ACTUALITÉ DU RENSEIGNEMENT

Navy Intel Chief: Information Dominance Must Balance Firepower
“Information as warfare” requires operational commanders to employ intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to dominate the information realm even as they direct combat actions, the Navy’s senior intelligence officer said today.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems Present & Future Capabilities – Major General Blair Hansen, 2009

What Should Be Classified? A Framework with Application to the Global Force Management Data Initiative
RAND - Martin C. Libicki, Brian A. Jackson, David R. Frelinger, Beth E. Lachman, Cesse Ip, Nidhi Kalra
For its operational planning and budget programming, the Department of Defense (DoD) needs frequent access to current, detailed data on authorized force structures for all the services. Having users aggregate this information themselves was difficult, time consuming, and error prone. Hence, DoD launched the Global Force Management Data Initiative (GFM DI). While most of the data from the GFM DI are unclassified, the fact that it facilitates data aggregation raised concerns about what a potential adversary might be able to do with access to it and whether it would be better to classify such data and store it exclusively on the secure network.

The authors address this question by looking at why material should or should not be classified, concluding that classification is warranted only (1) if it reduces the amount of information available to adversaries, (2) if the information kept from adversaries would tell them something they did not know, (3) if they could make better decisions based on this information, and (4) if such decisions would harm the United States. Using this framework, the authors balance the risks GFM DI poses against the costs to DoD of not having this information readily available to its own analysts. The authors conclude that overall classification is not necessary but suggest that some limited subsets may warrant additional protection.

La surveillance préventive en Suisse en 2010 – Sylvain Métille – CF2R
La surveillance préventive est l’une des activités essentielles des services de renseignement. Elle a pour principale caractéristique qu’elle ne s’applique pas à la poursuite d’infractions pénales qui auraient été commises, mais qu’elle vise à la détection d’un danger ou d’une menace pour la sécurité du pays. Elle inclut également la recherche d’informations politiques, économiques et militaires. La personne qui est visée par ces mesures techniques de surveillance n’est donc pas l’objet d’une procédure judiciaire et elle ne jouit pas des droits réservés à un prévenu au sens de la procédure pénale. Elle n’est la plupart du temps même pas soupçonnée d’avoir commis ou de vouloir commettre une infraction au sens du droit pénal, mais sa personne ou ses activités pourraient représenter un risque pour la sécurité intérieure.

Jordan Baev
The historiography of intelligence and security has benefited significantly from the comparatively greater accessibility of the East European secret services records in the post-Cold War era. In a way, those files revealed not only the specific tasks and activities of the intelligence services in the smaller Soviet bloc countries, but also the global aims of the superpowers, though the KGB’s operational archives are still almost entirely unavailable so far. A review of the formerly top secret Central-Eastern European documents seems to confirm the established view that the Warsaw Pact intelligence services were established as a “mirror” image of the KGB First Main Directorate (PGU). [1] This conclusion is also supported by a confidential instruction from the first secretary of the Bulgarian Communist party, Todor Zhivkov, after a meeting with KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov in Sofia in November 1969, stating that the Bulgarian State Security services (DS) should become “a worthy branch” of the KGB.

Brits thwarted Zim arms ship
MI6 launched operation to stop Chinese weapons from reaching Mugabe after disputed 2008 elections.

FEATURES Open Secrets – Charles S. Clark
The nation’s spy agency steps into the public eye, releasing documents and airing candid assessments of past operations. In April 2010, some of the most secretive professionals in government launched their contribution to the Obama administration’s transparency campaign. CIA officials released their open government plan on the agency’s website, «mindful,» as it states, «that continued public support for CIA is very much dependent upon public understanding of its mission and activities.»

The Saudi Spy Who Saved Chicago – Bruce Riedel
Al-Qaeda had a simple but deadly plan for the eve of the 2010 American elections. Two parcel bombs would explode in the cargo holds of two cargo aircraft descending into Chicago on the eve of the elections, demonstrating the terror group could still disrupt the international airline business and strike the American homeland in what al-Qaeda called “Obama’s city.” What al-Qaeda did not count on was a defector, a Saudi, who revealed the details of the plot to the Saudi intelligence services, who in turn passed the information to the Americans and other countries so the bombs could be stopped in England and Dubai before getting into the United States.

Les services de renseignements français dans la bataille de Diên Biên Phu
Jean-Marc Le Page, Centre d’études d’histoire de la Défense
Au soir de la défaite française dans cet affrontement dantesque qui a opposé les corps de bataille des généraux Giap et Navarre, l’heure du bilan est arrivée. Il faut trouver des responsables. Les principaux protagonistes de cette aventure seront entendus par la commission Catroux. À de nombreuses reprises, les services de renseignements seront accusés de ne pas avoir fait leur travail, c’est-à-dire de ne pas avoir informé le commandement comme il le fallait. À la lumière des archives de cette bataille, que peut-on en conclure ? Y a-t-il eu échec ou réussite des services de renseignements ?

PRIVATISATION DU RENSEIGNEMENT & DE LA SÉCURITÉ

Why Our Best Officers Are Leaving
Why are so many of the most talented officers now abandoning military life for the private sector? An exclusive survey of West Point graduates shows that it’s not just money. Increasingly, the military is creating a command structure that rewards conformism and ignores merit. As a result, it’s losing its vaunted ability to cultivate entrepreneurs in uniform.

FORCES ET OPÉRATIONS SPÉCIALES

Ce premier « Cahier électronique du CEHD » rassemble des textes historiques ou plus conceptuels sur les forces spéciales dans le monde. La plupart de ces textes correspondent à des communications présentées lors de la journée d’études organisée par le CEHD en juin 2001 au CNRS. Mais il a été jugé utile d’ajouter deux textes de réflexion originaux, renforçant encore la discussion conceptuelle de ces textes historiques.

SOF truths: Relationships matter
I mentioned in a previous article that I would discuss with our base populace about what it means to be a special operations airmen and how special operations forces truths should intertwine in our lives and our work at Cannon. I start this week’s article with a quick background on the truths and then a highlight of the first truth. I will focus on the other truths in the coming weeks.

GUERRE DE L’INFORMATION

Words That Kill: Rumours, Prejudice, Stereotypes and Myths Amongst the People of the Great Lakes Region of Africa
Much of the violent conflict in Burundi, Rwanda and the Kivu provinces of Congo over the past fifty years has been because of discrimination—and political, social and economic exclusion. In the worst cases the extreme intolerance of people of a different ethnic identity has taken the form of massacres and genocide. When this happens, people are being excluded or killed not for what rights or wrongs they have done—nor for what they believe, or even for what they have—but for their identity: for what they are, how they identify themselves and are identified by others. A few years ago, a respected research institute in the Great Lakes region organised a small regional conference in Bujumbura on the subject of the “identités meurtrières” — the “deadly identities” — that characterise the region. A year or so later, a small group of distinguished analysts from different academic disciplines began to meet periodically to share understandings and perspectives from the three core countries of the region. Two years ago, they decided to carry out some initial research on “Rumours, myths, prejudice and stereotypes in the Great Lakes region”.

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**CYBERMENACES**

*Threat Assessment – Internet Facilitated Organised Crime – Europol*
This document is an abridged, public version of Europol’s threat assessment on Internet Facilitated Organised Crime. It has been produced in line with the objectives of the Stockholm Programme and the Draft Council Conclusions on an Action Plan to implement the concerted strategy to combat cybercrime, and to assist in strategic planning for a European Cyber Crime Centre. Findings are based on intelligence submitted to Europol by law enforcement agencies of the EU Member States and a range of open source material.

*Cyberwar Case Study: Georgia 2008 – SWJ, David Hollis*
On the surface, it represents one of many cold wars (with periodic renewals of formal national-level military conflict) fought every day on the «near abroad» of the Russian periphery. A conflict which may not end for a very, very long time. But while much of that is true, a deeper analysis of the cyberspace domain operations conducted by both sides in this conflict indicate that image is illusory and incomplete. The Russian-Georgian war was quite historic and precedent setting for several reasons.

*Chinese Use of Cyberwar as an Anti-Access Strategy: Two Scenarios*
Testimony presented before the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission on January 27, 2011.

**TERRORISME**

*Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment*
US Dept. of Homeland Security
This product is one of a series of intelligence assessments published by the Extremism and Radicalization Branch to facilitate a greater understanding of the phenomenon of violent radicalization in the United States. The information is provided to federal, state, local, and tribal counterterrorism and law enforcement officials so they may effectively deter, prevent, preempt, or respond to terrorist attacks against the United States.

*A Ticking Time Bomb: Counterterrorism Lessons from the U.S. Government's Failure to Prevent the Fort Hood Attack – Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, February 2011*
Finally, we request that the National Security Council and Homeland Security Council lead in the development of an integrated approach to law enforcement and intelligence domestically and a comprehensive national approach to countering homegrown radicalization to violent Islamist extremism. The threat of homegrown radicalization goes beyond the capabilities of the law enforcement, intelligence, and homeland security agencies and requires a response from a broad range of our government which will produce plans to translate and implement this comprehensive national approach into specific, coordinated, and measurable actions across the government and in cooperation with the Muslim-American community.

*Flowering of Islamic Thought Liberal-Progressive Discourse and Activism in Contemporary Indonesia*
Les notes de l'Irasec — Discussion Papers n° 08
Since the fall of President Suharto in May 1998, liberal-progressive Islamic groups have been mushrooming in Indonesia. This article explores the contribution of those groups in spreading liberal-progressive Islamic discourse, while at the same time countering the discourses and activism of radical-conservative Islamic groups. In the interests of accessibility and ease of comprehension, I have divided the article into four parts. The first section will start with a brief explanation on the emergence of Liberal Islam in a global context. The second section will elaborate on the first wave of liberal Islam, in an Indonesian context, that emerged during the 1970s and until the fall of President Suharto in 1998. The third section will provide an explanation about the second wave of liberal Islamic groups and their various discourses, activists and activism. For several reasons, this part will focus only on particular groups that represent liberal-progressive Islam in Indonesia. Finally, to conclude this article my closing remarks will be an overall explanation of liberal-progressive Islam and its future in Indonesia.

*Abhinav Bharat, the Malegaon Blast and Hindu Nationalism: Resisting and Emulating Islamist Terrorism*
Christophe Jaffrelot
This article is based on the police report on the Malegaon case, a very interesting source for two reasons. One, it provides rich pieces of factual information regarding the actors of the plot and their motivations. Two, it presents us with the discourse of the Hindu nationalists when they speak between themselves since these excerpts include the transcripts of secret meetings they held in 2007-08 that one of the participants recorded.

*Mathematical Methods in Counterterrorism*
Memon, N. (red.), Farley, J. D. (red.), Hicks, D. (red.) & Rosenørn, T. (red.)
A terrorist cell usually forms very quietly and then grows in a pattern – spanning international borders, oceans, and hemispheres. Surprising to many, an effective “weapon”, just as quiet – mathematics – can serve as a powerful tool to combat terrorism, providing the ability to connect the dots and reveal the organizational pattern of something so sinister
Defining and theorizing terrorism: a global actor-centered approach — Omar Lizardo
In this paper I draw on global approaches from international relations and world systems theories to propose a definition of terrorism that skirts these issues by concentrating on terrorist actors rather than terrorist behavior. I argue that this approach has several advantages, including the dissolution of several empirical and analytical problems produced by more essentialist definitions, and the location of terrorism within a two dimensional continuum of collective-violence phenomena in the international system which discloses important theoretical insights. I proceed to examine the characteristics of terrorism by comparing it with other forms of violence in the international system. I propose that terrorism may be part of the cycles and trends of unrest in the world system, responding to the same broad families of global dynamics as other forms of system-level conflict.

How Lashkar-e-Taiba generates money – CLAWS
According to the US State Department documents, the terrorist group spends over $5 million every year to recruit, train and launch terrorists not only against India but also against the US and other Western nations. This money was spent by Zaki-ur Rahman Lakhvi, the jailed LeT operations commander “to purchase all materials required for LeT operations other than weapons and ammunition”.

Iran and the Palestinians – Rachel Brandenburg
After the 1979 revolution, Iran ended its alliance with Israel and started supporting the Palestinians, symbolized by turning over the Israeli embassy in Tehran to the Palestine Liberation Organization. As part of its campaign to export the revolution, the theocracy also aided emerging Palestinian Islamic groups, notably Islamic Jihad and Hamas. Both sent representatives to Tehran.

Iran generally opposed the U.S.-backed Middle East peace process. During the 1997-2005 reform era, however, President Mohammad Khatami indicated that Tehran might accept any decision embraced by the Palestinian majority. But that sentiment was short-lived. Tehran has trained many Palestinian militants and provided a significant proportion of the weaponry used against Israel. For Shiite Iran, the Palestinian groups are among its most important Sunni allies.

The PLO Weapons Ship from Iran – Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs
Last week’s seizure by Israeli naval commandos in the Red Sea of the Palestinian ship, Karine-A, with its cargo of over 50 tons of Iranian weapons and explosives, reveals an entirely new network of cooperation in Middle Eastern terrorism. The PLO-Iranian link will require a complete re-examination of the strategic landscape in the Middle East, particularly with respect to the intentions of the PLO’s governing institution in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Authority (PA), and the regional role of Iran.

Chechnya’s Suicide Bombers: Desperate, Devout, or Deceived (2004)
Years of war and social upheaval have left the people of Chechnya with nothing but misery and despair. In the second Chechen war, Federal Forces have radicalized the resistance and humiliated the populace by committing widespread human rights abuses against civilians. These actions, combined with the Kremlin’s unwillingness to seek a negotiated path to peace, have precipitated radicalization of the Chechen conflict and correspondingly engendered unorthodox tactics such as suicide terrorism.

Domodevo and the Chechen Conflict – International Relations and Security
While no group has yet claimed responsibility, the Domodevo bombing earlier this week appears to demonstrate the continued ability of Chechen separatists to strike terror deep in the heart of Russia. Largely overlooked by commentators, however, is the resource driving the 16-year old conflict: oil.

Turning a New Leaf in Relations: Russia's Renewed Arms Sale to China
Tensions in the arms sales relationship between Russia and China have been visibly on the rise in recent years. Yet, in November 2010, Moscow and Beijing announced a large new package of arms sales that appear to have turned a new leaf in this relationship. Much of the tension stemmed from the Chinese defense industry’s practice of reverse engineering Russian weapons technology, indigenizing it and then reselling it in third party markets in competition with Moscow. In negotiations, China has long demanded that Russia sell it advanced technologies in its defense platforms or advanced weapons, something that Moscow has been loath to do regarding both the weapons and their components.

Russia has also always been concerned that China might ultimately employ these advanced technologies and systems against it or its friends in Asia. For example, in 2006 it refused to sell certain sensitive space technologies to China (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Newsline, December 27, 2006). Nevertheless the restoration of arms sales appears to be connected with a new turn in Sino-Russian relations in China’s favor. The fifth round of Sino-Russian strategic talks took place from January 23-25 and Russia’s arms sales organization, Rosoboroneksport, has announced that it sees China as Russia’s chief partner in Asia (Interfax, January 19). This turn in Sino-Russian ties, probably dictated form the highest levels of both governments, appears to have overridden Russia’s mounting concerns about Chinese military developments.
Killing Pirates: Dilemma of Counter-Piracy – Sam Bateman
The recent storming of a hijacked ship off Somalia by South Korean navy commandos, resulting in the killing of eight pirates, has met with considerable acclaim. The success, however, has not resolved the debate over international counter-measures against piracy.

The Economic Costs of Maritime Piracy – Anna Bowden, One Earth Future Foundation
At the end of 2010, around 500 seafarers from more than 18 countries are being held hostage by pirates. Piracy clearly affects the world’s largest trade transport industry, but how much is it costing the world? One Earth Future (OEF) Foundation has conducted a large-scale study to quantify the cost of piracy as part of its Oceans Beyond Piracy project. Based on our calculations, maritime piracy is costing the international economy between $7 to $12 billion, per year. This report details the major calculations and conclusions made in the study. The project focuses on direct (first) order costs, but also includes some estimates of secondary (macroeconomic costs), where data is available.

La criminalité serbo-montenegrine en Europe occidentale – Alain Rodier, CF2R
Fin 2010, des opérations anti-drogue d’envergure menées par des forces de police européennes épaulées par Interpol, ont conduit à l’arrestation d’une centaine de personnes dans cinq États : Italie, Suisse, Hongrie, Slovénie, Monténégro et Serbie. Elles se sont ensuite étendues à l’Autriche, l’Allemagne et à la Macédoine. Cela a permis de faire ressortir l’omniprésence des organisations criminelles transnationales (OCT) serbes et monténégriennes en Europe occidentale.

Mephedrone use among regular ecstasy consumers in Australia – Raimondo Bruno, Allison Matthews
This report finds that use of mephedrone, a synthetic stimulant, has increased in recent years, particularly in the UK, Europe and Australia. The report also finds that:
• One-fifth (21%) of the 2010 national regular ecstasy user sample reported lifetime use of mephedrone and 17% reported use of mephedrone in the six months preceding the interview.
• Mephedrone was typically swallowed or snorted on a median frequency of 3 days or approximately once every two months.
• Use of mephedrone was most common in particular jurisdictions such as Tasmania (47%) and Victoria (28%) followed

Italie : bilan 2010 - Guardia di Finanza
La lutte contre la fraude fiscale a encore des progrès à faire en Italie. Selon la Guardia di finanza, brigade de contrôle du Trésor public, les entreprises et les ménages transalpins ont dissimulé l’an dernier 49,2 milliards d’euros de revenus à l’administration des impôts. Ce montant est en hausse de 46 % par rapport à 2009. Sur le total, quelque 10,5 milliards d’euros sont partis à l’étranger, pour moitié au Luxembourg et en Suisse.

Afghanistan Opium Survey 2011: Winter Rapid Assessment for the Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Regions January 2011
In 2011, the Opium Winter Assessment has been divided into two phases. The first phase was carried out in December 2010 and January 2011 and covered the Central, Eastern, Southern and Western region, where opium is sown in fall 2010. A second phase will take place in February-March 2011 and will cover the Northern and Northeastern region, where opium poppy is in spring. This report presents the findings of the first phase, which covers the main poppy cultivation provinces in the Southern and Western region. Based on a qualitative assessment of cultivation trends, the winter assessment in the south, west, central and east of Afghanistan predicts an overall slight decrease in opium cultivation for 2011 in this region. This follows a stable opium cultivation estimated in 2010 for the whole country, halting a declining trend in cultivation observed since 2007. The result of this assessment indicates that the current high price of opium did not produce an increase in opium cultivation in the highest cultivating provinces of Helmand and Kandahar. In these two provinces the cultivation is expected to decrease in 2011. The reasons for this development were multiple and differed from area to area. The findings of the Winter Assessment in the Southern region are encouraging. A combination of events seemed to have contributed to this development: dry weather, efforts directed against poppy cultivation and towards increasing government control as well as licit alternatives to poppy. It is premature to determine which of these factors had the bigger impact. But there also worrying signals which need to be carefully monitored: the possible return of Ghor and Kapisa provinces to poppy cultivation and the increasing cultivation trends in the Western and Eastern regions, especially in Nangarhar, which, in the past, has shown its potential to be a major poppy cultivating province.
Mexico’s Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of the Rising Violence

Congressional Research Service

In Mexico, the violence generated by drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in recent years has been, according to some, unprecedented. In 2006, Mexico’s newly elected President Felipe Calderón launched an aggressive campaign—an initiative that has defined his administration—against the DTOs that has been met with a violent response from the DTOs. Government enforcement efforts have had successes in removing some of the key leaders in all of the seven major DTOs. However, these efforts have led to violent succession struggles within the DTOs themselves. In July 2010, the Mexican government announced that more than 28,000 people had been killed in drug trafficking-related violence since December 2006, when President Calderón came to office. This report provides background on drug trafficking in Mexico, identifies the major drug trafficking organizations operating today, and analyzes the context, scope, and scale of the violence. It examines current trends of the violence, analyzes prospects for curbing violence in the future, and compares it with violence in Colombia.


While understanding the nature and extent of the violence afflicting Mexico in recent times is important, we also recognized that the violence itself is more symptom than cause of the underlying problem. For this reason, we thought it important to focus this project’s research on a series of key issues that are feeding the growth of organized crime and related violence in Mexico. We also found it important to examine several policy areas where reform and action by one or both governments could contribute to a long term sustainable approach to weakening the grip of organized crime and illegal drugs on both countries.

Maritime Security

This LibGuide is intended to provide a few starting points to assist you with your research on issues related to maritime security. That is, issues concerning sea piracy as well as maritime terrorism.

RISQUES INTERNATIONAUX

Contingency Planning: Military Escalation in Korea – CFR

Further provocations by North Korea as well as other dangerous military interactions on or around the Korean peninsula remain a serious risk and carry the danger of unintended escalation. Moreover, changes underway in North Korea could precipitate new tensions and herald a prolonged period of instability that raises the possibility of military intervention by outside powers. This Center for Preventive Action Contingency Planning Memorandum by Paul Stares analyzes potentially dangerous crises that could erupt in Korea due to the atmosphere of recrimination and mistrust that exists between North and South; the possibility of provocative, domestically driven North Korean behavior; and the potential for a troubled succession process in Pyongyang. Stares concludes that the United States has a strong and abiding interest in ensuring that another Korean war not be ignited and provides recommendations to reduce the risk of unwanted military escalation on the Korean peninsula.

China and Inter-Korean Clashes in the Yellow Sea

The deadly provocations by North Korea in the Yellow Sea in 2010 drew condemnation and limited military responses by South Korea, the U.S. and Japan, but Beijing has been reluctant to go beyond counselling restraint to all parties. While declining to call Pyongyang to account, it criticised Washington for stepped-up military exercises with allies in North East Asia. Beijing’s unwillingness to condemn North Korea prevented a unified international response and undermines China’s own security interests, as it invites further North Korean military and nuclear initiatives, risks increased militarisation of North East Asia and encourages an expanded U.S. military and political role in the region. Because it is seen as having failed to take greater responsibility to safeguard stability, China has also damaged its relationships in the region and in the West.

La Mauritanie au Carrefour des menaces régionales – Laurence Aïda Ammour – CF2R

Pays charnière entre les ensembles maghrébin et sub-saharien, la Mauritanie est confrontée depuis quelques années à de fortes menaces sécuritaires. Outre le terrorisme, elle est également prise dans le maillage des flux criminels qui s’étendent du golfe de Guinée à la Méditerranée. Laurence Aïda Ammour dresse l’inventaire de ces menaces et des mesures prises par les autorités mauritanienes afin d’y faire face.

« Moi ou le chaos », stratégie suicidaire pour la Côte d’Ivoire

Que peut-on écrire de nouveau sur la crise postélectorale en Côte d’Ivoire ? Rarement aura-t-on lu, au sujet d’un événement politique en Afrique, autant d’articles de presse, d’éditoriaux, de tribunes et de commentaires furieusement postés sur les sites Internet d’informations et sur les blogs. La confrontation des idées est féconde et bienvenue. L’intérêt, la passion, la fibre panafricaine, la qualité de juriste ou de politologue ne suffisent cependant pas pour articuler un propos définitif sur ce qui se passe en Côte d’Ivoire.
Evidence of Sudan Armed Forces Deployment in South Kordofan

Recent SSP (Satellite Sentinel Project) monitoring of the region provides the first public evidence confirming some of the recent reports of SAF deployment in South Kordofan and checkpoints on the roads north of Abyei. SSP is also monitoring SPLA positions in the region as well. Imagery collected so far by SSP corroborates claims from SPLA sources reported by the Small Arms Survey in December 2010 that SAF troops are deployed in Muglad, Kadugli, and Kharassana. The full strength and capacity of these deployments remains unconfirmed.

The Future of Pakistan – Brookings Institute

This is the capstone essay of a larger project that looks at Pakistan’s medium-term future, defined as the next five to seven years (2012-2017). Other project elements include a summary of past predictions of Pakistan’s future (Appendix) and fourteen essays commissioned for a workshop at the Rockefeller Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy in May 2010. The authors were asked to briefly set forth important variables or factors that might shape Pakistan’s future and to speculate on the likely outcomes. This essay follows the same pattern. After a brief summary of recent developments, it examines a number of factors – distributed among four categories – and then sets forth a number of alternative futures. It also explores the methodological problems inherent in this exercise and discusses policy options, especially for the United States, other Western countries, Japan, and India.

Pak Civil Society is on the Retreat – IBN Live

Author Ahmed Rashid speaks to Karan Thapar on the current situation in Pakistan.

Armenia and Azerbaijan: Preventing War – International Crisis Group

An arms race, escalating front-line clashes, vitriolic war rhetoric and a virtual breakdown in peace talks are increasing the chance Armenia and Azerbaijan will go back to war over Nagorno-Karabakh. Preventing this is urgent. Increased military capabilities on both sides would make a new armed conflict in the South Caucasus far more deadly than the 1992-1994 one that ended with a shaky truce. Neither side would be likely to win easily or quickly. Regional alliances could pull in Russia, Turkey and Iran. Vital oil and gas pipelines near the front lines would be threatened, as would the cooperation between Russia and Turkey that is central to regional stability. Another refugee crisis would be likely. To start reversing this dangerous downward trend, the opposing sides should sign a document on basic principles for resolving the conflict peacefully and undertake confidence-building steps to reduce tensions and avert a resumption of fighting.

There has been significant deterioration over the past year. Neither government is planning an all-out offensive in the near term, but skirmishes that already kill 30 people a year could easily spiral out of control. It is unclear if the leaders in Yerevan and Baku thoroughly calculate the potential consequences of a new round of tit-for-tat attacks. Ambiguity and lack of transparency about operations along the line of contact, arms deals and other military expenditures and even the state of the peace talks all contribute to a precarious situation. Monitoring mechanisms should be strengthened and confidence-building steps implemented to decrease the chance of an accidental war.

Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Evidence of Effective Approaches to Counterinsurgency, 1978-2008

Small Wars Journal

Contemporary discourse on counterinsurgency is voluminous and often contentious, but to date there has been a dearth of systematic evidence supporting the various counterinsurgency (COIN) approaches advocated by various discussants. This analysis is based on all insurgencies worldwide begun and concluded between 1978 and 2008; 30 insurgencies in total. Among other things, the analysis offers strong support for 13 commonly offered approaches to COIN, and strong evidence against three.

Counterinsurgency in Helmand: Progress and Remaining Challenges – Institute for the Study of War

Over the course of the past year, the momentum in Helmand has swung from the insurgency to the coalition and Afghan forces. Definable progress is evident in many areas throughout southern and central Helmand. This progress was largely due to “getting the inputs right,” that is, providing the decisive force that was required for successful comprehensive counterinsurgency operations. Marines and Afghan forces are currently widening the campaign to include significant population centers in the northern reaches of the province. In just a year and a half, coalition forces along with their Afghan partners have demonstrated their ability to achieve success on the battlefield through sufficiently resourced, population-centric counterinsurgency operations designed to protect the population while taking the fight to the enemy.

Yet, progress in Helmand has not been limited to the security line of effort. Substantial gains have not been made regarding the development and capabilities of the ANSF in Helmand, though there continues to be challenges in professionalizing the force. Counternarcotics efforts have been successful in some areas but need to be maintained at their current levels or expanded over the coming years to help farmers weather the multi-year transition from illicit to licit agriculture. Progress on the governance front, arguably the most important line of effort, has been heartening, though there remain significant challenges.
Winning Hearts and Minds?: Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan’s Faryab Province

The case study of Faryab Province is part of a larger comparative study that looks into the assumed causal relationship between development aid and stabilization in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Horn of Africa. The assumptions that development aid can help win “hearts and minds,” help increase the legitimacy of the Afghan government, and reduce the levels of violence have become key parts of the international effort in Afghanistan. Globally, the assumption that aid projects lead to improved security has resulted in a sharp increase in overall development funding, an increase in the percentage of activities based on strategic considerations, and an increased involvement of military actors in development activities. Little evidence exists, however, that such programming has been successful at achieving stabilization or security objectives. The present study therefore seeks to question some of the assumptions by looking at evidence from the field. Faryab is one of five provincial case studies that make up the overall Afghanistan aid and security study. The other four are Balkh, Helmand, Paktia, and Uruzgan.

Somalia: 20 Years of Anarchy – BBC

Somalia has not been under the control of a single national government since 26 January 1991, when military strongman Siad Barre was toppled. What impact has 20 years of war and instability had on Somalia and its people? This factsheet includes a political map, a map of Somali refugees worldwide, a graph depicting Somali refugees numbers in Africa since 1991, a table presenting Somalia standards of living, and images representing the rise and expansion of Somali pirate attacks.