

Raising Great Power Operating Costs: Strategic Opportunities in Central Asia – Tajikistan

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SOF Paradigm in Great Power Competition

*The views expressed are the authors' and do not represent official NDU, DOD, or USG positions.

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Agenda

- National Defense Strategy 2018 – Strategic Pivot
- Great Power Competition 2.0 – Deterrence and Overmatch
- Hybrid Threats – All of the Above
- VEO Displacement – Collapse of the Physical Caliphate
- Current Authorities – Counter-Russia/Counter-VEO
- Nexus of Great Power/VEO Convergence – Tajikistan's GBAO
- Opportunities
- Recommendations

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National Defense Strategy 2018 – Core Paradigm

- **Strategic Context**

- Multi-Domain World
- Multi-Threat Adversaries

- **Strategic Response**

- Joint Integrated Campaign Planning
- Multi-Domain Operations

Great Power Competition 2.0

- **Cold War Era Posture – Still Relevant**
 - Deterrence through Strength – 3 Cs
 - Viable Conventional and Nuclear Response
 - Global Presence and Networks of Allies
- **Occurs Across the Entire Continuum of Conflict**
 - *Full Spectrum Competition*
 - *Moves Through Phases and Places – Ebb and Flow Occurs*
 - $0 \rightarrow 4 \rightarrow 0$
- **Evolution**
 - World War (I, II) Era – Multi-Polar Alliances
 - Cold War Era – Bi-Polar + Proxies
 - Current – Multi-Polar + Proxies/Puppets/Partners

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Challenges of Hybrid Warfare

- **Definition**

- Some concurrence on strategic opportunity/necessity
- Hardest challenge – knowing when it even exists

- **General Tenets**

- Unmarked Soldiers
- (Dis)Information Operations
- Entire Spectrum of Violence
- Insurgent Techniques
- Militarize Security Forces
- Cyber Sabotage and Warfare

Hybrid Warfare – Hot, Cold and in Between

- **Lebanon/Hezbollah**

- Non-State vs. State
 - Non-State becomes State
 - Defining the threat just got more complicated
- Great Power Competition
 - State-Sponsorship/Media/Provoking a Response
 - Defining the response just got more widespread

- **Georgia and Crimea – Gerasimov Doctrine**

- Russification via Citizenship
- Political Instability Exploited
- Irregular Warfare
 - “Little Green Men,” Mobilized Population, Controlled Media, Elect a Puppet

VEOs – Still a Thing, More of a Thing to Come

- **Violent Extremist Organizations**

- Remain a Fly in the Ointment
- Distract from Peer Competition
- Over-Sized Impact via Social Media/Lone Wolves

- **New Foes**

- Russian Compatriots
- Local Businesses – Chinese Supply Chain
- Protestors – Provocateurs

End of IS – Start of Trouble

- **Collapse of the Physical Caliphate**
 - Dispersed Jihadists
 - Global Movement Transcend GCC Boundaries
- **Foreign Fighter Retrograde**
 - Stay and Die
 - Go Home to Fight
 - Locate a New Safe Haven
- **Existing Strategic Opportunities**
 - Great Power Competition Creates Them
 - Great Powers Support Them

Countering VEOs – Current Authorities

- **Authorized Use of Military Force**

- 2001 – 9/11; AQ
- 2002 – Iraq
- Geographically and Organizationally Restricted
- Current Drafts but Politicized – Repeal vs Repeal and Replace
 - Problem of Uncertainty/Limitations
 - Repeal → can't forward stage w/o Congressional approval
 - *We become completely reactive*

National Defense Authorization Act – VEO

- **Counter-ISIS Train and Equip “CTEF” (formerly 1209)**
 - Deny IS Safe Haven/ Stabilize Liberated Geography
 - Material and Logistics support to Vetted Partners and Allied Nations
 - Challenges: Authority does not allow for nature of threat
 - Geographically and Partnership Limitations vs Fluid Threat
 - Fleeing ISIS Fighters Transcend GCC Boundaries (New Partners/ Borders)
- **Support of SOF to Combat Terrorism (127E)**
 - Train, Advise, and Assist Surrogate Forces for CT Operations
 - Low cost method to employ partner forces to achieve U.S. CT objectives
 - Challenges: Limited resources/applications
 - \$100M Program Cap (Choose Wisely)
 - Partner Force Selection (Often Assigned, Not Selected)

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National Defense Authorization Act – GPC

- **Deterring Russian Aggression in Europe (1248)**
 - Full NATO Support and U.S. National Power to Deter Russian Aggression
 - Forward Stage Capabilities; Security Cooperation in Eastern Europe; Improving NATO Coordination and Response
 - Challenges: Hard border
 - Geographically Constrained (Think Global)
 - Force Projection, Show of Force, and Deterrence Limited (Fighting Former Threats)
- **Global Train and Equip (Formerly 1206/2282)**
 - Provide training, equipment, minor construction to Build Partner Capacity ISO CT
 - Identify Partner Nations Requirements; Capacity to Absorb U.S. Assistance; Monitor and Assess to Achieve Maximum Return; Sustain the Gains
 - Challenges: Slow processing, unused \$
 - Obligated \$3.7B of \$4.1B from FY09-17, leaving \$400M (Money)
 - Process Failures Impeded Rapid, Effective Procurement (Time)
 - Insufficient Reporting to Congress (Trust)

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National Defense Authorization Act – GPC

- **European Deterrence Initiative (EDI)**

- Created in Response to the Russian Annexation of Crimea, Reassure NATO of U.S. Support
- Increase Training with NATO Partners; Pre-Position Equipment; Build Infrastructure; Fund Heal-to-Toe Rotational Forces; Build Partner Capacity
- Challenges: Hard border, Inconsistent?
 - Funded via OCO (not FYDP) – constrains continuity in programs (Reliable today...)
 - EUCOM/EURO Centric (Global Problem)
 - Does not optimize forward staging of equipment (Time)
 - Conventional Deterrence vs. Hybrid Threats (Fighting the Last War)

European Deterrence Initiative (EDI)	FY 2017 <u>Enacted</u>	FY 2018 <u>Request</u>	FY 2019 <u>Request</u>
Military Personnel	264.8	214.3	344.6
Operation and Maintenance	1,829.1	2,271.3	2,677.2
Procurement	1,165.4	1,870.6	2,661.9
Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation	--	64.1	40.0
Military Construction	113.6	306.9	792.4
Revolving and Management Funds	--	50.1	15.2
Total:	3,419.7	4,777.3	6,531.4

Achieving Strategic Effects

- **Overall Authorities Challenges**

- Not Progressive/Fighting the Last War – Adversaries, Locations, Domains
- Global Threat requires Pliable Authorities
- National Defense Strategy evolved, NDAA slow to respond
- High Reliance on Overseas Contingency Operations funding

- **Joint Staff (macro remedy)**

- Global Integrator of Resources (blending conventional-SOF capabilities)
 - Bandwidth?

- **ASD/SOLIC (micro remedy)**

- Given Service Secretary Level-Like Responsibility (Section 914/NDAA 2017)
- Proponent of SOF equipping, manning, training/primary advisor to USD(P)
- Global Integrator of SOF solutions

Where Do They Converge?

- **Strategic Value to Great Power**
 - Historical Claims
 - Population
 - Economic
 - Elite Clients
- **Strategic Vulnerability for Great Power**
 - Political Weakness
 - Supply Chain
 - Counter-narrative
- **Strategic Opportunity for US**
 - Presence of Resources
 - Existing Authorities

Nexus of Great Power/VEO Convergence – Tajikistan

- **Rahmon Governance – Political, Security, and Religious Restrictions**
 - Political
 - Barriers to Entrance – State Controlled Media, Freedom of Speech, Presidential Powers
 - Outlawing Opposition Parties – Islamic Parties (IRPT)
 - Constitutional Referendums= President for Life; Nepotism
 - Poor Economy – High Reliance on Russia
 - Remittances – 31% of GDP/ 75% from Russia (90% of Employment abroad in RU)
 - Imports – 31% from Russia (70% of Food)
 - Unemployment – 19%/ Ranked 80th Globally
 - Russian Influence – Forgive Debt post-Tblisi’s Rose Revolution (2004); Expels Tajik Migrants (2011); Deportation Camp Built (2013); 3K Expelled/ 17K Denied Entry (2013)
 - *Energy Independent – 89% Hydroelectric*
 - Religious Restrictions
 - Committee on Religious Affairs (CRA) – Bans Political Parties based on Religion; Restricts Prayer Times and Locations; Bans Persons under 18 from Participating; “Ban” on Hijabs/Beards; Restricted Travel Abroad for Religious Reasons

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GBAO – Trouble Spot in Tajikistan

- **Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)**
 - Limited Governance
 - Government Clashes
 - Local Power Brokers
 - Geographically Prominent Despite Challenging Terrain
 - One road East-West
 - Mountainous
 - Arid
 - But everyone uses it

GBAO – Essential Zone for GPC

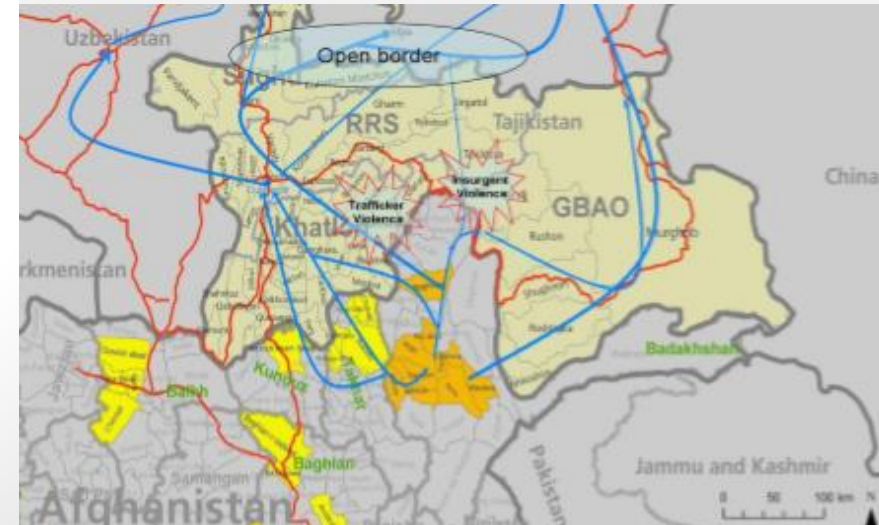
- **Geographically Important**
 - China
 - Border Security- Uyghur Control
 - One Belt and Road Routes
 - Russia
 - Security Buffer Zone (Geopolitics)
 - Historical Claim (Heartland Theory)
 - China replacing them?
 - Afghanistan
 - Foreign Fighter Flow
 - Illicit Trafficking
 - VEO
 - IS-Khorasan Province Emergence
 - Ill-Governed (Safe Haven Opportunity)



GBAO to Xianjiang- 550 Miles



Chinese Base Reported on 19 Feb – Shaymak



AFG Northern Smuggling Routes

GBAO – Essential Zone for GPC

- **Russia Activities** ●
 1. 2012st Military Base – Largest Base Abroad, est. 6-7K troops
 2. Econ Influence – remittances, aid, trading partner
 3. Jihadist Flow Concerns
 4. Historical Claim to the Heartland
- **Chinese Activities** ●
 1. Chinese Military Camp – ID'd via open source on 19 Feb 19
 2. 10x AFG Border Outposts and CT Training Center
 3. Uyghur Population Flow – Threat to Stability
 4. One Belt and One Road – Planned Pipeline, Powerline, Railway
 5. Economic Partnership with Afghanistan
- **Jihadist Activities** ●
 1. Foreign Fighter Transit Route
 2. ISIS Attacks – 2018
 3. Competing Jihadist Groups – Jamaat Ansarullah, IMU,
 4. IS-KP Basing in Pakistan and Afghanistan
- **United States Activities** ●
 1. Security Cooperation Funding – \$20M (the only CAS recipient)
 2. USSOF Counter-Narco Training – 1200x Tajik SOF Trained in 2018
 3. Virginia National Guard State Partnership Program est. 2003
- **Tajik Activities** ●
 1. Rahmon Regime – Realpolitik/ Regime Stability
 2. 1400 KM Tajik-Afghan Border
 3. Limited Governance in GBAO



United States Opportunity

- **Tajikistan Security Partnership to counter Russian Primacy**
 - 127E; 1206; CTEF; 1048
 - Presence in the Competition Space:
 - Tajik SOF/ Narco/ Border Training; Human Geography; GTEF; Counter-RU Messaging
- **Concurrent DOS Focus to Improve Government Stability**
 - Humanitarian – De-mining Equipment; Natural Disasters
 - Free Economic Zones – USAID American Silk Road Initiative, Food Security
 - Human Rights – Religious; Freedom of Speech & Movement
 - Media Development – Support to Independent Media
 - Legal Reform Initiatives – Increase NGO registration; Political Pluralism
 - Youth Opportunity Development – Education and Employment
- **Stability Increases Chances for Foreign Investment and Denying Terrorist Safe Haven**
 - Undermines Necessity of Chinese Basing
 - Raising Russian Operating Costs to Counter US Presence

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Recommendations

- **Enable Expansion Valves to fully Operationalize the NDAA**
 - Geographic Boundaries
 - Emerging Adversaries
 - Multi-Domain Response
- **Whole Government Approach**
 - Security Partnerships – Interoperability
 - Improve Governance – Stability, Economic, Human Rights
- **Strategic Success**
 - Competing Well
 - Conflict Management