

Statement for the Record

Worldwide Threat Assessment

Armed Services Committee

United States Senate



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## INTRODUCTION

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to provide the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA) assessment of the global security environment and to address the threats facing the nation. They include a list of multifaceted challenges, adversaries, asymmetric threats, the emergence of foreign militaries with near peer capabilities, and highly adaptive transnational terrorist networks. This Statement for the Record has organized these threats regionally, followed by global issues such as Cyber, International Terrorism, and Foreign Intelligence capabilities, to include insider threats. These issues taken together reflect the diversity, scope and complexity of today's challenges to our national security.

The men and women of your DIA are stationed around the globe, leading the intelligence community in providing unique defense intelligence from the strategic to the operational to the tactical. They deliver decision advantage to warfighters, defense planners, the defense acquisition community and policymakers. DIA men and women — uniformed and civilian — know they have a unique responsibility to the American people and take great pride in their work. I am privileged to serve with them and present their analysis to you. My hope in this hearing is to help the nation — through the important oversight role of Congress — to better understand the global challenges it faces and to support this committee in developing possible responses to these threats. On behalf of the entire Defense Intelligence Enterprise, thank you for your continued confidence. Your support is vital to us.

## REGIONAL THREATS

### MIDDLE EAST

I will begin today with Middle East security challenges, where the region, in my opinion, is now facing one of the most dangerous and unpredictable periods in its modern history. The security challenges have rapidly multiplied since 2011, as nations are confronted with simultaneous internal and external threats including terrorism, subnational armed groups, and conventional military threats. The region's threat environment has become more dangerous and unpredictable with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's (ISIL) emergence, and many nations are using the rubric of combatting terrorists to eliminate their political or sectarian adversaries. Drivers of unrest — aging authoritarian leaders, lack of political transparency, corruption, insufficient economic opportunity, and sparse social mobility — will also remain, compounded by the consequences of the Arab Awakening: civil conflict, ungoverned spaces, social cleavages, instability spillover, and growing Iranian involvement. My comments on this volatile and important region will focus on Syria, Iraq and Iran.

**SYRIA:** The civil war in Syria is a manifestation of the region's precarious transition since 2011. As the two sides pursue political dialogue, the regime is unlikely to be militarily defeated or collapse in the near-term and is poised to enter 2016 in a stronger military position against the opposition in light of increased support from its key allies: Iran, Lebanese Hizballah, and Russia. Increased Russian involvement probably will also help the regime regain key terrain in high priority areas, such as Aleppo and Idlib.

Despite regime advantages, territory is likely to be contested in 2016. We anticipate the regime's strategy will be to bolster defenses along Syria's western spine — from northern Dara to northeastern Latakia — and to conduct operations to impede key opposition supply lines. We also expect the regime to press ISIL and secure areas around the Ash Shaer gas fields, degrading the group's presence around key energy infrastructure sites.

A divided Syrian opposition is likely to suffer from inconsistent command and control and access to resources. Anti-regime forces continue to fight each other and the regime, with al-Qa'ida's Syria-based affiliate Al-Nusrah Front and ISIL making gains at the expense of more moderate anti-regime forces. Increased Russian involvement is likely to harden the opposition's stance towards the regime and may undermine moderate forces cohesion, increasing the chance for radicalization among moderate opposition members. This could result in opposition groups cooperating or merging with terrorist groups to survive regime offensives. The Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Force likely will seek to cut lines of control to ISIL's de facto capital of Raqqah, but will probably be incapable of capturing it.

ISIL controls large swaths of Syria and Iraq, to include strongholds of Raqqah, Mosul, and Fallujah. In 2015, coalition airstrikes impeded ISIL's ability to operate openly in Iraq and Syria, caused it to curtail use of conventional military equipment, and forced it to lower its profile. In 2016, the growing number of anti-ISIL forces and emerging resource issues will probably challenge ISIL's ability to govern in Iraq and Syria. However, the group probably will retain large Sunni Arab urban centers, enabled by strong military capabilities, leadership, and command and control.

**IRAQ:** Systemic institutional deficiencies hinder the progress of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), the Kurdish Peshmerga, and Shia and Sunni Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in achieving key military objectives against ISIL. The ISF lacks sufficient logistics and military preparedness, exacerbating poor morale. Force generation is complicated by a lack of experienced and qualified soldiers, while funding and materiel shortfalls hamper the Sunni mobilization program.

The ISF cannot defend against foreign threats or sustain conventional military operations against domestic challenges without continued foreign assistance. The recapture of Sinjar in November and the Ramadi government center in December depended on extensive coalition airstrikes and other support. Through 2016, the ISF writ large is likely to continue to need coalition support to combat ISIL on multiple fronts. Iraq is diversifying defense acquisitions through foreign suppliers such as Russia, Iran, and other non-U.S. suppliers to overcome equipment shortfalls and capability gaps. However, the ISF lacks a coherent procurement strategy, adversely impacting the interoperability of current and future military equipment.

In 2016, we expect the Government of Iraq to rely heavily on support from the primarily Shia Popular Mobilization Committee (PMC) forces. PMC forces, with ISF support, made gains last year against ISIL in the strategically important city of Bayji. They are now poised to attack ISIL in Bayji's surrounding areas. Kurdish forces have also re-taken territory from ISIL in Northern Iraq, and we expect continued Kurdish counter-ISIL operations in 2016. The Kurds likely will maintain, and possibly expand, their buffer zone with ISIL, which could include moving further into ethnically-mixed areas in northern Iraq. Such moves serve to amplify existing tensions

between the Peshmerga and Baghdad's forces in these areas, and threaten to intensify sectarian tensions between Arabs and Kurds in northern Iraq. While there have been no attacks against U.S. or coalition forces by Iran, Lebanese Hizballah, or their proxies, the potential threat will almost certainly persist through 2016.

**IRAN:** Iran remains a threat to regional stability as its national interests often diverge from our own and those of our regional allies. Iran's national security priorities are ensuring regime survival, expanding regional influence, and enhancing Tehran's military capabilities and deterrence posture.

Iran's security strategy is based on deterrence, withstanding an initial strike should deterrence fail, and retaliating to force a diplomatic resolution. Iran uses underground facilities and denial and deception extensively to conceal and protect its strategic assets. We do not anticipate changes to this security posture in 2016. Iran will focus on defending allies in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, with its actions intended to increase regional influence at Western expense.

In January, Iran fulfilled key commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This extended the timeline for Iran to gather enough fissile material to build a weapon to about a year. In exchange, Iran received sanctions relief under the agreement, but such economic relief is unlikely to have an immediate impact on Iran's military capabilities. Over the long term, however, economic growth could support its conventional military priorities such as ballistic and cruise missiles, naval systems, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and air and air defense systems.

Iran's ballistic missiles are capable of striking targets throughout the region, ranging as far as southeastern Europe. Iran is likely to continue developing more sophisticated missiles, with improved accuracy, range, and lethality, irrespective of JCPOA implementation. Iran stated publicly it intends to launch the Simorgh Space-Launch Vehicle (SLV), which would be capable of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) ranges if configured as such. This test launch could occur in 2016.

Iran continues to develop additional anti-access/area denial capabilities. The Navy is fielding increasingly lethal weapons, to include more advanced mines, small submarines, armed UAVs, attack craft, and ship and shore based anti-ship capable cruise missiles. Tehran is also prioritizing the improvement of its air and air defense forces. For example, last year Iran signed a contract with Russia to purchase the advanced and highly capable S-300 Surface to Air Missile (SAM) system, putting it one step closer to modernizing its antiquated air defense system.

The survival and stability of its key Iraqi and Syrian allies is an Iranian priority. Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force and Lebanese Hizballah are important foreign policy instruments, and provide Tehran the ability to project power in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and beyond. In 2016, we expect Iran and Hizballah to increase the provision of training, materiel, and funding to forces defending the Syrian Regime.

In Iraq, Iran and Hizballah train and advise Iraqi Shia militant groups, and provide training and equipment to Government of Iraq forces. Iranian advisers have planned and led operations against ISIL. Iranian-supported Iraqi Shia groups also warn of their willingness and preparedness to fight U.S. forces in Iraq. Although almost certainly not at the direction of Iran

or group leadership, low-level Shia group members may have conducted attacks against coalition aircraft and personnel.

In late 2015, Iran deployed over 1,000 ground troops to engage in combat operations in Syria. The arrival of Iranian ground forces coincided with the start of Russian airstrikes and increased Russian support to pro-regime operations. Tehran and Moscow have deepened their cooperation and are coordinating operations in Syria to preserve their Syrian ally, while also participating in diplomatic talks aimed at ending the conflict.

## **RUSSIA**

Moscow continues to devote major resources to modernizing its military forces, viewing military power as critical to achieving key strategic objectives: acknowledged great power status, dominating smaller regional states and deterring NATO from military action in Eurasia. Russian leadership considers a capable and survivable nuclear force as the foundation of its strategic deterrent capability, and modernized, agile general purpose forces as vital for Eurasian and limited out-of-area power projection.

Moscow's assertive pursuit of foreign policy and security objectives includes military involvement in Ukraine, operations in Syria and expansion of its military capabilities in the Arctic. Last year, the Russian military continued its robust exercise schedule and its aggressive, and sometimes provocative, out-of-area deployments. We anticipate similar high levels of military activity in 2016, although Moscow's military modernization efforts will be complicated by economic and demographic challenges.



**Operations in Syria:** Moscow, a long-time ally of Syrian President Bashar al Assad, has supplied the Syrian regime with weapons, supplies, and intelligence throughout the Syrian civil war.

Moscow began to deploy military forces to Syria in late August 2015, likely both to shore up the regime and assert Russia's status as a military player and powerbroker in the Middle East. The majority of Russian air strikes, artillery and rocket fires initially supported regime ground offensives and focused on opposition targets. An increasing number of strikes have since targeted Islamic State forces and facilities while sustaining operations against the opposition. Tensions between Russia and Turkey following the November 24, 2015 downing of a Su-24 bomber have not impacted the pace of Russian air operations.

Russia has sought to use the Syrian intervention as a showcase for its military modernization program and advanced conventional weapons systems. Moscow has launched land-attack cruise missiles (LACMs) from Caspian Sea naval units and a Kilo-class submarine in the Mediterranean Sea. They have also demonstrated new capabilities with air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) from its Tu-160 Blackjack and Tu-95MS Bear H heavy bombers. These operations are meant to demonstrate strategic capabilities and message the West about the manner in which the Russian military could operate in a major conventional conflict.

Russia will almost certainly be able to logistically support its current level of operations in Syria via a mix of air, naval, and commercial maritime means for the foreseeable future. Moscow may opt to increase its forces in Syria if unable to make progress on securing increased acceptance and support for the Assad Regime, or if support to regime ground offensives are

unsuccessful. The most likely additions would be additional air and artillery assets, and potentially include Russian-led and -enabled proxy forces.

**Ukraine Crisis:** In September 2015, Moscow began placing more emphasis on diplomacy after a year of often intense fighting along the line of contact. While maintaining the strong separatist military force it trained, equipped, and furnished with leadership, the Kremlin focused on implementing the Minsk II agreement to institutionalize influence with Ukraine without risking more sanctions. Despite deemphasizing a military approach to Ukraine, Moscow retains the ability to rapidly redeploy troops to the border, including prepositioning logistics stockpiles.

**Military Doctrine and Strategy:** Russia's military doctrine reflects its perception of a heightened threat environment and sense of urgency about its preparedness to address those perceived threats. Moscow has moved to further improve its capabilities to meet what it sees as Western challenges to its internal stability, dominance of neighboring states and status as a great power abroad. In 2016, Russia will attempt to optimize its strategic forces, develop precision strike weapons, create efficiencies in defense industry, and improve professional military training and education. Russia will also seek to prepare its economy and state and local governments to transition from peace to war-time.

The Arctic — and associated international disputes — is a major emphasis for Russian security policy. Moscow has increased the readiness of its Northern Fleet through increased exercise activities and refurbishing airbases and has added air-defense and coastal-defense cruise missiles and ground force assets to the region. The Joint Strategic Command (OSK) "North," established in late 2014 on the basis of the Northern Fleet, will be reinforced by an air force and

air defense (PVO) army. Despite this increased military focus on the Arctic, we believe Russia will likely prefer to use existing multilateral and bilateral mechanisms to address competing claims and other security issues in the region.

**Force Modernization:** Russia's future force will be smaller, but more capable of handling a range of contingencies on Russia's periphery and expeditionary operations. We expect continued effort to improve joint operations capabilities and rearmament. Russia's ambitious rearmament program will be challenged by corruption and industrial inefficiency, Western sanctions, and the poor state of its economy. Moscow will continue its military modernization efforts despite these difficulties, but many major programs will likely face delays or cuts.

Russia places the highest priority on the maintenance of its robust arsenal of strategic and nonstrategic nuclear weapons. Moscow is making large investments in its nuclear weapon programs. Strategic nuclear forces priorities include force modernization and command and control facilities upgrades. Russia will field more road-mobile SS-27 Mod-2 ICBMs with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles, deploy more Dolgorukiy class ballistic missile submarines with SS-N-32 Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and will continue the development of the RS-26 ICBM and next-generation cruise missiles.

**Space and Counterspace:** Russia is advancing its space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capability and has nearly doubled the number of satellites in its ISR constellation since 2014. Moscow views U.S. dependence on space systems as key enablers for military operations as a vulnerability. Russian military doctrine highlights counterspace capability as a force multiplier. Russia has a highly advanced space surveillance network, a

prerequisite for counterspace operations, and is modernizing and expanding these systems. Russia's counterspace capabilities include satellite warning-enabled denial and deception and jamming systems targeting satellite communications. Russian leaders assert that their armed forces have antisatellite weapons and conduct antisatellite research.

## **CHINA AND NORTH KOREA**

**Chinese Force Modernization:** China is pursuing a long-term, comprehensive military modernization program designed to improve its capability to fight short-duration, high-intensity regional conflicts. While preparing for a Taiwan contingency remains the primary driver of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) modernization, the Chinese military has increased its preparations for other contingencies, including conflicts in the East or South China Seas.

In addition to modernizing equipment and operations, the PLA is undergoing massive structural reform. Changes being implemented include increasing the number of Navy, Air Force and Rocket Force personnel at the expense of ground forces, establishing a theater joint command system and reducing their current seven military regions down to five joint theaters of operation. The emphasis on joint commands reflects China's intention to emulate the style of joint operations pioneered by the U.S.

A key component of PLA strategy in a regional contingency is planning for potential U.S. intervention. China has the world's largest and most comprehensive missile force, and has prioritized the development and deployment of regional ballistic and cruise missiles to expand its conventional strike capabilities against U.S. forces and bases throughout the region. They continue to field an anti-ship ballistic missile, which provides the capability to attack U.S.

aircraft carriers in the western Pacific Ocean. China also displayed a new intermediate-range ballistic missile, capable of striking Guam, during its September 2015 military parade in Beijing.

The PLA is modernizing its nuclear forces by enhancing silo and underground facility-based ICBMs and adding more road-mobile systems. In addition, the PLA Navy deployed the JIN-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine in 2015, which, when armed with the JL-2 SLBM, provides Beijing its first sea-based nuclear deterrent.

**South China Sea (SCS):** China has long identified the protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity as a “core interest” and has embarked on a multi-year, whole of government approach to securing Chinese sovereignty over the area within the “nine-dash line” as Chinese territory. In 2015, China shifted from enlarging and building its outposts in the SCS to developing them for civilian — and eventually military — occupation and use. In 2016, China likely will continue to add dual-use capabilities to these man-made features, including harbors, communications and surveillance systems, logistics support facilities, and airfields. The PLA’s response to recent U.S. Freedom of Navigation Operations, as well as an Australian ISR flight in December, demonstrate that Beijing recognizes the need to defend these outposts and is prepared to respond to any military operations near them.

**Defense Spending:** China has the fiscal strength and political will to support robust defense spending growth for the foreseeable future. In 2015, China announced a 9.2 percent inflation-adjusted increase in its annual military budget, to \$144 billion, continuing more than two decades of annual defense spending increases. Data analysis since 2006 indicates China’s

officially-disclosed military budget grew at an inflation-adjusted average of 9.8 percent per year.

**Space and Counterspace:** China possesses the world's most rapidly-maturing space program, using on-orbit and ground-based assets to support civil, economic, political, and military objectives. In parallel, China continues to develop counterspace capabilities designed to limit or prevent the use of space-based assets by adversaries in a crisis or conflict.

**DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA (DPRK):** North Korea remains a critical security challenge for the U.S. Despite significant resource shortfalls and aging hardware, the DPRK maintains a large, conventional, forward-deployed military and continues to improve its ability to launch rapid, small-scale attacks against South Korea. North Korea's continuing efforts to construct and use underground facilities to protect and strengthen the defense of key elements of its leadership and military. DPRK leadership's willingness to ignore the plight of their people yet undertake provocative actions against Seoul — demonstrated during its August 2015 ambush of South Korean soldiers — poses a serious threat to the U.S. and its regional allies. We also remain concerned about North Korea's proliferation activities in contravention of the United Nations (UN) Security Council.

Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program and evolving ballistic missile programs underscore the growing threat. The DPRK's display of a new or modified road mobile ICBM during a recent parade and its 2015 test of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile capability highlight its commitment to diversifying its missile forces and nuclear delivery options, while strengthening missile force survivability. North Korea also continues efforts to expand its stockpile of

weapons grade fissile material. In early January, North Korea issued a statement claiming it had successfully carried out a nuclear test, and on 7 February, Pyongyang launched a SLV from a west coast testing facility. The technology involved in a satellite launch would be applicable to North Korea's other long-range missile programs.

## **SOUTH ASIA**

**AFGHANISTAN:** In 2015, the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) took primary responsibility for security in Afghanistan for the first full year. The Afghan National Army conducted several independent multi-corps operations against the insurgency in diverse regions of the country. Security forces also successfully secured almost all provincial capitals and national lines of communication, to include major highways. A positive development in the evolution of the ANDSF is the use of special operations forces to effectively respond to terrorist threats and to deny safe haven to networks across the country, albeit with coalition support.

Despite these increased capabilities, the ANDSF is still facing significant challenges in leadership, combat enablers, logistics and sustainment, and ministerial capacity. The ANDSF cannot manage the insurgency and ensure security across Afghanistan without further improvement in these key areas and the development of human capital. The 2015 fighting season highlighted these shortfalls and a security posture which is overstretched and ineffectively utilized. The temporary fall of Kunduz City in September 2015, the result of Taliban efforts to expand operations in northern Afghanistan and exploit ANDSF capability gaps, illustrated these deficiencies. Despite the Afghan Army's ability to mount effective

counterattacks to regain lost terrain — as in Kunduz —the force is challenged to effectively employ organic aerial and ground fire enablers in support of reactive operations.

The late July announcement of former leader Mullah Omar's death, and the contentious accession of new leader Mullah Mansour, led to the emergence of a Taliban opposition faction in late 2015. Infighting between Mansour's supporters and the opposition has occurred, and the Taliban have faced competition from the ISIL's emergent regional affiliate. The Taliban and the ISIL are focused on countering the international presence and expanding territorial footholds in Afghanistan. In the 2016 fighting season, we expect the Taliban-led insurgency will try to build on its temporary victory in Kunduz by attempting to surround and pressure population centers. They will also seek to make incremental gains in rural areas and conduct high-profile attacks against government and civilian targets in key cities, particularly Kabul.

**PAKISTAN:** In 2016, Islamabad will face internal security threats from militant, sectarian, and separatist groups. ISIL in Khorasan and al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent also will remain significant security concerns for Islamabad. Counterinsurgency operations along Pakistan's Western border and paramilitary operations in Karachi have had some success in reducing violence and are likely to continue.

Pakistan's nuclear stockpile continues to grow. We are concerned that this growth, as well as the evolving doctrine associated with tactical nuclear weapons, increases the risk of an incident or accident. Islamabad continues to take steps to improve its nuclear security, and is aware of the threat presented by extremists to its program.



**INDIA and PAKISTAN:** Tensions between India and Pakistan subsided in late 2015 following high-level diplomatic engagement and an agreement to continue talks next year. However, there remains a significant risk that tensions could once again escalate with little warning, particularly if there is a large-scale terrorist attack in India.

## **AFRICA**

Africa's security environment is volatile due to dysfunctional political systems, conflict, and permissive environments for transnational terrorist and criminal groups. The region remains vulnerable to terrorist attacks, civil conflict, outbreaks of mass violence, trafficking networks, and humanitarian emergencies. Additionally, depressed global commodity prices and internal economic mismanagement and corruption are negatively impacting Africa's economic growth prospects and limiting government resources, weakening state capacity to respond to security threats. African and UN forces are responding to most security challenges, but most of the region's militaries continue to require sustained international assistance to address the continent's security environment.

In North Africa, years of civil conflict over political control of Libya and an expanding extremist presence in the country are the most pressing security concerns. UN sponsored negotiations to end the political impasse in Libya are slowly progressing, though obstacles to establishing a unified and functioning government will persist. ISIL has taken advantage of this permissive environment to establish a stronghold in the coastal Libyan city of Surt. Libya's instability has enabled the flow of illicit activity across the country's porous borders and increased concerns over a heightened terrorist threat across North Africa and the Sahel region. The Libyan conflict

and terrorist safe haven will persist until an inclusive unity government is established and secured by a loyal and capable military, which is unlikely in the foreseeable future.

West Africa's Sahel and Lake Chad regions are also contending with a number of violent extremist groups. The military forces within this region are stretched to defend against entrenched extremist groups or to confront cross-border extremist attacks. Given the enduring presence of terror groups in northern Mali, partner nations are working with Bamako to help reform and improve its military, and UN forces are securing major towns in the country's northern region. However, much work remains to be done to contain extremist threats in Mali and across the Sahel region. In northeastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, terror attacks by the Islamic State (IS)-West Africa, also known as Boko Haram, persist and are likely to continue despite the combined military efforts of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. The four states are working to operationalize the Multi National Joint Task Force to better combat IS-West Africa, but the results have been limited and efforts to address the socio-political drivers of IS-West Africa's success have lagged.

Parts of central and eastern Africa are at risk of instability over the next year, necessitating the continuing presence of peacekeepers. In Somalia, al-Shabaab attacks and control of some rural areas will persist as African Union troops, supported by the nascent Somali National Army, attempt to sustain control of southern region population centers. The January 15 al-Shabaab attack on a Kenyan military camp in southern Somalia highlighted the fragility of the country's security environment.

The risk of episodic violence in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Sudan will also continue despite peace and stability efforts. In Burundi, opposition to President Nkurunziza's third term has increased the risk of ethnic violence with potentially destabilizing regional implications. Ongoing efforts to extend presidential terms in Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Republic of Congo could spark new episodes of unrest. Additionally, the potential death or incapacitation of several heads of state throughout the region, especially in Zimbabwe, would contribute to a heightened risk of regional instability.

## **LATIN AMERICA**

Latin American nations continue to confront transnational threats challenging regional stability and prosperity, and the region remains vulnerable to transit by bad actors. At the same time, nations outside the hemisphere are seeking greater regional influence.

Mexico remains the primary transit country for U.S.-bound cocaine, and a major supplier of methamphetamine, heroin, and marijuana. El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras face some of the highest levels of violence in the world, exacerbated by drug trafficking and gang activities. Colombian cocaine production significantly increased in 2014, the majority of which is destined for the U.S. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) insurgent group is in peace talks with the government and has 5,000-7,000 members capable of surging short-duration offensives against government outposts and critical infrastructure. The FARC, the National Liberation Army, and criminal bands continue to profit from the drug trade.

Russia continues to engage with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela and probably wants access for Russian military forces to ports and airfields in those countries.

## **GLOBAL THREATS**

### **CYBER**

DIA remains concerned about the growing capabilities of advanced state actors – such as Russia and China – as they seek to gain advantage through knowledge and understanding of Department of Defense (DoD) personnel, systems, and networks. Advanced state actor aggregation of bulk data obtained from compromises could be used to conduct pattern analysis possibly exposing sensitive operations or relationships and their demonstrated access to networks could threaten data integrity within Defense databases. Iran and North Korea also remain a significant threat to conduct disruptive cyber-attacks as an asymmetric response, raising the possibility of unintended escalatory consequences. Each of these state actors continue to employ a combination of government personnel, contractors, and loosely affiliated or ideologically aligned hackers, augmenting their capabilities and challenging our ability to attribute malicious cyber activity.

International progress toward agreement on accepted and enforceable norms of behavior in cyberspace may provide an opportunity to limit the scope and scale of nation-state cyber activities and establish parameters for deterrence of malicious cyber operations. However, non-state actors' use of cyberspace to recruit, propagandize, and conduct open source research will endure as an enabler to their global decentralized operations, and the potential exists for a "lone wolf" cyber-attack.

## TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

As the Paris attacks demonstrated, ISIL has now become the most significant terrorist threat to the U.S. and our allies. In 2015, the group remained entrenched in Iraq and Syria and expanded globally, establishing official branches in Libya, Sinai, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the Caucasus. Branches in Libya and Sinai posed the greatest threat in 2015, but we assess that other branches will likely grow increasingly dangerous as we move into 2016. Emerging branches include those in Mali, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Tunisia, Somalia, and possibly other countries. Spectacular external attacks demonstrate ISIL's relevance and reach and is a key part of their narrative.

ISIL will likely increase the pace and lethality of its transnational attacks as infrastructure and capabilities mature. It will purposefully attempt to stoke sectarian conflict between Shia and Sunni, and between the West and Islam, to create the chaotic environment in which it thrives. ISIL will probably conduct additional attacks in Europe and attempt to direct attacks on the U.S. Homeland in 2016. We expect that ISIL leaders in Syria will be increasingly involved in directing attacks rather than just encouraging lone attackers. ISIL's foreign fighter cadre is core to its external attack capability, and the large number of western jihadists in Iraq and Syria will pose a challenge for western security services.

We also assess that Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE) will continue to pose a threat to DoD interests. Although HVEs are likely less able to conduct complex or spectacular attacks, difficulty in detecting preoperational planning makes them more likely to succeed. Lone actors

continue to find inspiration from ISIL propaganda. Since 2004, more than half of HVE plots in the U.S. either targeted or considered targeting DoD facilities or personnel.

Al-Qa'ida also remains a serious threat to U.S interests worldwide. It retains affiliates in Yemen, Somalia, North Africa, Syria, and South Asia. International focus on ISIL may allow al-Qa'ida to recover from its degraded state. We are concerned al-Qa'ida could reestablish a significant presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan, if regional counterterrorism pressure decreases.

## **FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE THREAT**

Foreign intelligence threats continue to expand and pose grave persistent threats to the DoD, its personnel, and capabilities. Our adversaries collect intelligence to enable their planning and operations and to counter our strategic and operational activities. Their collection against the Defense Industrial Base erodes U.S. military and technological advantages. Insiders also continue to constitute a major threat. Insiders who disclose sensitive U.S. government information without authorization will remain a significant threat in 2016. The sophistication and availability of information technology that can be used for nefarious purposes exacerbate this threat both in terms of speed and scope of impact.

Russia, China, and Iran are the most persistent and enduring foreign intelligence challenges for DoD. Cuba also remains a critical counterintelligence threat. Russia has the most sophisticated intelligence services; China's are the most prolific, using a variety of techniques and resources to collect vast amounts of valuable sensitive and classified DoD information; and Iran's services

remain an aggressive foreign intelligence challenge. In addition, a number of other foreign intelligence entities, including non-state groups, also continue to develop their capabilities.

These hostile foreign intelligence entities focus not only on targeting our armed forces and warfighting capabilities, but also increasingly pose threats to our supply chain, technologies, research and development, defense intelligence capabilities, and critical infrastructure.

Acquisition of commercially available technology makes it easier for less sophisticated foreign intelligence entities to acquire technical equipment and use it to target the U.S. Some of these foreign intelligence entities also seek to influence our national policy and decision-making processes.