المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

## Militias and Armies:

# Developments in Combat and Political Performance of Armed Non-State and State Actors

22 - 24 February 2020

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About the Conference | Timetable | Participants | Abstract

# About the Conference

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, there has been a steady rise in the military capacities and political roles of armed non-state actors (ANSAs), challenging the traditional hegemony of armed state actors (ASAs) on the monopoly of force. Security and Strategic Studies literature have demonstrated a significant rise in the victories of ANSAs over stronger ASAs or in the inability of armies to defeat much weaker militias. This represents a change in historical patterns. One dataset has shown that in 286 insurgencies between 1800 and 2005, state armies were victors in only 25% of them between 1976 and 2005. This contrasts the 90% victories for state armies over ANSAs between 1826 and 1850. Similar findings were replicated by other studies. Overall, regardless of the dataset employed and the timeframe selected, the findings have been consistent. ANSAs have been altering a historical trend: traditionally the consensus was that state actors monopolize the means of violence and therefore are more capable of defeating non-state actors on the battlefield. The trend applies to very different types of armed non-state actors from the FARC in Colombia to the Taliban in Afghanistan and beyond. In the Arab World, the cases of the "Islamic State" organisation (Daesh), Ansarullah (Houthis) in Yemen, Popular Mobilization Units (PMUs) and the Peshmerga Units in Iraq, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and People's Protection Units (YPG) in Syria, Hizbullah in Lebanon, Hamas in Palestine, various Libyan and Sudanese ANSAs, and others represent a challenge to various armed and unarmed state actors. The aforementioned ANSAs have combat capacities and political clout traditionally reserved for state actors.

The victories of ANSAs and/or the inability of ASAs to defeat them have prompted a number of timely research questions. How did such a revolution in combat performances and political roles happen? Why did it happen? What are the strategic implications of such a trend? How will this trend affect armed state actors and hybrid warfare in the region and beyond? And what are the implications for stability, reforms, and democratisation in the region? All these questions and more will be addressed and discussed in a symposium titled "Militias and Armies: Developments in Combat and Political Performances of Armed Non-State and State Actors." The Symposium is organised by the Strategic Studies Unit of the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS). Scholars and practitioners will discuss the main themes in seven sessions, focused on anti-status quo ANSAs, pro-status quo ANSAs, hybrid warfare and foreign interventions, transformations from ANSAs to ASAs and from ASAs to ANSAs, and developments in tactical capacities. The sessions will cover over 30 ANSAs and ASAs in more than 20 countries. After the symposium, a selected number of papers will be published in an edited volume by the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies. The volume will engage with the abovementioned research questions and cover the tactical developments and the strategic implications of the political-military rise of armed non-state actors. This concept note offers a brief, general framework for some of the issues covered in the Symposium.

Security, Military and Strategic Studies literature provides a broad range of explanations to why weaker armed non-state actors beat or survive stronger state forces. Classic and contemporary explanations primarily focus on geography, population, external support, military tactics and military strategy. Mao highlighted the centrality of population loyalty for a successful insurgent by

stating that an insurgent "must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea." The U.S. Army/ Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual concludes that insurgencies represent a "contest for the loyalty" of a mostly uncommitted general public that could side with either the status quo force(s) or the non-status quo force(s), and that success requires persuading this uncommitted public to side with the status quo by "winning their hearts and minds". Thompson, Mason and Krane, Wood, Kalyvas, Kalyvas and Kocher; Braithwaite and Johnson, Condra and Shapiro show that the brutality of the incumbents against local population affects their loyalty, and therefore helps the insurgents in terms of recruitment, resources and legitimacy. General Stanley McChrystal, the former commander of the U.S. forces in Afghanistan, refers to this effect as the "insurgent math:" for every innocent local the incumbents' forces kill, they create ten new insurgents. Kilcullen earlier coined the term "accidental guerrilla," which is a reference to the consequences of indiscriminate repression leading elements of the local population to be drawn into fighting the incumbents, without having being a priori enemies. There are also alternative arguments, showing that the brutal use of (state) violence against civilians may help the incumbents to defeat insurgents by alienating the locals.

Geography-centric explanations have also been proffered by the literature. Fearon and Laitin stress that rough terrain is one of four critical variables supportive of an insurgency. Mao argued that guerrilla warfare is most feasible when employed in large countries where the incumbents' forces tend to overstretch their lines of supply. Macaulay and Guevara explained how small numbers of armed revolutionaries in Cuba manipulated the topography to outmaneuver much stronger forces and gradually move from the second easternmost province of the island towards the capital in the West. Galula was more deterministic when it came to geographical explanations. In his seminal work Counterinsurgency Warfare, he stresses that "the role of geography [...] may be overriding in a revolutionary war. If the insurgent, with his initial weakness, cannot get any help from geography, he may well be condemned to failure before he starts". Boulding introduced the concept of the "Loss of Strength Gradient" (LSG) to geographical explanations. Briefly, it means that the further the fight is from the centre, and the deeper it is into the periphery, the more likely for the incumbents' forces to lose strength. Schutte builds on and modifies this concept to argue that it is accuracy, not necessarily strength, which gets lost as a function of distance. He introduces the "Loss of Accuracy Gradient" (LAG): incumbents' long-range attacks are more indiscriminate and less accurate (in killing insurgents) than short-range ones. Hence, civilian alienation becomes a function of distance, as a result of inaccuracy and indiscriminate killings (Schutte 2014, 8).

Other scholars highlighted the importance of foreign support. In their study of 89 insurgencies, Connable and Libicki argued that insurgencies that "benefitted from state sponsorship statistically won a 2:1 ratio out of decided cases [victory is clear for one side]." Once foreign assistance stops the success ratio of the insurgent side fell to 1:4. This is relevant only to clear-cut victories, not to mixed cases or enduring insurgencies and reflects the impact of hybrid warfare as a determinant of insurgent victory (or defeat).

Finally, scholars explained insurgent victory based on either their military tactics and/or their military strategy. In terms of tactics, Lyall and Wilson argue that modern combat machinery has undermined the incumbents' ability to win over civilian population, form ties with the locals, and gather valuable human intelligence. Jones and Johnston, Kilcullen, and Sieg argue that insurgent access to new technologies in arms, communications, intelligence information, transportation, infrastructure, and organizational/administrative capacities has allowed them to enhance their military tactics to levels reserved historically for state-affiliated armed actors. This significantly offset the likelihood of being defeated by incumbents' forces. Strategically, Arreguín-Toft offers a complex model of strategic interactions between militarily weaker actors and their stronger opponents. His study concludes that weaker forces can overcome resource paucity by employing opposing strategies (direct versus indirect) against stronger ones. A guerrilla warfare strategy (an indirect strategy) is the most suitable to employ against direct attack strategies by stronger actors including "blitzkriegs".

Several elements of these explanations apply well to organisations operating in the Middle East region, including Daesh, HTS, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the Houthis and many others. But certainly, the political environment has a major impact in the Arab World context. Votes, constitutions, good governance and socio-economic achievements are still a secondary measure and, in many Arab States, relegated to cosmetic matters as opposed to arms; which proved to be the most effective means to gain and retain political power in most of the region. Hence, armed non-state actors can endure and expand in a regional context where bullets continue to be more effective than ballots; where extreme forms of political violence are committed by state and non-state actors and then legitimated by state media and/or religious institutions; and where the eradication of the "other" is perceived as a more legitimate political strategy than compromises and reconciliations. It is critical to realize that the military rise of armed non-state actors in the region are a symptom, not a cause, of the deeply dysfunctional politics in the region. Hence, a sustained political reform and reconciliation process may eventually curb that rise.

# Timetable

# Day 1, Saturday, 22 February 2020

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| **8:30 - 9:00** | **Registration:** |
| **9:00 - 9:30** | **Opening Remarks**<br>**Chair: Massaab Al-Aloosy** |
| **9:30 - 10:30** | **Introductory Lecture**<br>**Omar Ashour**<br>The (Military) Rise of Armed Non-State Actors:<br>The (Extreme) Case of ISIS<br>**Keynote Speaker**<br>**Larry P. Goodson**<br>The First Great War of the 21st Century:<br>Hybrid Warfare from Syria to the South China Sea |
| **10:30 - 10:45** | **Coffee Break** |
| **10:45- 12:15** | **Panel One**<br>**Rebels Redux? Combat Capacities Against Status-Quos**<br>**Chair: Marwan Kabalan**<br>**Elias Farhat**<br>Houthi Military Tactics<br>**Metin Gurcan**<br>The Rojava Effect: The PKK's Changing Military Strategies after Its Achievements in Northeast Syria<br>**Muhanad Seloom**<br>YPG Female Fighters: Ideology or Tactic? |
| **12:30 - 13:45** | **Lunch Break** |

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| **13:45 - 15:15** | **Panel Two**<br>**States' Militias? Combat Capacities for Status-Quos**<br>**Chair: Abdul Aziz al-Horr**<br>**Massaab Al-Aloosy**<br>Deterrence by Insurgents: Hezbollah's Deterrent Policy and Capability against Israel<br>**Inna Rudolf**<br>The Combat Capacities of the Popular Mobilisation Units<br>**Abdou Moussa**<br>Hybrid Warfare Strategies and Tactics with Application to Tribal Militias in the Sinai |

# Day 2, Sunday, 23 February 2020

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| **09:00 - 10:30** | **Panel Three**<br>**Hybrid Warfare: Local Militias and Foreign States**<br>**Chair: Younes Mohamed al-Dharb**<br>**Anthony Chimente**<br>The UAE and Proxy Warfare in Yemen: The Political and Military Role of Armed Non-State Surrogates<br>**Göktuğ Sönmez**<br>Foreign Shi'i Fighters in the Syrian Civil War: Actors, Recruitment Strategies and Iran's Regional Role<br>**Osama Kubaar**<br>The "Libyan National Army" Militia in Libya |
| **10:30 - 10:45** | **Coffee Break** |
| **10:45 - 12:15** | **Panel Four**<br>**Global Politics of Combat**<br>**Chair: Hend Al Muftah**<br>**Thomas H. Johnson**<br>The Afghan Taliban's Developments in Combat and Political Performance<br>**Anna Bulakh**<br>Resilience Building as Response to Russian Asymmetric Warfare in Ukraine<br>**David Darchiashvili**<br>August 2008: The Pinnacle of the Russo-Georgian Hybrid War |
| **12:15 - 13:15** | **Lunch Break** |

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| **13:15 - 14:45** | **Panel Five**<br>**From Militias to Armies**<br>**Chair: Abdelwahab El-Affendi**<br>**Hamid Ali**<br>Rapid Support Forces in Sudan: From Militia to Army<br>**Filip Ejdus and Tijana Rečević**<br>Complex Links Between DDR, TJ and SSR:<br>A Shadow of the Never Dismantled Paramilitary Units in Serbia<br>**Gareth Stansfield and Allan Hasaniyan**<br>From Insurgents to Regulars:<br>The Military and Political Implications of the Peshmerga's Transformation |

# Day 3, Monday, 24 February 2020

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| **9:00 - 10:30** | **Panel Six**<br>**Armies: Centralisation and De-Centralisation**<br>**Chair: Dana El Kurd**<br>**Gregory Waters**<br>The Assad's Militias: Strength Through Decentralization<br>**Hamzeh Almoustafa**<br>The Combat Performance of Al-Nusra Front: The Transition from Jihadist Militia to the Syrian Salvation Government's "Army"<br>**Ahmed Hussein**<br>How Did Hamas Establish Its "Army?" The Development of Al-Qassam Battalions' Military Action in Palestine |
| **10:30 – 10:45** | **Coffee Break** |
| **10:45 – 12:45** | **Panel Seven**<br>**Tactical Developments**<br>**Chair: Rashid Hamad Al-Nuaimi**<br>**Hugo Kaaman**<br>How Car Bombs Became a Battlefield Weapon<br>**Dan Gettinger**<br>Drone Wars: The Legacy of the ISIS Drone Program<br>**Mohammed Al-Dorani**<br>Most Famous Cyber-Attacks: Nations States and Organized Groups<br>**Kirstin Braithwaite**<br>Subterranean Warfare: How Militant Groups Enhance their Combat Effectiveness |
| **12:45 – 13:00** | **Concluding Remarks** |
| **13:00 – 14:00** | **Lunch** |

# Participants

# Abstracts


## Abdou Moussa

Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies with a master's degree in Political Science. His research interests focus on development, human rights and democratic reform in Egypt and the Arab Region, with special interest in the social dimensions of the "war on terror". His publications on that topic include a paper titled "Sinai between Globalized Jihad and Localized Oppression."


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## Hybrid Warfare Strategies and Tactics with Application to Tribal Militias in the Sinai


This paper builds a model for field support between regular and non-regular combatants that adopts the concepts of hybrid warfare. To build this model, the paper looks at the case of the tribal militias in the Sinai, which operate alongside the Egyptian armed forces. The paper hypothesizes that the effectiveness of using non-state armed actors in achieving the goals of regular armies in the context of a hybrid war depends on the latter's ability to socially integrate and the effectiveness of role-swapping. The paper begins by describing the context in which an asymmetric war erupted in the Sinai between the state and the "Islamic State" (IS) Sinai Province, outlining the social and economic considerations that prompted the state to strategically adopt an alliance with forces outside of state control. Then, it gives a description of the tribal militias, reviewing its emergence, structure, and geographical scope and analyzing the tribal formation of this militia, its leadership, and the conditions of its treaty/proxy agreement with the state. The research documents the development of the militia from the declaration of the ongoing military confrontation between IS and the Tarabin tribe in April 2017 until now. It describes and analyzes combat tactics employed by militias and ends with the introduction of a preliminary model of hybrid war strategies and tactics that can be applied to tribal militias in the Sinai.


## Ahmed Hussein

Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies. Editor-in-Chief of *Siyasaat Arabia* journal. He received a PhD in International Relations from the University of Florence, Italy and has published several articles on international relations.


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## How Did Hamas Establish Its "Army?" The Development of Al-Qassam Battalions' Military Action in Palestine


The study examines the development of Hamas' armed activism from the eve of its launch in 1987 up until the al-Qassam Brigades military wing of the movement was established in 1992 and beyond, and monitors its development throughout confrontations with the Israeli occupation in the wars of 2008, 2012 and 2014. The paper draws on the notes and testimonies of the political and military leaders of the movement in Palestine and on the available data on the armed confrontations with the Israeli occupation. The study argues that the development of Hamas as a militarily active agent in the region differs according to both the stages of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and also the nature of the movement's political thinking and its relations with regional and international systems. This shaped the changing identity of the movement, leading it to determine its interests and role in the region based on its military strength. The al-Qassam Brigades became a pseudo-classic army in Gaza, after initially being made up of small groups with modest equipment, as is the case in the West Bank to this day.


## Allan Hassaniyan

Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Kurdish Studies at the University of Exeter. His research interests comprise contemporary Kurdish/Iranian politics, Kurdish nationalism and the national movement, security and armed movements, as well as civil society and political and cultural activism in Iranian Kurdistan. He received his PhD in Kurdish Studies from the University of Exeter. His doctoral research examined the 20th-century's cross-border Iranian-Iraqi Kurdish movements' interaction and the effects of this interaction on the mobilisation of the Iranian Kurdish movement.


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## From Insurgents to Regulars: The Military and Political Implications of the Peshmerga's Transformation

The Peshmerga forces of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) attained a heightened level of international attention following the emergence of the Islamic State in the north of Iraq from 2014 onwards. Positioned as conveniently placed ground forces to be trained, equipped, and, to a degree, organized by Western forces, the Peshmerga became a critical element of the campaign to defeat IS in 2016/17. However, while much has been written about the Peshmerga force, and a great deal of it romanticized, there has been little work addressing the combat effectiveness of the force, and particularly how the inherent politicization of the Peshmerga, as militias of the KDP and PUK, may inhibit them going forward. In recent years, several Western governments, including the US, UK, and Germany, have been involved in promoting a strategy to unify and normalize the Peshmerga forces, but with only a limited effect to date. This paper addresses the development of the Peshmerga, assesses its combat capabilities, and considers its future in light of changes in the Iraqi state as well as the efforts of Western governments turn these non-state party militias into a regularized military organization of the KRI within a federal Iraq.

## Osama Kubbar

Senior Consultant in the Strategic Studies Centre of the Qatari Armed Forces. He is specialized in Middle Eastern affairs, with a specific focus on Libyan politics, the US policies towards the Middle East and the Arab Uprising.

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## "The Libyan National Army" Militia in Libya

The paper details the construction of the so called Libyan National Army (LNA) assembled and lead by the retired General Khalifa Hafter's since May 15th 2014 as he simultaneously declared a war on terror (Operation Dignity) & the establishment of the LNA. The paper challenges the notion that the LNA is entirely Libyan or reflective of the Libyan public wishes, or it has legitimacy.

The paper also questions if the LNA is a truly national force with geographical reach across the country, comprised of regular armed forces as opposed to autonomous militia groups.

The research primarily focusses on the combat capacities of the LNA and how its military was built by a foreign patronage network (UAE, Egypt, France and, later, Russian mercenaries). It concludes by detailing the impacts of hybrid warfare and the alliance between triable militias, local warlords, salafi armed networks and foreign units of regular armies on Libya's prospects of peace, stability, and democratization.


## Anna Bulakh

Director of DisinfoTech. She is also a Senior Associate Research Fellow at the Center for Defense Studies in Kyiv, Ukraine. She is a graduate of the International Relations and European Integration program for future diplomats and civil servants at the Estonian School of Diplomacy and was formerly a Research Fellow at the International Center for Defense Studies, Tallinn, Estonia, where she led the energy security and resilience building research programs from 2013 to 2018.


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## Resilience Building as Response to Russian Asymmetric Warfare in Ukraine

The Kremlin has an inherent belief in the power of information control to advance its political and military goals. Its approach to achieving information superiority involves engaging in both 'technical' and 'cognitive' attacks to advance Russian foreign policy goals. Its tactics range from propaganda to hacking to kinetic military operations. According to the Russian security and defence doctrine, cyberspace is only one part of the 'information space'. The goal of the paper is to develop awareness of Russia's influence operations in Ukraine as illustrative of the threats posed by Russian asymmetric warfare. In the first part, the paper discusses influence operations and the informational domain as the entry point for destabilization strategies. The security of a state's informational domain depends on its informational and digital resilience. Russian strategy targets and tests this resilience. It aims to effectively disorganize governance, delude adversaries and reduce an opponent's will to resist. The paper examines informational resilience as the ability of the population and institutions in various sectors to withstand and maintain the level of trust under the continuous attacks of disinformation. A high level of trust, it is argued, is essential in the ability of the state to build a comprehensive response strategy to deter further penetration of the enemy state and switch to a kinetic response.

## Anthony Chimente

Researcher and Advisor with Gulf State Analytics. He earned his PhD from Durham University, UK. His research interests are civil-military relations and the fragmentation of state power and the sub-communalization of violence around militias. Dr. Chimente previously taught at Durham University, UK.

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## The UAE and Proxy Warfare in Yemen: The Political and Military Role of Armed Non-State Surrogates

Since 2015, UAE officials have focused on identifying, equipping, and training non-state actors to help implement Emirati objectives in southern Yemen. This paper examines how the nature of Emirati military support impacted the development in combat compacities of the Security Belt Forces (SBF), Hadrami Elite Forces (HEF), and Shabwani Elite Forces (SEF). Importantly, the political will and motivation surrounding Emirati involvement is outlined to highlight how political will impacted the nature and process of developing surrogate militia in southern Yemen. The paper additionally explores the nature of recruitment, training, and myriad support provided to the militia, and proceeds to focus on how the nature of this military support enabled the proxies to perform in combat against the forces of President Hadi and Ansar Allah, in a dyadic interaction. While the SBF, HEF, and SEF demonstrated varying degrees of combat success when aided by the Emirati military, and the Emiratis succeeded in establishing a political entity and an effective proxy force, the paper will demonstrate how the strategic ramifications of success entail the fragmentation of Yemen and deterioration of the conflict, and restrict the possibility of security sector reform.

## Dan Gettinger

Founder and Co-Director of the Center for the Study of the Drone College, an interdisciplinary research and education institution at Bard College in New York. His research concerns commercial drone industry and regulations, defence research and procurement, and international trade and security. He is a Non-Resident Fellow at the Modern War Institute at West Point and an expert at the Forum on the Arms Trade. He holds a BA in Political Studies from Bard College.

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## Drone Wars: The Legacy of the ISIS Drone Program

In 2014, ISIS released an hour-long documentary that opened with drone footage of the Iraqi city of Fallujah. The blurred and uneven aerial video looked amateurish, but it was a sign that a shift in warfare was underway. Suddenly, the seemingly innocuous consumer drone had a military purpose, one that granted non-state actors and other groups with limited means an aerial force to be reckoned with. Over the next few years, ISIS became much more proficient with using drones, eventually developing an arsenal so prolific that, as one US Army officer acknowledged in 2017, ISIS had complete control of Mosul's airspace under 3,500 feet. Today, various non-state actors from Central America to Southeast Asia have learned from this example, fashioning consumer drones of various types for their own purposes. State actors too have taken heed, as more and more militaries seek to adapt the consumer drone to serve as an organic reconnaissance asset for small infantry units. This paper examines the various stages of the ISIS drone program and its legacy for security and warfare.


## David Darchiashvili

Professor at Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia. He graduated from Tbilisi State University and throughout his career has served as a visiting scholar at various Western educational and research institutions. In 2002-2003, he was a Fulbright Fellow at Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC. He teaches national and regional security and has authored several articles, including: "Soviet Path Dependency as an Impediment of the Democratization in Georgia".


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## August 2008: The Pinnacle of the Russo-Georgian Hybrid War


This paper discusses the decades-long confrontation of the USSR successor state, the Russian Federation, with the newly independent republic of Georgia. The author argues that from the very beginning, this confrontation featured methods currently ascribed to hybrid warfare, although this concept has not been applied to the conflict in the 1990s, nor during the large-scale Russian army intervention of Georgia in 2008. Only in 2014, when armed actions in Crimea and the Eastern Ukraine, masterminded by Moscow, occurred, retrospectively, did some experts return to the analysis of Russo-Georgian war and draw comparisons with the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, seeing common hybrid motivations and tactics in both cases. The author compares the nature of armed clashes in Ukraine since 2014 and in Georgia prior or during 2008. Foreign support of armed insurgencies is one element of hybrid war. It is the main reason why armed non-state actors become increasingly capable of challenging armed state actors. This is taking place in Ukraine as well as in Georgia. The author argues, however, that the Georgian case is relatively unique in this respect. It reveals the limits of the hybrid threats if the state under attack becomes consolidated and finds strategic allies in its turn. In August 2008, Russian officials and operatives on the ground realized that their proxy/insurgency agencies on Georgian soil were losing ground after facing increasingly modernized Georgian military and special forces. Consequently, Russia had to resort to conventional warfare. The paper's main argument is that insurgencies, instigated or manipulated by foreign powers, can only bear decisive results if they face weak state institutions in the targeted country.

**Elias Farhat**

Retired Lebanese General and Researcher and now leader of the Fouad Shehab Command and Staff College and Director of the Lebanese Army Directorate of Orientation. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from the Lebanese University. He served as Editor-in-Chief for several magazines, such as Al-Jaysh and the National Defense Magazine (Lebanon). He has participated in many international conferences and has translated and written several books.

## Houthi Military Tactics

Military observers and researchers have long pondered the Houthi phenomenon in Yemen, particularly considering their military capabilities, combat tactics, and continued weapons development. The development of ballistic and cruise missiles and drones has drawn even more attention. But more important is the organizational capacity, leadership, and control that has emerged among the Houthis in their battles, as well as their provision of logistical supplies for fighters and residents. The Houthi organizational phenomenon does not apply to regular armies, revolutionary war, or rebels, nor to asymmetric war organizations or the widespread inter-tribal wars in Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula. Arguably, Houthi organizational structure was imposed by the strategic climate of this war and has become a mixture of all the above. The constants that do not change are first geography, and secondly, human resources. The paper begins with an explanatory description of the Houthis or, as they refer to themselves, "Ansar Allah". It goes on to detail the opposing forces, the Arab coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, President Hadi's forces, and the Southern Movement. The paper also documents existing military and new capabilities, as well as Houthi military tactics.


## Filip Ejdus

Associate Professor at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade. He obtained his PhD from the University of Belgrade. Most recently, he completed a two-year post-doc as a Marie Curie Fellow at the University of Bristol. In his research he investigates management of (in)security during crises and beyond borders with a geographic focus on the Western Balkans, European Union, Middle East and Horn of Africa. Since 2012, he has served as the (co)Editor of the *Journal of Regional Security.*


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## Complex Links Between DDR, TJ and SSR: A Shadow of the Never Dismantled Paramilitary Units in Serbia


Since no external pressure for DDR was exercised over Serbia in the aftermath of the Bosnian and Kosovo wars, an opportunity for more responsibility in dealing with these issues arose with the victory of a pro-democratic coalition in October 2000. Nevertheless, since the emergence from the authoritarian regime materialized through what is often called a "pacted revolution", some domains within the security sector remained "reserved" and untouched by the authority of new political elites. In exchange for their passivity during the revolution, some segments of the security forces managed to veto the lustration and opening of secret files from during the war and authoritarian rule, thus ensuring near-total impunity for many officials who had been implicated in human rights abuses. The same veto extended to all para-military formations close to the political and military leadership, which eventually resulted in their assassination of a pro-reform Prime Minister in 2003. This paper thus illuminates the post-war and post-authoritarian trajectory of paramilitary units' reintegration into the state apparatus and society and indicates the major security and political consequences of how the DDR process in Serbia occurred, or rather, did not occur.

## Gareth Stansfield

Professor of Middle East Politics and Al-Qasimi Chair of Arab Gulf Studies at the University of Exeter. Currently, he is the Director of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter. He has been a long-time observer of Kurdish politics and has written extensively on Kurdish and Iraqi matters. He is also a Senior Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute and was, for 10 years, an Associate Fellow at Chatham House.

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## From Insurgents to Regulars: The Military and Political Implications of the Peshmerga's Transformation

The Peshmerga forces of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) attained a heightened level of international attention following the emergence of the Islamic State in the north of Iraq from 2014 onwards. Positioned as conveniently placed ground forces to be trained, equipped, and, to a degree, organized by Western forces, the Peshmerga became a critical element of the campaign to defeat IS in 2016/17. However, while much has been written about the Peshmerga force, and a great deal of it romanticized, there has been little work addressing the combat effectiveness of the force, and particularly how the inherent politicization of the Peshmerga, as militias of the KDP and PUK, may inhibit them going forward. In recent years, several Western governments, including the US, UK, and Germany, have been involved in promoting a strategy to unify and normalize the Peshmerga forces, but with only a limited effect to date. This paper addresses the development of the Peshmerga, assesses its combat capabilities, and considers its future in light of changes in the Iraqi state as well as the efforts of Western governments turn these non-state party militias into a regularized military organization of the KRI within a federal Iraq.


## Göktuğ Sönmez

Director of Security Studies, Middle Eastern Studies Center (ORSAM). He obtained his PhD in Politics and International Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. His research areas are Radicalization and Violent Extremism, Non-State Armed Actors, Turkish Foreign Policy and Energy Politics. He has published many pieces in national and international journals and provides commentary on radicalization and terrorism topics as well as Turkish foreign policy.


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## Foreign Shi'i Fighters in the Syrian Civil War: Actors, Recruitment Strategies and Iran's Regional Role

Iran's "proxy warfare" gradually attracted increasing attention following its involvement in Iraq and Syria and, even more so, in the post-JCPOA era. Due to the country's nuclear program, international efforts to monitor it, the impact of the sanctions and the economic and political consequences of the possible termination of these sanctions, and the "proxy war" it actively carries out in the region, Iran has been one of the key focal points in international relations. Iran's efforts to shape its immediate geography through "proxies" is demonstrated in Syria's Civil War, where, together with other actors in the field, it has used the "know-how" accumulated over the years to keep the Syrian regime in power. In this study, Iran's use of a transboundary strategy to ensure the regime's authority in Syria is discussed focusing on the two proxies, namely the Fatemiyoun and Zeynabiyoun militias. The paper will provide a general discussion of Iran's post-revolutionary regional ambitions and key actors within this context, followed by an analysis of the Syrian Civil War dimension. It will demonstrate how Iran has become an influential actor in the Syria Civil War through its regional proxy-centered strategy and discuss which online and offline strategies have stood out in this process.

## Gregory Waters

Researcher and writer on the Syrian civil war and extremist groups, primarily utilizing Syrian community Facebook pages for his projects. He received an MA in Global Studies from the University of California, Berkeley. His work has involved tracking combat death in Syria, studying loyalist military units, and assessing ISIS global presence through Facebook. His work has been published in the Middle East Institute, International Review, Bellingcat, and OpenDemocracy.

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## The Assad's Militias: Strength Through Decentralization

This paper asserts that loyalist Syrian militias can be categorized into five main groups, each of which will be briefly detailed and provided examples of:

1. Private militias
2. Foreign-founded Syrian militias
3. Intelligence-founded militias
4. Syrian Arab Army-founded militias
5. Militia-fied military units

The author presents three case studies. The history, structure, and internal and external support of the Tiger Forces are examined in order to provide a detailed look at Intelligence-founded militias. Then, the Qalamoun Shield Forces are assessed in order to provide an analysis of Syrian Arab Army-founded militias. Lastly, the 4th Division is used as an example of a military unit that has transformed into a militia over the course of the war. After presenting these case studies, the author argues that the creation and support of militias proved crucial for the Syrian regime's success throughout the war. The strategy by which the regime deployed regular SAA units, the impact this had on the coherence of the SAA as a fighting force, and the key role militias played in augmenting SAA shortcomings are also explored in this paper.


## Hamid Ali

Associate Professor at the department of public administration at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He received a PhD in Economics and Public Policy from the University of Texas, Austin in 2004. He was Acting Dean for School of Public Administration and Development Economics at Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and Director of Public Policy (2016-2017). He also served as an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Public Policy and Administration at the American University in Cairo (2013-2016). He is the author of *Ethnic Conflict and Natural Resources*.


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## Rapid Support Forces in Sudan: From Militia to Army

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) evolved from a Janjaweed tribal force fighting on horsebacks to militiamen riding SUVs equipped with heavy machine guns. This force performed effectively and turned the fortunes of the government side. They used the same rebel tactics and pickup trucks to maneuver in the battlefield by trapping their foes and attacking them. Politically, since its inception, the RSF has been considered a localized and limited capability force that cannot challenge the army. On the surface, they showed no interest in politics but the RSF soon became a counterweight to the army and a tool of repression against the President's political rivals in the opposition. The RSF were under the direct command of the President.

The RSF extended its influence by getting involved in the war in Yemen. This war and the patronage system of the government enabled the force not only to build an economic enterprise but also to receive foreign aid from the European Union and build foreign relations. The purpose of this paper is to understand how a regional, inter-tribal militia became the most influential division in the Sudanese army with autonomous international relations and foreign policy.

## Hamzeh Almoustafa

PhD student in Middle Eastern Politics at Exeter University in the UK and assistant researcher at the Arab Center. He holds a master's degree in political science and international relations from the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies in Doha and previously worked as a researcher at the Al-Sharq Studies Center. The Arab Center published his book, *The Virtual Public Sphere in the Syrian Revolution: Features, Orientations, and Mechanisms to Create Public Opinion.* His research interests relate to international and regional affairs in general and the Syrian situation in particular.

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## The Combat Performance of Al-Nusra Front: The Transition from Jihadist Militia to the Syrian Salvation Government's "Army"

This paper explores the combat performance of Al-Nusra Front - which has undergone several name changes, most recently becoming Hayat Tahrir al-Sham - since its founding, and finally took sole control of Idlib, the last stronghold of the Syrian armed opposition. The study monitors the development of the work of jihadi organizations in their quest for an "emirate" and the transition from the guerrilla warfare and traditional methods by which they have been characterized to the institutionalization of their forces as a military wing of a political organization or executive government. Thus, following a review of the most prominent academic literature on the subject, the paper looked at jihadi theorists' writings on preferred combat methods, especially the jihadi modus operandi that Abu Mus'ab al-Suri described in his book The Global Islamic Resistance Call, adopted by Al-Nusra Front during the "nesting" stage before declaring themselves in 2012. The paper then analyses Al-Nusra's combat performance according to two time periods. The first extends from Al-Nusra's foundation until 2014, when methods of combat were limited, and involved explosives, Inghimāsīyūn, adhesive IEDs, close-quarter combat, long-range artillery and besieging important sites and ammunition stores. The second stage follows an increase in organisation's associates and resources, and a clear definition of its political project to establish a rational "Islamic government". The paper explores changes in the relationship of al-Nusra with other factions throughout these two phases.


## Hugo Kaaman

Independent Researcher, with a focus on the use of Suicide Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (SVBIEDs) by armed non-state actors – specifically ISIS. For the past few years he has researched and written in-depth about the evolving nature of the group's use of SVBIEDs, and how it has transformed and adapted through a series of innovations. Hugo has researched and written for publications such as those produced by Jane's Military & Security Assessments Intelligence Centre and the Middle East Institute.


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## How Car Bombs Became a Battlefield Weapon

The suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) has been one of ISIS's most powerful and versatile weapons. Used extensively in active combat on the front lines, SVBIEDs were the primary means by which the group was able to capture territory and temporarily stave off advances by opposing forces. Throughout the years, the group consistently adapted its SVBIED designs based on its operational environment and other factors, with modifications in armour, payload organization, colour, and detonation technology. While the evolving nature of these SVBIED designs meant that ISIS was often able to remain a step ahead of opposing forces – it has also had dangerous consequences on a global level. Advanced SVBIED designs have been shared between various ISIS provinces through technology transfer, not only within Iraq and Syria, but also globally to provinces in Nigeria and the Philippines. ISIS's research and development of SVBIED technology presents a continued threat, even after the collapse of the territorial caliphate, due to the group's ability to share and export its designs, enabling nascent ISIS provinces halfway around the world to launch powerful attacks on unsuspecting communities. These readily available designs could also potentially facilitate a re-emergence of ISIS in Syria or Iraq if the group's strength was to increase.


## Inna Rudolf

Research Fellow and PhD Candidate at King's College London's Department of War Studies. She completed her Master's degree in Political Science and Islamic Studies in 2012 at the University of Heidelberg, specializing in Conflict Resolution, Peace Building and Political Islam. During her studies, she headed the regional group on "Conflicts in the Middle East and the Maghreb" at the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research. In addition to her field work in Iraq, she has lived in Libya, Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia and Palestine.


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## The Combat Capacities of the Popular Mobilisation Units

Established as an umbrella organization that includes approximately fifty distinct armed groups, Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also known as al-Hashd al-Sha'abi (HS), are plagued with a wide variety of internal tensions and ideological divisions along strategic fault lines. Regardless of how deeply entrenched the PMU may seem, in terms of organizational development the paramilitary umbrella is still in its infancy. To defend their version of a strong state, they have so far not shied away from monopolizing its institutional foundations, under the weary eye, or often with the blessing, of power-driven formal bureaucracies. Preserving their privileges, however, would require the PMU to provide convincing evidence of their commitment to safeguarding the rule of law. With the hybrid nature of the PMU demonstrating characteristics of a state-sanctioned paramilitary while being comprised of autonomously operating factions evading state control, this paper will contextualize the power dynamics underlying the organization's institutional trajectory. To showcase the often-conflicting ideologies, allegiances and interests on the ground, this PMU case study will draw on primary Arabic sources, Iraqi legislative documents, official government statements, and semi-structured interviews with PMU members, government officials, Iraqi analysts and representatives of Iraq's security sector.


## Kirstin Braithwaite

Assistant Professor of International Relations at James Madison College, Michigan State University. She earned an MA in Comparative Ethnic Conflict from Queens University, Belfast and an MA and PhD in Political Science from the University of Notre Dame. She specializes in international security and is interested in nationalism, identity, and military conflict. She has published on ethnic conflict contagion, the impact of gender and racial norms on civil-military relations, on combat effectiveness, and on urban warfare.


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## Subterranean Warfare: How Militant Groups Enhance their Combat Effectiveness

To conduct military operations, militant groups must manage several difficulties such as funding, logistics, maintaining public support, and force/leadership protection, to name a few. Militant groups have sometimes used tunneling to address these challenges. Drawing on examples from several 20th century militant groups, this paper will explore the several ways in which these groups use tunnels to increase their combat capacities. It posits that there are three main issues that tunnels can help these groups address: tactics, logistics, and public support. Tunnels are a military technology that can be used for direct offensive or defensive action, but they also have important political functions that indirectly contribute to combat effectiveness; they can be used for arms smuggling as well as smuggling goods into besieged areas. Additionally, this paper will consider state efforts to counter tunnels and highlight the difficulties they pose to even well-funded and experienced militaries. Tunnels are challenging to detect, difficult to completely destroy, and pose political problems when located in urban environments. They are not a new tool, but as conflict in urban environments becomes more common, they will become an increasingly important – and difficult – issue for states to address.

## Larry P. Goodson

Professor of Middle East Studies at the US Army War College, where he is the only person to have held the General Dwight D. Eisenhower Chair of National Security twice (2004-2007, 2014-2017). In 2019, he was on sabbatical from the War College as a Visiting Fellow in the Changing Character of War Center, Pembroke College, Oxford University. Since joining the US government in 2002, he has served as a regional advisor on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Middle East.

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## The First Great War of the 21st Century: Hybrid Warfare from Syria to the South China Sea

The United States, Russia, and China are now engaged in the first global war of the 21st century. The latter two powers are using the hybrid warfare approach, which entails the use of all instruments, elements, and determinants of power in a coordinated, comprehensive, and holistic way (including violence or the threat of violence) to achieve political ends. The strategy of hybrid warfare is to achieve national policy goals without pushing a stronger opponent too far up the escalation ladder. Hybrid warfare tactics are as varied and multiple as can be imagined, but often emphasize deniability, disinformation, deception, and destabilization, and very often armed non-state actors (ANSAs) are used as proxies. ANSAs are involved in hybrid warfare in two important ways, often both simultaneously. They can employ many hybrid warfare tactics in pursuit of their own interests, and they can be used as proxies by states or other ANSAs. Today, ANSAs can operate in all five domains of war, albeit with fewer resources and weight than major states, although often with greater agility. The emergence of ANSAs as key hybrid warfare players reflects the reality of the changing character of war today.


## Massaab Al-Aloosy

Assistant Professor at the Critical Security Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He worked as a lecturer at Tufts University and the World Peace Foundation in the United States. He specializes in armed groups and is interested in strategic studies and foreign policy in the Middle East. He holds a PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.


## Deterrence by Insurgents: Hezbollah's Deterrent Policy and Capability against Israel

Deterrence between states is a long-established theory in security studies but it is rare, if not unique, that an insurgency would deter a state from attacking another country. Insurgencies in the Middle East are increasingly playing an international role of which deterrence is only a part. This generates an interesting dynamic in which an insurgency uses untraditional tools in order to dissuade an adversarial state from attacking the group or the country in which it exists. This research asks: How is Hezbollah able to deter Israel? Despite occasional skirmishes and a 33-day war, Hezbollah and Israel maintained a defensive posture while improving their offensive capabilities since 2000. By many, if not most, accounts, the cause of the 2006 was a miscalculation largely by then inexperienced Israeli politicians. Moreover, the geopolitical changes stemming from the Syrian civil war had an impact on the conflict between the two warring parties, but the tacit mutual understanding remains intact. There will be no winner in a prolonged confrontation between Hezbollah and Israel. Hezbollah recognizes its inability to destroy Israel while the latter believes it cannot extirpate the party of God; strategic interaction between Hezbollah and Israel thus paved the way for mutual deterrence.

## Metin Gurcan

Team commander/military adviser/liaison officer for Turkish Special Forces from 2000-2008. He obtained his PhD from the Department of Political Science of Bilkent University in 2016 and held the position of fellow at Changing Character of War Program of Oxford University. He has published a number of books including *What Went Wrong in Afghanistan? Understanding Counter-insurgency in Tribalized Rural Muslim Environments*, (2016) and *Opening the Blackbox: Turkish Military before and after July 15,* (2018).

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## The Rojava Effect: The PKK's Changing Military Strategies after Its Achievements in Northeast Syria

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)-led military mobilization in predominantly Kurdish areas of northeast Syria, referred to as Rojava (Western Kurdistan) by Kurds has transformed the PKK. Namely, the rise of Rojava due to YPG's achievements has affected the PKK's ideology, political and military strategy, propaganda methods, and foreign policy approach. In ideological terms, while the PKK's position on the United States and the West is becoming blurred as they emerge as pro-YPG geopolitical actors, increasing inclusion of global radical leftist/anarchist elements into the ideological frameworks has been to the detriment of Kurdish ethno-nationalist emphasis. Re-territorialization of the PKK's political strategy has implied moving away from post-materialist values towards more traditional materialist arguments associated mainly with state, territorial control, security, and stability. In terms of military strategy, there is a shift from rural guerrilla-style warfare to more conventional military strategies, such as territorial control/area denial through the use of armored warfare, siege warfare, urban warfare, indirect fire support, and large-scale logistic movements. This paper argues that this success story also poses a new challenge as Rojava emerges as a new power center in the PKK's regional military quest that may one day rival the PKK's strategic command, based in the Qandil of northern Iraq.


## Mohammed Al-Dorani

Chair of the Information Technology Department at the Community College of Qatar, where he oversees the first bachelor program on Cyber Security and Networking in Qatar. He attained his PhD from George Washington University, DC. His first book, *Cyber Danger & GCC Countries* was published in 2016 and his second, *Cyber War, Qatar Blockade, & GCC Countries*, in 2018.


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## Most Famous Cyber-Attacks: Nations States and Organized Groups

Cyber-attacks carried out by criminal, activist, or state-sponsored individuals or groups have increased exponentially over the past 5 years, not only impacting social, economic, and political landscapes, but also the national securities of countries. In many cases, the identities of individuals and groups that carry out cyber-attacks is not revealed. Individuals and groups belonging to certain militia, state-sponsored groups, and proxies carrying out cyber-attacks are difficult to locate, and when identified, it is difficult to have them extradited from one country to another due to different laws and jurisdictions. This paper explores the 10 most infamous cyber-attacks occurring in recent years which have had huge ramifications on countries, companies, and individuals. There are hundreds of similar attacks taking place each day often either going unreported, or underreported in the media. The selection of these 10 cyber-attacks is based on extensive research undertaken for two books written by the author. They will be included in the third book being written by the author and published in early 2020.


## Muhanad Seloom

Assistant Professor in Critical Security Studies at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He is also an Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter (UK). His research focuses on government security policies, strategy and defence studies, anti-terror policies and legislations, and securitisation of ethno-nationalist conflicts. His most recent study "Transitional Justice and counter-terrorism in Iraq", was published in the *Wolverhampton Law Journal* (2019).


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## YPG Female Fighters: Ideology or Tactic?

From Sri Lanka to Angola to Latin America, women have long participated in armed ethno-nationalist guerrilla movements. The all-female Women's Protection Units (YPJ) brigade, a military wing of the Democratic Union Party (PYD), was instrumental in the battle to liberate Ayn Al-Arab (Kobani) city in the Syrian Kurdish region from the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). Their noticeable role notwithstanding, it remains unclear whether Kurdish female fighters chose to take up combat roles because of external security pressures or whether they were inspired by the PYD's secular egalitarian ideology. Against a backdrop of a structurally patriarchal society, this research examines the role of female fighters in the PYD. Drawing on the YPJ case study, this research asks: Is the recruitment and deployment of the YPJ female fighters ideological or tactical? Insights into the nature of female militants' participation in the PYD are drawn from data collected through semi-structured interviews with Kurdish women from the Syrian region of Kurdistan (Rojava) and experts in Kurdish militancy. The author argues that there is a need for a more nuanced view of women's participation in the YPJ. Women might have different reasons for being a part of these groups; and without speaking to them, or at least attempting to appreciate their motives from their perspective, their role or participation can never truly be appreciated.

## Omar Ashour

Associate Professor of Security and Strategic Studies in the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and Founding Director of the Critical Security Studies Graduate Program and the Director of the Strategic Studies Unit at the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies. His research focuses on asymmetric warfare, insurgencies, state and non-state combat effectiveness, and democratization. He is the author of forthcoming book *How ISIS Fights: Military Tactics in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Egypt* and previously taught at the University of Exeter (UK) and at McGill University (Canada). He has served as a senior consultant for the United Nations on security sector reform, counterterrorism, and de-radicalization issues.

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## The (Military) Rise of Armed Non-State Actors: The (Extreme) Case of ISIS

This presentation is a guiding framework for the conference papers. It focuses on the developments in combat capacities and military effectiveness of armed non-state actors (the dependent variable across all the conference papers), as well as their impacts on battles/wars outcomes. The paper outlines the sources of strength of armed non-state actors (ANSAs) and generally explains why stronger state armed actors (ASAs) have sustained difficulties in defeating them on the tactical, operational and strategic levels. The presentation is divided into four sections. First, it demonstrates a historical change in battle/war outcomes involving armed state actors (represented by incumbent governments, ruling regimes and so on) and armed non-state actors (represented by insurgents and rebels etc.). Second, it outlines the main explanations in the Security and Strategic Studies scholarly literature explaining that historical change in terms of outcomes. The third part focuses on the extreme case of the Islamic State (IS) Organisation, and how state actors have dealt with it. Finally, it provides some concluding observations and introduces the main conference themes. The paper is partly based on the research findings of the book *How ISIS Fights: Military Tactics in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Egypt*, including an analysis of 10 battlefronts and 20 battles in 4 countries that involved 17 IS "Provinces," 26 Armed Non-State Actors, and units from 9 State Armies.


## Thomas H. Johnson

Research Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School (Monterey, California, USA). He has conducted research and published widely on Afghanistan and South Asia for over three decades. In 2009, he served as the Senior Political and Counterinsurgency Advisor to Gen. Jonathan Vance, Commander of Canadian Forces in Afghanistan. His most recent book, *Taliban Narratives: The Uses and Power of Stories in the Afghanistan Conflict* was published in 2018.


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# The Afghan Taliban's Developements in Combat and Political Performance

Since 1978, insurgents in Afghanistan have endured a state of constant conflict, facing two occupying forces that have fielded modernized, highly capable militaries with a multitude of numerical and technological advantages. The Afghan Taliban have evolved from a small group of mullahs, *madrasa* students and *mujahedin* into one of the most innovative and adaptive insurgencies in modern history. This paper will focus on the approach to asymmetric conflict that has driven the Taliban into a rapid cycle of adaptation and innovation that continues today. The Taliban way of war and approach to governance focus on turning populations against political weakness and fielding simple and effective governance at the local and provincial levels. The Taliban has proven to be a highly adaptive, innovative, and resilient organization, drawing on tactics from conflicts in Iraq, Pakistan, and their own experience in Afghanistan to fight an effective and enduring defensive "jihad". The introduction of improvised explosive devices, suicide bombers, and a rising rate of assassinations all demonstrate the Taliban's ability to adapt tactically and innovate at the strategic level. Understanding the innovation demonstrated by the Taliban in Afghanistan provides critical insights into the conflict and what Kabul and the US-led coalition have faced in the past and today.


## Tijana Rečević

Junior Researcher and PhD candidate at the University of Belgrade Faculty of Political Sciences. She holds an MA degree in International Security from the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. Since 2018, she has served as a Managing Editor of the Journal of Regional Security. Her main academic interests are institutional design and intergroup relations in divided and post-conflict societies, post-conflict memories, as well as EU conflict management capacity.


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## Complex Links Between DDR, TJ and SSR: A Shadow of the Never Dismantled Paramilitary Units in Serbia

Since no external pressure for DDR was exercised over Serbia in the aftermath of the Bosnian and Kosovo wars, an opportunity for more responsibility in dealing with these issues arose with the victory of a pro-democratic coalition in October 2000. Nevertheless, since the emergence from the authoritarian regime materialized through what is often called a "pacted revolution", some domains within the security sector remained "reserved" and untouched by the authority of new political elites. In exchange for their passivity during the revolution, some segments of the security forces managed to veto the lustration and opening of secret files from during the war and authoritarian rule, thus ensuring near-total impunity for many officials who had been implicated in human rights abuses. The same veto extended to all para-military formations close to the political and military leadership, which eventually resulted in their assassination of a pro-reform Prime Minister in 2003. This paper thus illuminates the post-war and post-authoritarian trajectory of paramilitary units' reintegration into the state apparatus and society and indicates the major security and political consequences of how the DDR process in Serbia occurred, or rather, did not occur.

# Chairs

## Abdulaziz Al-Horr

CEO of Qatar Finance and Business Academy (QFBA). He received a PhD in Science Education from Durham University, UK in 1996, a master's degree in Education from Florida University, US in 1993 and a BSc from Qatar University in 1990. Before joining QFBA, he served as Director of the Aljazeera Media Training Center and Director of the Corporate Development Bureau. He was also the Director of the Arab Educational Training Center for the GCC (2003-2007), and Assistant Undersecretary of Planning and Curriculum Development at the Ministry of Education (1999 to 2002). Prior to that, he was Professor of Science Education at the University of Qatar.

## Abdelwahab El-Affendi

Professor of Politics, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and Coordinator of the Democracy and Islam Program at the University of Westminster (since 1998). He holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Reading, UK. In 2015, El-Affendi published a book called *Genocidal Nightmares: Narratives of Insecurity and the Structure of Mass Atrocities*. Previously, he worked as a diplomat in the Sudanese Foreign Ministry (1990-1997).

## Dana El Kurd

Researcher at the Arab Center. She obtained a doctorate in political science from the University of Texas in Austin, USA. Her research interests focus on comparative politics and international relations, specifically Palestine, and the relationship of authoritarianism in the Arab world to US intervention.

## Hend Al Muftah

Vice President of Administration and Finance at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies and Associate Professor in the Public Administration program. She has held several managerial positions, working as the Director of Human Resources at Qatar University (2004-2008), an Advisor to the to the Vice President of Administrative Affairs at Qatar University (2009), an Advisor to the Minister of Economy and Commerce (2010), Director of Human Resources at the Qatar Railways Company (2012-2014), the Executive Director of the Childhood Cultural Center (2012-2014) and as an Associate Professor at Qatar University since 2010.

## Marwan Kabalan

Researcher at the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, where he is also the Head of the Unit for Policy Studies. He previously headed the Sham Center for Research and Studies and served as the Dean of the Faculty of International Relations and Diplomacy at the University of Kalamoon. His academic work in international Relations is widely published.

## Massaab Al-Aloosy

Assistant Professor at the Critical Security Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. He worked as a lecturer at Tufts University and the World Peace Foundation in the United States. He specializes in armed groups, and is also interested in strategic studies and foreign policy in the Middle East. He holds a PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

## Rashid Hamad Al-Nuaimi

Director of the Qatar Armed Forces Strategic Studies Centre. He previously held several positions, including the Director of the office of the Air Force Commander and Liaison Officer to the Gulf Cooperation Council in 2009. He has published many studies on security issues in the Arab Gulf States and contributed as a speaker in international conferences. He holds a PhD in International Relations.

## Younes Mohamed al-Dharb

Lieutenant General in the Iraqi army. He holds a PhD in Islamic Military History from the Arab History and Scientific Heritage Institute for Higher Studies Baghdad. He previously served as President of Iraqi Defense University for Military Studies and Inspector General of the Iraqi Armed Forces. He also served as Director of the Baghdad Center for Research and Strategic Studies. He has published extensively on security and strategic studies, armed conflict and military history.