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Federal Intelligence Service FIS

SWITZERLAND'S SECURITY

Situation Report 2016
of the Federal Intelligence Service FIS

Switzerland's Security 2016

Table of contents

Security and sovereignty in uncertain times 5

The situation report in brief 7

Strategic environment in a state of flux 13

Focus on China 24

Violent extremism and terrorism motivated by religion and ethno-nationalism 33

Right-wing and left-wing extremism 53

Proliferation 63

Illegal intelligence 71

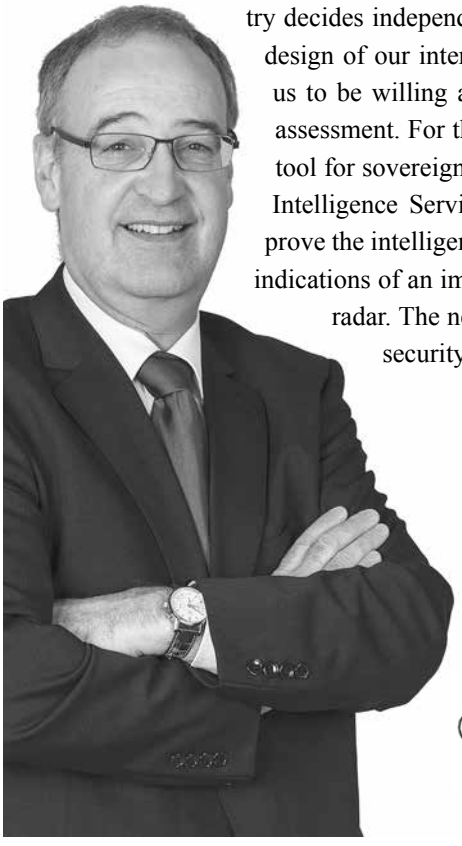
List of abbreviations 85

Security and sovereignty in uncertain times

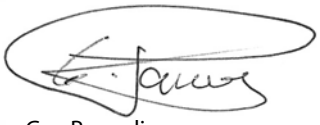
As the previously favourable security climate becomes more volatile, security policy is required to provide guidance. Our environment is characterized by rapidly growing complexity, and even the word 'chaos' is creeping into the language of security policy. It is being used as a rather inadequate description of the trend toward 'fragmentation': the sharp rise in the number of relevant players compared with past eras. Increasingly, many non-state players are able to influence Switzerland's internal and external security, both for good and for ill. In this environment, threats and dangers can often develop rapidly and surprisingly. They are becoming more unpredictable and the response times for decision-makers are shrinking. This is generating an atmosphere of uncertainty. The probability of strategic surprises is growing.

Providing security guidance under such conditions is a major challenge, and a reliable situation assessment is an indispensible requirement. It provides the basis for governing bodies to make decisions which will help to prevent strategic surprises and to guarantee security even in an increasingly uncertain environment. The intelligence service's assessment of the threat situation, as presented in an unclassified version by the FIS in its annual report, using its situation radar tool, makes a substantial contribution to these security policy objectives.

Every ship in turbulent waters relies on its own radar. This alone shows precisely those threats and dangers that are relevant to its position. However, this does not preclude the exchange of information with other ships in similar positions about risks lying in wait along the route. The situation is similar in the case of states. In a volatile security environment, it is natural to exchange information with other states about developments, risks and consequences. However, our country decides independently on our external security-policy stance and the specific design of our internal security-policy instruments. This independence requires us to be willing and able to do our own information gathering, analysis and assessment. For this reason, the intelligence service is a particularly important tool for sovereign decision-making on security policy in Switzerland. The new Intelligence Service Act will increase its importance still further. It will improve the intelligence service's information gathering, primarily where there are indications of an immediate threat to our own interests. It will optimise our own radar. The new Intelligence Service Act will in this way contribute to our security and our sovereignty.



Federal Department of Defence,
Civil Protection and Sport DDPS



Guy Parmelin
Federal Councillor

The situation report in brief

The complexity of the challenges facing the security authorities is increasing as the security environment becomes fragmented due to the growing number of relevant players. The FIS uses its 'situation radar' tool to provide a certain amount of security policy guidance. It gives an overview of the security situation, removing any unnecessary complexity, and identifies what the intelligence service sees as being the major issues facing Switzerland's inhabitants.

- Switzerland's strategic environment is marked by unusually high levels of stress in Europe due to various crisis situations. These crises are long-term in nature, but they have all come to a head at around the same time: the political and economic crisis over European integration, a new conflict situation with Russia and the crisis situations in the Middle East, the impacts of which have been directly felt in Europe in the form of escalating migration movements and a heightened terror threat.

- For a number of years, Russia has opposed the expanded EU and NATO in Eastern Europe and has sought to consolidate its own sphere of influence on its borders. Ukraine is strategic territory and lies at the heart of this ambition. Since the annexation of Crimea, force of arms has been used to prosecute the conflict; the armed conflict has left its mark on the Ukrainian economy and population. However, the country is also being weakened by internal power struggles. Russia's influence can also be seen in Moldova, Belarus and Georgia. The conflict with Russia will in all probability be a change in Switzerland's strategic environment that will have lasting effects. Realistically possible security scenarios in Europe fall into two broad categories: in one of these, an understanding between East and West limits the conflicts along the edges of the emerging zones of interest at an early stage, and in the alternative evolution, escalation gradually continues to spiral upward over the next few years.

- Syria is in many respects the epicentre of one of the crisis situations. The problems underlying the Arab Spring have not been brought any closer to a solution anywhere in the region (with the possible exception of Tunisia), and new crises have escalated (such as in Yemen). The tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran have the potential to cause particularly far-reaching destabilisation of the region. But it is in Syria that the expansion of 'Islamic State' and signs of attrition of the regime have internationalised the conflict to a whole new level. Russia took the strategically significant decision to intervene on the side of the regime with its own armed forces. This step and the attacks by 'Islamic State' in Paris have given fresh impetus to efforts by

the Western powers to exert influence. However, despite intensified military operations, there is as yet no sign of a resolution of the Syrian civil war, let alone a sustainable political solution.

- The terrorist organisation 'Islamic State' occupies the leadership role in the jihadist movement. It took over this role from al-Qaeda, but the potential threat from the latter has not diminished as a result. The threat posed by jihadist terrorism has increased further in recent months, mainly due to the fact that 'Islamic State' is sending individuals to Europe on missions to plan or carry out attacks. Switzerland is part of the European threat area, and the threat level has also risen in this country.

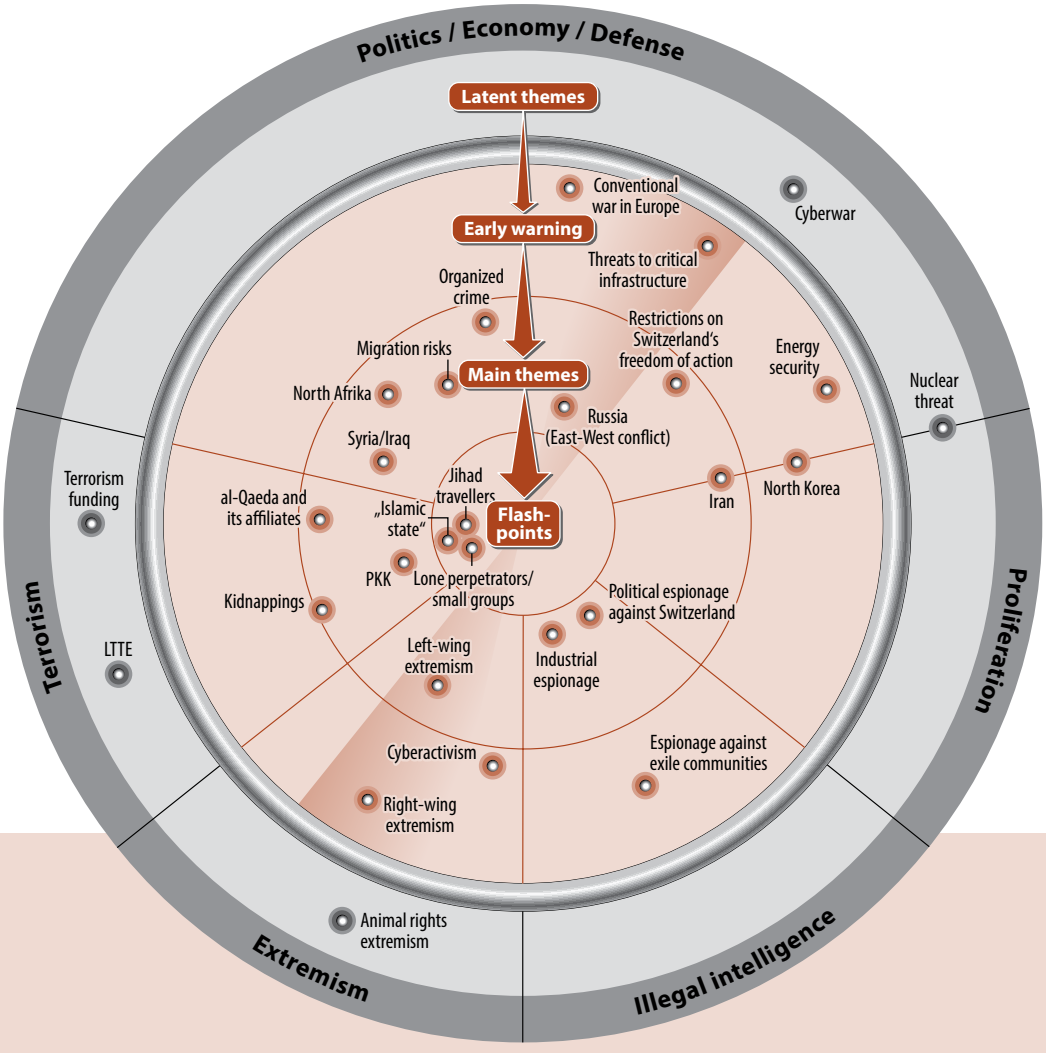
- Migration movements toward Europe have escalated over the course of the last year. Despite rising numbers, Switzerland has until now been less affected by this than other countries in Europe. Migration is not a security issue in itself, but individual aspects of migration certainly are. Notable among these are attempts by groups or individuals to reach Europe concealed within the mass flow of migrants in order to carry out terrorist attacks. The violent reactions of right-wing and left-wing extremists to developments in the area of migration and asylum also require close monitoring. The situation in Switzerland, unlike that in some countries in Europe, has been largely calm. Nonetheless, the potential for violence is present in both right-wing and left-wing extremist circles.

- An agreement has been successfully reached with Iran in the shape of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, thus overcoming one of the challenges in the area of nonproliferation. This should prevent a nuclear-armed Iran for the next ten to fifteen years. However, the nonproliferation issue has not in any way diminished in importance as a result; further efforts in this area are required in relation to North Korea as well as Iran.

- Illegal intelligence is carried out in Switzerland, as elsewhere. The damage caused by the theft of information is just one of the resulting problems. The access which intelligence services obtain to persons, institutions or electronic systems can potentially be exploited not only in order to collect intelligence, but also for the purposes of manipulation or even sabotage. Information obtained by intelligence services can also be used for information operations, the importance of which is increasing. In the area of information security, the lessons that emerged from the Snowden affair remain as valid as ever.

Situation radar tool

The FIS uses a situation radar tool to depict the threats affecting Switzerland. A simplified version of the situation radar, without any confidential data, has also been incorporated into this report. The public version lists the threats that fall within the FIS's remit, together with those classified under the categories of 'migration risks' and 'organised crime', which are also relevant from the point of view of security policy. This report does not go into detail about these two categories, for more information on which readers are referred to the reports of the relevant federal authorities.


Politics / Economy / Defense
Latent themes
Conventional war in Europe
Cyberwar
Early warning
Threats to critical infrastructure
Organized crime
Restrictions on Switzerland's freedom of action
Migration risks
Energy security
Main themes
North Afrika
Nuclear threat
Russia (East-West conflict)
Syria/Iraq
Terrorism funding
Jihad travellers
Iran
North Korea
al-Qaeda and its affiliates
„Islamic state"
Flash-points
PKK
Lone perpetrators/ small groups
Political espionage against Switzerland
Kidnappings
Terrorism
Proliferation
LTTE
Left-wing extremism
Industrial espionage
Cyberactivism
Espionage against exile communities
Right-wing extremism
Animal rights extremism
Extremism
Illegal intelligence

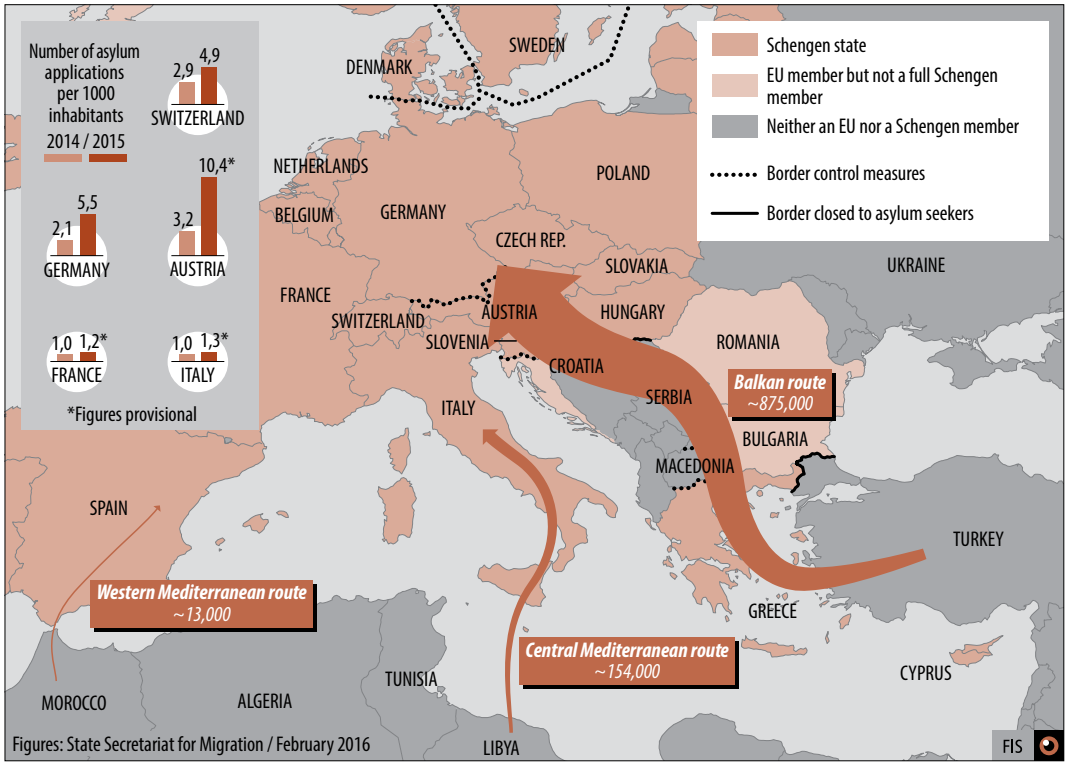
Strategic environment in a state of flux

Long-term crises and trends

Switzerland's strategic environment is marked by unusually high levels of stress in Europe due to various crisis situations. In the last few years, these crises have been regularly described by the FIS in its situation reports. They are long-term in nature, but they have all come to a head at around the same time: the political and economic crisis over European integration, a new conflict situation with Russia and the crisis situations in the Middle East, the impacts of which have been directly felt in Europe in the form of escalating migration movements and a heightened terror threat. The focus of this year's report is on another long-term trend of importance to Switzerland: the growing strength of China and its rise to become a global force.

Huge pressure for change on Europe as we know it

The migration movements toward Europe, which had been steadily increasing for years, have escalated since the first half of 2015. In the month of October 2015 alone, as many asylum-seeking migrants entered Europe as in the whole of 2014, itself a record year – the majority entering via Turkey and Greece and travelling onward via the so-called Balkan route. In many places, temporary border controls intended for emergency situations have been reintroduced at internal borders. The Schengen/Dublin agreements, pillars of the free movement of persons and among the most visible achievements of European integration, have come under severe pressure.



However, the negative impact on Schengen is only the most visible aspect of the challenges with which Europe's political order currently finds itself confronted. The European debt crisis and the associated risks to the stability of the eurozone and the common currency are still virulent threats and just as relevant to the survival of European integration as the problems of migration and terrorism. A series of crisis management steps have been taken to tackle the debt crisis in recent years, and harsh structural reforms are underway, particularly in the countries on the periphery of the EU. However, further – politically difficult – measures still lie ahead, and these will not be completed until at least the end of the current decade. Political and economic crises like those which have gripped Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Cyprus for years tend to trigger speculation about the stability of the eurozone and of the common currency, and are likely to occur again in the years to come.

It remains to be seen whether the escalated migration movements will be the crisis that brings European integration to a standstill or even jeopardises the entire historical process since the Second World War. The heightened terror threat is now also impacting on the integration process, for the time being with mixed results: integration and cross-border cooperation in the area of security are widely recognised as being necessary, but there is also a tendency for national border regimes to be tightened again, to some extent at the expense of the free movement of persons. Whatever the outcome of the responses to these challenges, the years of difficult political and economic crisis management will have eroded trust among the member states. Even if the EU, the euro and the common market outlive the protracted European crisis, severely strained government budgets and continuing instability in the European banking system will delay economic recovery and increase social tensions. Far and wide, the fringes of the political spectrum are gaining in strength and the political centre ground is being weakened. Obtaining political majorities for EU-wide solutions is becoming more and more difficult. A multi-speed Europe is on the verge of becoming reality: unilateral decisions by individual countries are becoming more frequent, as are requests for national exemptions. In cases of acute crisis, the suspension of common European rules has also become a reality. The debate in the UK, where a referendum on whether or not to remain in the EU is still pending, illustrates that the integration of Europe is not irreversible.

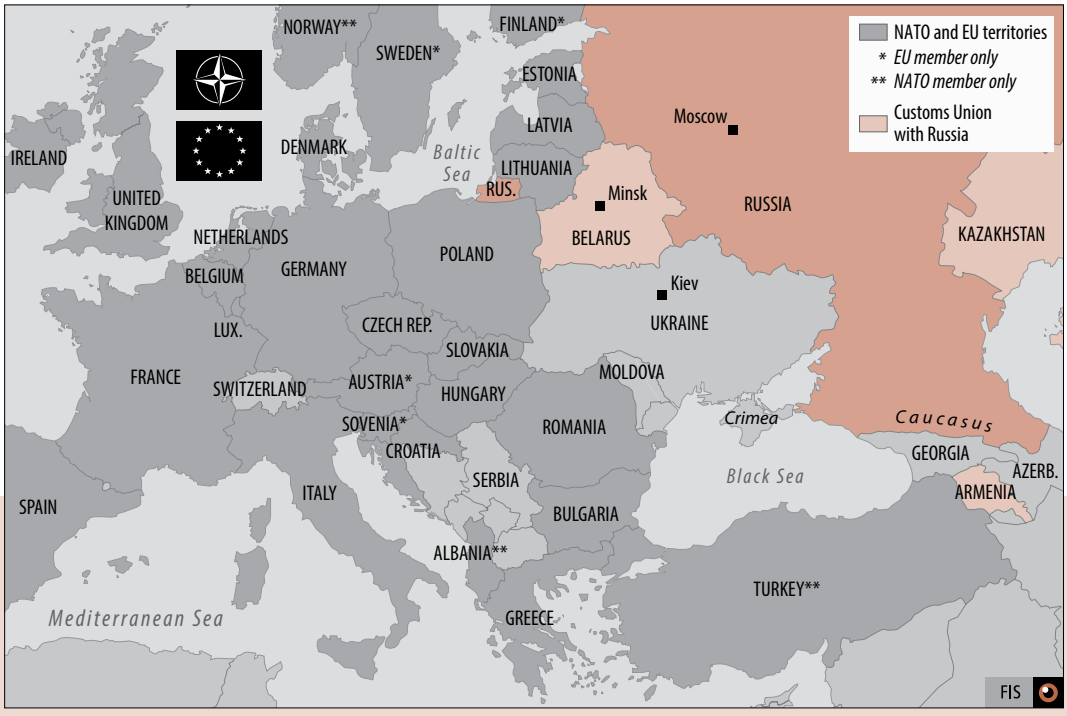
The crisis in European integration affects Switzerland directly, not only due to the great economic importance of the stabilization of the Eurozone. It challenges policymakers in many areas, more and more including security policy. For Switzerland, as an integral part of Europe in many respects, European integration since the Second World War has guaranteed a secure and stable environment. A Europe in crisis, preoccupied with itself and experiencing difficulties in maintaining the common market and the development of intra-European solidarity, is not well equipped to tackle the major long-term security challenges presented by the growing strength of Russia in the East and the crises on Europe's southern and south-eastern flanks.

Russia: Europe in the initial phase of a new conflict situation with Moscow

The growth in Russia's power on the European continent is a process that has been ongoing for over 15 years. The core of the Russian power structure, which President Putin has built up around a small circle of trusted advisors, is very stable in terms of personnel, the middle-class opposition movement has been contained, and the centralisation of the system and the internal controls are continuously being strengthened. Western sanctions and even more so the sharp fall in oil prices are currently putting a strain on the Russian economy. However, the corporatist system of power was built to cope with adversities. It would probably come under enough pressure to affect its stability only if the oil price were to remain at a low level for a prolonged period.

Russia, from its position of regained strength, has for a number of years opposed the expanded EU and NATO in eastern Europe and has sought to consolidate its own sphere of influence on its borders. This policy of exerting power in Europe is accepted by the Russian population at large.

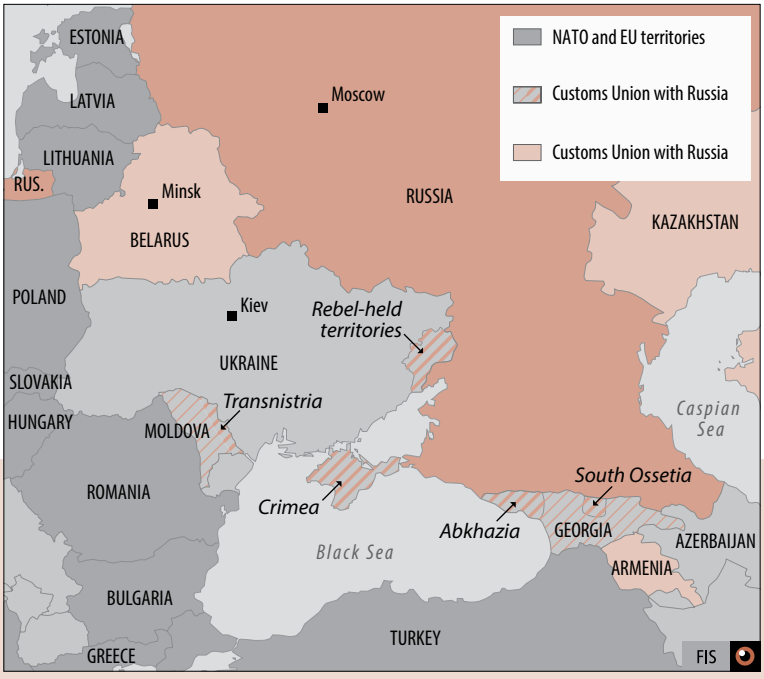
The expansion of Russian influence is clear to see. Russia has begun to challenge the post-Soviet status quo in Europe – including militarily. To Russian ambitions, Ukraine represents strategic territory and the heart of Russia's own sphere of influence. Since the annexation of Crimea, force of arms has been used to prosecute the conflict. Two years on, the armed conflict has left its mark on the Ukrainian economy and population. However, the country is also being weakened by internal power struggles. The political elite in Kiev, the traditional ruling oligarchy, is involved in intense internal power struggles which are damaging the Ukrainian state more than at any time since its independence in 1991 and are promoting the trend toward the break-up of the country into its regions. Russian influence stands ready to succeed the present leadership. The pro-Western government in neighbouring Moldova was replaced in



2015 after years of internal power struggles and protests by frustrated citizens, and the country is once again increasingly opening itself up to Russian influence. Russian influence is already dominant in Belarus and is also advancing in Georgia.

In all probability, the conflict with Russia is not a temporary phenomenon, but a change in Switzerland's strategic environment that will have lasting effects. A 25-year-long era in which inter-state conflicts on the 'old continent' were on the decline has come to an end. A return to a situation like the one which has prevailed over the last two decades, in which movement toward the goal of a common security area from the Atlantic to the Urals was at least a long-term prospect, has now become unlikely. The joint fight against jihadist terrorism will also in all probability be unable to put a halt to the growing geopolitical polarisation between East and West. Europe probably now faces a sustained period of confrontation between the West and Russia at the political, economic and military levels. The conflict in Ukraine, the West's subsequent economic sanctions against Russia, Russia's sanctions against the EU, the recession in the Russian economy and Russia's military action in Syria are an expression of this confrontation, which will probably drag on far into the 2020s. A process has been set in motion which over time is likely to lead to the formation of competing zones of interest on the European continent.

Realistically possible security scenarios in Europe fall into two broad categories: in one of these, an understanding between East and West limits the conflicts along the edges of the emerging zones of interest at an early stage, and in the alternative evolution, escalation gradually continues to spiral upward over the next few years. The more favourable case will see the development of a constant struggle for influence over a wide geographic area right across the continent, in which phases of tension and détente alternate and in which the limits of one side's influence and of the opposing side's resistance are continually tested. It is uncertain how these developments will play out in de-



tail, whether it will prove possible to regulate these tensions and to limit the deployment of resources, to freeze conflicts and to limit each side's claims or at least to postpone their fulfilment. This ongoing conflict may over the next few years lead to serious crises in various areas of Switzerland's strategic environment. Besides Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, the fault line across Europe between East and West passes in the north through the Baltic region and in the south through the Balkans, where East-West rivalry could be superimposed on conflicts in a region which has not yet come to terms with the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

In the meantime, the NATO states are once again stepping up their focus on collective defence. Since 2014, the establishment of rapid-deployment forces has been strengthened, exercise activity has been intensified and greater importance is again being attached to the maintenance of hardware and infrastructure. The USA, for its part, has begun to restrengthen the deterrent effect of US armed forces in Europe and to restore the basic capacity for rapid reinforcement in the event of a conflict. NATO is anticipating not only purely military threats, but also challenges below the threshold of war, such as cyber attacks and acts of sabotage against critical infrastructure by special operations forces or other players prepared to use violence, information warfare or coercive economic measures. Along with changes in the strategic environment, the situation for Switzerland is also changing. An armed attack on Switzerland remains unlikely. However, developments in Europe lead to challenges on many fronts. Switzerland's environment is once again becoming more sharply polarized along East-West lines and military factors are regaining importance. The conflict with Russia represents a new phase in the geopolitical struggle. Threats have become a reality on both sides of the eastern border of the EU/NATO and are currently growing. A crisis in this area between East and West – whether above or below the threshold for war – could, without much advance warning, become a challenge to Europe's political order, an order whose stability since the Second World War has also been one of the foundations of Swiss security and defence policy.

The consequences of the Arab Spring reach Europe

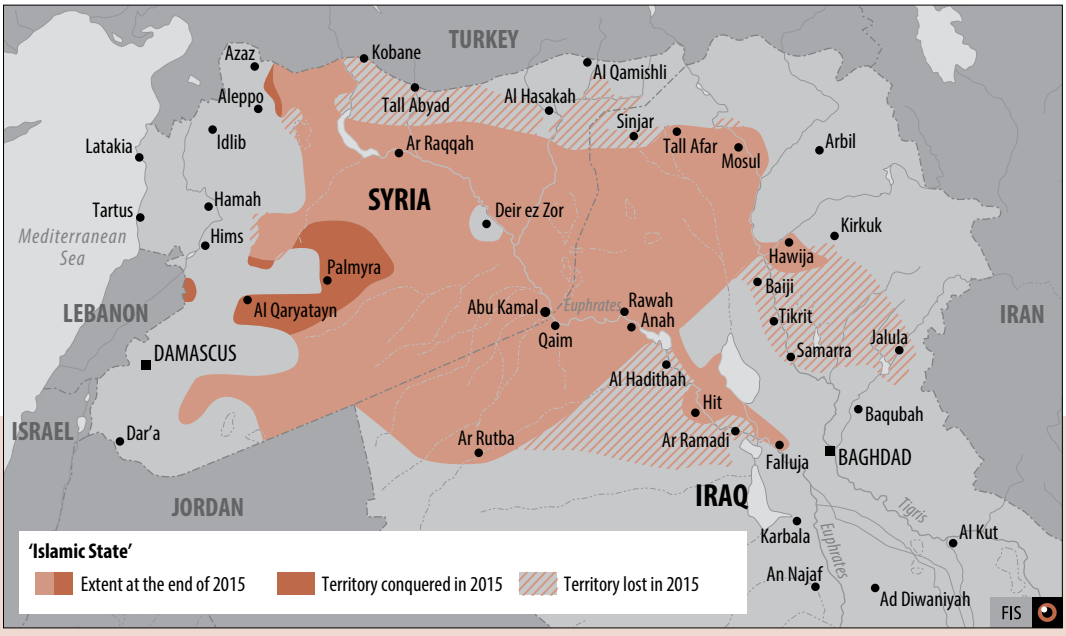
2015 was the year in which the crisis in the Middle East resulting from the Arab Spring of 2011 finally reached Europe. Firstly, migration escalated in 2015 to such an extent as to cause the reception infrastructures in Europe to collapse in places, giving rise to a real refugee crisis with complex political and social repercussions. Secondly, the attack on a Russian passenger plane over Sinai and the attacks in Paris by jihadist terrorists from the 'Islamic State' in Iraq and Syria demonstrated – not for the first time, but on a new level – the organization's potential to act globally.

Syria is in many respects the epicentre of the crisis situation. The problems underlying the Arab Spring have not been brought any closer to a solution anywhere in the region (with the possible exception of Tunisia), and new crises have escalated (such as in Yemen). The

tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran have the potential to cause particularly far-reaching destabilisation of the region. But it is in Syria that the expansion of 'Islamic State' and signs of attrition of President Bashar al-Assad's regime have internationalised the conflict to a whole new level. Russia took the strategically significant decision to intervene on the side of the regime with its own armed forces. This step and the attacks by 'Islamic State' in Paris have given fresh impetus to efforts by the Western powers to exert influence: they have triggered renewed attempts at a political solution, as well as new military operations in the fight against terrorism. At this point in the crisis in Syria, which will soon enter its sixth year, the price of political compromise has already increased significantly. Despite intensified military operations, there is as yet no sign of a resolution of the Syrian civil war, let alone of any sustainable political solution to the conflict.

The impact of 'Islamic State' is far-reaching. For at least the next twelve months, it will probably continue to control its own territory, although it is currently shrinking due to successful operations of the opposing forces. A sustainable military defeat of 'Islamic State' in Iraq and Syria is not likely in 2016, whilst the group continues to exploit the weaknesses of its opponents. Its demonstrations of power, from Iraq and Syria via Lebanon and Egypt to Libya, are calling into question the precarious legitimacy of state borders and with it the almost century-long post-Ottoman order in the Middle East. Finally, they are also provoking new and possibly long-drawn-out rounds of military interventions in the region, led by the USA and Russia.

The outcome of this upheaval on Europe's southern and south-eastern flanks remains uncertain. Any consolidation of 'Islamic State' in Syria and Iraq would be a strategically important change in the Middle East order and would have security consequences for Europe, Switzerland included. In Syria, the regime is fighting on and will possibly survive, albeit with Syrian society in ruins and without stable control over many provinces. The loss of state control across large areas of Syria and Iraq will make it necessary for the West and Russia to



maintain lengthy military engagements, which will possibly also introduce new geopolitical rivalries into the region. Egypt and Tunisia are struggling to stabilise the balance of power in their own countries, using a variety of methods. Libya has lost this struggle and is now showing all the symptoms of a failed state.

Switzerland is supporting the difficult and lengthy process of transformation in the region, where such a process still exists. However, it cannot remain unaffected by the risks in the southern and eastern Mediterranean regions. Migration to Europe from the crisis area has become one of the two greatest and most pressing challenges. Europe can try to mitigate and manage the consequences. But unless the region stabilises – and at the moment it doesn't look like doing so – the migration pressure on Europe will remain at a high level over the next twelve months.

The other major challenge for Europe is to tackle the increased terrorist threat from the region. This problem was the central theme of the FIS's 2015 Annual Report. The phenomenon of jihad tourism has become the serious security problem for Western states that many feared it would. At a media conference on 2 November 2015 –11 days before the attacks in Paris – the FIS drew attention to the heightened threat because there were indications that 'Islamic State' had sent individuals to Europe on missions to plan or carry out attacks. However, the authorities will also need to continue to pay close attention to numerous other problem areas: the threat to the security of citizens and diplomatic missions in the region, terrorist threats and kidnappings in the region and the disruption of trade and of energy supplies, as well as coping with sanctions regimes and managing the funds of politically exposed persons.

Energy security

The crisis in the global economy and the political challenges in regions critical to the global economy are being accompanied by upheavals on the commodity markets. These continue to call the public's attention to the issue of dependence on imported raw materials and energy. As far as Switzerland's energy security is concerned, however, the risks have not changed fundamentally. A well-functioning oil market secures Switzerland's supply, even in times of heightened uncertainty in the oil-producing regions. This also applies with regard to the dramatic collapse in the oil price, which in the short term offers price advantages for importing countries, but in the medium term prevents continuous investment in prospecting for and developing new oil fields, which may well result in supply bottlenecks and rising prices in future. There is as yet no comparably robust international market for natural gas. Switzerland's dependence on fixed pipeline systems which are largely centred on Russia will not change substantially in the near future. The EU's large-scale Nabucco project and Russia's South Stream project have both been aborted in recent years. This has further accentuated the significance of the crisis region of Ukraine to the transit of natural gas from Russia to Europe in the short term. In the longer term, the technological revolution linked to the extraction of shale gas

has the potential to speed up the development of an international natural gas market and also to have a positive impact on Switzerland's energy security.

Focus on China

The focus section of this report is dedicated to China. Where the intelligence service directs its attention should be determined not only by current events but also by long-term trends, where these impact on Switzerland. The growing strength of China and its rise to become a global power undoubtedly fulfil this criterion. As a result of China's expanding international engagement, contacts between Switzerland and China – initiated as much by one side as the other – are also on the increase.

China sees itself as Asia's strongest power and is seeking recognition as a player which is politically and economically on a par with the USA. Since head of state and party leader Xi Jinping took office, the country has taken 'the Chinese dream of the rejuvenation and resurgence of the nation' as its guiding principle. In the international context, it is showing itself to be a dependable player, but is also asserting its interests in a determined way. It is striving to attain a regional leadership role in Asia.

Terrorism

Jihad-motivated terrorism still poses a major threat to security in jihadist conflict zones, but also in Western, Islamic and other states. Radicalised individuals prepared to use violence might also take action in Switzerland or use Switzerland as a base for preparing attacks in other countries. Overall, the threat from jihad-motivated terrorism in Europe has once again increased. This also applies to Switzerland, which falls within the western European threat area.

Ethno-nationalist-motivated terrorism and violent extremism should not be forgotten, either.In particular, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has the potential for violence in Western Europe and could exploit it at any time. Depending on the situation in Turkey and in Kurdish-populated areas, further coordinated events and campaigns across Europe can be expected. However, these will probably not be of a violent nature, at least not in Switzerland. Isolated incidents on the fringes of demonstrations can, however, quickly lead to acts of violence, especially where Turkish and Kurdish groups come into contact with one another.

Right-wing and left-wing extremism

In both right-wing and left-wing extremist circles, the potential for violence persists. Despite this, the situation at the current time is largely calm. However, the tense situation regarding the issue of asylum, in particular, as well as further jihad-motivated attacks in Europe, could potentially lead to a deterioration in the situation in both right-wing and left-wing extremist circles. While there are currently no specific signs of such a situation developing in Switzerland, there are in other countries in Europe.

Proliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continues to threaten security in many regions of the world. Thanks to a diplomatic breakthrough in 2015, the situation regarding the Iranian nuclear programme has eased significantly. Nonetheless, Iran will remain subject to a special authorisation regime in the area of foreign trade for years to come. Some sections of the agreement between Iran and the permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany, codified through a UN Security Council resolution, are also binding on Switzerland, as one of the major exporters of dual-use goods. North Korea continues unhindered with its weapons of mass destruction programs and on 6 January 2016 once again tested a nuclear explosive device. The international sanctions regime introduced in 2014 in connection with the military escalation of the situation in Ukraine also poses a new challenge for Switzerland. In addition, the repeated use of chemical substances in the conflict in Syria and Iraq reminds us of how important combating proliferation is to related issues such as that of combating terrorism.

Illegal intelligence

Illegal intelligence activities are carried out by governments or by private players working for governments; in some instances, there is also a market for illegally acquired information. In the area of espionage there are no friendly states, but collaboration does take place where interests coincide. As a rule, state interests define the goals of intelligence collection activities – with some requirements constant and others dictated by the current situation. Illegal intelligence provides access to persons and systems which could possibly be exploited, not only in order to acquire information: they may sometimes also be used to manipulate or even sabotage data. The information is used in the interest of the state concerned, generally in secret, but in certain cases it may also be made public. Information operations have greatly increased in importance in recent years.

Cyberspace

This report does not deal with cyberspace separately, firstly because cyberspace is a cross-cutting issue and secondly because the Reporting and Analysis Centre for Information

Attack carried out using an improvised explosive and incendiary device in connection with the WEF in Zurich in January 2016 (Zurich city police)

Assurance produces half-yearly reports on the latest developments. However, the so-called real world is reflected in many areas of the so-called virtual world, although the virtual world does not present a comprehensive picture. The major difference is that in the virtual world every networked point on Earth can be reached in fractions of a second. For players with malicious intentions, this means that they can attack these points without having to be present at the location. Inhibition thresholds are generally lower, and attacks are more likely to be carried out, whether because the degree of anonymity in the virtual world is greater and the personal consequences of a person's own actions are less serious, or because the victim is identifiable, accessible or inadequately protected. Examples include the campaigns conducted by the hacker group 'Anonymous' against targets which are linked to a greater or lesser extent with 'Islamic State' – the attackers in this case remain unknown. As a consequence, 'Islamic State' and its protagonists are taking protective measures, which range from taking personal precautions to retreating into the dark web – the part of the Internet which cannot be tracked via conventional search engines.

Attacks can take different forms, one of which is website defacement. After the attack on the 'Charlie Hebdo' magazine in France, 1,300 cyber attacks were detected in which 25,000 websites were hacked and defaced with Islamist propaganda and messages of sympathy. This wave of attacks also spilled over into French-speaking Switzerland.

Alongside these private or loosely organised players, state players also make an appearance in conflicts. Their resources are usually greater; as is the damage which they (can) inflict – their importance in terms of security is correspondingly higher. For example, various locations in Switzerland and in Austria at which the nuclear negotiations with Iran took place have been attacked. The infiltration of computer networks for espionage purposes may be a direct part of a conflict. However, it also makes it possible to inflict damage on an opponent at a later date, for example by means of manipulation or even sabotage. Cases of sabotage continue to be rare, although media reports in January 2016 indicate that hackers were responsible for a power failure in Ukraine. This would be the third such case, following the attacks on an Iranian centrifuge plant and on a steelworks in Germany.

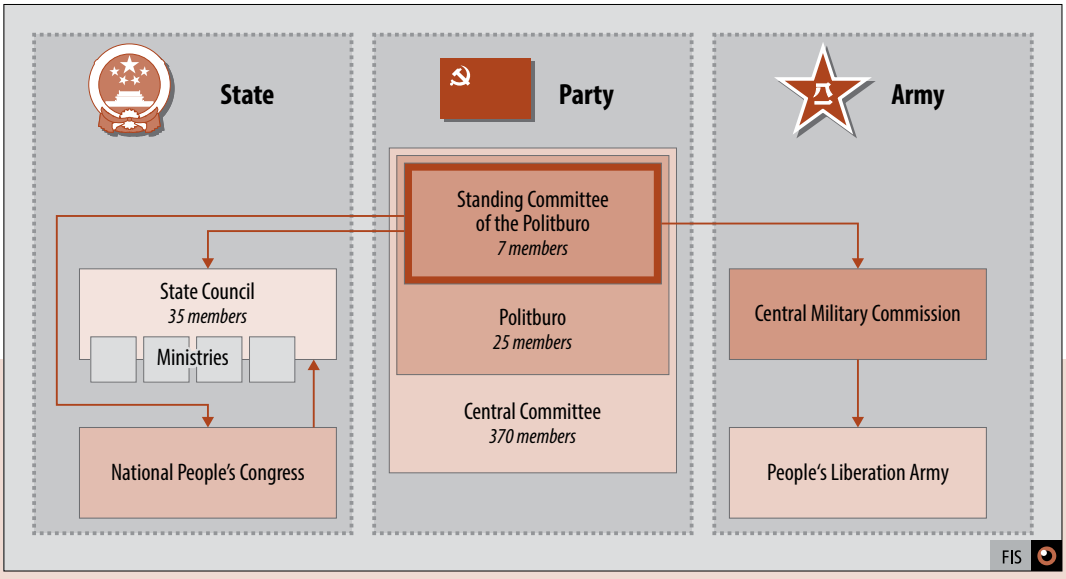
One of the numerous website defacements following the attack on 'Charlie Hebdo' in January 2015

Focus on China

China has undergone a period of enormous growth over the last thirty years. The impetus for this was the policy of reform and liberalisation vigorously promoted by Deng Xiaoping. Due to the resultant economic upturn, China has risen to become the world's second-largest economy. Thanks to the economic power which it has now accumulated, Beijing is acting with greater confidence on the international stage and is increasingly making its influence felt worldwide. China sees itself as Asia's strongest power and is seeking recognition as a player which is politically and economically on a par with the USA. As a result of China's expanding international engagement, contacts between Switzerland and China – initiated by both sides – are also on the increase.

China growing in strength under Xi Jinping

After taking office in 2012, China's head of state and party leader Xi Jinping swiftly consolidated his position at the head of the state, the party and the army. At the start of his term in office, he proclaimed the guiding principle of 'the Chinese dream of the rejuvenation and resurgence of the nation'. In doing so, he articulated China's historical aspiration to recover its national greatness, coupled with the desire of the people for prosperity and welfare. The party uses such slogans to propagate its legitimacy and credibility. Due to serious corruption scandals and internal power struggles, the party's image has taken a beating. The party therefore presents itself in the state media as being close to the people and as the representative of the masses. The new hands-on style of the government is illustrated most clearly by Xi's unprecedented anti-corruption campaign, which has been used to dismiss tens of thousands of political opponents and critics from the party, the military and the government. In parallel with the anti-corruption campaign, Xi has promoted the establishment of a socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics. The country is to be ruled strictly in accordance with legal and statutory rules and regulations. The objective here is not so much a separation of powers, but rather the reestablishment



of the citizens' trust in the organs of justice, which will, however, continue to be subject to full party control. Xi is using these developments to extend his power and control to the entire apparatus of government.

The current leadership is not only using harsh methods to tackle corruption and disagreements inside the party but is also simultaneously fighting the emergence of a civil society that is critical of the party. This manifested itself in 2015 in a wave of arrests of more than 300 Chinese human rights lawyers and the detention of publicists in Hong Kong who were critical of China. The party is pushing ahead with an intense programme of ideologisation and of isolation of the population from foreign influences. To this end, it has massively tightened control and censorship of the media and of the Internet. The Minister of Education has demanded that Western values should vanish from the curriculum in schools and universities and that Chinese values should be reinforced. Marxist ideas are exempted from this. The party is afraid of groups which have the capacity to organise themselves outside its sphere of influence and to mobilise people. Beijing therefore has difficulties with ethnic minorities, independent spiritual groups, trade unions and dissidents. Critics of the system of government are not tolerated, as the primary goal of the regime is the retention of power by the Communist Party. Additional party priorities include preserving territorial integrity and maintaining internal order.

China in need of far-reaching economic reforms

After around thirty years of record growth, the Chinese economic model is in need of far-reaching reforms. China has risen to become the world's second-largest economy and during the economic upturn has managed to lift around 500 million people out of poverty, but the economic upturn has also been accompanied by problematic side effects such as industrial over-capacity, over-investment and the over-indebtedness of local administrations. These difficulties have been exacerbated by China's expansionary monetary policy in the wake of the financial crisis of 2008. In general terms, its economic growth is insufficiently driven by domestic consumption and is too heavily dependent on the export economy and on infrastructure investment. In addition, demand for Chinese goods is falling due to the ailing world economy. China is therefore battling a decline in economic growth.

In November 2013, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China approved an ambitious programme for restructuring the Chinese economy. The aim of the realignment is a transformation toward an innovative service economy which will be driven to a greater extent by domestic consumption, thanks to increased wage levels. Under the reform plans, the economic influence exercised by the central government will be diminished and market forces will be strengthened. To date, the reforms have been implemented tentatively, as bureaucratic hurdles and the resistance of state-owned enterprises are hampering implementa-

tion. The government interventions to stabilise the stock market in the summer of 2015 and the unannounced devaluation of the Chinese currency in the autumn of 2015 illustrate that the government still feels compelled to intervene in the market. Beijing has been criticised for its market interventions, particularly because of their inadequate communication.

China's strong economic growth has, however, also had negative consequences, such as rampant environmental pollution and sharply increasing income differentials. Although the party is aware of the problem, both issues are potentially socially explosive. They are particularly highly charged because they are linked to some of the concerns of the growing middle class. The latter is better informed and networked than the farmers and the workers and also has greater financial resources at its disposal. It is therefore better able to coordinate and mobilise itself and to challenge the party.

In the long term, China faces a demographic problem: a falling working population will have to provide for a rising non-working population. This is a consequence of the one-child policy, relaxation of which will counteract China's demographic change only to a marginal extent. A further problem lies in the prosperity gap between coastal and inland provinces and between urban and rural areas. Linked to this are challenges such as the high levels of domestic migration, involving over 250 million migrant workers, and the discrimination against migrant workers due to their lack of residence permits. Despite recurring protests against environmental damage, poor working conditions, expropriation of land or discrimination by the authorities, there are no signs of any major cross-regional social unrest movements. In frontier provinces such as Tibet, Xinjiang or Inner Mongolia, the effects of these socio-economic problems are particularly pronounced, as the ethnic minorities are economically disadvantaged and politically oppressed.

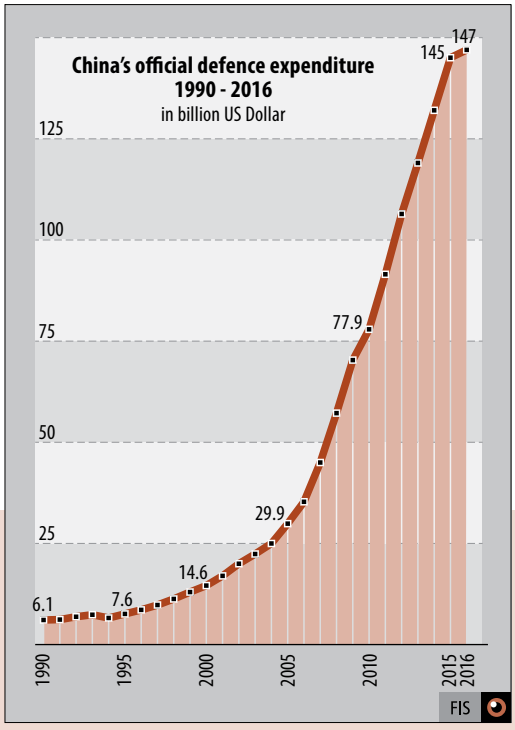
China's outward projection of power

Since Xi Jinping took office, China has projected itself to the outside world more actively and self-confidently. By dropping the foreign policy reticence of his predecessors early on in his term of office, Xi Jinping came to embody this invigorated China, The Chinese leadership is pursuing an intensive policy of state visits and is adept at raising its own profile at multilateral summits. It is trying to shoulder more responsibility internationally in order to gain influence and is increasingly exerting a formative impact on individual global problems. On paper, Beijing's foreign policy subscribes to the ‘principle of peaceful development’. Where China's core interests are concerned, however, the government is unwilling to make any concessions and is not afraid to adopt a confrontational stance. This applies above all to the overlapping territorial ownership claims in the East and South China Seas, as well as to the Taiwan issue and international support for the Tibetan government in exile. This is increasing the potential for conflict, particularly with neighbouring states and the USA, and jeopardising the economic relations that are

important to China. China is therefore attempting at the same time to stabilise its foreign-policy environment, particularly on its periphery. The main tools China is using to achieve this are its economic dominance and the plentiful financial resources at its disposal. During visits abroad, agreements on multibillion foreign investments are signed. China has now become the largest trading partner for several states in the ASEAN region and on the African continent, as well as for South Korea, Mongolia and Taiwan. In this way, China is attempting, through its expansionary economic policy and the creation of economic dependency relations, to weaken the USA's influence in the region.

In addition, China is carrying out an extensive modernisation of its armed forces. For years, China's defence expenditure has been increasing sharply, more or less mirroring its general economic growth. Xi Jinping's goal is a powerful army that is combat-ready at all times and is able to guarantee China's internal and external security. The Chinese army is developing from a purely territorially-based and inflexible defensive army into a dynamic armed force with a capability to achieve military effects even over considerable distances. This process will extend over the next thirty years. Despite the large-scale military modernisation and the demonstrated increase in capabilities, the operational readiness of the Chinese armed forces remains currently limited.

Although the Chinese army still has large gaps in its capability and is in the midst of a process of transformation, it is viewed as an increasingly effective instrument of power politics. China has already started deploying military resources to signal its regional interests. Although Chinese foreign policy is dominated by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, an increase in the deployment of military forces far from China's own shores has also been observed in the last few years. In this context, the navy and the air force have been growing in importance relative to the previously dominant army. This has



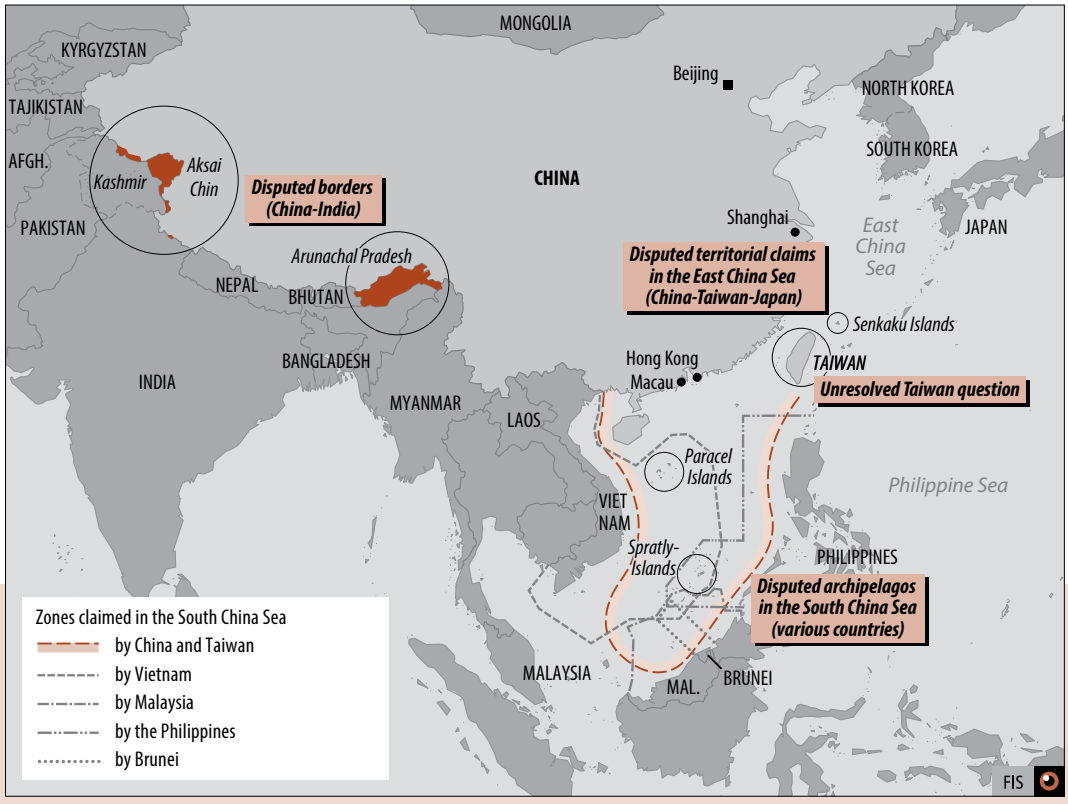
given China the opportunity to showcase its newly commissioned military systems around the world.

China is aware that its rise to great power status will lead to conflicts of interest with established powers. However, it sees its claim to assume a leadership role in Asia as being a legitimate one. Its long-term goal is the establishment of a security zone around China and the expansion of its own sphere of influence to neighbouring states. This is seen as the best way to assert its core interests. As a rising great power, China will confidently and resolutely involve itself in foreign-policy areas which affect its own interests. On the other hand, it will avoid conflicts which touch on the country's interests only marginally.

China's renewed leadership role in Asia

For several centuries, the Middle Kingdom stood at the centre of a regional tributary system. States and peoples from both near and far regularly paid tribute to the Chinese emperor in the form of gifts and reverences. In exchange, they received commercial goods and in some cases also protection guarantees.This led to a stable system of regional order. The tributary system and the Sinocentric world view associated with it came to an abrupt end with the invasion of the Western powers and Japan in the second half of the 19th century. Chinese historiography looks on this period, which lasted until the end of the Second World War, as a century of national humiliation.

The century of national humiliation has left a deep mark in the Chinese social consciousness and national identity. Against the background of this historical consciousness, the Chinese view it as a matter of course that China will one day again stand at the heart of Asia. This is also reflected in the central theme of the Chinese Dream propagated by Xi Jinping. The



Communist Party is skilfully using this to rally the population behind it and is presenting itself as the only player which can guide the Chinese nation back to past greatness.

The rise of China will in principle be accepted by the international community as long as it remains within existing international standards and rules. However, China's increasing global involvement is revealing that in numerous areas its standards and values differ from those of the West. As a result, China's rise is also perceived as a threat. In a secret party document which was published in 2013 by a Chinese-language international news magazine, the party warned of the 'dangers' which have to be quashed in China. These included press freedom, universal human rights, party democracy, the rule of law and constitutionalism. This document shows how far apart the West and China are from one another ideologically. These differences will deepen in future, as China shows itself increasingly willing to use its freshly acquired power to create new international standards which will change the existing political and economic world order. To this end, China is founding new institutions and funds and initiating large-scale economic projects.

Through its so-called New Silk Road initiative, China is planning to become the central hub of a regional value chain which is to be extended over land and sea to East, South-East and Central Asia and as far as Europe and Africa. This initiative is the centrepiece of current Chinese foreign policy and, according to the official interpretation, is intended to strengthen exchange and cooperation in the region. In fact, large-scale investments are creating a new regional economic architecture which will make surrounding states increasingly dependent on China. Although the project is intended to cover fifty states, it is based on bilateral rather than multilateral treaties. Like the tributary system, the initiative is hierarchically structured: China stands at the centre and controls the flow of commercial goods to the connected countries. China aims to use this network to reestablish itself as a strong power in Asia ensuring stability in the region by means of economic dependencies.

The founding of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a supplement to the existing Bretton-Woods system is another sign of a resurgent China. The multilateral AIIB is focussing primarily on the as yet unmet demand for investment in infrastructure in Asia. As the initiator, China is providing the AIIB with by far the largest share of its financial resources and according to the rules currently has a blocking minority with respect to important decisions. China will in future also use the bank as an instrument of economic diplomacy to counter any regional tensions that emerge due to the rise of China.

The Chinese government is also anxious to legitimise its own principle of national internet sovereignty and to introduce it as a global standard. It takes the view that national authorities are entitled to regulate, control and censor any online content which is consumed within their own state borders. This approach is in stark contrast to the Western understanding.

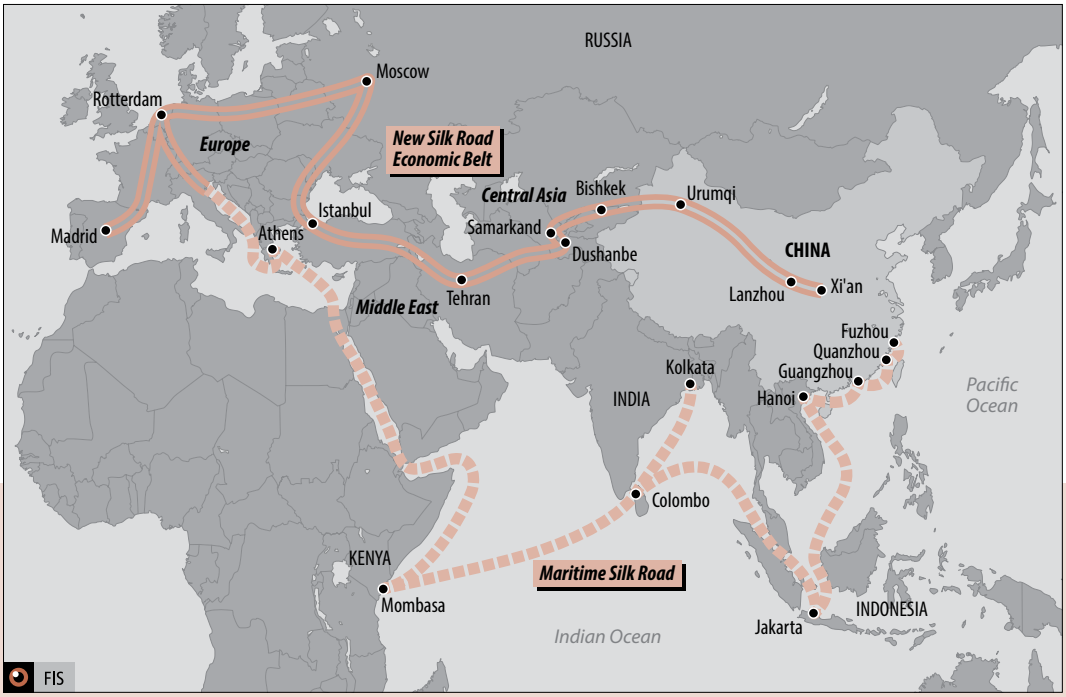
The ability of China to assert its international interests, whether in the context of the New Silk Road initiative or of the AIIB, is seen in China as symbolic of redressing the century of national humiliation. Its regained national strength is also clear to see in China's more assertive behaviour in the territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. Based on its historical role in the region, China sees control over these areas as its by right.

The People's Republic of China and Switzerland

Switzerland maintains active and multifaceted relations with China. After the introduction of the reform and open-door policy by Deng Xiaoping at the end of the 1970s, bilateral relations grew strongly at all levels.

The increased influence being exerted by China presents Switzerland with both opportunities and risks. It offers a variety of opportunities for bilateral and multilateral political and economic cooperation. There are institutionalised bilateral dialogues between the states in a large number of areas. Switzerland is a founding member of the AIIB. In economic terms, China is Switzerland's main trading partner in Asia and its third-largest trading partner worldwide after the EU and the US. Switzerland benefits from the import of cheaply produced Chinese goods. Chinese trading partners in turn are interested in products manufactured by the Swiss engineering, electrical, metal and pharmaceutical industries. Swiss watch and jewellery manufacturers have profited from the rising prosperity in the Middle Kingdom and the marked affinity of many newly rich Chinese for luxury goods. The bilateral free trade agreement which entered into force in 2014 has led to favourable terms for Swiss companies, as many customs duties are gradually being reduced. The rapid rise of the new middle class in China has paid particular dividends for the Swiss tourism industry: since 2014, over a million overnight stays by Chinese visitors to Switzerland have been recorded annually.

The main risks are posed by a growing dependence on China's economic growth.



A marked economic downturn or sharp currency fluctuations in China would impact negatively on Switzerland. Economic or political pressure exerted by China on EU states could indirectly have consequences for Switzerland. Furthermore, branches of Swiss industry are exposed to a risk of being crowded out by competition from China. Chinese companies and investors have a particular interest in this country's industrial and financial sectors and in innovative companies, for Switzerland is a world leader in areas in which China still has some catching up to do. Through takeovers of Swiss companies and increasingly also Swiss hotels, China is attempting to secure the know-how that it desires and to acquire Swiss brands together with their good reputations.

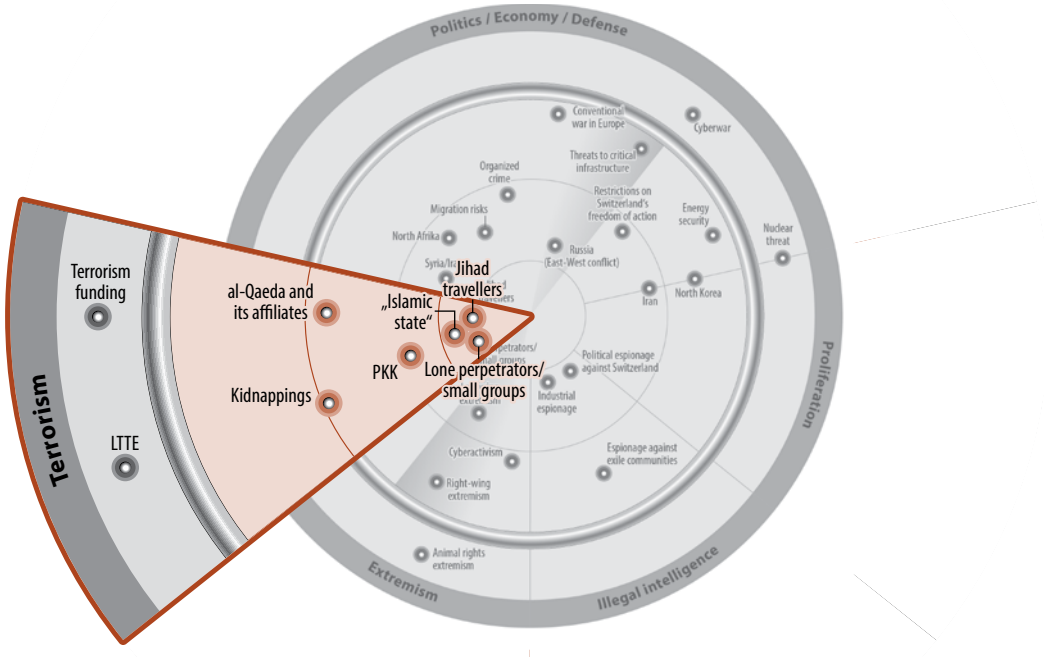
However, cooperation with China is not based on the principle of reciprocity. Beijing does not grant its foreign trading partners the same access to the Chinese sales and investment market as is granted to Chinese companies abroad. A number of branches of the economy and of the financial market are closed off by the state's protectionist industrial policy. Shortcomings in the rule of law, the lack of law enforcement in China and direct intervention in the market by the government mean that there are risks for foreign companies operating in China that are difficult to predict.

China's influence in Switzerland is not just economic, but also ideological. The Chinese government aims to establish a thousand Confucius Institutes worldwide by 2020. Two Institutes have already been opened in Geneva and Basel. In addition, China is also expanding its own media reporting capabilities: since 2011, China Central Television (CCTV) has opened around 70 offices worldwide, including one in Geneva. For Switzerland, it is primarily in relation to the Tibetan exile community in Switzerland that China's assertive and demanding behaviour makes itself felt. Official receptions of the Dalai Lama are no longer tolerated by China in any way, and a variety of measures are used to impose retroactive sanctions. These measures range from the temporary cooling of diplomatic relations and cancellations of state visits to the temporary decrease in exports to China from the country concerned. This shows that fundamental differences of opinion persist between the West and China in relation to human rights, personal freedoms and the rule of law. Because of China's economic power politics, however, the resolve of the international community to demand that China join in respecting basic universal values is waning. ■

At left:
simplified diagram of China's New Silk Road Initiative

Violent extremism and terrorism motivated by religion and ethno-nationalism

Jihad-motivated terrorism still poses a major threat to security in jihadist conflict zones, but also in Western, Islamic and other states. Radicalised individuals prepared to use violence might also take action in Switzerland or use Switzerland as a base for preparing attacks in other countries. Overall, the threat from jihad-motivated terrorism in Europe has once again increased. This also applies to Switzerland, which falls within the western European threat area. Ethno-nationalist-motivated terrorism and violent extremism should not be forgotten, either. In particular, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has the potential for violence in Western Europe and could exploit it at any time. Depending on the situation in Turkey and in Kurdish-populated areas, further coordinated events and campaigns across Europe can be expected. However, these will probably not be of a violent nature, at least not in Switzerland. Isolated incidents on the fringes of demonstrations can, however, quickly lead to acts of violence, especially where Turkish and Kurdish groups come into contact with one another.



SITUATION

Core al-Qaeda loses leadership role

The threat, to Western states in particular, from jihad-motivated terrorists operating internationally has increased. The power struggle between 'Islamic State' and core al-Qaeda over the claim to leadership of the jihadist movement has reached a new stage. Above all, Core al-Qaeda contests the very legitimacy of the caliphate proclaimed by 'Islamic State'.

In mid-August 2015, after a year of silence, core al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri issued an audio message that put his organisation back in the spotlight. In the audio recording, he declared an oath of allegiance to Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the new leader of the Afghan Taliban. In a further audio message in September 2015, Zawahiri unequivocally dismissed the legitimacy of the caliphate proclaimed by 'Islamic State' in June 2014. All the recognised affiliates of core al-Qaeda – al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al-Shabaab in Somalia, Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria and al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent – have confirmed their pledges of allegiance.

Since 2013, 'Islamic State' has repeatedly professed its claim to leadership of the jihadist movement. Since the proclamation of the caliphate in 2014, various jihadist groups worldwide have pledged their support for 'Islamic State' or sworn an oath of allegiance. In return, 'Islamic State' has accepted several of these pledges and declared the groups to be provinces. Meanwhile, the organisation has taken over the leadership role in the international jihadist movement from core al-Qaeda.

Differences and common features

Core al-Qaeda and 'Islamic State' share the ideology of international jihadism which al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden were instrumental in shaping. At the same time, however, there are numerous differences between the two organisations. For example, core al-Qaeda has been left with just a small circle of leaders, and from the West only isolated individuals are now willing to fight for the organisation. The al-Qaeda label has lost much of its potential to mobilise support in the West.

	Core al-Qaeda	'Islamic State'
Ideology	International jihadist	International jihadist
Agenda/Approach	Focus: fighting the far enemy	Fighting the near and the far enemy
Caliphate	Remote ultimate goal	Caliphate being established
Territory	Controls no territory	Controls territory
Financial resources	Financial difficulties	Income: approx. 2 billion dollars/year
Quality of propaganda	Development and modernisation of media neglected / low profile on social media	Technical and linguistic professionalism, rapid and wide distribution on social media
Number of Western fighters	A few individuals at most	Approx. 3,000

The organisation's financial resources are very limited. Core al-Qaeda is able to engage in military activities only in collaboration with local players. Core al-Qaeda maintains a low profile on social media and it produces very little propaganda any more, most of it unstructured.

'Islamic State', by contrast, has a high-profile leadership that remains intact. Several thousand individuals from the West are prepared to play an active combat role. The utopia of making a caliphate reality, as well as reports of heroic deeds, make the organisation attractive to potential fighters. Also, thanks to its relatively substantial financial resources, which stem in part from exploitation of the territory it occupies, but also from the looting of banks and trading in oil from wells in occupied areas, 'Islamic State' is well-equipped and has considerable military fighting power.

Willingness, capability and means to carry out attacks

The fact that 'Islamic State' and other jihadist groups and individuals connected with it, as well as perpetrators linked to al-Qaeda, are not only willing to carry out attacks worldwide but also have the capabilities and the means needed to do so, has recently been illustrated on numerous occasions.

- On 22 March 2016, jihadists carried out attacks at the airport and a metro station in Brussels (Belgium). They killed more than 30 people and injured more than 300. On the same day, 'Islamic State' claimed responsibilty for the attacks.
- On 15 January 2016, jihadists in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) attacked the 'Cappuccino' restaurant and the 'Splendid' Hotel. They killed 30 people, including two Swiss nationals. AQIM claimed responsibility for the attack, but it was carried out by the al-Murabitun group.
- On 12 January 2016, 11 people were killed and 14 injured in an attack in Istanbul (Turkey). Ten of the victims who died were German tourists. The modus operandi suggests a link to 'Islamic State', but responsibility for the attack has not been claimed.
- On 13 November 2015, 137 people died and more than 350 were injured in multiple coordinated attacks in Paris. Three suicide bombers detonated explosive devices outside the 'Stade de France' football stadium in the north of the city. Dozens of people were shot dead at the 'Bataclan' theatre by three men wearing suicide vests; they were killed during the storming of the building. In addition, several perpetrators carried out almost simultaneous shootings in three locations, targeting customers in bars and restaurants, and another suicide bomber detonated an explosive device in a restaurant. 'Islamic State' claimed responsibility for the attacks.
- In two suicide bombings in a suburb of the Lebanese capital Beirut on 12 November 2015, 44 people were killed and over 200 injured by the explosive devices. 'Islamic State' announced via social media that it had been behind the attack.

At left:
comparison of core al-Qaeda and 'Islamic State'

'Islamic State': a complex phenomenon

'Islamic State' is more than just a jihad-motivated terrorist organisation operating internationally. The FIS views 'Islamic State' as a multifaceted phenomenon with a variety of different guises.

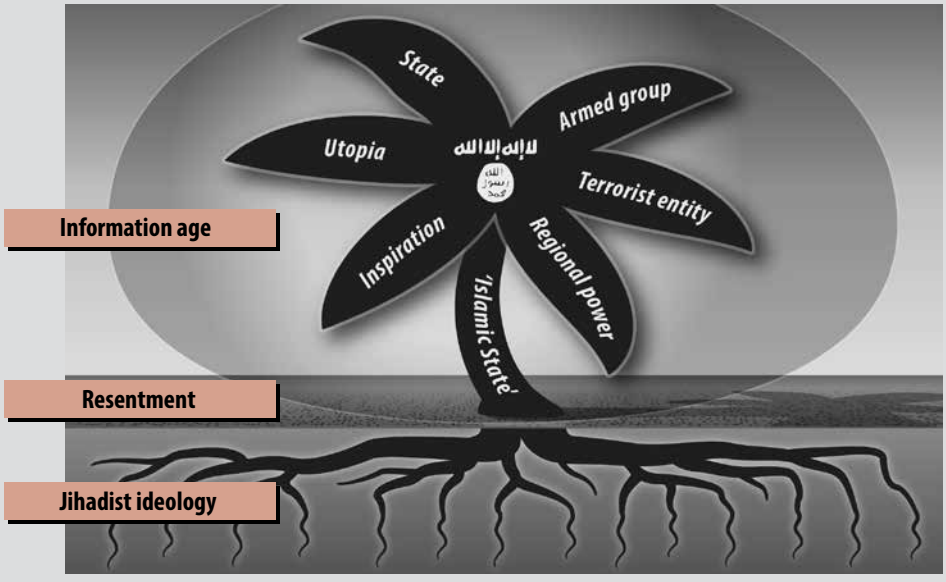
The strategic leadership of 'Islamic State' is composed of experienced jihadi fighters from Iraq and Syria, but also includes persons who have traveled there from elsewhere. 'Islamic State' is a highly diverse organisation which effectively and efficiently integrates the different capabilities of battle-hardened jihadists, former soldiers and supporters from Europe and the Islamic world.

'Islamic State' uses multimedia-based propaganda selectively and professionally; it maintains a high profile on social networks. Despite countermeasures, its inspirational effect remains high.

Although it has suffered a number of military setbacks in the last few months, the organisation still controls a territory covering approximately the eastern half of Syria and the western third of Iraq. 'Islamic State' continues to control several major cities, including Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city. This highlights the way the group sees itself as a state in the true sense of the word. The ultimate goal is the establishment of a caliphate as the only state in the world for all Muslims in which a strict interpretation of Islamic law is applied as the only law and temporal and spiritual leadership are vested in one person, the Caliph.

Besides individuals across the globe capable of carrying out attacks in its name, there are numerous jihadist groups professing allegiance to 'Islamic State'. Many of these have been officially recognised by 'Islamic State' as affiliates. 'Islamic State' has what it calls provinces (wilaya, pl. wilayat) in Libya, Algeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria and the North Caucasus. This conveys the impression that the 'Islamic State' is expanding globally, which in turn increases the appeal of the organisation to potential sympathisers and fighters. Even if 'Islamic State' does not control the provinces in the sense of tightly governing them, its influence has made it an important regional player in the Islamic world.

The use of violence is deemed by 'Islamic State' to be a legitimate means of establishing the caliphate. The enemy is seen as being the USA, Israel and the West as a whole, as well as Russia and all those who are infidels in the eyes of 'Islamic State' – i.e. all those who do not share its understanding of Islam.



- It is probable that the detonation of an explosive device that was smuggled on board a Russian passenger plane which took off from Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt on 31 October 2015 led to the plane crashing over the Sinai. All 224 passengers and crew lost their lives in the crash. 'Islamic State' claimed responsibility immediately after the crash and reiterated this claim repeatedly. For example, in its magazine 'Dabiq', 'Islamic State' published a picture of the explosive device which was allegedly used.
- Two suicide bombings were carried out on 10 October 2015 during a peace rally in the Turkish capital, Ankara. 102 people lost their lives in the attack, and over 500 were injured. One of the two perpetrators was the brother of the man who had carried out the attack in Suruc in July 2015. The modus operandi suggests a link to 'Islamic State', but responsibility for the attack has not been claimed.
- A suspected jihad-motivated lone perpetrator attempted to carry out an attack in a high-speed train travelling from Amsterdam to Paris on 21 August 2015. He boarded the train in Brussels and opened fire on passengers. Passengers managed to overpower him, but several people were injured.
- On 20 July 2015, 34 people died and over 70 were injured, some of them seriously, in a suicide bombing in the Turkish city of Suruc. No-one has yet claimed responsibility for the attack; it is likely that the perpetrator was linked to 'Islamic State'. The organisation had on a number of occasions threatened to extend its struggle to Turkey.
- On 26 June 2015, in Port el-Kanaoui close to Sousse in Tunisia, a man shot at tourists on a beach and threw several hand-grenades into a hotel complex. A total of 38 people lost their lives, including a large number of UK citizens. On the same day, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device during Friday prayers at a Shiite mosque in Kuwait City. 26 people were killed, and over 200 were injured. On the following day, 'Islamic State' put out a claim of responsibility via the short message service Twitter.
- On 18 March 2015, an armed attack on tourists planning to visit the Bardo Museum took place in Tunis. Several people were taken hostage in the building. 19 foreign tourists

Photograph of the bomb which is alleged to have caused the plane crash over the Sinai in October 2015. Appeared in 'Dabiq', an 'Islamic State' magazine, in November 2015.

and two Tunisians lost their lives in the attack. Approximately 40 other people were injured, some seriously. The two Tunisian perpetrators were killed when the museum was stormed by the Tunisian security forces. 'Islamic State' claimed responsibility for the attack in an audio message the following day.

- On 7 January 2015, two brothers who were French citizens of Algerian descent carried out an attack on the editorial offices of the satirical magazine 'Charlie Hebdo' in Paris and killed twelve people. While fleeing, the perpetrators also shot dead a policeman. They were killed by the French gendarmerie on 9 January 2015; one of the brothers had previously stated that he had links to AQAP. Though AQAP claimed responsibility for the attack, the actual extent of its involvement is still unclear. On the previous day, a Frenchman of Malian descent had shot and killed a policewoman in Montrouge (France) and on 9 January 2015 he took hostages in a Jewish supermarket In Paris. He killed four of his hostages and was himself shot and killed when the supermarket was stormed. He had pledged allegiance to 'Islamic State' in a video message. In 2016, on the first anniversary of the attack on 'Charlie Hebdo', security forces in Paris shot dead a man who approached a police station carrying a weapon and wearing an imitation suicide vest.

Travel to jihadist conflict zones

People continue to travel from Switzerland to jihadist conflict zones, for example the area controlled by 'Islamic State'. The journeys are made via transit countries such as Turkey and are therefore not easy to detect. Propaganda by terrorist organisations motivates people to travel to conflict zones not just to take part in combat. In the conflict zones, jihad tourists receive training on carrying out attacks, gain experience in armed combat and credibility as role models, and network with other people. Women and minors are also increasingly travelling to

Image disseminated on Twitter by a Swiss jihad tourist: explosive belt and Swiss passport

conflict zones for jihadist motives or to 'Islamic State' territory on religious grounds. The dataset of the 'Islamic State' (the so-called 'IS-list') that appeared in the media in March 2016, did not yield much new information for FIS.

After their return, jihad tourists may pose a specific threat to the internal security of the countries where they embarked on their journey or from which they originate. However, returnees from jihadist conflict zones may also plan or perpetrate attacks in countries to which they have no biographical connection. Within Europe, the free movement of persons in the Schengen area makes it easy to cross borders between individual states, and the risk of being detected is low. Jihad tourists present a potential threat to their countries of origin even during their time in a conflict zone: they may have a radicalising influence on individuals via electronic media or other channels, for example by publishing reports of their experiences or directly inciting violence against e.g. their country of origin.

Radicalised individuals resident in Western countries who are unwilling or unable to travel to conflict zones also pose a threat. Such persons may assist potential perpetrators with the preparations for or after an attack or may ultimately be persuaded to carry out acts of violence or terror themselves, once they have been sufficiently indoctrinated by jihadist propaganda. Jihadism may also be used merely as an ideological pretext for justifying crimes committed for other reasons.

Switzerland as crime scene or preparation area

Radicalised individuals prepared to use violence might carry out attacks in Switzerland or use Switzerland as a base for preparing jihad-motivated attacks in other countries. In October 2015, the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland brought charges before the Federal Criminal Court against four Iraqi citizens for participating in and/or supporting a criminal organisation. The charges against the accused include the preparation of a terrorist attack in Europe. Three of the four men were arrested in north-east Switzerland in the spring of 2014 and have been in custody since then. Three of the four men have been convicted at first instance by the Federal Criminal Court in March 2016.

Electronic communication

'Islamic State' makes frequent, targeted and highly professional use of social media and other electronic means of communication. In this way, it is able to reach a wide audience in a very short time. Internet users in Switzerland and elsewhere may be radicalised by propaganda, particularly that of 'Islamic State'.

Jihadist groups and individuals continue to make intensive use of electronic channels in order to communicate, to acquire new members or find sympathetic supporters, to disseminate propaganda and to raise funds. In addition, cyberspace is also used to carry out attacks. For example, websites are modified or defaced (website defacement) or accounts on social media are taken over and misused without authorisation (social media hijacking). To date, however, little evidence has been found of more

sophisticated activities such as cyber espionage and cyber sabotage. While the attacks in cyberspace focus predominantly on Western targets, these are mainly a randomly targeted selection of websites with security weaknesses or poorly protected user accounts.

In connection with propaganda activities on the Internet, in October 2015 the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland issued a penalty order in conclusion of proceedings against an Iraqi for supporting a criminal organisation, displaying violence, providing instruction on the manufacture of explosives and publicly inciting crimes or violence. Over a period of several years, the man had taken part in discussions in various Internet forums which were used for spreading jihadist propaganda and supporting terrorist groups.

'Islamic State' provinces and al-Qaeda affiliates

There are jihadist terrorist groups operating in parts of Africa, some of which are affiliates of core al-Qaeda or provinces of 'Islamic State'. Groups such as, for example, the Sinai province of 'Islamic State' in Egypt, AQIM, al-Murabitun in Mali, Boko Haram in Nigeria or al-Shabaab in Somalia exploit porous borders and territories that are in some cases difficult to control in order to carry out operations, evade pressure from security forces, obtain supplies of weapons and materials, build up networks of supporters and recruit fighters. Operating alongside them in these areas are jihadist groups which have not affiliated themselves either to 'Islamic State' or to al-Qaeda, or whose oath of allegiance has not been officially recognised by these groups. In Libya, in particular, jihadist groups have been capitalising on the power vacuum that has existed since August 2011. The situation in Libya has impacted on the security situation and stability of the entire Sahel and Maghreb regions. The jihadist groups or cells in the Maghreb and Sahel regions differ in terms of their goals, oper-

Propaganda disseminated on the Internet by a user in Switzerland: response to the attacks in Paris, November 2015

ating methods, alliances, motivations and national and ethnic composition. Although they are pursuing different goals, their local aspirations may also coexist alongside an international jihadist agenda which views the West as the main enemy.

There are also North Africans among those joining jihadist groups in Syria, Iraq and Libya. Their countries of origin find themselves facing a growing threat from returnees from jihadist combat zones. In addition, increasing numbers of radicalised lone perpetrators or small cells, influenced by international jihadist propaganda, are independently deciding to take jihadist action in North African countries.

In the western Sahel, the security situation remains unstable, despite the conclusion of a peace agreement in Mali. The risk of attacks is still high, particularly in Mali, where these are directed at representatives of the Malian Government, the international UN Mission, the French special forces stationed in the country and other Western targets. Five people were killed and several were injured in an attack by a gunman on a restaurant in the Malian capital Bamako in the early hours of 7 March 2015. Among those injured were two members of the Swiss army who were deployed in Mali as munitions specialists. On 15 January 2016, two Swiss nationals were killed in an attack by AQIM in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). The attack in Ouagadougou shows that the terrorist groups previously active in northern Mali are attempting to expand their area of operations and to attract attention by means of spectacular attacks. Again in Mali, in January 2016, a Swiss citizen was kidnapped for the second time; she was living in this area despite repeated warnings.

The situation in several central African states, e.g. Sudan and South Sudan and the Central African Republic, is also marked by instability. Although the parties to the conflict in South Sudan have reached a peace agreement, ceasefires that have been agreed are repeatedly broken.

In the Horn of Africa, too, particularly in Somalia, civil war is still raging. The al-Shabaab organisation has pledged allegiance to core al-Qaeda, but within the group there is also a faction which advocates closer links with 'Islamic State'.

Profile picture of a Swiss social media user

A small group broke away for the first time at the end of October 2015 and, independently of the parent organisation, pledged allegiance to 'Islamic State'. Despite this internal strife, the activities of al-Shabaab continue.

On the Arabian peninsula, Yemen, in particular, is marked by instability. AQAP and the affiliates of 'Islamic State' in Yemen are exploiting the fact that in large parts of the country, government authorities have lost much of their influence.

Conflict between PKK and the Turkish state

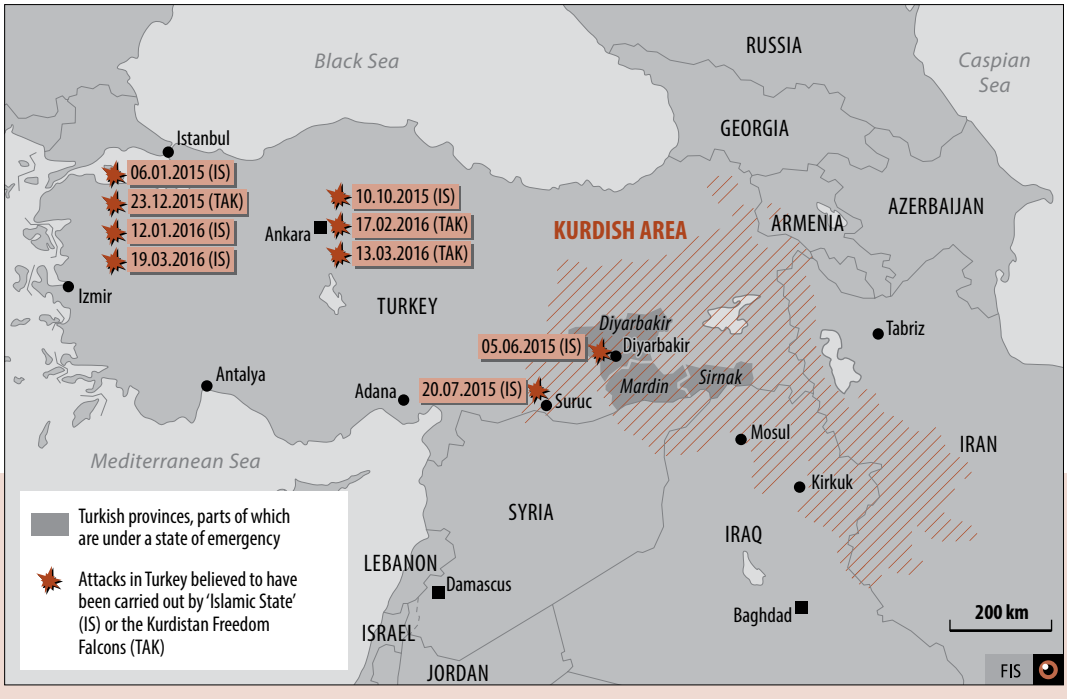
'Islamic State' also operates in Kurdish-populated areas. Turkey is becoming increasingly involved in confrontations between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and 'Islamic State'. Following the attack in Suruc on 20 July 2015, the PKK accused the Turkish government of having encouraged the suspected jihad-motivated attack through its support for jihadist opposition groups in Syria. The Turkish government for its part accused the PKK of having killed two policemen after the attack. The talks about a rapprochement between Turkey and the PKK, which had been ongoing since 2013, were then broken off.

As a consequence of this, violent clashes and hostilities between the PKK and Turkish security forces intensified. At demonstrations in various cities in Europe, there were increasing numbers of clashes between supporters of the PKK and sympathisers of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey and/or Turkish nationalists.

In Switzerland, riots occurred on 12 September 2015 at a demonstration by AKP supporters and the counter-demonstration against it organised by PKK youth. Otherwise, demonstrations organised in Switzerland by the PKK have so far passed off without any violent incidents.

Tamil community keeping a low public profile

While Tamils still have the goal of establishing a Tamil state in part of Sri Lanka, Tamil groups have for some time been maintaining a low public profile in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe. Events and functions held by Tamil interest groups take place behind closed doors and do not cause any security problems.


Black Sea
RUSSIA
Caspian Sea
GEORGIA
Istanbul
06.01.2015 (IS)
23.12.2015 (TAK)
12.01.2016 (IS)
19.03.2016 (IS)
10.10.2015 (IS)
17.02.2016 (TAK)
13.03.2016 (TAK)
Ankara
KURDISH AREA
ARMENIA
AZERBAIJAN
Izmir
TURKEY
Diyarbakir
05.06.2015 (IS)
Diyarbakir
Tabriz
Antalya
Adana
20.07.2015 (IS)
Suruc
Mardin
Sirnak
Mosul
IRAN
Mediterranean Sea
Kirkuk
SYRIA
IRAQ
LEBANON
Damascus
Baghdad
200 km
ISRAEL
JORDAN
FIS
Turkish provinces, parts of which are under a state of emergency
Attacks in Turkey believed to have been carried out by 'Islamic State' (IS) or the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK)

ASSESSMENT

Leadership role of 'Islamic State'

'Islamic State' has effectively taken over the leadership role in the jihadist movement. It is thus continuing to gain in influence and constitutes the most prominent threat to Western countries and their citizens. Perpetrators sympathising with or supported by 'Islamic State' act ruthlessly and with extreme brutality. This was underlined by the attacks in Paris in November 2015. Many of the victims were killed not by explosive devices, but by targeted gunfire.

Core al-Qaeda is still intent on carrying out attacks in Western countries in order to continue playing an important role in the jihadist movement, but it is increasingly reliant on the support of one of its affiliates, as it now barely has the resources necessary to carry out an attack.

Increased threat to Switzerland

The March 2016 attacks in Brussels have confirmed the threat assessment. The threat posed by jihadist terrorism has increased further in recent months, mainly due to the fact that 'Islamic State' is sending individuals to Europe on missions to plan or carry out attacks. Switzerland is part of the European threat area, and the threat level has also risen in this country. Switzerland, however, is not one of the primary targets of jihadist terrorist organisations, because it is not participating militarily in the fight against terrorism and is not seen by the jihadists as one of their arch enemies. Nonetheless, the jihadists do see Switzerland as part of the anti-Islamically-minded Western world and therefore as part of the enemy. For example, in a propaganda video issued by 'Islamic State', the Swiss flag was shown among the 60 flags of countries which are considered targets for attack. It is therefore perfectly possible that Switzerland or Swiss interests abroad might be targeted in an attack. In Switzerland, a more likely form of attack at present is one by a lone perpetrator or small group, carried out with basic means, little preparation and minimal logis-

tical outlay. The more complex the circle of perpetrators and the attack plan, the less likely it is that the attack will be aimed at Switzerland or Swiss interests abroad. One caveat needs to be made here: Swiss interests must be understood as also including interests of third parties in Switzerland, for example embassies of states engaged militarily in the coalition against 'Islamic State'. Some of these are exposed to a higher level of threat. This also applies to Swiss Jews and to Jewish and Israeli interests in Switzerland.

Threat posed by jihad tourists and lone perpetrators

The number of jihad tourists, particularly to Syria, will probably continue to increase, though not on the same scale as in previous years. Of particular significance among the potential lone perpetrators or small groups who could carry out an attack in Switzerland or against Swiss interests abroad are returnees who have been radicalised and trained by 'Islamic State' and other groups. There is also a risk that propaganda by 'Islamic State' and its supporters could radicalise individuals in Switzerland and seduce them into allowing themselves to be recruited or into carrying out attacks independently.

Since lone perpetrators and small groups operate outside organised structures, it is especially difficult for the security authorities to detect them at an early stage and to put a stop to their activities. This applies in particular to individual potential jihadists who mingle among the refugees migrating in large numbers to European countries. On the internet, especially in social

Combating terrorism in Switzerland

Switzerland has taken various measures to counter the terrorist threat.

For example, at the beginning of 2015 the Federal Council implemented the urgent federal law of 12 December 2014 banning the 'al-Qaeda' and 'Islamic State' groups and related organisations, in order to prevent any assistance being provided to these two players in Switzerland.

On 18 September 2015, the Federal Council approved the 'Counterterrorism Strategy for Switzerland'. The strategy sets out the established activities and processes at federal and cantonal level, thereby creating a common basis for combating terrorism. Its aim is to combat terrorism and its financing effectively in compliance with the Federal Constitution and international law, with particular regard to basic and human rights. The fight against terrorism will be conducted in four areas: prevention, repression, protection and crisis preparedness. In its foreign policy, Switzerland is committed to combating terrorism and its causes.

The strategy also acts as a set of guiding principles for the activities of the Tetra ('terrorist tracking') Task Force, which since October 2014 has coordinated the activities of agencies at federal and cantonal level dealing with cases relating to jihadist terrorism. In November 2015, the Task Force presented its second report, in which, among other things, it also proposed a preventive ban on travelling abroad. This initiative is in line with UN Resolution 2178's objective of preventing travel for terrorist purposes. At the same time, the Security Core Group broadened the Task Force's mandate to include issues relating to non-jihadist terrorism.

On 18 December 2015, the Federal Council decided to strengthen counterterrorism by creating 86 additional full-time posts in the federal administration. The posts are temporary, for a period of three years – until the end of 2018.

At left:
Switzerland as part of the coalition against 'Islamic State' – Swiss user shares an article about the 'Islamic State' terror video

networks, the highly effective propaganda of 'Islamic State', in particular, frequently leads to individuals and small groups becoming radicalised. It is possible for perpetrators to be inspired to undertake violent terrorist acts exclusively via electronic channels without ever having been in direct contact with a terrorist group or having travelled to a jihadist conflict zone.

High terrorism risk in parts of Africa and the Middle East

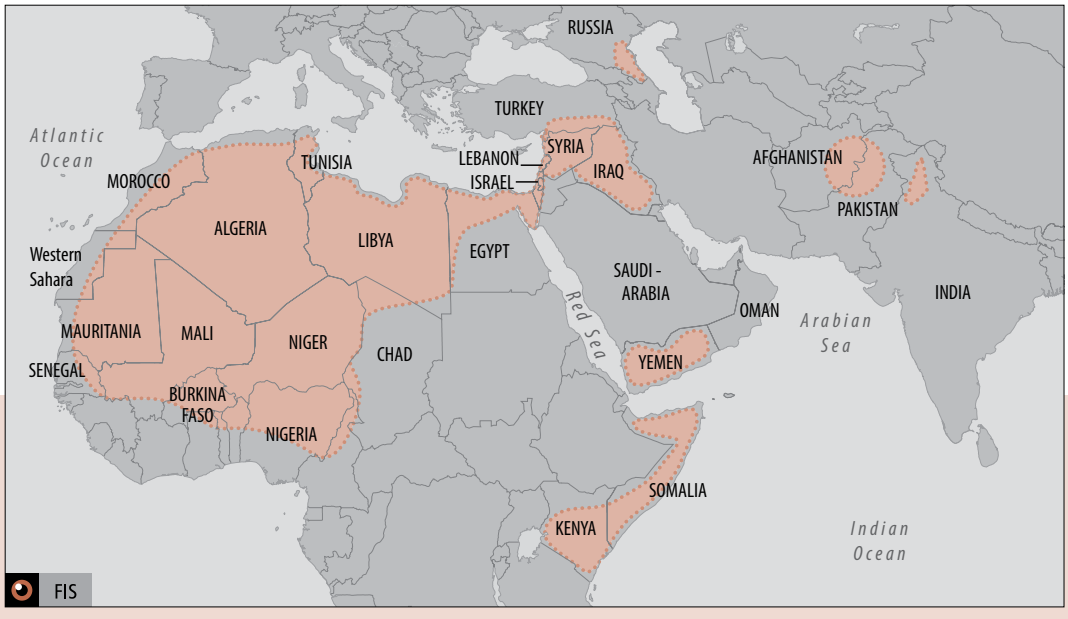
Acts of violence by jihadists are possible throughout the Sahel and Maghreb regions, and the risk of terrorist attacks is high. Such attacks are directed both against Western and against local targets. Tourists, in particular, will continue to be targeted, especially in the tourist destinations of Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt. The risk of abductions of Western nationals remains high throughout the Sahel and Maghreb regions.

Civil-war-like conflicts between hostile armed organisations and the existence of fragile states also increase the threat. For example, jihadist groups are exploiting fragile states such as Mali, Niger, Nigeria or Somalia in order to strengthen their presence. The insecure environment in countries like Kenya, Chad, Sudan or the Central African Republic could provide fertile ground for jihadist activities.

On the Arabian Peninsula, a coalition of Arab states is continuing its offensive against the Houthi rebels. Jihadist groups, first and foremost AQAP, but increasingly also the affiliates of 'Islamic State', are capitalising on the unstable security situation. Even though AQAP is currently focussing on the fight against the Houthis, it remains committed to the internationalist jihadist agenda. AQAP is still willing and able to attack Western interests, both inside and outside Yemen, when the opportunity presents itself.

Turkish-Kurdish conflict continues

The conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK continues. Riots at rallies in Europe are a response to the situation in Turkey and, depending on developments, may be repeated, including in Switzerland. The main potential targets for violent attacks by supporters of the PKK are



Turkish institutions such as clubhouses, mosques, travel agencies and diplomatic missions.

The fighting between a group close to the PKK and 'Islamic State' in northern Syria (Kobane) and northern Iraq (Sinjar) have also led to tensions in Europe between PKK supporters and 'Islamic State' sympathisers, which may result in violent clashes. Since late 2015, civil-war-like conditions have prevailed in parts of Turkey. Attacks by the PKK or organisations affiliated to it will probably continue to target government institutions rather than the civilian population or tourism, as one of the PKK's aims is to be removed from the EU's list of designated terrorist organisations. 'Islamic State', on the other hand, could carry out attacks not only on Kurdish but also on tourist targets in Turkey, in order to put pressure on Turkey and to influence its policies by spreading fear and terror.

Tamil activities

Members and sympathisers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are frequently to be seen among those attending peaceful events run by the Tamil community in Switzerland. The organisation is attempting to realign itself outside Sri Lanka. However, the reestablishment of a violent Tamil separatist movement like the LTTE is unlikely at the present time.

At left:
Overview: The most important areas of operations of djihadist groups

OUTLOOK

Destruction of 'Islamic State' not imminent

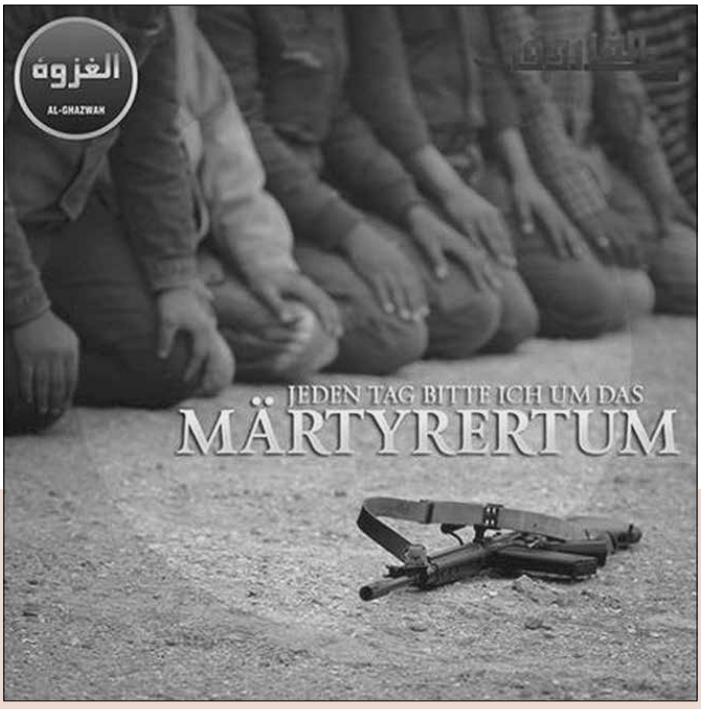
'Islamic State' has been given a further boost by its new leadership role in the international jihadist movement. A lasting military destruction of 'Islamic State' by the coalition partners is not likely in the coming months, despite the renewed increase in intensity of their operations. 'Islamic State' carries out targeted operations to exploit and deepen sectarian and power-political fault lines. It will be able to continue the intensive exploitation for propaganda purposes of its existing control over areas in Iraq and Syria, its inclusion of various provinces throughout the Islamic world and its direct action against targets in its enemies' home countries. The territory it controls will shift further westward into Syria. This westward shift is a consequence of the greater impact that the opponents of 'Islamic State' are having in Iraq. This trend will continue for as long as the military pressure in Iraq is greater than it is in Syria.

Threat posed by lone perpetrators and small groups

Persons who have been radicalised as a result of propaganda or during travel to jihadist conflict zones will, as in the past, continue to constitute the greatest threat to the security of Western states and their nationals. In the medium term, the threat remains that returnees from jihad areas might join together to form small groups, which could evolve into new, highly professional jihadist networks. The Paris attacks point in this direction. In addition, non-European fighters might also attempt to enter Europe by legal or illegal means. Migration movements could provide a certain amount of cover for such individuals.

Parts of Africa remain unstable

There is no obvious quick solution to the entrenched regional, ethnic, social, security-related and economic problems facing various coun-



Propaganda disseminated on the Internet by a user in Switzerland: response to the attacks in Paris, November 2015

tries in northern, western and central Africa and in the Horn of Africa. Even though Switzerland is not a direct target of terrorist organisations, there is a continuing risk of Swiss nationals falling victim to acts of violence either in conflict zones, where civil-war-like conditions prevail, or during attacks. In some areas, nationals of Western states still run the risk of being abducted as opportunistic targets.

Conflict between Kurds and Turks continues

The PKK and associated Kurdish groups outside Turkey will continue to shape their activities depending on events in Kurdish-populated areas in Turkey, Syria and Iraq and the operations of 'Islamic State'. It is to be expected that there will be repeated events and campaigns which are coordinated Europe-wide. However, it is likely that these will not be violent, at least not in Switzerland. Isolated incidents on the fringes of demonstrations can, however, quickly lead to acts of violence, especially where Turkish and Kurdish groups come into contact with one another.

Situation in homeland affecting Tamils

Developments in Sri Lanka will continue to exert an influence on Tamil communities outside their home country. The current Sri Lankan government, however, has held out the prospect of wanting to settle the continuing dispute. It is not possible at this stage to gauge whether the desired realignment of the LTTE will be successful.

Influence of social networks remains strong

Propaganda on the Internet will continue. Jihadist propaganda will also be distributed more widely, particularly on social networks. Such virally spread messages play a major role in the radicalisation of individuals. The openness of electronic communication channels and the numerous opportunities for anonymisation and concealment will make it almost impossible to curb such activities in a strategically effective way or to monitor them comprehensively.

FDFA travel advice

Independent information

A number of popular holiday destinations – Egypt, Tunisia, Istanbul and Paris – have recently become terrorist targets. Together with the emotional and geographical proximity of these attacks, insecurity is growing in Switzerland.

This was also the case in 1997, when a large number of tourists from Switzerland and other European countries lost their lives in an attack in Luxor. The insecurity has given rise to the need for independent information about the security situation abroad. In order to meet this requirement, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) posted its first travel advice notices on the Internet in November 1998. In line with the FDFA's competencies and remit, the travel advice focusses on the areas of politics and crime. It has now grown to 176 specific country notices and is consulted around two million times a year.

Risk of attacks and abductions

In addition to the specific country advice, the FDFA also provides non-country-specific travel information, for example on terrorism and abductions.

In view of the impossibility of foreseeing attacks, the FDFA does not advise against all travel to cities and countries which could be or already have been affected by such attacks. A risk exists in virtually every country and especially in places where large numbers of people gather, for example at tourist attractions, in shopping centres, on public transport, at sporting and cultural events and in nightclubs, well-known international hotels and popular restaurants.

Furthermore, terrorists frequently attempt to use abductions as a means of extorting money or enforcing their demands. In such abduction cases, Switzerland's ability to exert influence is very limited. The responsibility for resolving such cases lies with the local authorities. Switzerland does not pay ransom money, so as not to put other citizens at risk nor to strengthen the organisations carrying out the abductions. The outcome of every abduction is uncertain. The only certainty is that of the enormous physical and mental stresses on the abduction victims and their relatives. Since terrorists often deliberately seek out foreigners as victims, the FDFA advises against travel to regions where there is a high risk of abduction.

Information sources

The travel advice is based mainly on the assessments of Swiss embassies abroad. These maintain a large network of contacts – these include the authorities of the country concerned, Swiss companies and private individuals who are based in the country, local and indigenous non-governmental organisations, other embassies and personal contacts. Particularly where terrorism is concerned, information from the FIS is also incorporated. In contrast to the one-off snapshots found in travel blogs, the travel

advice is the result of long-term observation from many different points of view.

The Swiss embassies and the relevant central services continuously monitor the situation. If the assessment changes, the travel advice is adjusted accordingly, so travellers always have access to the latest situation assessment on the Internet. The FDFA also provides information via Twitter on the most important updates to its travel advice.

Personal responsibility

The travel advice is also available on the online platform 'itineris', on which Swiss travellers can file their travel plans. Thanks to 'itineris', if the situation in a country unexpectedly deteriorates markedly, the FDFA is able to contact, inform and, if necessary, assist Swiss nationals present in the country.

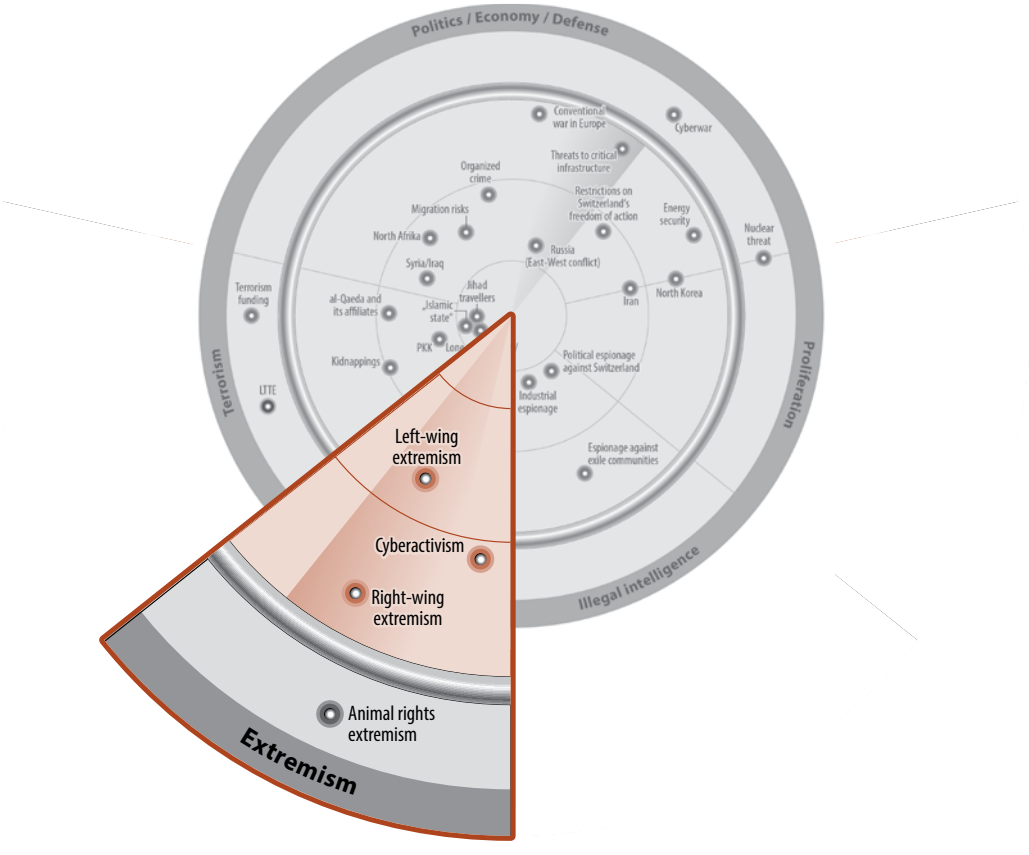
The travel advice and 'itineris' are two important tools which the FDFA provides to citizens for planning and implementing a trip. The FDFA recommends that you also obtain information from the media and from travel guides. Having appraised themselves of the risks, travellers must decide at their own discretion and on their own responsibility for or against travel to a particular destination and must take suitable precautions. ■

Internet sites:
www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise
www.dfae.admin.ch/voyages
www.dfae.admin.ch/viaggi
www.twitter.com/travel_edadfae
www.itineris.eda.admin.ch

Smartphone app for Android and iPhone:
itineris

Right-wing and left-wing extremism

In both right-wing and left-wing extremist circles, the potential for violence persists. Despite this, the situation at the current time is largely calm. However, the tense situation regarding the issue of asylum, in particular, as well as further jihad-motivated attacks in Europe, could potentially lead to a deterioration in the situation in both right-wing and left-wing extremist circles. While there are currently no specific signs of such a situation developing in Switzerland, there are in other countries in Europe.



SITUATION

Situation remains calm

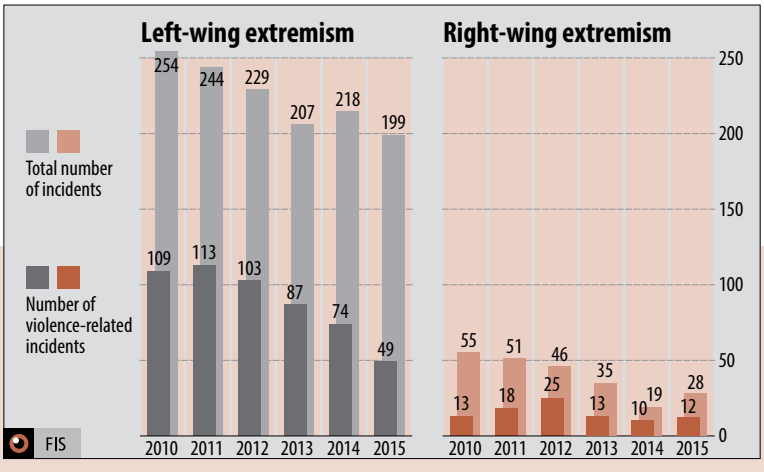
In 2015, there were 28 incidents connected with violent right-wing extremism and 199 incidents connected with violent left-wing extremism of which the FIS is aware; incidents merely involving graffiti have not been not included in the figures. This corresponds to an increase of 47 per cent for right-wing extremism, and of nine per cent for left-wing extremism. However, the low figures involved mean that annual fluctuations are not really significant. Broadly speaking, the figures confirm the long-term trend toward an easing of the situation: the figures for right-wing extremism are low; although those for left-wing extremism are markedly higher, the trend since the beginning of the decade has been downward.

Violence was involved in around 43 per cent of the incidents relating to right-wing extremism which have come to the attention of the FIS, while the corresponding proportion for left-wing extremism was approximately 25 per cent. What is important here is the nature of the violence that is being perpetrated. This has a decisive influence on how the situation is assessed:

- Right-wing extremists fight with, threaten, abuse and spit at people, and there are isolated instances of graves being desecrated. Their misanthropic attitudes are expressed in physical violence (albeit on rare occasions). Weapons are used only very infrequently, however, and arson attacks are also rare.

- Left-wing extremists attack people at demonstrations with stones, bottles and pyrotechnics and damage property, most often with paint, but on rare occasions with fire or water. The level of aggressiveness, particularly against the police, is high. The last attack with an improvised explosive and incendiary device took place in January 2016 at the World Economic Forum (WEF). Infrequently, but more often than in the previous year, vehicles were set on fire, and there were isolated attacks with chemicals such as butyric acid.

Right-wing extremists and left-wing extremists see each other as enemies. Left-wing extremists, in particular, seek out conflict, and direct clashes tend to become violent. In the case of events which are known about in advance, particularly those organised by right-wing extremists, the authorities will have to continue to take this into account in their security precau-



Events motivated by left- or right-wing extremism reported to the FIS since 2010 (excluding graffiti)

tions. The security measures, which are sometimes extensive, ensure that violent clashes remain rare.

Right-wing extremism

The issues currently attracting the most attention are those of migration and Islam. However, there is no sign that right-wing extremists have a strategy which sets out goals and ways of achieving them. The unusual and tense situation regarding migration which has prevailed since autumn 2015 could offer violent right-wing extremist circles an opportunity to exploit a topical issue for their own ends. In September 2015, unknown perpetrators threw bottles at a transit centre in Oberembrach ZH and slapped a resident. However, this was the first such incident relating to the issue of asylum since the end of May 2014 (improvised explosive and incendiary device outside the transit centre in Thun BE). In parallel with the debate about refugees, an increase in xenophobic and racist comments was observed on social media. The Federal Office of Police also noted an increase in threats against politicians in parallel with the political debate on asylum.

Right-wing extremists continue to keep a low profile and behave in a conspiratorial way. This applies even at public events. For example, in 2015 the commemorations of the battles of Sempach and Morgarten again provided an occasion for right-wing extremist demonstrations. These took place in the evening, with a good fifty or so people taking part in each one. By contrast, the belated Swiss National Day celebration on the Rütli meadow, which has been a regular event for years, did not even take place in 2015; however, the historic meadow was used in February 2016 for a major meeting of right-wing extremists. Instead, skinhead concerts were to be held around the 1 August in western and eastern Switzerland. The concert planned by the Swiss Hammerskins in Waadt and the concert, masquerading as a birthday party, which was organised by Blood & Honour in Schänis SG were banned by the authorities. The extremists did, however, manage to hold these events at the backup venues of Le Lieu VD and Schönenberg ZH. In the canton of Zurich, there was a sequel to this: in August 2015, leaflets were distributed here by left- and right-wing extremist groups alternately, and at the beginning of September, left-wing extremists turned up in Hombrechtikon ZH. Eventually they came across some right-wing extremists at the railway station in Bubikon ZH and attacked them. The right-wing extremists responded to this with a repeat leafleting campaign in Hombrechtikon.

Band's response to the prevention of a concert in the Canton of Vaud in April 2015

More importantly, as in previous years, there were again signs that violent right-wing extremists were attempting to organise themselves. So far, however, such attempts are still in their early stages. Besides skinhead events in Switzerland, right-wing extremists also attend similar events abroad; they do so Europe-wide, but chiefly in the countries neighbouring Switzerland.

Left-wing extremism

In contrast to violent right-wing extremists, left-wing extremists seek out publicity. For them, attempts to exploit topical issues are the order of the day. 'Borders' and 'repression' are currently the two dominant overriding issues. Under the slogan 'No Borders', the left-wing extremists are fighting for unrestricted entry into Switzerland and against the asylum regulations currently in force. The protest is targeted at the institutions charged with implementing these regulations, ranging from prisons where individuals to be deported are detained to private firms which carry out functions relating to asylum. The campaigns are not limited to protests, but may also have the aim of using blockades directly to prevent deportations taking place. The issue of 'repression', for example, is connected with prisons, and has for years been one of the main items on the agenda of violent left-wing extremists. With regard to the issues of 'open space' and 'urban development', on the other hand, things have quietened down. In summer 2015, the response to the Swiss Army's Conex 15 exercise showed that this issue was far from having the mobilisation potential it had had in the past. The same is true of the annual World Economic Forum in Davos GR: there is no real wave of protest for violent left-wing extremists to surf on and which they could exploit for their own ends. Rather, left-wing extremists turned up at events and rallies on a variety of other issues: women's rights, the right to abortion, the Trade in Services Agreement, democracy in the Congo – the list goes on.

Looking outside our borders, the above finding still holds true: after violent left-wing extremists had spent years trying to exploit the crisis in Greece for their own purposes, in 2014 the focus shifted to the Kurds' struggle against 'Islamic State', particularly in Kobane (Syria). Since that time, violent left-wing extremists and supporters of Turkish far-left groups and of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) have provided each other with mutual support. They do so mainly at demonstrations by one or other of the groups.

International links

As far as violent right-wing extremists are concerned, the main organisations are the two international skinhead groups Blood & Honour and Hammerskins, both of which have been in existence for decades. Besides these, there are no established structures or enduring groupings; links to right-wing circles abroad are mainly on a personal level. Attempts by groups in western Switzerland and in France to organise themselves across the border failed; the groups were either broken up or simply fell apart. Swiss right-wing extremists did, however, provide material assistance, albeit a limited amount, to a Ukrainian organisation called Misanthropic

Division. Misanthropic Division is part of the Azov Regiment and is fighting against the separatists in eastern Ukraine. The Azov Regiment is accused of war crimes; Misanthropic Division's public presentation contains references to its Nazi forerunners. Among the foreign right-wing extremists supporting Misanthropic Division, Swiss nationals play only a marginal role. Findings to date suggest that their activities are largely restricted to cyberspace. However, at the end of September 2015 it was reported in the media that at least two right-wing extremists from Switzerland had been or were fighting in Ukraine.

Finally, it should be pointed out that right-wing extremists from Germany have been settling in Switzerland for years. This relocation is probably chiefly due to personal and especially economic reasons. Findings to date indicate that it has not involved far-right structures being shifted to Switzerland, and there are no indications that criminal acts abroad are being planned in Switzerland. The right-wing extremists who have come from Germany are, however, active in the Swiss scene.

As far as violent left-wing extremism is concerned, the main international link is with Secours Rouge International (SRI). SRI maintains general secretariats in Belgium and in Switzerland, where the driving force is Revolutionärer Aufbau Zürich (RAZ). RAZ not only runs SRI's Swiss general secretariat, but also maintains personal contacts, for example in Italy with violent left-wing extremists who, unlike RAZ and SRI, belong not to the Marxist-Leninist but to the anarchist camp. One of these groups is Federazione Anarchica Informale (FAI), which was responsible for the last major attacks in Switzerland and against Swiss interests abroad. FAI has become weaker, and the remaining operational groups do not so far seem to have Switzerland and its interests in their sights. Apart from the PKK, the main point of contact with Kurdish and left-wing extremist Turkish groups is currently the Turkish group DHKP-C, which in the EU and the USA is classified as a terrorist organisation. Swiss left-wing extremists declared solidarity with them at the beginning of April 2015, following the bloody conclusion of a hostage-taking in Istanbul. This type of collaboration, mainly in the context of protest campaigns, remains likely but will also be dependent on the particular situation in each case or on events. The violent environmental activist and anarchist Marco Camenisch, who is currently serving his sentence for murder in an open prison in Switzerland, remains a rallying point for left-wing extremists in Switzerland and abroad.

Item deposited in front of the Turkish consulate in Zurich. It contained powder which turned out to be harmless. Revolutionary Youth of Zurich claimed responsibility on the Internet in January 2016 (Zurich City Police)

ASSESSMENT

Right-wing extremism

The right-wing extremist scene remains subject to the constraints which the FIS has long been drawing attention to in these reports: if right-wing extremists are recognised as such, they face a number of personal consequences. They risk losing their job or training position and also face other disadvantages, for example if they are pursuing a military career. This situation is reflected in their behaviour, in that they tend to shy away from public attention, particularly as Swiss society rejects far-right ideology. It is thus difficult for right-wing extremists to find a venue e.g. for a concert. Premises are hired for seemingly innocuous purposes (for example a birthday party). The location is then kept secret, even internally, until shortly before the event. In cases where the venue becomes unavailable at short notice, for example because the lessor withdraws from the contract, the event is shifted to an alternative venue, usually in another canton, which has been arranged in advance. The authorities will then generally not have enough time to prevent the event taking place.

It should, however, also be emphasised here that some right-wing extremists carry weapons and may on occasion also use them. Firearms are collected, traded and possibly also smuggled over the border. Those found in house searches – generally chance discoveries – suggest that there are substantial collections of functioning weapons in the hands of right-wing extremists.

Left-wing extremism

In terms of issues, the violent left-wing extremist scene in Switzerland remains flexible, drawing its motivation from current events. However, it also remains dependent on current events, does not set the agenda for a broader public and tends to adhere to negative stances or unrealistically high demands. Its attempts at manipulation are obvious and can, at least in part, easily be averted. For example, at a demonstration by the Switzerland-Palestine Association at the end of October 2015, left-wing extremists were initially requested to roll up their banners, which were seen by the organisers as inappropriate, and were then thrown out of the demonstration on account of their disorderly conduct.

The organisation Revolutionärer Aufbau Schweiz (RAS), notably its Zurich section, remains the leading force within violent left-wing extremist circles. This factor is particularly important when it comes to relations with far-left circles abroad. The detention of Marco Camenisch continues to provide a motive for attacks and campaigns in Switzerland and against Swiss interests abroad. However, the regional groups also operate independently of one another and the fundamental ideological differences remain important and affect the actions they take. For example, on 18 and 19 September 2015 two demonstrations were held against the Conex 15 army exercise: one with a Marxist-Leninist, the other with more of an anarchist leaning. Finally,

it should be pointed out that RAS, as the dictating force, will probably not be in a position to influence at will an individual's readiness to use violence. In Bern, in particular, there have been repeated attacks on police stations and on public transport. The Riding School is used as a base for retreating to. Here and elsewhere, the level of aggressiveness, particularly against the police, is high, and there are some attempts to injure the persons attacked.

Material, presumed to be for use at a demonstration in Zurich, seized in Bern in February 2015 (Bern cantonal police)

OUTLOOK

Right-wing extremism

There is no indication that a broader social movement against immigration or Islam is emerging. This is clearly shown by the fact that attempts to hold events under the banner of Pegida (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West) in Switzerland, unlike those in neighbouring countries, have invariably failed.

It is therefore to be expected that isolated acts of violence that do not form part of any overall strategy will remain the norm and that the movement will continue to lead an isolated existence away from the limelight. The potential for violence remains, however; it comes to the surface spontaneously in response to particular situations, and could even increase still further through self-radicalisation. Should the particular tense situation regarding migration deteriorate and the impression arise that the political system is not taking people's justified concerns seriously, right-wing extremists could nonetheless respond with violence. The same would apply if increased numbers of serious jihad-motivated terrorist attacks were to occur in Europe. It should, however, be noted here that individuals with racist and xenophobic and/or Islamophobic views and a high readiness to use violence also exist outside right-wing extremist circles. In certain situations, these individuals might also commit violent acts which are almost impossible to foresee.

Left-wing extremism

The easing of the situation that has been noted with regard to left-wing extremism must not distract attention from the fact that the potential for violence remains. This can be relatively easily whipped up at demonstrations and also finds expression in serious attacks on individuals, particularly the security forces. There is little sign of restraint here; those carrying out the attacks are at least accepting or even aiming for damage to life and limb. When it comes to robust attacks, by contrast, left-wing extremists are less willing to use violence. Offences involving improvised explosive and incendiary devices or arson are rare; generally only paint

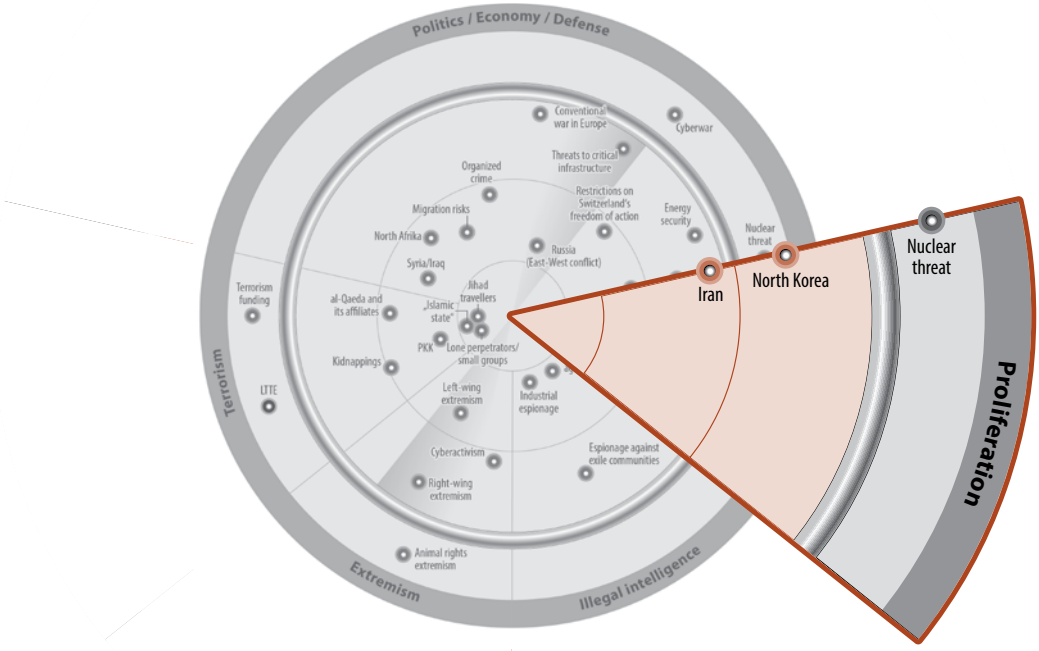
is used. The reasons for this restraint could lie at various levels. Firstly, levels of violence in Switzerland are generally lower than elsewhere in Europe; links with violent left-wing extremists abroad could, however, undermine this restraint. Secondly, there is no underlying social movement nor any objective that really provides a positive motivation. This could change if right-wing extremists were to act with increasing violence, for example against asylum seekers. Left-wing extremists are already more active in this area, under the banner of 'antifascism', than right-wing extremists; a response to right-wing extremist attacks would probably not be long in coming. Thirdly, the heightened sensitisation caused by jihad-motivated terrorist attacks could lead to the public being quicker and less hesitant to sanction minor acts of violence, or conversely it might result in a higher level of violence being necessary in order to attract the attention sought. By contrast, one can imagine a scenario in which jihadist terrorist attacks are followed by attacks by violent right-wing extremists on those they deemed responsible, which in turn are followed by left-wing extremist violence under the banner of antifascism. However, there are currently no specific indications of such a development.

In terms of issues, violent left-wing extremism will change little, with almost everything falling under the headings of 'anticapitalism' or 'anarchism'. The issues that are actually taken up will depend on current events, the agenda for which is not drawn up by the violent left-wing extremist scene. This also seems to be true of the issues of 'open space' and 'urban space', which have given the impression in recent years that they might become genuine issues for the far left. In addition, there is a generational change taking place in violent left-wing extremist circles which will continue over the next few years, one of the consequences of which will be a shift of emphasis away from Marxism-Leninism and toward anarchy. ■

At left:
Unauthorized demonstration in Bern in September 2015
(Bern cantonal police)

Proliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continues to threaten security in many regions of the world. Thanks to a diplomatic breakthrough in 2015, the situation regarding the Iranian nuclear programme has eased significantly. Nonetheless, Iran will remain subject to a special authorisation regime in the area of foreign trade for years to come. Some sections of the agreement between Iran and the permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany, codified through a UN Security Council resolution, are also binding on Switzerland, as one of the major exporters of dual-use goods. North Korea continues unhindered with its weapons of mass destruction programmes and on 6 January 2016 once again tested a nuclear explosive device. The international sanctions regime introduced in 2014 in connection with the military escalation of the situation in Ukraine also poses a new challenge for Switzerland. In addition, the repeated use of chemical substances in the conflict in Syria and Iraq reminds us of how important combating proliferation is to related issues such as that of combating terrorism.



SITUATION

2015 – a year of change

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continues to threaten security in many regions of the world. In a globalised world, the misuse of Swiss goods and technologies for power-political purposes remains a possibility. 2015 was, however, also a year of change. The Federal Council charged the federal administration with ensuring that the sanctions imposed by important trading partners in connection with the situation in Ukraine were not being circumvented via Switzerland. The so-called P5+1 (permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) concluded a framework agreement with Iran on the long-term resolution of the the nuclear issues. It covers the reintegration of Iran into the world trade system, which must also be accompanied by security measures by national authorities, in particular the intelligence services. Finally, the conflict in Syria and Iraq and the repeated use of chemical substances in that conflict were a reminder of how important combating proliferation is to related issues such as combating terrorism.

Iranian nuclear programme: diplomatic breakthrough

The situation as regards the Iranian nuclear programme has eased significantly. On 14 July 2015, following years of negotiations, a framework agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA) was reached between the P5+1 and Iran. Iran implemented the agreed restrictions on its nuclear programme by 16 January 2016 (implementation day). The resolution of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of 15 December led to a pragmatic consensus on the handling of the past military dimension of the Iranian nuclear programme. The implementation of the framework agreement and the agreed accompanying control mechanisms will for years to come limit Iran's opportunities to pull out of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty within a reasonable period of time. At the same time, however, its technical capability to make its nuclear programme more flexible will also increase during this timeframe.

Iranian ballistic missiles: steady expansion

In the negotiations between Iran and the P5+1, no viable consensus was reached on the issue of Iran's ballistic missile production and proliferation programmes. Iran maintained its de facto moratorium on the testing of medium-range ballistic missiles until October 2015. On 10 October 2015, it put the dissension about its missile programme agreed at the negotiating table to the test by launching a version of its Shahab III missile. The testing of this new system does not reflect any significant technical progress in terms of the threat situation, rather it was a political move. In reality, the qualitative development of the Iranian missile programme continues to make halting progress. The most re-

At right:
Expansion of the nuclear enrichment facility in Yongbyon, North Korea (2014)

cognisable progress was made on shorter-range systems which, though not directly relevant to Switzerland's security, are of direct relevance to states in the region.

North Korean nuclear programme: new nuclear test

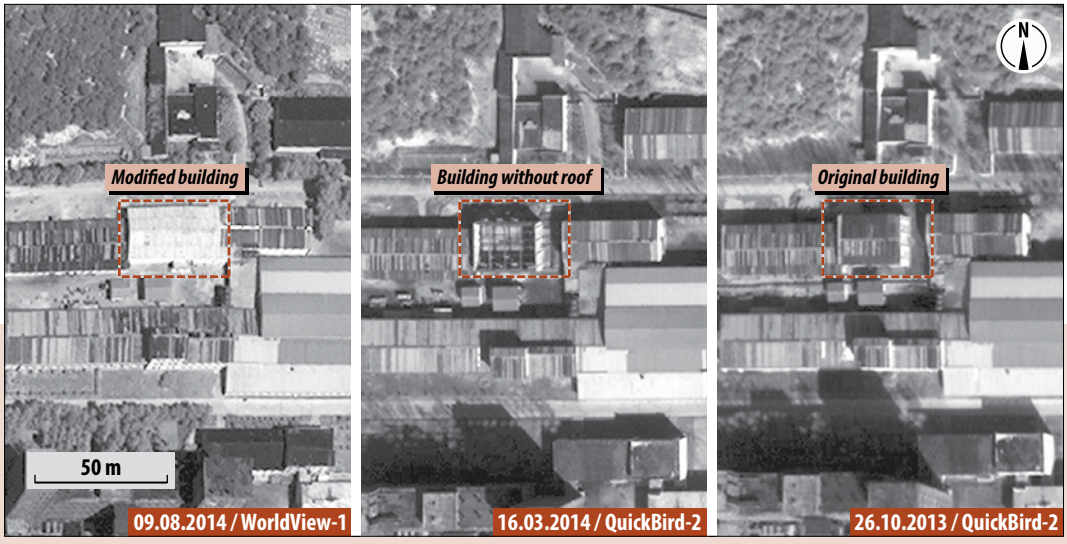
The North Korean nuclear programme remains a source of concern for the international community. On 6 January 2016, North Korea detonated a nuclear explosive device for the fourth time. Whilst this explosive device represents an advance on previous technology in technical terms, it is not equivalent to a fully developed hydrogen bomb. The information available on North Korea is still scant, but satellite images indicate that its uranium enrichment programme is progressing. Meanwhile, the political process within the framework of the so-called six-party talks (North Korea, South Korea, USA, China, Russia and Japan) remains blocked. North Korea is increasing its capacity to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons and is probably in a position to provide its forces with some explosive devices in the event of a conflict. However, this threat remains a regional one. Despite advances in missile construction, North Korea does not currently have the capability to deploy a nuclear weapon over intercontinental distances.

North Korean ballistic missiles: steady progress

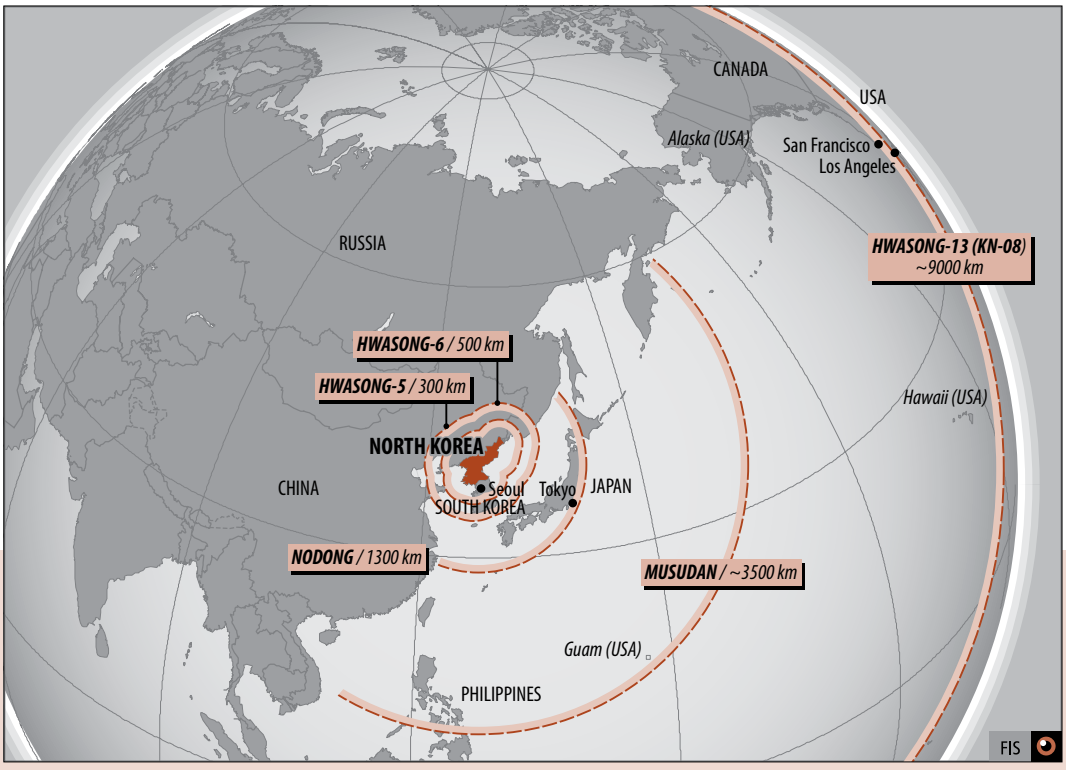
In the seventieth year since the end of the Second World War, North Korea used its missile programme as its main tool in its attempt to enter into a strategic dialogue with the USA on an equal footing. Once again, a weapons system purported to have an intercontinental range was shown off at a parade. In addition, Pyongyang announced its first ever successful test of a submarine-launched ballistic missile. However, neither capability has yet been independently verified. In its space programme, by contrast, demonstrable progress can be seen. For example, there has been expansion of the site at Sohae, from where North Korea first sent a satellite into orbit in 2012.

Use of chemical substances in Syria and Iraq

Reliable sources indicate that in the war zone in Syria and Iraq, chemical weapons and chemical substances have repeatedly been used for the purposes of waging war. It is generally accepted that the relevant resources are available to all conflict parties in the region. The inhibi-



tion threshold with regard to the use of chemical weapons is low, and fighters on the ground have experience in deploying them. It is also possible that there are still improvised production facilities in the region. These circumstances are also relevant for the assessment of the probability of non-conventional attacks outside the conflict zone.



ASSESSMENT

Nuclear crisis with Iran: efficient restrictions

The framework agreement and its binding codification in Security Council Resolution 2231 effectively restrict Iran's ability to acquire nuclear weapons in the short term. In the long term, they could lead to the normalisation of the situation regarding the Iranian nuclear dossier. At present, all the parties are showing a clear willingness to implement the agreement. However, these statements are not intended to give the impression that the situation is now conclusively settled. Further implementation of the agreement does not yet appear assured for the long term, since it is still encountering resistance, both in Iran and in the USA, from opponents of a deal between the two states.

Iran's foreign trade will be subject to a special authorisation regime for years to come. This regime includes, in particular, detailed obligations for exporting companies making shipments to Iran and the monitoring of supplied goods by the authorities of the exporting state. In addition, the intelligence services will continue to focus on Iran's missile programme, particularly in the light of the supply of Iranian weapons and technology to the theatre of war in Syria.

Some sections of the resolution are binding not only on Iran and the P5+1, but also on all UN member states. For Switzerland, as one of the major exporters of dual-use goods, the establishment of an internationally controlled procurement channel for dual-use goods for export to Iran is of particular significance. Not only exports for the Iranian nuclear programme, but all exports of dual-use goods from Switzerland to Iran are subject to the provisions of Resolution 2231. Swiss industry is required to submit exports to Iran to the UN for approval via the responsible Swiss federal authority and in any contract with the Iranian end customer must provide for a right for the federal authorities to carry out inspections.

North Korea: entire production range available to nuclear weapons programme

North Korea's uranium enrichment capabilities are unclear, but in the area of centrifuge technology it could be ahead of Iran. Based on the development path taken by the known programme, the existence of another, older, uranium enrichment plant seems plausible.

In the past, the regime in North Korea has had no qualms about selling its missile technology to numerous customers like Pakistan, Iran, Libya, Egypt and Syria, with no strings attached. It is capable of supplying the entire range of products needed for a nuclear weapons programme, including the production of fissile material (uranium and plutonium), the construction of a simple nuclear explosive device and the medium-range delivery systems required.

Proliferation and terrorism

The use of chemical substances in the conflict in Syria confirms the important role of

At left:
ranges of North Korean delivery systems

non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the fight against terrorism. As with the use of explosives, a group of perpetrators must consider whether it would be easier to transport chemical substances than to produce them in the area of operations. The control of essential source chemicals and the FIS's close contacts with industry and trade support counterterrorism measures.

OUTLOOK

Risks to Switzerland are many and varied

The flow of controlled goods and technologies to proliferation-sensitive countries via third countries poses a major challenge for Swiss export controls. Switzerland has excellent industrial capabilities and offers an attractive and, by international standards, open research location. The presence of students from states outside the EU, including states that are sensitive from the proliferation point of view, is increasing. The FIS is therefore increasingly raising awareness of the risks of proliferation among foreign students as well as at research and higher educational institutions. Knowledge sharing, collaboration, even of an informal nature, or favours for education or research institutions in the country of origin may also be subject to a licence requirement in Switzerland.

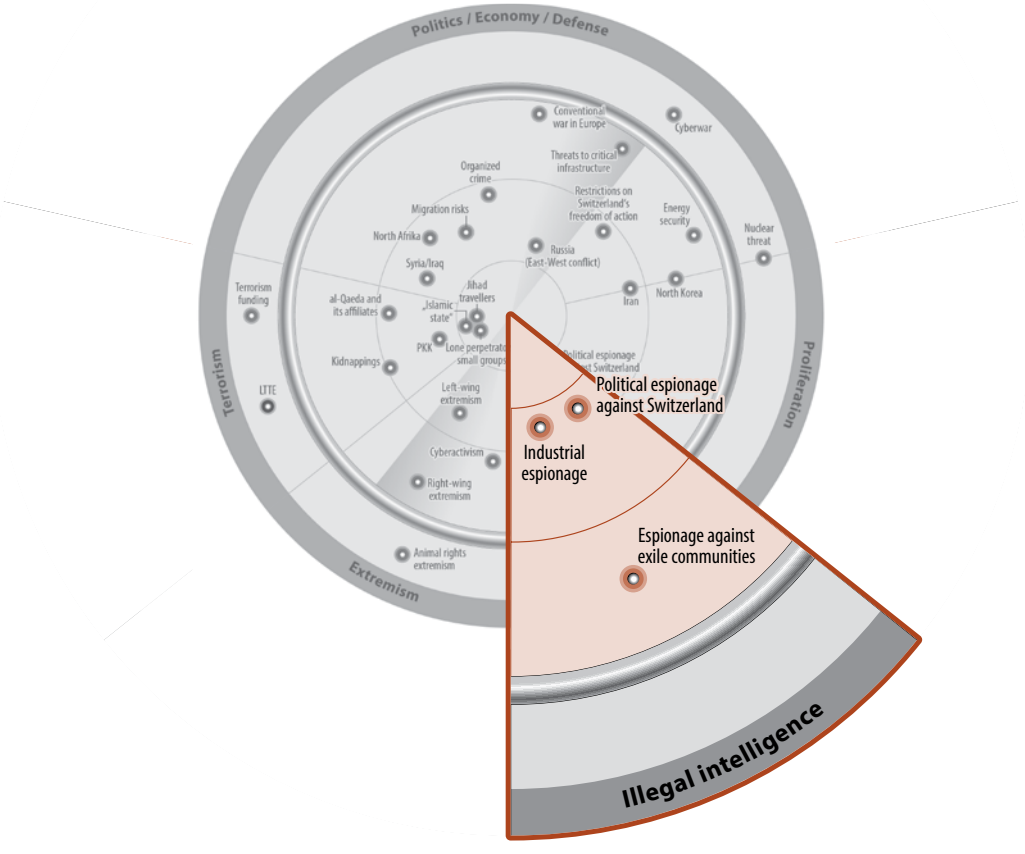
Thanks to Switzerland's cooperation with other countries and collaboration with industry, Swiss authorities have repeatedly been able to thwart or expose illegal procurement attempts. The majority of Swiss industries fulfil their statutory obligations in an exemplary manner and in cases of doubt contact the authorities.

However, the challenges are mounting. Procurement channels are constantly being redeveloped and reorganised. Many of these run via Asia. The increasing outsourcing of production abroad is also making it more difficult both for industry and for the authorities to monitor the flow of sensitive goods. In areas relevant to proliferation, there is also a discernible tendency among purchasers to focus on the procurement of subsystems and components. Identifying critical subsystems and withdrawing them from illegal trade is infinitely more difficult than is the case with complete systems, the export of which is subject to tighter and ever more effective international controls.

The international sanctions regime introduced in 2014 in connection with the military escalation of the situation in Ukraine also poses a new challenge in the light of growing geopolitical tension between Russia and the West. It affects trading partners of Switzerland with extensive and, in some sectors, well-developed relationships. Switzerland's actions will ensure that no circumvention of sanctions via Switzerland takes place. ■

Illegal intelligence

Illegal intelligence activities are carried out by governments or by private players working for governments; in some instances, there is also a market for illegally acquired information. In the area of espionage there are no friendly states, but collaboration does take place where interests coincide. As a rule, state interests define the goals of intelligence collection activities – with some requirements being constant and others dictated by the current situation. Illegal intelligence provides access to persons and systems which could possibly be exploited, not only in order to acquire information: they may sometimes also be used to manipulate or even sabotage data. The information is used in the interest of the state concerned, generally in secret, but in certain cases it may also be made public. Information operations have greatly increased in importance in recent years.



SITUATION

Aims and purposes of intelligence activities

The main purpose of intelligence is to acquire information, whilst that of illegal intelligence is to procure information which cannot be procured using legal means. In addition, numerous foreign states also use their intelligence services to promote their own interests directly, for example by procuring goods which would not otherwise be obtainable, to exert political or economic influence or to prepare measures for extraordinary situations.

Information procured by intelligence services can be used to achieve various aims. It helps to avert damage to one's own country, i.e. among other things it makes a contribution to protection and security, for example in the field of counter-terrorism. For legitimate objectives shared by other states, legal means of information procurement are also available, for example collaboration with the intelligence service of the country concerned or legal assistance in the field of justice. For the purpose of collaboration, some intelligence services also maintain missions abroad; the intelligence service employees working there are accredited by the respective host state. Where collaboration is not possible – or where the results are considered insufficient – illegal intelligence activity is to be expected, even where the objective is legitimate. However, as intelligence services always serve national interests first and foremost, it should be borne in mind that amicable collaboration with another intelligence service in order to achieve a particular aim may also be used to spy on one's partner.

Illegal procedures come into consideration when a state's own national interest are to be protected or asserted against the interests of others. Espionage can be used to assert or improve a state's own position in relation to its international political or economic rivals. The secured or improved position that is aspired to may relate to the target country of the operation or to any other members of the international community, or indeed to the country conducting the operation. For example, various countries spy on their exile communities in other states, including Switzerland.

Information and the access gained in order to obtain it can be used in a variety of ways. Someone who has access to a system or a person might be able not just to siphon off information, but also to use his access for manipulation or even sabotage. Information can be used in a multitude of ways: sometimes it is an individual piece of information which provides the crucial advantage – for example in economic competition the price quoted by a competitor – and sometimes it is the contribution the information makes to obtaining an overall picture. Information gained by the intelligence services does not necessarily need to be kept secret when it is used.

The targeted dissemination of information to attain political and military objectives has become increasingly important in recent years.

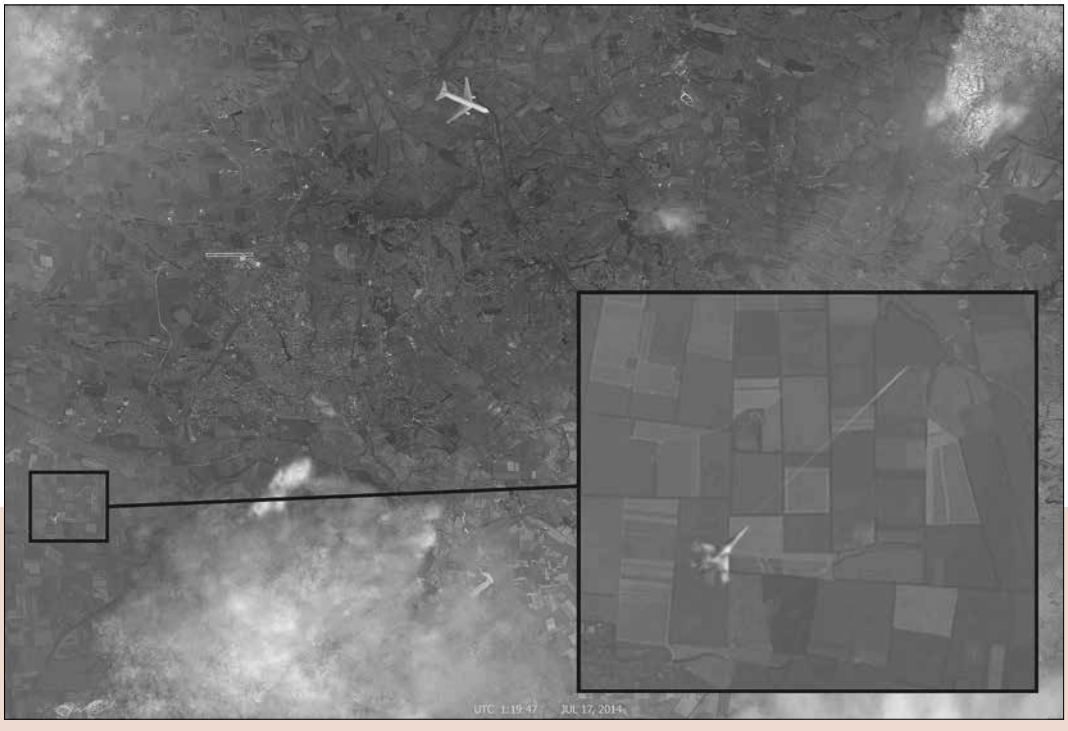
At right:
manipulated image material relating to the MH17 crash, November 2014

These so-called information operations range from legitimate information politics to targeted propaganda and manipulation campaigns conducted using intelligence and other tools. Clandestine networks are set up for the dissemination of information. These operate covertly and often in the grey areas of legality. Even the targeted publication of information procured using intelligence tools is not taboo. Presumably, one such case was the disclosure in early February 2014 of unfavourable observations about the EU, in connection with the conflict in Ukraine, by the US State Department's assistant secretary for European affairs. The recording of a conversation, published via YouTube and probably procured using intelligence tools, led to frictions in the USA-EU relationship at an inopportune moment. On the eve of the G20 meeting in Brisbane (Australia) in November 2014 a Russian TV station showed a manipulated picture, claimed to be an actual satellite image taken by a Western source shortly before the crash of MH17. It was supposed to support the thesis that MH17 was shot down by a Ukrainian fighter aircraft and to undermine confidence in the Western account of the incident.

Methods

For foreign intelligence services, cyber espionage and other cyber operations for obtaining information are becoming increasingly important. In a world in which networking is on the rise and information and communication technologies (ICT) are gaining importance, this is hardly surprising. Electronic attacks offer perpetrators some advantages over traditional methods of espionage. Cyber operations offer perpetrators a good opportunity to act without personal risk. They can be carried out from a safe location, so that even their discovery and the identification of the perpetrators, should it be successful, will not lead to arrest or criminal sanctions.

The sheer increase in the volume and frequency of cyber espionage does not, however, mean



that the traditional methods have become unimportant and that defence against them can be neglected. The acquisition of information from human sources is one of the traditional methods of espionage. It is carried out using members of the intelligence services disguised as diplomats, journalists, researchers or business people, for example. This type of intelligence collection can also be carried out using, or assisted by, cyber methods. Similarly, the use of human resources can clear the way for cyber operations. Other traditional forms of intelligence activities include what is known as open-source intelligence, the collection of publicly available information, which does not by itself fall under the heading of illegal intelligence, and various forms of signals intelligence, including surveillance of communication links and the content of communications. Aerial images, which can sometimes be procured commercially, are also information carriers.

Internationality as a magnet for illegal intelligence

International negotiations, UN conferences or a high concentration of foreign missions inevitably attract the interest of large numbers of states and trigger intelligence service activity. This statement is confirmed by the espionage activities, now public knowledge, targeted at the negotiations with Iran about its nuclear programme.

Intelligence services make intensive use of the diplomatic environment for information gathering. Numerous states deploy members of the their intelligence services in their embassies or consulates, disguised as diplomatic staff. This provides protection – doubled in the case of diplomatic immunity – and facilitates access to targeted individuals in the political, administrative, economic and military spheres.

Switzerland is particularly affected by this: the presence of numerous international organisations and non-governmental organisations provides an opportunity and a reason for sending representatives and maintaining diplomatic exchanges (e.g. conferences and international negotiations).

The accredited intelligence service employees mentioned above represent only part of the personnel sent abroad for intelligence operations. Many states also employ for their espionage missions what are known as travelling intelligence service employees. These may also be disguised as diplomats, or alternatively as tourists or business people. They are most frequently deployed in order to meet a human source abroad.

In recent years, the FIS has uncovered a number of cases of illegal intelligence by accredited diplomats or travelling intelligence service employees. In some cases, entry bans were issued.

Surveillance of the opposition

Exiled regime opponents are a key focus of the intelligence services of their countries of origin. The countries concerned are authoritarian states in which freedom of expression, at the very least, is curtailed. Most of these states also have the means to track their opponents abroad. The FIS regularly finds that diaspora communities in Switzerland are the target of illegal intel-

ligence activities. Such activities represent an attack on the sovereignty of Switzerland and an attack on the rights it guarantees; they undermine the protection that Switzerland extends to all its inhabitants.

This phenomenon affects not only Switzerland, but all states with diaspora communities considered a threat in their countries of origin. The intelligence services of these countries are sometimes instructed to obtain information about their exile communities, to carry out surveillance on them or even to exploit them for political purposes at home. This will obviously depend on the profile of the exile community concerned. However, it is not just political refugees who belong to the opposition or are seen as being members of it; the profile of exile communities is extremely heterogeneous. Swiss nationals, whether with or without any biographical connection to a state, are also becoming involved alongside activists who have fled to Switzerland from their homelands. These Swiss nationals, like the exiled activists, may become espionage targets.

Activists may be prevailed upon to act as sources. Positive incentives may be used for this purpose, but also pressure by threatening reprisals against which scarcely any protection is possible, for example against relatives living in their home country. In addition to straightforward intelligence gathering, intelligence services sometimes also attempt to weaken opposition organisations and movements by means of infiltration: for example, individuals planted by intelligence services may endeavour to sow discord and thus split an opposition movement. The information obtained is also used in the country of origin for the purposes of repression, and exiles may in extreme cases even be killed.

Cyber espionage

At least since the beginning of the new millennium, cyber attacks using simple, not particularly technically sophisticated methods, have been joined by so-called advanced persistent threats. These are precisely what their name implies: the attacks are carried out in a targeted fashion, are highly complex, are intended to remain undetected for as long as possible and are aimed at obtaining specific data. In the past, these characteristic features were a sign that a government perpetrator was behind the espionage activities. Even if the considerable resources required and the long-term interest still point to such a conclusion, the case of a group which has been active for some years now demonstrates that this is not necessarily so. The group possesses complex espionage software and the capability to install it. It either just sells the malware or handles the execution of the entire operation on behalf of its clients. Targets have included private companies – exclusively so in Switzerland to date – but also supporters of jihadist objectives on the internet or other hackers.

The diagram gives an overview of the main advanced persistent threats, with just two of the most recent attacks being highlighted here: the attack on the nuclear talks with Iran and the attack on the German Bundestag.

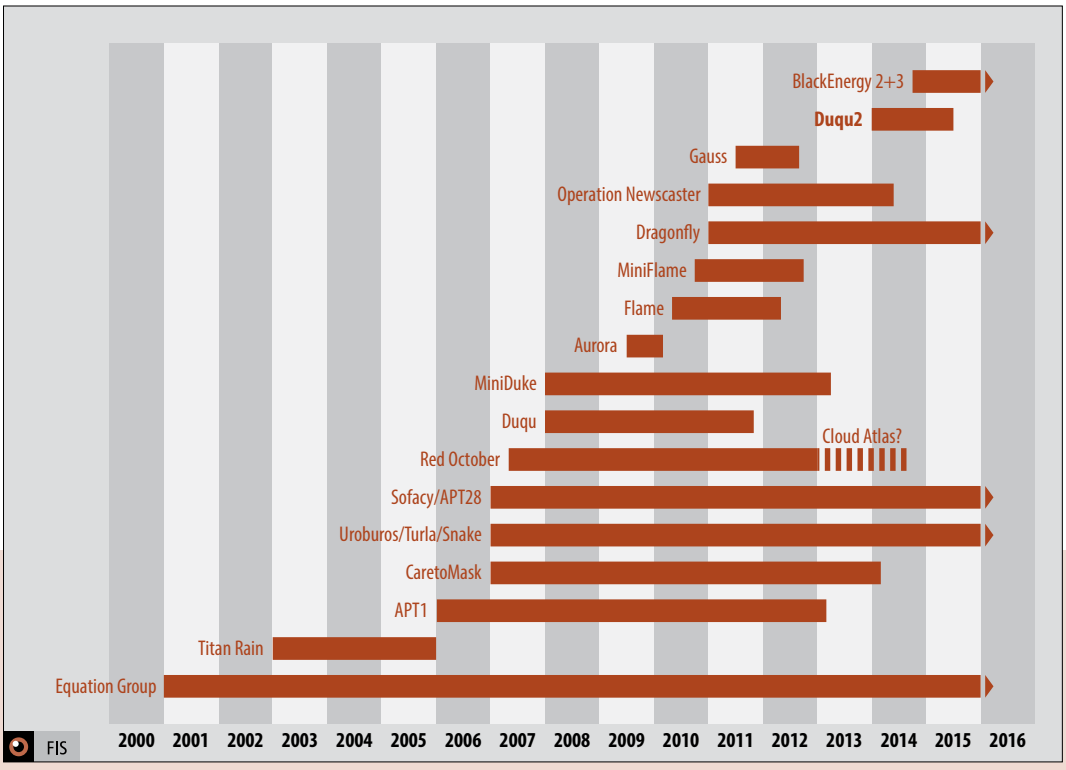
- Various properties in which the talks between the permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany and Iran were

taking place were attacked, some of them in Switzerland. Traces of the software used were found at three locations. The Russian company Kaspersky, which was itself attacked, named the malware Duqu2 because of its similarity with the Duqu software detected in 2011. It also has similarities with the Stuxnet software which was deployed against targets including the Iranian nuclear programme.

- The cyber attack in May 2015 on the German Bundestag was also carried out using software which was already known about. The operation had already become public, in a different context, in October 2014, its main focus being on targets in the areas of defence and security policy. The Swiss federal administration was also attacked. In general, previously unknown security vulnerabilities, so-called zero-day exploits, were used for infection.

Comprehensive monitoring

From an intelligence viewpoint, at least, the world now finds itself in a 'post-Snowden' era. The disclosures set in motion in mid-2013 by Edward Snowden, a former employee of a service provider for the US National Security Agency (NSA), relating to the activities of the NSA as well as to those of the UK's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) and of the Five Eyes states (USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) in general, have brought to light a new dimension of intelligence activities. This involves the comprehensive recording of electronic data stored anywhere or being moved via any channels. The example of the list of selectors for strategic communications intelligence publicised in the media in Germany from March 2015, shows once more what has to be expected. Meanwhile, not only the victims but also their attackers will probably have drawn their own conclusions from the revelations. Political reactions to this, for



example in the USA, have shown that a partial restriction on such activities is an option, but only within a country and only in relation to that country's own citizens, and not in relation to foreign countries. For example, at the end of January 2016, media reports stated that the Canadian intelligence service, Communications Security Establishment, had temporarily suspended the exchange of information only because a software error had led to metadata on its own citizens inadvertently being delivered to its Five Eyes partners.

At left:
Selected espionage operations from 2001 to date. The period in which an espionage operation was active is shown. The start of an operation has been defined as the first reference to the espionage software, and the end – where clearly defined – as its public disclosure. The case whose name is printed in bold is explained further in the report.

ASSESSMENT

Threats persist

The security dimension of the Snowden revelations is still very relevant: across the board, intelligence services are procuring confidential information by monitoring communications and actively penetrating IT systems. It is possible that they may also be falsifying such information or even manipulating processes or infrastructures. The penetration of communications is deep, systematic and virtually comprehensive. This is reflected in the resources that are used: providers are forced by law to disclose data, covert access has been obtained to the main lines of communication, encryption codes have also systematically been broken or weakened, and even encryption standards have been affected.

Advanced persistent threats will also continue to exist. One of the aims of these attacks is to remain undetected. However, it should be noted that recognised malware – albeit in modified form – also continues to be deployed. While the basic components of the malware remain the same, these are further developed and in particular are repeatedly reconfigured so that they will not be recognised by the protection mechanisms installed. However, a further feature of advanced persistent threats is that even after one has been discovered, it can be assumed that the attacker will attempt to infiltrate the system again.

Targeted cyber attacks require knowledge of the target, for example initially, when it comes to installing the malware in a system. This can be done in various ways, for example by a person who is physically present feeding the software in directly, or alternatively via the internet. The most commonly used methods are targeted emails, known as spear phishing, or targeted website infections, known as waterhole attacks. However, some effort is now needed to persuade the designated victim to click on a link or to open an email attachment, thereby taking the step necessary for installation.

Command and control servers are used to control the malware once it has been installed. These link the computers infected with the malware to a so-called botnet and can be used not just for espionage, but also to serve criminal purposes. Such command and control servers have also been identified in Switzerland.

Information operations

Successful information operations have a number of basic features in common. They contain simple core messages. These build on one another and are differently packaged, structured in simple or more complex ways and regularly repeated on various channels. The messages are closely synchronised in terms of time and content and are presented in a coordinated way, both vertically – from the head of state and public officials down to seemingly independent individuals, all put forward the same view – and horizontally – various media, letters to the editor and comments by so-called trolls or

Internet trolls. This shared emphasis increases the impact, as does the final feature, a distinct focus on a specific target group. For example, a campaign intended to tarnish the relationship between two states will attempt to influence the population and a government in different ways. Intelligence services are not only a tool but also a target of tailored manipulation campaigns.

No friendly states

When it comes to illegal intelligence, there are no friendly states, just ones that pursue their own interests. These may be wholly or partially compatible with the interests of other states, or they may diverge from or even conflict with them. However, even converging interests are no guarantee that a state will not deploy illegal intelligence in other states – one has only to think of the intelligence activities in the area of counterterrorism that link many different services.

Regime opponents remain a target

The intensity of illegal intelligence activities against regime opponents living in exile depends on several constant factors, but the situation is also a determining factor. The security situation, in particular, has a major influence on the intensity of intelligence activity. For example, official visits by foreign politicians or officials may lead to an intensification of illegal intelligence activity in Switzerland, often more out of a need for security than purely for intelligence reasons. In such cases, intelligence services may become active in Switzerland in order to obtain information about demonstrations or attempts to disrupt the visit. More independently of the particular situation, the aim is to identify persons who sympathise with movements critical of the regime or who support these and could pose a destabilisation risk to the regime.

Intelligence surveillance using individuals who have infiltrated the opposition is hard to detect. People will have very little interest in collaborating with counterespionage in the host state if family and relatives at home may be subject to intimidation attempts and repressive measures.

TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE

Travel intelligence refers to the collection and recording by the intelligence services of sensitive information about the travel and itineraries of particular individuals. The intelligence service relies on such information to detect activities which pose a threat to security. In concrete terms, this consists primarily of evidence from border and customs controls (entry, exit and transit) about citizens of particular countries. In addition, check-in data from selected airports is evaluated and compared with data in the FIS's information systems. The FIS is also involved at an early stage in the consultation process on the issue of visas for the Schengen area. The Federal Council regularly sets out the criteria for such information collection in a classified list, taking the threat situation as its basis. Together with findings from other sources, travel intelligence helps to build up a more comprehensive picture of the travel, itineraries and contacts of intelligence targets.

OUTLOOK

Continuing espionage, increased significance of information operations

Continuing espionage, increased significance of information operations

Illegal intelligence against economic, political and military interests will continue to be carried out, in Switzerland as elsewhere. The high technological standard of Swiss industry, the presence of the UN and other international bodies, and Switzerland's status as a research location, a financial centre and a marketplace for energy and commodities trading are among the reasons why this will remain the case, even if the entire range of counterintelligence measures is brought to bear against it. These include criminal prosecution and measures under the law governing foreign nationals and, most importantly, prevention.

Information operations will continue to increase in importance in future. Authoritarian states have a fundamental advantage over the open societies of the West in this regard.

Vulnerability of ICT

ICT remains vulnerable and probably exposed to attack by those states in which the industry for key ICT technologies is based. These countries will, provided they also have large intelligence services, continue to be potential sources of extensive espionage activity. At most, they may restrict their intelligence activities in their own countries and against their own citizens, but not abroad. Confidence in the ICT companies of these countries will therefore remain dented.

One result of this is that in countries which do not themselves possess the capability to manufacture key technologies, greater significance will be attached to security aspects of ICT projects, with the added consequence that this will lead to shifts on the international markets. However, key technologies will not migrate to other countries, at least not in the medium term. Conflicts are thus to be expected within ICT projects, perhaps in the form of legal disputes about the award of contracts within the framework of the World Trade Organisation. It is not immediately clear that the courts would give priority to general security considerations, for example regarding illegal intelligence: if there is a requirement for risks to be identified and documented in detail, then this will no longer be possible beyond a certain level of precision, precisely because there is a dependency on the leading states in this field. However, there is also a countervailing factor at work here: since Snowden, companies which supply key technologies have had to combat scepticism and are therefore interested in winning back trust. It can therefore be assumed that some companies will point out security vulnerabilities – for example backdoors or errors in encryption algorithms – sooner than would previously have been the case.

Criminal prosecution and the alternatives

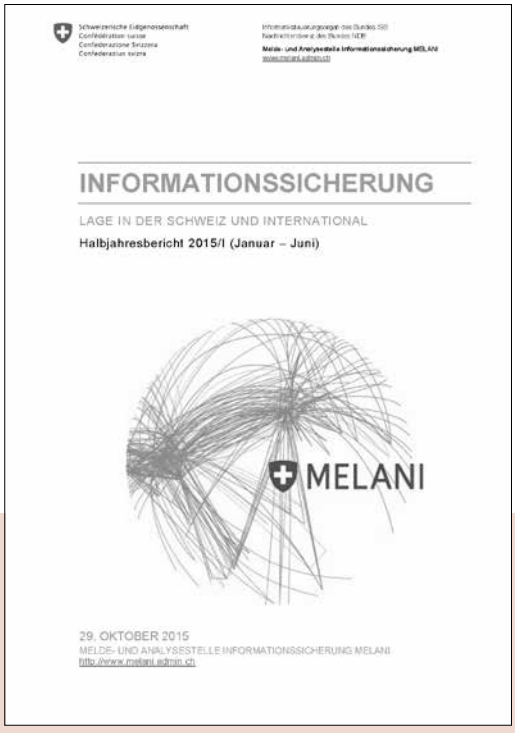
When spies are identified, the FIS will transfer the case to the authorities for criminal prosecution, unless they enjoy diplomatic immunity. However, cases of espionage are beyond the scope of international mutual legal assistance, the investigations are lengthy, the cases complex and finally, however lawful the measures, retaliatory measures can be expected, at least from certain countries. To safeguard the country's interests, the criminal prosecution authorities therefore require, in accordance with Article 66 of the Penal Authorities Organisation Act [Strafbehördenorganisationsgesetz], authorisation from the Federal Council in order to be allowed to prosecute political offences, such as for example political intelligence as defined by Article 272 of the Swiss Criminal Code.

Sometimes, however, explaining the legal position to the country of origin of officials engaged in intelligence activity may be enough to achieve the removal of an individual. If not, provisions under the law on foreign nationals can be used against identified spies: refusal of diplomatic accreditation or refusal to grant a visa. In addition, an entry ban may be imposed or the person concerned may be declared persona non grata. Depending on the circumstances, these measures are taken either discreetly or, in order to send a signal, publicly.

Finally, when all the interests are weighed up, a conscious decision may be taken to allow a person identified as being a spy to stay in Switzerland, at least temporarily. This may be the case where activities within the framework of international organisations or negotiations are involved. Their success may be of greater political interest. Examples of such events include the WEF, the Syria talks in Geneva, and visits by delegations with members in key economic or political positions.

Prevention and autonomy

Overall, prevention is the most important part of the defence against illegal intelligence. The FIS has a statutory remit to take preventive



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measures to counter the espionage activities of foreign intelligence services. The FIS, in collaboration with the cantonal intelligence units, has therefore for years been raising awareness among companies and research and higher educational institutions of the risks posed by illegal intelligence and proliferation. The Prophylax prevention and awareness-raising programme is used for this purpose with commercial companies, while the Technopole programme is specifically tailored to research activities in Switzerland. In addition, the FIS has provided speakers for events devoted to industrial espionage and has conducted seminars on 'Prevention of industrial espionage' in Zurich and in Lausanne for Swissmem representatives. In the area of information assurance, the Reporting and Analysis Centre for Information Assurance is managing a public-private partnership.

One of the greatest challenges for the future is that of raising awareness among individuals travelling abroad. Intelligence activities directed against Swiss interests do not necessarily take place in Switzerland. For security reasons, recruitment attempts and the handling of Western sources actually seem to be more likely to take place abroad. Intelligence services have control over the environment in their own countries and do not need to fear hostile surveillance. All Swiss residents should report any such approaches to the FIS. Immediate reporting of any suspicious approach or recruitment attempt can prevent any harm being done and ensure that the individuals concerned do not get into a situation in which they open themselves to charges of espionage. ■

List of abbreviations

AIIB ..... Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AKP ..... Justice and Development Party
AQAP ..... Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM ..... Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CCTV ..... China Central Television
FDFA ..... Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FAI ..... Federazione Anarchica Informale
GCHQ ..... Government Communications Headquarters
IAEA ..... International Atomic Energy Agency
ICT ..... Information and communications technology
JCPOA ..... Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LTTE ..... Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MELANI ..... Reporting and Analysis Centre for Information Assurance
NATO ..... North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NSA ..... National Security Agency
Pegida ..... Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West
PKK ..... Kurdistan Workers' Party
RAS ..... Revolutionärer Aufbau Schweiz
RAZ ..... Revolutionärer Aufbau Zürich
SRI ..... International Red Aid / Secours Rouge International
WEF ..... World Economic Forum

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