Party (RP), Gülen and Erdoğan clearly shared a common vision for a Turkish state – they wanted a Turkey where Islam played a greater role, and continuously sought to enforce an increasingly religious agenda despite attempts to construct narratives that still embraced secular and democratic values and thereby maintain horizontal legitimacy. An example of this was the AKP's proposed attempt to "recast secularism as an issue of individual freedom of religion as opposed to the state's traditional definition that emphasizes freedom from religion" (Eldem, 2013, p. 240). In a predominantly Muslim country, freedom of religion would merely be symbolic.

Erdoğan and Gülen formed a very powerful alliance, and soon it was time to marginalize the military and de-institutionalize its role in relation to the protection of the Secular Turkish Republic.

## **Legitimacy Through Identities and Narratives**

The utilization of democracy as a source of legitimacy for actors in Turkey, be it a political party or the military, was not new. Neither was the role of the military as a domestic political actor. What was new, and the reason the recent reconstruction of identities could take place, was the emerging belief among the Turks that they could "be trusted to make their own decisions"<sup>51</sup>, along with the increasing perception that the military's interference in Turkish domestic politics was an anachronism.<sup>52</sup> Also, the religious aspect and Islamic identity should not be overlooked. The vast majority of Turks identified themselves

<sup>50</sup> Cagaptay, 2010

<sup>51</sup> Kinzer, 2001, p. 167

<sup>52</sup> Several analyses also point to the use of EU norms and demands (for democratization) as legitimization (Sørensen & Boel, 2005); (Eldem, 2013)

as Muslim and believed that religion was important,<sup>53</sup> and although many Turks cherished the concept of a democratic secular state, the “depiction of Islamic groups as ‘dangerous’ and ‘backwards’ [...] fueled social alienation and prompted unification of these groups against their secular ‘oppressors’ led by the military”<sup>54</sup>. The military had indeed evolved into a very autonomous entity within Turkish society, one of the most prominent examples of which was in 1995 when president Demirel “learned about the Turkish military’s intervention in Northern Iraq through the media”<sup>55</sup>.

In an address to the public after the 2007 ‘coup-by-memorandum’, deputy prime minister Cemil Çiçek stated: “The General Staff’s adoption of any such position against the government is unacceptable in a state operating under the rule of law”<sup>56</sup>, clearly utilizing the narrative of Turkey as a modern democracy, where the military is subject to political control, although Turkey actually was on a path of de- democratization. This deliberate employment of the democratic narrative *de facto* marginalized the military, which could not oppose the very ideals it protected (Laïcité), and the government’s position on the matter sent shockwaves through the ranks.

## The Terrorist Identity

Erdoğan continued his vigorous fight against his opponents during the Ergenekon trials, where Erdoğan (with the support of Gülen) set out on a mission to destroy the secularist elite, including the upper echelons of Turkish military power. The legitimization for the trials were allegations of coup plotting, but soon expanded to other parts of society: “Instead of prosecuting criminals who seem to have been involved in discussing, though probably not executing, a coup against the government, the government has used this fluid case to persecute its opponents [...] sometimes without evidence of criminal activity”<sup>57</sup>. Ergenekon proved to be an enabler for increased authoritarian rule under the leadership of AKP. Opponents of the AKP were wiretapped and

<sup>53</sup> More than 99% of the population is Muslim (Eldem, 2013 p. 168), and a 2011 poll showed that 67% of the Turks believe religion to be “very important” (Hürriyet Daily News, 2012).

<sup>54</sup> Eldem, 2013, p. 156.

<sup>55</sup> Sørensen & Boel, 2005, p. 228.

<sup>56</sup> Cagaptay, 2014, p. 49,

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 50

labelled as terrorists connected to Ergenekon (Ibid.) The utilization of the label “terrorist” was deliberate in order to legitimize the actions against these people; and this would not be the last time Erdoğan created a narrative portraying his opponents as terrorists.

## The July 15th Intervention

A conflict between Gülen and Erdoğan slowly became inevitable. After the military and the Kemalist elite were *de facto* defeated with the commencement of the Ergenekon trials, Erdoğan’s continued quest for power consolidation did not leave room for Gülen’s influential organization, which had become a little too independent for Erdoğan’s taste. Adding insult to injury, Gülen publicly criticized the Erdoğan government for its rough handling of the Gezi Park Protesters using almost Kemalist rhetoric<sup>58</sup>, and the arrest (made by Gülen-loyalists) of the head of the national intelligence organisation, one of Erdoğan’s close allies, meant that the fight was on<sup>59</sup>.

Erdoğan lashed back by closing Gülen’s schools, and Gülen loyalists responded by initiating corruption investigations against Erdoğan’s son Bilal” (Ibid.). In May 2016, Erdoğan named the Gülen organization FETO – Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organization.

The labeling was yet another example of Erdoğan’s exploitation of identities and the construction of narratives, and in this case particularly ironic, partly since Erdoğan himself assisted Gülen’s people in infiltrating state institutions and partly because Gülen’s organization had existed since the 1970s and was only labelled terrorist in 2016, two months before the attempted coup.

On July 15, 2016, fighter jets bombed Ankara to the horror of the Turks, who had not seen a direct attack on the city in more than 600 years. Some 290 people were killed and 1400 injured, making it by far the bloodiest of all military interventions in modern Turkey to date.

<sup>58</sup> “We must refrain from treating our differing ideologies and diverse identities as reasons to quarrel or engage in conflict. Everyone must respect diversity. Freedom of speech and expression cannot be restricted” (Gülen quoted in Hürriyet Daily News, 2014)

<sup>59</sup> Belli, Caylan, & Popp, 2016



The Erdoğan administration reacted quickly, by using all media to build the narrative of a terrorist organization which kills “unarmed innocent people”<sup>60</sup> and “ploughs over citizens” with tanks (Ibid.), while portraying the government of Turkey as the guardian of democracy and liberal rights. It has even been decided that July 15 will be remembered as “Democracy Day” (Ibid. p. 5). The 90-page colour booklet published by the government-controlled Anadolu Agency is a great example of government propaganda.<sup>61</sup> Below is the first picture in the booklet of the triumphant Turkish people – holding a picture of Erdoğan with Atatürk in the background.



*Figur 2: Turkish people on the streets after the July 15th attempted coup*

<sup>60</sup> Anadolu Agency, 2016, p. 3

<sup>61</sup> For instance, the booklet has been distributed by Turkish Airlines

Undoubtedly, many Turks welcomed the apparent embrace of democracy.

However, Erdoğan's behaviour was fundamentally anti-democratic since he used the putsch to persecute not only Gülenists, but the opposition in general. As expressed by the Turkish human rights lawyer Orhan Cengiz: "They are turning the entire country into a prison"<sup>62</sup>. Erdoğan's democratic narrative does not align with his actual undertakings, revealing an increasingly large gap between policy and actions.

Erdoğan is not a liberal democrat, but merely uses the democratic narrative to gain legitimacy, while his goal is to "raise religious generations" (Erdoğan in Cagaptay, 2012<sup>63</sup>) with the help of his neo-Ottoman narrative<sup>64</sup> designed for this purpose.

## **Putin Style Presidency**

In the aftermath of the coup, Erdoğan has succeeded in consolidating his power even more, as he has won the chair as president. Simultaneously, the Turkish constitution has been altered so that the presidency entails a vast number of executive powers.

This constitutional change, which *de facto* means increased authoritarianism, has not gone by unnoticed by the not-so-silent minority of Erdoğan opponents in Turkey.

Nevertheless, authoritarianism has been accepted by popular vote, albeit with a surprisingly small margin (51.4% vs 48.6%).

<sup>62</sup> quoted in Belli, Caylan, & Popp, 2016

<sup>63</sup> Paraphrasing Atatürk's statement to "raise contemporary European generations"

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. Steffensen, N. M. (2015) 'Erdogan hylder sig i drømmen om osmannisk storhed'. Retrieved 2016 from Kristeligt Dagblad: <http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/udland/erdogan-hyller-sig-idroemmen-om-osmannisk-storhed>

## Turkey's War on Terror

Erdoğan has continued to label his opponents (ranging from political opponents and journalists to Kurds and the Kurdistan Workers Party PKK) as terrorists. While participating in the coalition fighting ISIS in Iraq and Syria (e.g. by hosting the Danish Air Force and other nations at the Incirlik Air Base) and while supposedly fighting the same terrorists, Turkish forces have in recent years conducted numerous autonomous military operations against groups they themselves label as terrorist, namely the Kurdish Popular Protection Units (YPG) in Northern Iraq and Syria.

These actions have often conflicted with coalition efforts<sup>65</sup> and have caused numerous conflicts between Turkey and the coalition because groups who have received weapons and training from the coalition subsequently have been bombed by Turkish fighter bombers. It seems that Erdoğan uses the globally acknowledged legitimacy for the fight against ISIS to fight Kurds who threaten to expand their claim for self-rule in a large area of Turkey, Iraq and the Levant.

## Conclusion

Although the example of Turkey describes an intra-state development, the conclusions can be applied to a large extent to international security issues. For example, attempts are made to make IHL applicable in asymmetric armed conflicts. However, it remains debatable as to whether IHL will ever win the fight against the competing narratives in the quest for legitimacy. President Bush's GWoT suggests that narratives and identities currently legitimize the suspension (or at least a very liberal interpretation) of IHL. Although the Obama administration rebranded the GWoT to "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)",<sup>66</sup> thereby avoiding using the term 'war' and opening the door to using both soft and hard power in the struggle against terrorism, the war continues, and the use of military force does not seem to be on the decline.

<sup>65</sup> Own observations. See also <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/29/syria-us-arms-supply-kurds-turkey>

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2010/05/the-new-term-for-the-war-on-terror/56969/>

Another result of the use and abuse of the terrorist label by leading political actors is that the labelling of “terrorists” to legitimize the use of force against these groups is very much open to interpretation (and to deliberate influence) by stakeholders in the conflicts. Coupled with the absence of suitable IHL, this facilitates opportunities for the legitimization of a broad array of actions taken against various groups and individuals who in the ongoing negotiation of reality are labelled as terrorists even if many people would regard them as freedom fighters. The problematic use of the terrorist label by many political authorities involves a dangerous legitimization of the use of deadly force and, to some extent, the tendency to accept collateral damage.

“Fear finds its most fertile breeding ground in conditions of ignorance and inadequate information”<sup>67</sup>. This fear has in the last decades been used actively to create public support of violations of the free world’s own ideals in the name of the GWoT. Context and nuance is important in the understanding of world events if we are to “develop a new conceptual framework that is both operationally effective and consistent with democratic values and ideals” (Ibid). We need to be very aware about not only what our enemy is but also what we ourselves are becoming.s

## **Counterterrorism in a United Nations Context**

It would seem logical that Zalman’s “new conceptual framework” mentioned above could take the form of a United Nations (UN) led effort against terrorism. The principal purposes of the UN as stated in the United Nations Charter are to prevent war, reaffirm faith in human rights, promote tolerance and prevent the use of armed force unless it is in the common interest.<sup>68</sup> Terrorism violates all of these concepts: so institutionalizing counterterrorism in a UN context should be straight forward. Yet is it? Terrorism does not fit the traditional conflict-template for which the UN charter was written (nation-states at war). The groups labelled as terrorists are not nation- states, but transnational groups sharing the same ideology. However, the UN has over time agreed on several resolutions on international terrorism,<sup>69</sup> even stating the need to “combat by all means [...] threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts,” (UNSCR 1373, 2001) thus legitimizing the use of

<sup>67</sup> Zalman 2009.

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations>

<sup>69</sup> E.g. UNSCR 1373 and 1377

force against terrorist groups. One problem is to define who these terrorist groups are. The UN has later adopted several resolutions concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), but it remains very open to interpretation whether the grouping is defined as terrorist. The author of this article has personally witnessed how the ISIL identity has been applied to many different groups by the stakeholders in the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, and how this engenders problems related to rules of engagement and even how the same group can be labelled as terrorist by one party and an ally by another.

Furthermore, “terrorist organizations are flexible, adaptable organizations that learn from each other’s previous mistakes. They often learn faster than more rigidly- structured government organizations who fight them. Each region features different terrorist organizations with different strategies and goals, so it is impossible to implement a one size fits all strategy”.<sup>70</sup> Even though significant efforts have been made with regards to creating a normative legal framework in the UN context, exemplified by the UN Handbook on Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism<sup>71</sup>, the implementation remains problematic, since the mere definition of terrorism seemingly continues to be impossible: “It is well known that the international community has not yet been able to agree on a comprehensive definition of terrorism despite several attempts by the General Assembly and the Security Council in this regard.”

A truly effective UN framework for counterterrorism which respects all aspects of the UN charter, enjoys support from and is implemented by all member states, while being flexible enough to meet the diverse challenges of global and regional terrorism, is therefore a utopian prospect.

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<sup>70</sup> Schenk 2014 68 <http://www.un.org/en charter-united-nations>

<sup>71</sup> See [https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Handbook\\_on\\_Criminal\\_Justice\\_Responses\\_to\\_Terrorism\\_en.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Handbook_on_Criminal_Justice_Responses_to_Terrorism_en.pdf)



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# Reflections on the Challenges of International Terrorism Governance

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In recent years, the international anti-terrorism situation has evolved at an accelerating pace. Profound changes have taken place in the form and operational logic of terrorist organizations. The organizational form has shown a tendency toward “nationalization” in the sense that terrorist organizations are looking for political authority and state-like powers, and the Internet is increasingly used to communicate terrorist messages. The European continent has become the new focus of terrorist attacks, and Africa has become a main arena both for terrorist attacks and for hosting terrorists. International terrorism has become the most serious and urgent security challenge facing mankind. The international community should join forces to systematically eradicate the root causes of terrorism.

## **Main Features of Global Terrorism**

Terrorism has entered a new phase of high-profile momentum. The Middle East continues to play a main role in producing international terrorism. Terrorist activities in South Asia have been happening frequently and anti-terrorism has become more complicated and difficult to implement. The spread of extreme ideas in Central Asia is worsening and anti-terrorist efforts are becoming more and more urgent. Terrorist activities have resumed in Southeast Asia. The Islamic State is fiercely competitive with Al-Qaeda and is gradually surpassing Al-Qaeda to become the new main representative of international Islamic

terrorism. Europe and the United States have become areas prone to terrorist activities and the terrorist activities have been expanded from focusing on a few key countries, becoming a challenge in the West as a whole. Terrorists have changed the weapons they use from traditional weapons such as axes and spears to conventional advanced weapons such as self-made rocket launchers, home-made cannons and sub-machine guns; and they have moved from using improvised explosive devices to using remote-controlled tripwires and pressure-detonated devices, etc. The means of terrorist attack have obviously become deadlier.

Terrorist organizations have become more advanced with significant features adopted from flat organizational structures, including from networking, miniaturization and decentralization models and grassroots organizations. Moreover, flexibility, mobility and the ability to conceal terrorist activities have been improved. Moreover, “cyber terrorism” has increasingly become a trend in terrorist activities.

The risks involved in combining nuclear, chemical and biological weapons with terrorism have risen, and the threat of so-called super terrorism involving these weapons has increased. At present, there are over 400 commercial nuclear reactors and over 280 research reactors as well as some military reactors in 31 countries all over the world. The possibilities for terrorist organizations to obtain nuclear materials and use them in terrorist attacks are gradually increasing. Terrorist organizations have recruited experts in computers, biology, chemistry, aircraft driving, missile manufacturing, cyber-attacks, explosions and medical treatment, and set up training bases to train professional assassins.

## **Problems of International Terrorism Governance**

The international anti-terrorism campaign cannot fundamentally solve the problem of terrorism. The root causes and systemic factors of terrorism have not been eliminated. The international community attaches great importance to eliminating organizations by fighting terrorism. However, there is a lack of common understanding of the ideological root causes and social problems that foster terrorism. There is also a lack of concerted action to eradicate the factors that give rise to extreme ideologies and thinking.

The international anti-terrorism campaign has become a tool for rivalry and geostrategic competition between major powers. Some countries take the anti-terrorist campaign as an excuse to fight for their own interests and use power to obtain control of strategic and resource-rich places. The fight to dictate the fundamental principles of regional order has become increasingly fierce. Some countries are both victims of terrorism and terrorism supporters. They have taken a contradictory policy toward extremism and terrorism, both cracking down on terrorists and secretly subsidizing them. The trend toward “instrumentalization” of international terrorism is taking shape.

The issue of ethnic conflicts and refugee flows complicates the international anti-terrorist campaign. International terrorism and national separatism influence each other significantly. In the international fight against Islamic State, the calls made by Kurdish minorities in states such as Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state have been on the rise. These calls have affected regional order at least as much as terrorism has. The interaction between terrorism and the international refugee problems, such as the influx of large numbers of refugees in Europe, has not only increased the burden on receiving countries and had a tremendous influence on the security of these countries and regions, but has also provided a fertile hotbed for the spread of terrorist thinking.

Attempts at establishing cooperation between those engaged in countering cyber-terrorism, financial anti-terrorist efforts, and other professional anti-terrorism campaigns, have not achieved as much success as hoped for. Moreover, the capabilities of international anti-terrorist efforts have been insufficient. New technology, such as the Internet, has transformed terrorism’s scope from domestic and international security issues to human security issues, and from criminal issues to non-traditional security issues. At the same time, all countries have various shortcomings in their provisions for intelligence gathering and legal prosecution, in their anti-terrorist law enforcement, in their handling of suspects and adjudication, and in their efforts to control extreme thinking. Funding is the foundation of terrorist activities. In recent years, the international community has failed to provide strict supervision of terrorist financing. As a result, the financing of international terrorism continues unhindered. Some terrorist organizations have even formed industrial networks and received funds from business activities.

## **The way ahead for the international anti-terrorism campaign**

Global anti-terrorism has entered a new era. All countries should give top priority to common human security and conduct strategic transformation in the ends, ways and means used to find the root causes.

It is necessary to abandon Cold War thinking and its “double standards on terrorist issues”; to put aside different views on terrorism and set up a functioning global and united anti-terror movement. Terrorists, who ignore basic human rights and challenge the bottom line of human civilization, are enemies of all mankind and it is in the common interest of the international community to fight them. No country, party or group should use double standards and participate in selective strikes against terrorism on the basis of political objectives purely based on national interests because this approach will not help safeguard international stability and security. We need to strengthen coordination and work together to prevent terrorists from receiving financial means. We must strengthen cooperation and dialogue on cyber security, on establishing common international rules for interaction in cyberspace, on a common international convention on anti-terrorism in cyberspace, on improving mechanisms for taking legal action against cybercrime, on preventing terrorist organizations from using the Internet to release videos and audio files to display acts of violence. We must prevent the dissemination of extreme ideas, prevent the organization and encouragement of terrorist activities, and prevent the recruitment of personnel and the acquisition of funds.

The focus of international anti-terrorist efforts should be the comprehensive root causes of terrorism. Anti-terrorist efforts must use comprehensive means to address the root causes as well as the resulting problems of terrorism. A comprehensive approach entails using a wide spectrum of political, economic, diplomatic, cultural, and military means to stop the proliferation of terrorism. Military means are not enough to address the problem of terrorism. We should also attach importance to issues of development and people’s livelihood; we need to eliminate poverty and uneven development in order to prevent terrorism from emerging.

All countries should cooperate on combating extremist ideologies. Religious extremism does not contribute to peace and security. Countries that host terrorists should strengthen anti-terrorist education and encourage mainstream Muslims to be more vocal and spread their interpretation of Islam and explain why

terrorism is not compatible with Islam. Terrorist organizations and extremism are targeting the next generation with their ideas. We must prevent young people from becoming targets of terrorist speech and thought. We should strengthen dialogue among different religions, civilizations, countries and regions, advocating mutual understanding and tolerance. Conflict and turmoil are breeding grounds for terrorism. We must enhance preventive diplomacy to stop armed conflicts from emerging and ongoing conflicts from escalating. Efforts should be made to combat terrorist problems in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya and to deal with international refugee issues. Special measures should be taken to help the countries concerned to train anti-terrorist and anti-extremist professionals working in teams, and they should have improved capabilities to carry out their task.

Moreover, it is important to enhance justice in the international governance system. Terrorism is a product of intensified international and domestic conflicts. It is also a direct result of violence instigated by the West. The frequent occurrence of international terrorism highlights the dilemma of the focus on national rather than international security and governance. Anti-terrorism requires that human security is prioritized over national security and this means addressing factors engendering terrorism at the societal level as well as at the international level. The problem of terrorism should not be addressed in a partial, unitary, one-sided and arbitrary way. We must promote justice in the international governance system and limit the influence of superpowers by obliging them to consult the international community before taking action so that national interests do not always dominate at the expense of the common interest in protecting human security.

The United Nations should play a leading role in the international fight against terrorism. Terrorism is a prominent global symptom of the problems of human society in the 21st century. All countries should improve anti-terrorist coordination and cooperation in accordance with UN resolutions and coordinate their efforts at international, regional and domestic levels. We must strictly abide by the UN Charter and the norms of international law, respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of other countries and abide by international law which stipulates when force can be used. We must not violate the sovereignty of other countries in the name of anti-terrorism. A key role for the United Nations in global governance ensures that national interests are not allowed to dominate the fight against terrorism. The international society of states should cooperate on social reconstruction efforts in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Afghanistan and on promoting adherence to the “Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism”.

# Tactical Intelligence and the UN counterterrorism strategy in the Sahel

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## Introduction

This paper will examine the role of intelligence in the UN's counterterrorism strategy in the Sahel region. The UN mission in Mali will be used as a case study to address this issue.

In 2012, northern Mali fell under the black banners and Azawad flag whose adherents were a combination of militant Islamists, international terrorists and separatists. The collapse of Libya in 2011 had paved the way and the weak Malian security forces were overrun and turned towards the capital Bamako, where a coup d'état was performed, further exacerbating the crisis. The regional response carried out by Mali's immediate neighbours was neither quick nor effective enough to put an end to the advance of the jihadist rebel forces. The terrorist threat had been looming in the desert for years and in combination with the political agenda from the disenfranchised Tuareg rebels, the Malian crisis took on a complexity and gravity capable of pulling the international community into its orbit. In 2013, French troops in the operation named Serval together with West African troops in the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) established by the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West-African States (ECOWAS) liberated northern Mali and created a situation sufficiently secure to commence the deployment of a Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission to Mali (MINUSMA) by the UN. The AFISMA forces were for the most part transferred to the MINUSMA mission, thereby providing the UN mission with most of its peacekeeping forces.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Lori-Anne Thérout-Bénoni, 'The Long Path to MINUSMA: Assessing the International Response to the Crisis in Mali', in Thierry Tardy and Marco Wyss (eds), *Peacekeeping in Africa: The Evolving Security Architecture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).



As MINUSMA grew in scale and commenced its operations according to the UN mandate, the French mission Serval ended. In 2014, it was superseded by a Sahel- wide counterterrorist operation named Barkhane. Alongside MINUSMA, the European Union deployed a training mission (EUTM) in Mali to assist in implementing security sector reform of the Malian armed forces. In line with the UN mandate, MINUSMA, operation Barkhane and EUTM were able to coordinate their operations and include the Malian Army in this coordination.

At the same time, terrorist groups and individuals willing to use random violence as a tactic resurfaced in northern Mali. Gradually, MINUSMA – and, eventually, the EUTM – became targets of acts of terrorism: roadside bombs (IEDs); rocket attacks on camps; and complex attacks with direct fire and suicide vehicle-bombs directed at camps. The Malian Army continued to suffer casualties from the raids on its installations, and operation Barkhane was targeted continuously. In the period since, there has been an increase in the number, sophistication, and precision of terrorist attacks, and by 2017 MINUSMA had become the UN mission with the highest number of casualties.<sup>73</sup>

In the wider region, West Africa began to see attacks in the capitals of Burkina Faso and Mali and on Ivory Coast beach resorts. As the attacks on MINUSMA grew and the capacities in the mission increased, a discussion emerged both within MINUSMA and in the wider UN concerning the possibility that the UN encompasses counterterrorism mandates.

The 2015 HIPPO<sup>74</sup> report clearly recommended not including counterterrorism as part of UN peacekeeping efforts. However, seen from the perspective of the MINUSMA mission, it was desirable to develop the mission to encompass counterterrorism, and counterterrorist objectives were also manageable due to the supply of additional military capabilities from NATO countries. The demand from below for more operations aimed at terrorists is not surprising, considering the regular ceremonies at MINUSMA headquarters to commemorate casualties caused by acts of terrorism.

The UN has not adopted counterterrorism mandates to directly target suspected terrorists, but the deployment of special operations forces, attack helicopters, military drones and intelligence units has given the MINUSMA

<sup>73</sup> Signe Cold-Ravnkilde, Peter Albrecht, Rikke Haugegaard, 'Friction and Inequality among Peacekeepers in Mali', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 162 n° 2, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> The High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (16 June 2015).



mission capacities enabling them to carry out counterterrorist operations. The growing number of terrorist threats to its missions and the lack of progress on maintaining peace in mission areas challenge the UN. How should the UN attempt to meet these challenges by devising a strategy for addressing the challenges? And what role does tactical intelligence play in this?

In 2014, the author of this article was deployed as a military analyst to MINUSMA as part of a new unit with the aim of gathering and analyzing information, producing intelligence for MINUSMA's leadership. Additionally, in 2015, he served in MINUSMA as aide-de-camp to the Force Commander in the military component of the mission. This paper is based on his experience from these deployments as well as on academic research and open-source accounts of events.

## **The “terrorists”**

It is a reasonable assumption that there is a direct link between the Islamist groups in Mali and the rebel groups that have challenged stable government in Mali. Social network studies have established that the linkages are not clandestine. In the public domain,<sup>75</sup> the linkages are out in the open due to the fluid and transitional nature of the affiliations in northern Mali. The identification of “terrorists” in the Sahel region becomes difficult due to the presence of many different actors, such as separatists, trafficking soldiers, disenfranchised farmers and herders, self-defence militias and criminal networks.

Terrorist groups are active in northern Mali and the Sahel. In the winter of 2017, some of the terrorist groups stood forward in a video proclaiming their resolve to collaborate by joining forces under a new banner: The Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (the “Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims”). JNIM, in short, consists of Ansar Dine, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's Sahara branch, Al Murabitoon, and Katibat Macina (also known as the Macina Liberation Front).<sup>76</sup> The video shows a group of leaders, with the Malian Tuareg Iyad Ag Ghali in the middle.

<sup>75</sup> Olivier J. Walther & Dimitris Christopoulos (2015) ‘Islamic Terrorism and the Malian Rebellion’, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 27:3, 498.

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/03/analysis-merger-of-al-qaeda-groups-threatens-security-in-west-africa.php>

His affiliations and actions indicate that he has close connections with the stakeholders in Mali's conflict. He is the embodiment of direct social, ideological and practical links between the "terrorists" and the rebels, formed under the name of the coordination groups, who are the signatories to the 2016 peace agreement.

The ultimate aim of terrorist groups is to overthrow an existing order. Domestic terrorism becomes international terrorism when a state allies itself with external powers to gain the upper hand in a domestic conflict. In the article "Terrorism and Counterterrorism," Plümper and Neumeyer conclude: "Terrorism is the weapon of the weak, typically perpetrated by agents of terror who work on behalf of terror leaders with rational ultimate and strategic goals. International terrorism emerges because targets from foreign nations have a strategic value for terrorist groups."<sup>77</sup>

Iyad Ag Ghali, the leader of the terrorist group Ansar Dine, who in 2011-2012 took control of northern Mali alongside Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), most likely orchestrated the complex attack on the UN camp in Kidal 12 March 2016. This complex attack left five Guinean peacekeepers dead and wounded at least 30. The suicide bomb that was driven into the Guinean contingent's area ravaged the camp completely and left in its wake a breakdown of trust between the peacekeepers and their partners in Kidal, the signatory rebel groups, who were setting up a counterterrorist force to build security and confidence in the town. The attack was claimed by Ansar Dine<sup>78</sup> and deplored by the UN. Sadly, it underlined the extremely dangerous implications of the fluid nature of affiliations between the individuals and groups in northern Mali combined with the will to use terrorism as a tactic to obtain enhanced political influence.

With the merging of the terrorist groups, the Sahel faces a dangerous proliferation of coordinated militant Islamism affecting the northern regions; the central region of Mali<sup>79</sup>; and the frontier region that borders Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso.

<sup>77</sup> Thomas Plümper & Eric Neumayer (2014) 'Terrorism and Counterterrorism: An Integrated Approach and Future Research Agenda', *International Interactions*.

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/02/jihadists-launch-assaults-on-un-malian-forces-in-northern-mali.php>

<sup>79</sup> 'Central Mali: An Uprising in the Making?', Africa Report N°238 | 6 July 2016.

2017 saw a growing number of terrorist attacks occur along the border to Burkina Faso<sup>80</sup>. The likely effect of the JNIM constellation will be to increase militant

Islamist's ability to employ terrorist tactics at great distances from the safe havens in Sahara. Moreover, the establishment of JNIM entails linking groupings under its banner that were previously operating on their own in the Sahel region.<sup>81</sup> What commenced as a terror campaign in Northern Mali has gradually become an immediate threat to the stability of the landlocked states of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

## **The UN mandate and Rules of Engagement**

The UN does not provide its peacekeeping missions with a “counterterrorism” mandate or Rules of Engagement allowing for the use of force (except in self-defence or as part of the Protection of Civilians). But with terrorism<sup>82</sup> comes the need for counterterrorism, and since terrorism is often conducted as part of a strategy for obtaining the ultimate goal of changing an existing order, counterterrorism often entails a strategy for preserving an existing order. Counterterrorism consists of multiple policies, actions and initiatives and does not necessarily entail the use of

direct force. Johan Karlsrud has argued that MINUSMA, “given its collaboration with Opération Barkhane, could also indirectly be considered a counterterrorism operation.”<sup>83</sup> This conclusion is reached based on the argument that MINUSMA operationalizes a counterterrorist strategy with the exception of the use of direct force against individuals.

In Security Council resolution 2364 MINUSMA is mandated to:

“In pursuit of its priorities and active defence of its mandate, to anticipate and deter threats and to take robust and active steps to counter asymmetric attacks against civilians or United Nations personnel, to ensure prompt and effective

<sup>82</sup> The US Army defines terrorism as ‘the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instil fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political’. (US Department of the Army, Joint Publication 3-26, I-5-4.b.)

<sup>83</sup> John Karlsrud (2017): ‘Towards UN counter-terrorism operations?’, *Third World Quarterly*, p.11.

responses to threats of violence against civilians and to prevent a return of armed elements to those areas, engaging in direct operations pursuant only to serious and credible threats.”<sup>84</sup>

The Rules of Engagement (ROE) that regulate the use of force for the MINUSMA mission state that the use of force is allowed in self-defence, in defence of civilians and in defence of UN property. In 2014, the mission received additional guidance on the application of the ROE and mandate from a code cable directed to the mission for the United Nations Head Quarters reading: “The ROE do not permit MINUSMA to undertake offensive counter-terrorism or counter-insurgency operations in the implementation of its mandate, neither unilaterally, nor in coordination with other forces”.<sup>85</sup> The mandate and the Rules of Engagement do, however, enable the MINUSMA force to conduct both defensive and pre-emptive operations against hostile persons or groups to protect themselves.

As part of the operational practice in 2015-2016, the force routinely conducted operations to counter and prevent attacks on UN personnel. One example was the security of logistical convoys, which had suffered from regular attacks in the form of roadside bombs. Here, the convoys were supported by the Special Forces contingent and a helicopter element to conduct reconnaissance of the routes, monitor vulnerable points, and be prepared to engage if individuals displayed behaviour associated with the placing of roadside bombs on the routes. These operations were active steps with effective responses, which deterred the threat from manifesting itself. Similar tactics had been used in other missions such as the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and could be applied in Mali. Another example was the security operations around the UN camp in Kidal, which suffered from repeated attacks from indirect fire at night. Here again, an operation comprising of a patrolling ground element with multiple means of surveillance and a Special Forces element in covert positions enabled the peacekeepers to provide an active and robust response to the asymmetric threats.

<sup>84</sup> SC resolution 2364 (2017), d. (d) Countering asymmetric attacks in active defence of MINUSMA’s mandate.

<sup>85</sup> Adapted from MINUSMA Legal Advisors (LEGAD) briefing to Commanders.

These examples emphasize that it is possible to identify the legal foundations for countering asymmetric threats, which are the methods used by terrorists to achieve their objectives, provided that the counterterrorist actions are directed at the protection of civilians and self-defence.

With the introduction of Special Forces, Military Drones, ISR Coys,<sup>86</sup> Attack Helicopters and a larger number of military officers from NATO-countries with experience from NATO operations, the UN mission in Mali disposes of key elements necessary to conduct counterterrorist operations. These capacities create demands from personnel in the mission for expanding the operational practice of the mission. Johan Karlsrud has noted in his article “Irrespective of these discussions, MINUSMA may already be in a counter-terrorism mode. ASIFU<sup>87</sup> is developing ‘targeting packs’ on groups and individuals considered a threat to the mission”.<sup>88</sup> These observations correspond with those of the author. With the ASIFU concept, the MINUSMA mission obtained a military intelligence unit, which made it necessary to discuss how to operationalize both the UN mandate and the Rules of Engagement. The ASIFU was not a silver bullet against asymmetric attacks, but it began to introduce operational practices that aligned the information processes and use of intelligence both within the Force and with the Senior Mission Leadership. The ASIFU also underlined the difficulties with handling classified information in an UN environment and with providing intelligence to the tactical level of the mission. It proved extremely difficult to gain situational awareness even in the areas where the Intelligence units were physically present. For any actor who aims to conduct targeted operations with the use of force against specific individuals or groups, the quality and timeliness of the intelligence available is a determining factor. So even if the mandate or the RoE were to allow this kind of operational practice, the preconditions to execute targeted counterterrorist operations is not present.

<sup>86</sup> Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Company.

<sup>87</sup> All Source Intelligence Fusion Unit. This concept originates from the ISAF mission in Afghanistan where the Dutch contingent had operational experiences with combining ISR units under one centralized command with a secure network as backbone to handle classified information.

<sup>88</sup> John Karlsrud (2017): ‘Towards UN counter-terrorism operations?’, *Third World Quarterly*, p. 10.

## The UN Counterterrorism Strategy

In July 2016, the UN reviewed its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288). The strategy is composed of four pillars:<sup>89</sup>

- 1 Addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism
- 2 Measures to prevent and combat terrorism
- 3 Measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard;
- 4 Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.

This global strategy frames counterterrorism in the Sahel. In this region, the strategy on the direct use of force against terrorists appears to be founded in UN-approved counterterrorist operations such as the French operation Barkhane and the newly proposed G5 Sahel Force<sup>90</sup>. In the resolution for the Group of Five Sahel joint force (Force conjointe du G5 Sahel - FC-G5S) the UN “Urges the FC-G5S, MINUSMA and the French forces to ensure adequate coordination and exchange of information, through relevant mechanisms, of their operations, within their respective mandates, and reiterates in this regard its request to the Secretary-General to enhance cooperation between MINUSMA and the G5 Sahel Member States through provision of relevant intelligence and liaison officers from the G5 Sahel Member States to MINUSMA”.<sup>91</sup>

Cooperation between MINUSMA and operation Barkhane has been allowed on the same terms as with the FC-G5S. Here, the exchange of information (Intelligence) has been one area which directly links the UN mission to directly targeted counterterrorist operations by the French forces. The same can eventually apply with the future relationship between MINUSMA and FC-G5S. This implies that MINUSMA and the UN will gradually develop closer ties to counterterrorism operations in the Sahel.

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

<sup>90</sup> The G5 Sahel Joint Force is an initiative from the G5 states in the Sahel region: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The French title is Fore Commune G5 Sahel (FC-G5S).

<sup>91</sup> UN Resolution 2359 (2017) : Adopted by the Security Council at its 7979th meeting, on 21 June 2017.



Signe Cold-Ravnkilde from the Danish Institute of International Studies(DIIS) does not see the FC-G5S as an immediate game changer for the security situation in the Sahel. She points to the fact that “the ability to gather, analyse and share relevant intelligence has been a major hurdle for MINUSMA despite the fact that it has a specialized intelligence unit. This is not least because of the mission’s limited capacity to patrol and gain the trust of the local population. The G5 force would most likely benefit from intelligence support from the French and American drone bases in the region, but such work is sensitive, and it is unclear how the G5 will improve it.”<sup>92</sup>

Another – and perhaps more defining – factor is the logistical challenges of fielding sufficiently trained and equipped forces in the Sahel region. One needs to keep in mind that the same G5 states already contribute most of the troop contributions to MINUSMA. A big challenge is to supply operational capacity in harsh geographical conditions and with constant threats from terrorists conducting asymmetrical attacks. On a larger scale, what really is at stake in Mali and the Sahel for the UN is its reputation and its basic principle of impartiality. There is a deep-rooted culture of distrust of uniformed forces – whether army or police – in the Sahel region.

## **How to improve Tactical Intelligence?**

The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali is in a unique information position due to its multi- dimensional engagements in the country and its cooperation with actors in the wider Sahel region. This widespread network is primarily used at the strategic and operational level where existing information can be obtained from UN offices, open sources, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic research. By contrast, at the tactical level, the information needed to protect both civilians and peacekeepers has to be analysed and assessed to become intelligence that can subsequently shape decisions and actions. The difficulty with obtaining qualified and timely tactical intelligence easily translates into an operational pattern in the sense that outreach is limited at the tactical level and troops concentrate on self-protection in camps. Intelligence sharing between MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane has mostly occurred at the initiative of MINUSMA, which has asked for information from Barkhane.

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.passblue.com/2017/06/15/operation-barkhane/>

The challenge of sharing nationally developed intelligence with the UN remains an obstacle hindering continuous exchange of information. This obstacle will also influence the character of cooperation between the FC-G5S, MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane. In order to exercise timely and relevant information sharing which can benefit the tactical level, it is necessary to remain focused on developing procedures supporting the diffusion of intelligence between the missions.

Terrorists use asymmetric attacks as a tactic to obtain their goals. Therefore, to be effective counterterrorism must be implemented at the tactical level of the peacekeeping missions. A general counterterrorism strategy involves a holistic plan of action, but for the peacekeepers the principal concern is to have the appropriate means and training necessary to counter asymmetric threats. The troop-contributing countries to MINUSMA have varying responsibilities in line with the Memorandum of Understanding with the UN regarding the supply of manpower and equipment.

When these same countries field more forces into the FC-G5S, a more complex situation will develop. Although not a counterterrorist operation, MINUSMA will increasingly coordinate its operations with counterterror operations, and this is likely to have implications for the perception of MINUSMA as partial collaborators. One consequence may be less willingness among the population to share information, which results in a worse basis for achieving tactical intelligence. The issue of how to improve the gathering of tactical intelligence needs to be addressed if the UN is to be effective in countering terrorism.

Although it may seem counterintuitive to most commanders at the tactical level, it is relevant to facilitate a high level of patrolling activity in populated areas, and to remain active and engaged in the local areas in which the force is operating. A precondition for the success of the combined multiple activities of MINUSMA, Barkhane, and FC-G5S in countering asymmetric threats is that the tactical level knows the terrain and the population and has the means and will to share information. If the terrorists continue to successfully attack forces, efforts at the strategic level may be undermined by a deteriorating credibility among decision-makers and the populations of troop-contributing countries. Military arguments would call for the force to be concentrated to achieve an effect; yet in view of a mandate focused on protecting the civilians of MINUSMA, dispersing the units to enlarge the footprint of the UN peacekeeping troops is called for. The contrasting arguments will continue to influence the operational pattern. Consequently, it is recommended that the UN's ISR capabilities be augmented while at the same time structures enhancing access to information at the tactical level are established.

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# Chinese Military Participation in the UNPKO: Prospects and Challenges

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It has been nearly three decades since China first sent military personnel to participate in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO). Concurrently, China is the largest contributor of peacekeepers among the five permanent members in the UN Security Council, the second largest contributor to UN peacekeeping funds of all member states, and the largest contributor among developing countries in real figures.<sup>94</sup> At present, more than 2,600 military personnel are deployed in nine UN mission areas, including 15 peacekeeping contingents and approximately 100 staff officers and military observers. For the foreseeable future, China will work to fulfil the goals set by the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to build a modern and powerful nation, a world-class military and a community with a common destiny. Against this strategic backdrop, the Chinese military must play a more active role in UNPKO.

## **Intensive and Extensive Participation**

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Chinese military's participation in United Nations' peacekeeping operations has been on the rise: from limited participation at the initial stage in providing military observers and enabling contingents through to contemporary extended involvement where it is

<sup>93</sup> The author is a research fellow from the Academy of Military Sciences, PLA, China. The views expressed here are those of the author alone. They do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the PLA or AMS.

<sup>94</sup> <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded>

diversifying its missions – including providing security and combat contingents. Based on China’s Military Strategy released in 2015 by the Ministry of National Defence of the People’s Republic of China, it is consistent with both interests of China and the international community to participate in UNPKO, which helps China to integrate with the international community and which reduces instabilities and insecurities in the troubled regions in the world.<sup>95</sup> In my view, in future the Chinese military will play an even more prominent part in UNPKO in the following four ways:

Firstly, China will increase the number of military personnel involved. During the Cold War, the Baltic nations and Canada provided most of the personnel and equipment to UNPKO. In the post-Cold War era, however, the largest troop contributing countries are from the developing world, with Ethiopia, Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan at the top of the list. China ranks 12 on the list of 124 troop contributing countries.<sup>96</sup> In September 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared at the UNPKO summit held at UN Headquarters in New York that China will join the new UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System and provide a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops.<sup>97</sup> Two years later, the spokesman of the Ministry of China’s National Defence confirmed that the 8,000-strong peacekeeping standby force had completed its registration process with the UN and will be deployed after training.<sup>98</sup> The force includes 28 contingents from 10 different types of units, ranging from infantry battalions, rapid response companies, helicopter units, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) units, and surface combatant units.<sup>99</sup> This major initiative undoubtedly indicates that China will increase rather than cut down the number of military personnel involved in UNPKO in future.

Secondly, China will send multifunctional forces to assume more diversified tasks. Traditionally, China used to send military observers and staff officers, as well as contingents to mission areas, engaging in support tasks such as engineering, transportation and medical treatment. Modern UNPKO has become increasingly multidimensional, presenting a challenge to all troop contributing countries to meet more advanced requirements and assume more tasks. In 2013, the Chinese military began to deploy an infantry company in

<sup>95</sup> [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-05/26/content\\_20820628.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-05/26/content_20820628.htm)

<sup>96</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/aug16\\_2.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/aug16_2.pdf)

<sup>97</sup> <http://ie.china-embassy.org/eng/zlt/2d2/t1321128.htm>

<sup>98</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-09/28/c\\_136645953.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-09/28/c_136645953.htm)

<sup>99</sup> [http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-09/28/content\\_7773168.htm](http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2017-09/28/content_7773168.htm)

Mali to provide security protection for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) HQ. Larger troop deployments followed in 2015 when China dispatched a 700-strong infantry battalion to South Sudan to carry out such tasks as civilian protection, patrolling and guarding, and humanitarian relief. In June 2017, for the first time a helicopter unit was sent by the Chinese military to the United Nations African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) to conduct air patrols, transport peacekeeping forces, evacuate rescued personnel and provide air supplies.<sup>100</sup> Thus, UAV and surface combatant units, as part of the 8,000-strong standby force, are most likely to be put to use in the near future.

Thirdly, China will deploy military forces to more UN mission areas if necessary. UN peacekeeping missions are mainly carried out in Africa where many nations suffer from political unrest and frequent conflicts. This is a major reason for the Chinese military to focus on contributing to peacekeeping operations in this region. However, with the rapidly changing security landscape in the Middle East and Central Asia, these regions are likely to become future new sources of instability and turmoil. It seems that China's military may consider participation in peacekeeping operations in these areas if authorized and requested by the UNSC. In 2012, when the civil war broke out in Syria, China sent military observers to the UN Supervision Mission in Syria that was formed in accordance with the UNSC Resolution 2043.

Last but not least, China will initiate more international peacekeeping training at different levels. Comprehensive peacekeeping training systems have been set up in recent years in China. Bearing in mind the concepts of resource sharing and win-win cooperation, the Chinese military will put increasing emphasis on providing assistance to other nations by sharing its experiences and facilities. Since 2013, the Peacekeeping Center under China's Ministry of Defence has held a series of international training programs for a total of 59 nations. By 2020, China will train 2,000 peacekeepers from other countries and carry out 10 mine clearance assistance programs which will include the provision of training and equipment.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.ecns.cn/military/2017/06-12/261092.shtml>

<sup>101</sup> [http://eng.mod.gov.cn/focus/2017-09/28/content\\_4793398.htm](http://eng.mod.gov.cn/focus/2017-09/28/content_4793398.htm)



## **New Possibilities for Participation in PKO in the Context of Regional Organizations**

In recent years, cooperation between UN and regional organizations has become both effective and efficient. This indicates a general trend for future international peacekeeping operations. According to Ambassador Wang Guangya, former Chinese permanent representative to the UN, regional and sub-regional organizations can play a unique and even irreplaceable role in resolving regional conflicts.<sup>102</sup> Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has also pointed out that peacekeeping cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations is producing good results.<sup>103</sup> This development of the international collective security mechanisms is important and welcomed. Even though the Chinese military has never been involved in any peacekeeping operations exclusively conducted by regional organizations, this possibility cannot be ruled out in future.

I believe there are at least three basic preconditions for Chinese military participation in PKO under the auspices of regional organizations. First and most importantly, peacekeeping operations conducted by regional organizations must implement the UN Charter and have a clear mandate from the UNSC. In line with its long-standing policies, China will strongly oppose any attempt to pursue unilateralism and hegemony under the pretext of conducting peacekeeping operations.

Second, basic principles of peacekeeping operations stipulated in the *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* must be respected. The operations that China consider as violating those principles will not be supported by China. Thirdly, there must be a relatively high likelihood for success of the potential peacekeeping operations conducted by regional organizations. Those operations assessed to be of great risk of failure will be avoided by China insofar as it is possible.

<sup>102</sup> Remarks by Wang Guangya, Chinese Permanent Representative to the UN, at an opening session of United Nations Security Council on Nov 6 2007. [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/dszlsjt\\_673036/t436434.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/dszlsjt_673036/t436434.shtml)

<sup>103</sup> Remarks by Chinese FM Wang Yi at the UN high-level meeting on peacekeeping operations on Sep.26, 2014. <http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0927/c157278-25745932.html>

In addition, China is likely to focus on contributing to PKO under the auspices of regional organizations in its immediate surroundings. Besides its engagement in the UN, China is actively involved in another two collective security mechanisms, namely the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the China-Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) cooperation mechanism. The SCO has achieved useful results by cooperating on preventing and fighting extremism, terrorism and separatism. ASEAN has begun to explore the possibility of forming its own peacekeeping force. In October 2010, China and ASEAN co-hosted a seminar on modern peacekeeping operations to exchange views. In May 2011, the fifth defence ministers' meeting of ASEAN reached a consensus on setting up a peacekeeping centre, which will benefit member states by providing joint training and mutual learning.<sup>104</sup> It seems likely therefore that China will further enhance its cooperation with ASEAN on peacekeeping and even consider the possibility of participation in peacekeeping operations under the auspices of ASEAN, insofar as ASEAN initiates such operations. As a general rule, China's close relations with regional organizations in its neighbourhood means that China is likely to prefer participation in peacekeeping operations hosted by such regional organizations as the SCO and ASEAN.

## **Challenges and Ways Ahead**

With more intensive and extensive participation in peacekeeping operations in future, the Chinese military will face increasing challenges. As a result, it is urgent for the Chinese military to enhance its peacekeeping capabilities, especially regarding the following three aspects.

First, it is essential to continue to boost China's power projection capacities to minimize pressures on overseas deployments. Chinese military peacekeeping forces are deployed to mission areas thousands of miles away from home. Nevertheless, due to insufficient equipment and capabilities, the Chinese military have had to rely on civilian maritime or aviation companies to project peacekeeping forces abroad. For example, with regard to its Mali PKO

<sup>104</sup> <http://news.cntv.cn/20110519/110878.shtml>

contribution, from the time of departure from Dalian port in China it took approximately two months before it arrived in the UN mission areas in Mali.<sup>105</sup> Chinese reliance on maritime transportation explains the long travelling time between the home base and the mission areas for PKO personnel and equipment. In future, China will need to establish a strategic long-distance power projection mechanism to provide effective and efficient means of transportation for peacekeeping forces to the mission areas.

Second, it is essential to continue to educate professional PKO personnel to cope with the shortage of highly-skilled peacekeeping talents. There are only a few Chinese military officers who have been appointed by the UN to senior staff positions. Partly, it is the lack of proficiency in English and/or French, along with insufficient professional peacekeeping skills that prevent a majority of Chinese military officers from successfully applying for senior positions either in the UN or in the UN missions. It is therefore to be expected that in the years ahead, Chinese military personnel with overseas experience will be encouraged to be involved in advanced training programs to become qualified candidates for UN leadership positions at different levels.

Third, it is essential to continue to take more preventive measures to lower security risks in mission areas. Peacekeeping operations are more often than not carried out in a hostile environment, wrought by armed conflicts, terrorist attacks, criminal offenses and infectious diseases. More than 3,650 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the UNPKO process since its inception in 1948, including 13 Chinese military personnel.<sup>106</sup> In the coming years, when the Chinese military is expected to expand its peacekeeping operation activities, especially with the deployment of contingents instructed to carry out combat and security tasks in high-risk missions, Chinese personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations will also work under conditions of greater security risks. Therefore, realistic training prior to deployments should be given priority in order to improve the security skills of personnel, thereby minimizing casualties in potential mission areas.

<sup>105</sup> It is reported by the *PLA Daily* that it took about 2 months for the first batch of goods and materials including more than 240 pieces of equipment to arrive in Mali after departing from China's Da Lian port, covering a distance of more than 20,000 kilometres. <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2014/0115/c83083-24123410-2.html>

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.chinanews.com/mil/2016/08-01/7958060.shtml>

# Author biographies

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## **Casper Emil Holland**

Major

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Major Casper Emil Holland has a Master of Arts (MA) in African Studies from the University of Copenhagen. He is currently studying at the French War College in Paris to obtain the title “expert in management, command and strategy”. He has completed the master-level courses at the Royal Defence Academy in Military Operations. While serving as Operations Officer at battalion and brigade level, he commenced African Studies focusing on International Security Cooperation. In 2013, he was deployed to Mali as part of the All Source Intelligence Fusion Unit (ASIFU) to assist the UN mission (MINUSMA) leadership in assessing the conflict. In 2015, he was appointed as aide de camp to General Michael Lollesgaard, who served as Force Commander MINUSMA from 2015 – 2017. Topics of particular interest are norm change, peacekeeping, peace building, as well as state and security in sub-Saharan Africa. He has been deployed on missions to Mali, Afghanistan and Kosovo.

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## **Jespersen, Martin Walldén**

Major

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Major Martin Walldén Jespersen is currently the Commanding Officer of the 727 Fighter Squadron in the Royal Danish Air Force. In 2016, he was the Detachment Commander of the Royal Danish Air Force F-16 Operation Inherent Resolve. From 2015 to 2016, he was second in command of the Royal Danish Air Force 730 fighter squadron. From 2011 to 2015, Major Jespersen was head of the team concerning standardization and evaluation of the F-16 fighter aircraft in the Royal Danish Air Force, and he was a subject matter expert for the New Fighter Program in the Ministry of Defence. In 2011, he was Operations Commander in the Libya Force of the Royal Danish Air Force. From 2009 to 2011, he was Director of Operations for the 730 Fighter Squadron in Denmark. In 2010 and in 2012, he served as Instructor to the European F-16 Weapons School. Martin Walldén Jespersen completed a Master of Military Studies at the

Royal Danish Defence College in 2016. He graduated from the Fighter Weapons School in 2008. He has served as an F-16 pilot since 2001.

Major Jespersen has served in more than 100 F-16 combat missions in Libya, Iraq and Syria. He is the author of the monograph “I forreste række” [At the Front] about the author’s experiences in the Libya war. The monograph was published by Lindhardt & Ringhof in 2012.

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Col. Jiao Liang is a research fellow with the Foreign Military Studies Department, Institute of War Studies, the Academy of Military Science, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). After he joined the PLA, he successively served as an instructor in a military academy, as deputy battalion commander, as a UN military observer, and as a researcher engaged in world military studies. Currently, his research focuses on Revolution in Military Affairs and PLA participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

He is also actively involved in such academic events as the Xiangshan Forum and the AMS-ISDP annual joint conference.

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**Lollesgaard, Michael**

Lieutenant General

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Lieutenant General Michael Lollesgaard is currently the Danish Military Representative to NATO and the EU. Prior to this, in 2015-16, he commanded the 11000-strong Force which conducted the UN mission MINUSMA. Throughout his career, he has chiefly focused on operations, training, and education. He has commanded at all levels from company to division. When commanding the Danish Division in 2013-2014, he was the tactical inspector of the Danish Army, and he was also responsible for the training of the three Baltic Brigade staffs. From 2010-2013, when commanding 1. Danish Brigade, he trained

all Danish battlegroups rotating into Afghanistan, whereby he gained extensive knowledge on how to operate in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism environments. From 2007-2009, he ran the Peace Support Operations Training Centre in Sarajevo which included conducting an extensive training program of the Bosnian brigades and developing regional cooperation within the area of peace support training in the Western Balkans. In

2005-2006, he was the Director of the Army General Staff Course at the Danish Defence College. Here, he was also responsible for development of Danish Army Doctrine. Additional deployments to serve in peace operations include Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iraq.

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**Lund, Sune**

Commander

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Commander Sune Lund currently works as a member of the Joint Operations Staff, focusing on maritime operations, NATO, and EU non-military operations.

His operational background is a mix of sea duty in the High North, in Southern territorial waters, and on the High Seas. He has performed jobs ranging from Commanding Officer on a patrol boat to Operations Officer on board the frigate NIELS JUEL. In 2014, he was deployed off the coast of Syria during the Danish-led Operation Removal of Chemical Weapons from Syria.

Commander Lund's policy experience stems from a period working in the Office for Security Policy and Planning at the Danish Ministry of Defence. Commander Lund holds a Master of International Relations from the American Military University.

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**Odgaard, Liselotte**

Associate Professor

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Liselotte Odgaard is an Associate Professor at the Institute for Military History and War Studies at the Royal Danish Defence College. Her recent publications include *China and Coexistence: Beijing's National Security Strategy for the 21st*



*Century* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press/Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); “Beijing’s Quest for Stability in Its Neighborhood: China’s Relations with Russia in Central Asia,” *Asian Security* 13, no. 1 (2017): 41-58; and *Strategy in NATO: Preparing for an Imperfect World* (Edited, Palgrave MacMillan, 2014). She has been a visiting scholar at institutions such as Harvard University, Woodrow Wilson International

Center for Scholars, and the Norwegian Nobel Institute. She is a regular participant at the Xiangshan Forum at which the People’s Liberation Army conducts an annual dialogue with other countries, and she organizes annual joint conferences between the Academy of Military Science and the Royal Danish Defence College.

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**Pedersen, Charlotte Flindt**

Director at the Danish Foreign Policy Society

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Charlotte Flindt Pedersen is the director of the Danish Foreign Policy Society. She holds a MA in East European Studies and political science, and a diploma in Strategic Management. In the period 1996 to 2015 she was employed in several long-term positions for the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR), lastly as deputy director in charge of the organisation’s international work, which covered countries in Middle East and North Africa, Africa south of Sahara, Asia, including China, Europe and Central Asia. As director of international operations at DIHR she oversaw the portfolio of DIHR in relation to human rights development in the form of cooperation with justice and police authorities, Ombuds- and national human rights institutions, business corporations, and key civil society organizations on strengthening their strategic capacity to comply with and promote and protect human rights. She is board member of Ebbe Muncks Mindefond, International Media Support as well as the Folmer Wisti Foundation for Intercultural Understanding in addition to board membership of the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute.

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**Wang, Nils**

Rear Admiral & Commandant at the Royal Danish Defence College

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Rear Admiral Nils Wang is one of Denmark's leading analysts on issues related to Arctic security and the relationship between Denmark and Greenland. Before he became Commandant of the Royal Danish Defence College, he was Head of the Royal Danish Navy for five years. In this capacity, he was responsible for the naval ships operating in the Arctic. Rear Admiral Wang has more than ten years of active sea duty in the Danish Navy, including 5 years in Arctic Waters around Greenland. In 2011, he was invited by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to serve as special advisor on Arctic Security during the finalization of the "Kingdom of Denmark -- Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020". In 2015, Rear Admiral Wang was appointed to be part of the Taksøe-Jensen Advisory Group, assisting the development of a new set of priorities for Denmark's future foreign and defence policies. National and international media outlets frequently seek Nils Wang's comments on Arctic matters, and he often contributes as an expert/guest speaker at conferences and events dealing with Arctic issues.

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**Wang, Weixing**

Major General

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Maj. Gen. Wang Weixing is Deputy Political Commissar of the Academy of Military Sciences, the People's Liberation Army (PLA). He also acts as Chairman of the International Military Branch and the China Association for Military Science. He was born in November 1958 in Shaanxi Province, and joined the PLA Army in February, 1978. He graduated from the Xi'an Political Academy of PLA, and attended courses conducted by the Party School of the Central committee of the Communist Party of China and the PLA National Defence University. He successively served in a regional command, group army, division, regiment, field army, and military institution. In 1979, he was engaged in the Defensive Counter-attack War against Vietnam. In 1996, he was assigned as an assistant researcher in the PLA Academy of Military Science and was subsequently promoted to office leader, deputy department director, and department director. His recent publications include *China's Military Art*, *China's Art of War in Vernacular*, and *Essence of Chinese Ancient Strategic Theories*.

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Senior Colonel Wang Yisheng is currently serving as Director of the Foreign Military Studies Department at the Institute of War Studies at the Academy of Military Science. He received his PhD degree in international strategy and is now research fellow and PhD supervisor. His research areas include international strategy, Asia- Pacific security, and Korean Peninsula issues, and he has published 14 monographs (including translations) and more than 200 papers and translated articles. He also serves as part-time director of China's Reform and Opening Up Forum, and China's International Friendship Association. Previously, he has studied at the Kim Il Sung University in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and has paid academic visits to the United States, Japan, South Korea, as well as to the EU and ASEAN countries.

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**Yan, Wenhui**Colonel

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Colonel Yan Wenhui was born in September 1971 in Baishui, Shaanxi Province. He is now an associate researcher in the Institute of War Study at the Academy of Military Science. He earned his PhD degree in history and conducted post-doctorate research on national security strategy. His research areas include national security strategy, military strategy, national religion and national security, counter-terrorism, non- governmental organizations, the Middle East, Central Asia, as well as the Belt and Road Initiative. He is the author of chapters in such books as: *Outline of National Security Strategy*; *A Study on Globalization and Social Ideological Trends in the Middle East*; *Major Issues in the Middle East*; and *China's Foreign Policy*. In addition, he is one of the drafters of China's defence white papers. He has written more than 30 advisory reports and published more than 100 articles.





This collection of papers was presented at the 3rd joint conference between the Royal Danish Defence College (RDDC) and the Academy of Military Science (AMS) held at RDDC 12 December 2017 and co-hosted by the Danish Foreign Policy Society. The papers offer unique insights into Chinese and Danish views on counterterrorist operations, rules of engagement and international order, exploring the extent to which the UN will provide platforms for common action in these areas in the future.

