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**Day 2 National Security: ISIS and Terrorism**

BAGHDAD — As fighters for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria continue to seize territory, the group has quietly built an effective management structure of mostly middle-aged Iraqis overseeing departments of finance, arms, local governance, military operations and recruitment.

At the top the organization is the self-declared leader of all Muslims, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a radical chief executive officer of sorts, who handpicked many of his deputies from among the men he met while a prisoner in American custody at the Camp Bucca detention center a decade ago.

He had a preference for military men, and so his leadership team includes many officers from Saddam Hussein’s long-disbanded army.

They include former Iraqi officers like Fadel al-Hayali, the top deputy for Iraq, who once served Mr. Hussein as a lieutenant colonel, and Adnan al-Sweidawi, a former lieutenant colonel who now heads the group’s military council.

MIDDLE EAST MEMO

ISIS Threatens Al Qaeda as Flagship Movement of Extremists JUNE 30, 2014

The pedigree of its leadership, outlined by an Iraqi who has seen documents seized by the Iraqi military, as well as by American intelligence officials, helps explain its battlefield successes: Its leaders augmented traditional military skill with terrorist techniques refined through years of fighting American troops, while also having deep local knowledge and contacts. ISIS is in effect a hybrid of terrorists and an army.

“These are the academies that these men graduated from to become what they are today,” said the Iraqi, a researcher named Hisham Alhashimi.

ISIS, which calls itself Islamic State, burst into global consciousness in June when its fighters seized Mosul, Iraq’s second-largest city, after moving into Iraq from their base in Syria.

The Iraqi Army melted away, and Mr. Baghdadi declared a caliphate, or Islamic state, that erased borders and imposed Taliban-like rule over a large territory. Not everyone was surprised by the group’s success. “These guys know the terrorism business inside and out, and they are the ones who survived aggressive counterterrorism campaigns during the surge,” said one American intelligence official, referring to the increase in American troops in Iraq in 2007. “They didn’t survive by being incompetent.” The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was discussing intelligence reports.

After ISIS stormed into Mosul, one official recalled a startling phone call from a former major general in one of Mr. Hussein’s elite forces. The former general had appealed months earlier to rejoin the Iraqi Army, but the official had refused. Now the general was fighting for ISIS and threatened revenge.

“We will reach you soon, and I will chop you into pieces,” he said, according to the official, Bikhtiyar al-Qadi, of the commission that bars some former members of Mr. Hussein’s Baath Party from government posts.

ISIS’s success has alarmed American and regional security officials, who say it fights more like an army than most insurgent groups, holding territory and coordinating operations across large areas.

The group has also received support from other armed Sunni groups and former members of the Baath Party — which was founded as a secular movement — angry over their loss of status.

“In the terrorism game, these guys are at the center of a near perfect storm of factors,” the American official said.

Mr. Baghdadi’s deputies include 12 walis, or local rulers; a three-man war cabinet; and eight others who manage portfolios like finance, prisoners and recruitment.

Its operations are carried out by a network of regional commanders who have their own subordinates and a degree of autonomy, but they have set “drop times” when they open a shared network to coordinate.

For example, ISIS responded to American airstrikes on its positions in Iraq by distributing a professionally produced video last week of the beheading of the American journalist James Foley more than 200 miles away.

ISIS is the current incarnation of Al Qaeda in Iraq, the insurgent group that battled American forces under the leadership of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi before his death from an American airstrike in 2006.

According to a map of the group developed by Mr. Alhashimi, the Iraqi expert, Mr. Baghdadi has 25 deputies across Iraq and Syria. About one-third were military officers during Mr. Hussein’s rule, and nearly all were imprisoned by American forces.

The last two leaders of ISIS’s military council were former Iraqi military officers: a colonel and a captain. Both have been killed — and have been followed by a former lieutenant colonel, Adnan al-Sweidawi, who is about 50 years old.

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PRIVACY POLICY

Ahmed al-Dulaimi, the governor of Anbar Province, which is now largely controlled by ISIS, said that all three men graduated from the same military academy.

Mr. Dulaimi said he had taught one of them, Adnan Nijim, who graduated in 1993 to become an infantry officer.

“It was never clear that he would turn out like that,” Mr. Dulaimi said. “He was from a simple family, with high morals, but all his brothers went in that direction,” becoming jihadists.

After the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, Mr. Nijim joined Al Qaeda in Iraq and was detained by American forces in 2005, Mr. Dulaimi said.

“All of these guys got religious after 2003,” Mr. Dulaimi said. “Surely, ISIS benefits from their experience.”

Mr. Baghdadi’s top deputy in Syria, Samir al-Khlifawi, was a colonel. He was killed in Syria by other insurgents.

Derek Harvey, a former Army intelligence officer and specialist on Iraq who now directs the University of South Florida’s Global Initiative for Civil Society and Conflict, said that former officers also had professional, personal and tribal relationships that had strengthened ISIS’s coalition.

The group’s campaign to free hundreds of militants from Iraqi prisons was executed with former Baath Party loyalists. These included intelligence officers and soldiers in Mr. Hussein’s Republican Guard.

Hassan Abu Hanieh, a Jordanian expert on Islamist groups, said that while Mr. Baghdadi had relied mostly on Iraqis, he had left areas like religious guidance, recruitment and media production to foreigners.

Many of them, like the head of ISIS’s media department, are Saudis. This is at least partly to make ISIS appear “globalized,” Mr. Abu Hanieh said. “They want to appeal to international jihadists so that they come and join the battle.”

Some non-Iraqis have risen to prominence. Mr. Baghdadi’s chief spokesman is Syrian. And one group of foreign fighters is led by an ethnic Chechen who goes by the name Omar al-Shishani.

Michael Knights, an Iraq analyst at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said it was no surprise that so many officers from Mr. Hussein’s era had joined ISIS. Discontent in the military was widespread near the end of his rule, and underground Islamist movements were gaining strength, even inside the military, he said.

Political changes after the American invasion accelerated their rise. Members of Mr. Hussein’s Baath Party were barred from government positions, and the political dominance of Iraq’s Shiite majority made many Sunnis feel disenfranchised.

“After 2003, what did these guys have to do but get more radical?” Mr. Knights said.

For those who had served in Mr. Hussein’s staunchly secular army, that transformation was complete by the time they joined ISIS. “There is no one in Baghdadi’s state who is not a believer,” Mr. Alhashimi said.

Article 2

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is struggling to cut off the millions of dollars in oil revenue that has made the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria one of the wealthiest terror groups in history, but so far has been unable to persuade Turkey, the NATO ally where much of the oil is traded on the black market, to crack down on an extensive sales network.

Western intelligence officials say they can track the ISIS oil shipments as they move across Iraq and into Turkey’s southern border regions. Despite extensive discussions inside the Pentagon, American forces have so far not attacked the tanker trucks, though a senior administration official said Friday “that remains an option.”

In public, the administration has been unwilling to criticize Turkey, which insists it has little control over the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq and Syria across its borders, or the flow of oil back out. One senior official, calling President Obama’s recent conversations with Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, “sensitive,” said the decisions about what the country will do to counter ISIS “will be theirs to make.”

But behind the scenes, the conversations about the Sunni extremist group’s ability to gather vast sums to finance its operations have become increasingly tense since Mr. Obama’s vow on Wednesday night to degrade and ultimately destroy the group.

TIMES TOPIC

Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

Opinion Thomas L. Friedman

Obama’s Strategy for Fighting ISIS Isn’t All About Us SEPT. 13, 2014

Turkey’s failure thus far to help choke off the oil trade symbolizes the magnitude of the challenges facing the administration both in assembling a coalition to counter the Sunni militant group and in starving its lifeblood. ISIS’ access to cash is critical to its ability to recruit members, meet its growing payroll of fighters, expand its reach and operate across the territory of two countries.

“Turkey in many ways is a wild card in this coalition equation,” said Juan Zarate, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and author of “Treasury’s War: The Unleashing of a New Era of Financial Warfare.” “It’s a great disappointment: There is a real danger that the effort to degrade and destroy ISIS is at risk. You have a major NATO ally, and it is not clear they are willing and able to cut off flows of funds, fighters and support to ISIS.”

Turkey declined to sign a communiqué on Thursday in Saudi Arabia that committed Persian Gulf states in the region to counter ISIS, even limited to the extent each nation considered “appropriate.” Turkish officials told their American counterparts that with 49 Turkish diplomats being held as hostages in Iraq, they could not risk taking a public stance against the terror group.

“Like any sort of black market smuggling operation, if you devote the resources and the effort to attack it, you are unlikely to eradicate it, but you are likely to put a very significant dent in it,” a senior administration official said on Saturday.

A second senior official said that Mr. Obama’s national security team had spoken several times with Mr. Erdogan and other top Turkish officials in the past two weeks about what they can do to help counter ISIS, and that ISIS’ financing was part of those discussions. “Stopping the flow of foreign fighters, border security and dismantling ISIL funding networks are also key aspects of our strategy, and we will continue to work closely with Turkey and our other partners in the region on these efforts in the days ahead,” the official said, using a different acronym to describe the militant organization.

At the core of the talks are the dozen or so oil fields and refineries in Iraq and Syria on territory the group has controlled. The output has provided a steady stream of financing, which experts place at $1 million to $2 million a day — a pittance in terms of the global oil market, but a huge windfall for a terror group.

“Oil is a huge part of the financing equation” that empowers ISIS, said James Phillips, the senior fellow for Middle Eastern Affairs at the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based research center.

The territory ISIS controls in Iraq alone is currently producing anywhere from 25,000 to 40,000 barrels of oil a day, which can fetch a minimum of $1.2 million on the black market, according to Luay al-Khatteeb, a visiting foreign policy fellow at the Brookings Doha Center, who also directs the Iraq Energy Institute. Some estimates have placed the daily income ISIS derives from oil sales at $2 million, though American officials are skeptical it is that high.

“The key gateway through that black market is the southern corridor of Turkey,” Mr. Khatteeb said. “Turkey is becoming part of this black economy” that funds ISIS.

“They’ve been turning a blind eye to it, because they benefit from the lower price of smuggled black-market oil,” Mr. Phillips said, “and I’m sure there are substantial numbers of Turks that are also profiting from this, maybe even government officials.”.

The supply chain of routes, individuals, families and organizations that allow the oil to flow are well-established, some dating back decades, to when President Saddam Hussein of Iraq smuggled oil during the United Nations’ oil-for-food program. “Those borders have never been sealed, and they never will be sealed,” Mr. Phillips said.

PRIVACY POLICY

For the Obama administration, getting at ISIS’ oil revenue is far more complex than, say, its crackdown on Iran. That has been the administration’s most successful use of sanctions, and officials credit the effects on Iran’s economy, along with American sabotage of its nuclear facilities, for Iran’s reluctant decision to negotiate on the future of its nuclear enrichment program.

But Iran used fairly conventional means of reaching oil markets, and not one of its techniques applies to ISIS’ black-market sales, which take place mostly through networks of smugglers.

The long-term American plan appears focused on persuading Turkey to crack down on the smuggling networks — some of which, one Western diplomat noted, “benefit a powerful Turkish elite” — and aiming at the refiners who would ultimately have to turn the crude oil into petrochemical products. But gathering the intelligence is a slow process, analysts say.

“It’s hard to use any of the suite of tools that are available to the U.S. Treasury Department to sanction people in this case,” said Patrick B. Johnston, a RAND Corporation researcher who is working on a top-to-bottom study of ISIS’ financing and organization. “Getting a grip on who the right financial targets would be at the Treasury Department would be difficult.”

That is equally true of the other major source of ISIS money — its extortion activities in the areas it controls, said Mr. Johnston, who is examining declassified documents that detail the group’s funding streams. ISIS demands anywhere from 10 percent to 20 percent of revenue from businesses in its territories and operates other “mafia-style” rackets that yield as much as $1 million a day.

Article 3

UNITED NATIONS — France wants more power to block its citizens from leaving the country, while Britain is weighing whether to stop more of its citizens from coming home. Tunisia is debating measures to make it a criminal offense to help jihadist fighters travel to Syria and Iraq, while Russia has outlawed enlisting in armed groups that are “contradictory to Russian policy.”

The rapid surge of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and its ability to draw fighters from across the globe, have set off alarm bells in capitals worldwide. Countries that rarely see eye to eye are now trying to blunt its recruitment drive, passing a raft of new rules that they hope will stop their citizens from joining extremist groups abroad.

The United States has seized on the issue, pushing for a legally binding United Nations Security Council resolution that would compel all countries in the world to take steps to “prevent and suppress” the flow of their citizens into the arms of groups considered to be terrorist organizations.

Recruits from 74 countries are among the estimated 12,000 foreign militants in Syria and Iraq, many of them fighting with ISIS, according to Peter Neumann, a professor at King’s College London, who has culled the figures largely from government sources. The largest blocs of these fighters come from nearby Muslim countries, like Tunisia and Saudi Arabia, but smaller contingents come from countries as far away and disparate as Belgium, China, Russia and the United States.

American intelligence officials disclosed this week that there were 15,000 foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria from 80 countries, mostly with ISIS.

The Security Council made it illegal to aid terrorist organizations after the Sept. 11 attacks, and recent studies suggest that only a small share of foreign fighters have committed acts of terrorism once they return home. But the prospect of radicalized youths’ becoming hardened on the battlefields of Syria and Iraq has sent a new ripple of anxiety through nations of all stripes, reviving a longstanding tension, especially in democratic countries, over how to balance civil liberties and security in an age of transnational terrorism.

“You now have reopened those very debates,” said Kathleen Hicks, a former Pentagon official now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The efforts to stop fighters from rallying to the side of ISIS puts the greatest scrutiny on countries like Turkey, whose long porous border has allowed thousands of militants to cross into the Syrian battlefield and into Iraq. Turkey has openly supported some of the rebels who have sought to unseat Syria’s president, Bashar al-Assad, but lately it has faced the direct ire of ISIS. Nearly 50 of its citizens have been held hostage by the group in the Iraqi city of Mosul since June, including the Turkish consul general.

Turkey insists that it is now trying to stanch the flow of ISIS gunmen across its 500-mile frontier with Syria, saying it has closed most of its official border crossing points, though it is doubtful that militants would use them anyway. In 2013, Turkey denied entry to 4,000 people who had been on a no-entry list and detained more than 92,000 people on its border.

“It’s not a blame game,” said Yasar Halit Cevik, the Turkish ambassador to the United Nations. “We’re all in the same boat. Turkey feels like it’s in the same boat as the moderate international community.”

The focus on foreign fighters also shines the spotlight on Qatar, which has had strong ties to several militant groups seeking to topple Mr. Assad in Syria, and on Saudi Arabia, home to powerful religious leaders who have long sanctioned jihad. The Saudi king this year issued a rare decree making it a criminal offense to join a foreign war. It signaled his concerns about the threat that extremist groups could pose to his hold on power, but the degree to which he can rein in radical preachers in his kingdom remains to be seen.

The debate over stemming the flow of foreign fighters has opened up new legal territory and raised the question of when and how countries should prosecute their citizens for fighting in another country’s war. Beyond that, standards of proof can be high in many European countries, diplomats said, and proving participation in a known terrorist group has been a challenge.

What is more, governments around the world are under pressure to balance their desire to target individuals who pose a genuine risk at home without engaging in broad crackdowns that could backfire and alienate a wider portion of their populations, particularly Muslim youths.

“It requires very, very rigorous intelligence assessment,” said David H. Ucko, an associate professor at the National Defense University in Washington. “If you let in the wrong person and you have an attack, the political blowback is going to be unbelievable.”

The Interpreter Newsletter

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Take for instance, the case of Mehdi Nemmouche, a French citizen suspected of killing four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels this year. A French journalist held hostage for months by extremists in Syria has said that Mr. Nemmouche was one of his captors, the newspaper Le Point reported.

The call for a new global legal apparatus echoes a raft of counterterrorism provisions passed in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks. The United Nations Security Council already prohibits aiding organizations that are on its own list of banned groups, including Al Qaeda and its Syrian affiliate, the Nusra Front, though not other groups like Hezbollah, which the United States considers to be a terrorist group.

There are also long no-fly lists in circulation already. Passports can be confiscated. Children can be taken into state custody. And many countries, including some in Europe, have already prosecuted terrorism suspects under existing laws.

Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq

According to Peter Neumann, a professor at King’s College London, at least 12,000 foreign militants are fighting in Syria and Iraq — many of them with ISIS. Where the fighters originate from:

Britain, for example, is prosecuting at least 50 of its citizens who have returned from Syria, and the law already allows the authorities to revoke the citizenship of a dual citizen found guilty of joining a terrorist group. The government is now exploring ways to keep Britons from returning home temporarily if they are suspected of having been involved in terrorism abroad, even if they are solely British citizens.

French law currently requires a court order to stop a citizen from leaving the country to go abroad. The government is weighing new rules that would enable the police to make that decision without judicial review.

Germany, which can already revoke passports in certain cases, is considering a provision enabling it to revoke the national identity cards that all Germans are issued, which allow them to travel to many countries, including Turkey.

The Netherlands recently proposed amending its nationality laws to be able to revoke Dutch citizenship if a person has volunteered with a terrorist organization. This would apply only to dual citizens, according to the Dutch Foreign Ministry. Already, various administrative measures are available to the Dutch authorities, and the police recently detained two couples from the small town of Huizen and took their children into state custody. The authorities said they were suspected of going to Syria to join a terrorist group.

In Tunisia, where Parliament is debating a new antiterrorism law, the government estimates that 2,400 Tunisians went to fight in Syria, mainly with ISIS and the Nusra Front. A Tunisian diplomat said his country had prevented an additional 8,000 from traveling to Syria.

The American-sponsored resolution will be voted on at a Security Council meeting led by President Obama on Sept 24. The day before, Secretary of State John Kerry is scheduled to lead a meeting of counterterrorism officials from around the world to discuss how to deal with foreign fighters more effectively. Counterterrorism officials recommend that countries share data to detect the recruitment of foreign fighters, monitor online communications more aggressively, share airline passenger information in advance, and criminalize travel abroad to fight.

Ms. Hicks, the former Pentagon official, described the American push as a low-cost diplomatic effort to rally support for the fight against ISIS without having to do anything extra, like committing troops. She called it “an easy way for countries to sign up and say they’re part of this strategy.”

It is virtually impossible to enforce, experts say, and does not authorize military action by any country. In the end, it leaves it to every country to weigh its need to stop the fighters against other political and strategic priorities, Mr. Ucko of the National Defense University said.

“It starts a conversation,” he said. “It comes down to what a state wants to do internally.”





