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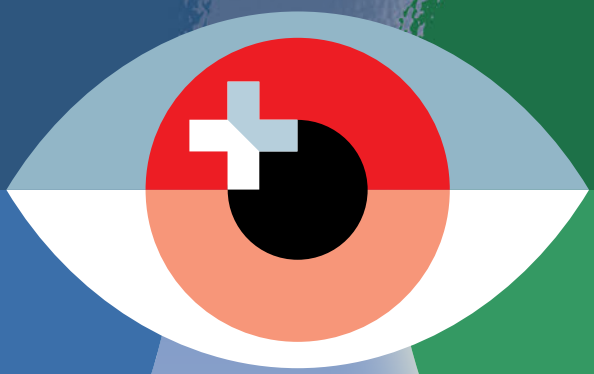
SWITZERLAND'S SECURITY 2021



Situation Report of the Federal Intelligence Service

SWITZERLAND'S SECURITY 2021

Situation Report
of the Federal Intelligence Service

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Early detection is key!

Covid-19 will have a lasting impact on our security policy. A key finding from the pandemic is that there needs to be a crisis-resistant supply of critical and essential goods and services. The crisis also reminds us that we need to strengthen our protection against disasters and emergencies across the board. Looking beyond Covid-19, we must be prepared for further serious pandemics in the future – as well as natural disasters, which are increasing in frequency and severity.

This annual situation report by the FIS once again shows clearly that our security is threatened not only by dangers of this kind, but also by other threats. Because the international security situation has become more unpredictable, we need to pay greater attention to security policy and the entire spectrum of threats and dangers. We must increasingly adapt ourselves to an environment that has become nastier. Our security policy instruments must be developed and equipped in such a way that they help us to avert and overcome current and foreseeable threats and dangers.

A crucial factor here is that we must continue to improve our systems for the early detection of threats and crises. The intelligence service plays a central role here. The planned revision of the Intelligence Service Act is designed to help it fulfil its preventive function even better in conjunction with other civilian and military instruments – in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism, espionage and proliferation. However, improved early detection will also permit better targeting of efforts to counter 'hybrid' threats, cyber threats and illegal disinformation and influencing activities directed against Switzerland. These are becoming more significant in terms of security policy and we need to pay greater attention to them. I hope you find the following pages interesting reading. The FIS's annual report provides a contribution to the debate about security policy, which should be taking place not only among politicians and policymakers but also among the wider public.

Viola Amherd, Federal Councillor
Federal Department of Defence,
Civil Protection and Sport DDPS

The situation report in brief

This report is intended to provide interested members of the public with information on threats and dangers to Switzerland's security. The FIS hopes that this intelligence-based analysis of today's world will help clarify what the threats to Switzerland are – not so much today's flashpoints, but more importantly tomorrow's trouble spots.

Switzerland's security environment continues to be influenced to a great extent by the growing competition between the superpowers and a number of regional powers. Instruments of power are being deployed increasingly frequently.

- Under President Biden, the USA will seek to revitalize its global system of alliances and will also return to engaging in multilateral diplomacy and to the defence of democracy. The strategic rivalry with China will remain in the focus of national security policy. Within NATO, the USA will continue to strive for fair burden sharing and support from its allies and partners in its dealings with China, especially in the area of cutting-edge technology. In the conflict with Iran, the new administration is prioritising diplomacy.

- The Chinese government will continue to follow its strategic plan to become the strongest global power by the middle of the century. China's rise to major world power status now appears to be all but certain. Rather than seeking integration through the adoption of international standards and rules, the Communist Party is increasingly presenting the Chinese model of government as an alternative to liberal democracy.

- The EU has the potential to be an influential global actor. However, due to the difficulties of finding the necessary consensus, it remains to be seen whether it can fulfil this potential. A number of initiatives demonstrate its willingness to strengthen its defence capabilities, but the EU is far from achieving strategic autonomy in relation to the USA and NATO.

- Russia's focus on the internal development of the Putin system will not restrict its room for manoeuvre in terms of foreign and security policy. Russia is successfully deploying its limited resources abroad, at relatively low cost, in order to consolidate its own sphere of influence. On its western border, it aims to regain the influence lost to NATO and the EU after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia and Turkey both follow a confrontational policy toward Europe, although there

are also considerable conflicts of interest between them. In tandem, both states could strengthen their positions vis-a-vis Europe and further their influence in the Mediterranean region.

Many of these developments do not directly affect the thread situation in Switzerland. However, they are at least an indication that the protective effect of the security environment is weakening. In addition, technological change is giving rise to new risks, which are difficult to calculate. This applies in particular to cyberspace.

- The pressure to digitalise which has been reinforced by the protective measures against the pandemic has increased vulnerability to cyber attacks, especially via supply chains. The numerous companies in Switzerland which provide equipment and services for the operators of critical infrastructure in this country and abroad are attractive targets for state-sponsored actors.

- Foreign actors continue to attempt to procure materials and cutting-edge technology in Switzerland for weapons of mass destruction programmes or for the manufacture of delivery systems. Furthermore, with its many innovative companies, Switzerland is vulnerable to strategic proliferation efforts.

- Espionage remains an ever-present challenge. Digitalisation and interconnectedness have made a sharp increase in espionage in cyberspace possible. The targets of foreign espionage have not changed, and Geneva is still a prime target because of the international organisations and the large number of diplomatic missions based there. Foreign intelligence services pose a direct threat to certain target groups in Switzerland and may also be involved in influence operations against Swiss interests.

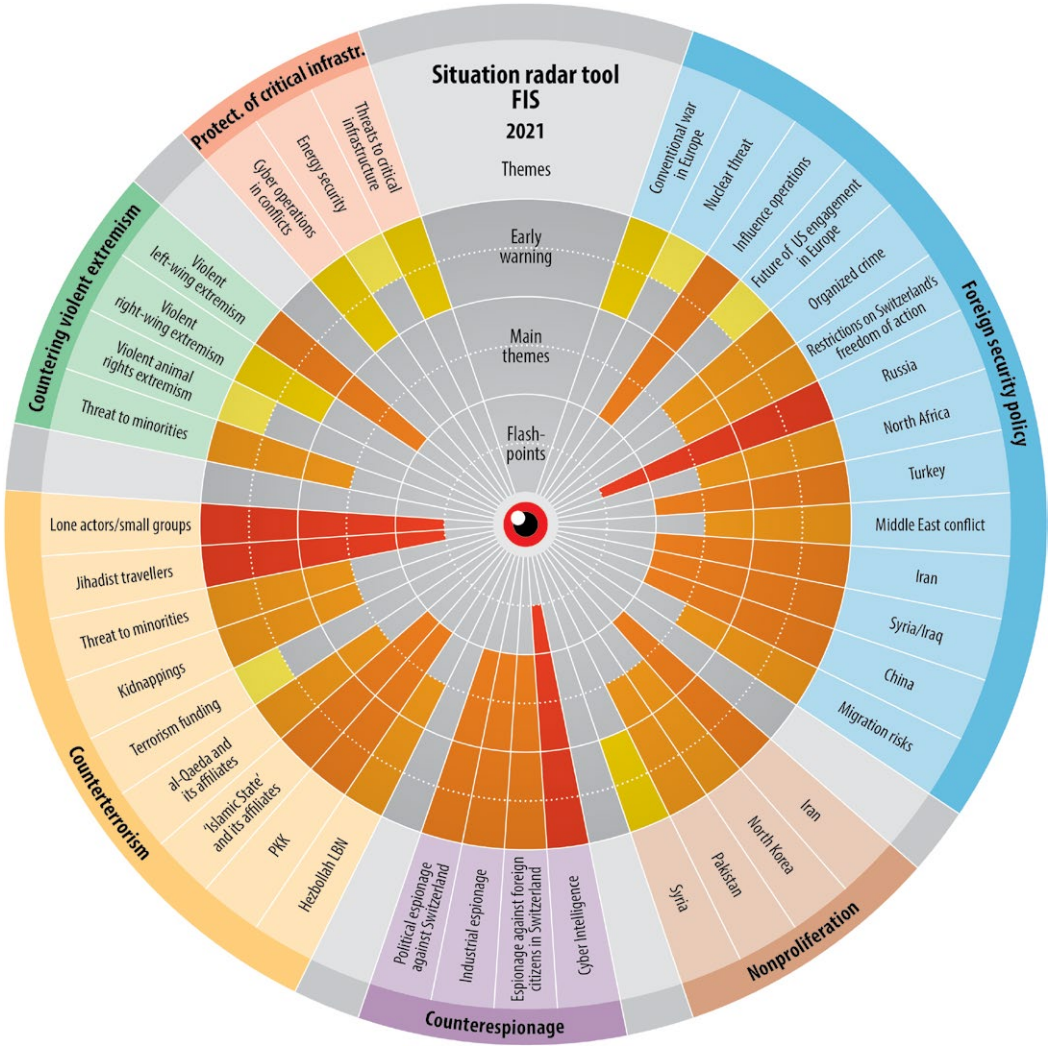
- The terrorist threat in Switzerland remains at a heightened level. It is mainly determined by jihadist actors, principally by lone perpetrators acting autonomously, increasing numbers of whom have psychological problems.

- The potential for violence among right- and left-wing extremists in Switzerland persists. Both scenes try time and again to make use of the potential for protest in

society. Particularly in protracted or exacerbating crises, there is furthermore the risk that protests intensify and in parts turn violent even without the involvement of the left- or right-wing extremist scene.

Situation radar tool

The FIS uses a situation radar tool to depict the threats affecting Switzerland. A simplified version of the situation radar, without confidential data, has also been incorporated into this report. This public version lists the threats that fall within the responsibilities of FIS, with the addition of the topics 'Migration risks' and 'Organized crime', which are relevant for security policy. This report however, does not cover these two categories; for more information readers are referred to the reports of the relevant federal authorities.



Strategic environment

What does the FIS see?

Switzerland: protective effect of the security environment continues to decline

Switzerland's security environment continues to be influenced to a great extent by the growing competition between the major global and some regional powers and the more frequent deployment of instruments of power associated with this. Stabilising factors, such as conventional and nuclear arms control, are being eroded. Regional conflicts, such as those in Ukraine, Syria or Libya, can develop into complex proxy conflicts which have little prospect of a diplomatic solution and carry the risk of military confrontation between the global or regional powers involved. Smouldering conflicts can flare up again even after decades, as seen in Nagorno-Karabakh between September and November 2020.

Rapid technological change, particularly in the areas of defence technology and cyberspace, is giving rise to new risks, which are difficult to calculate. Cyberspace is continuously creating new opportunities for economic, political and military espionage and is also of great importance to the activities of terrorist, violent extremist and criminal groups.

The major global powers continue to avoid direct military confrontation. China is focussing on expanding its sphere of influence, while Russia is seeking to consolidate its sphere of influence. Unlike President Trump, President Biden intends

to exercise the USA's international leadership role within the Western alliance. The USA under President Biden will continue to focus on the strategic challenge posed by China, with China's rise as a global technological power perceived as a particular threat. The USA will demand that its European allies take on greater responsibility for their own security in Europe and that they support the USA in curbing China in the economic and technological spheres.

The EU's economic weight gives it the potential to be an influential global actor. However, due to the difficulties of finding the necessary consensus, it remains to be seen whether it will be able to realise this potential. Initiatives such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund demonstrate its willingness to strengthen its defence capabilities. Nonetheless, the EU is far from achieving strategic autonomy in relation to the USA and NATO. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic could put the brakes on its pursuit of autonomy in terms of defence policy and on its investments in military security.

Among the regional powers, Turkey is the most aggressive in its efforts to expand its sphere of influence, and it is engaged in military operations not only in northern Iraq but also in Syria and Libya.

Switzerland is not directly affected by Russia's efforts to strengthen its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, nor by China's increased military activity in the South and East China Seas. Overall, however, the protective effect of Switzerland's security environment is continuing to decline. Global and regional rivalries are impacting on Switzerland's internal security in a variety of ways. Countering proliferation and espionage attempts requires increasing vigilance and effort. The terrorist threat remains at a heightened level. The potential for violence among right- and left-wing extremists in Switzerland persists; both scenes have links to international networks.

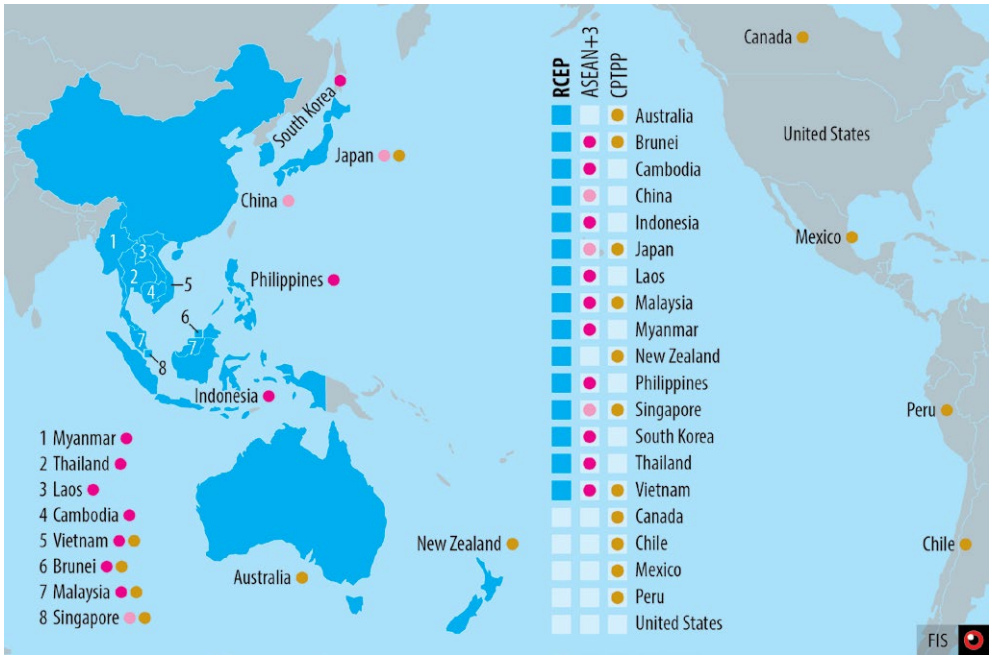
The pandemic has further exacerbated the economic situation in Africa and in the Middle East. However, measures such as travel restrictions and local bans on gatherings are reducing migration to Europe or mass protests, particularly in Iraq and Lebanon.

China: consolidation and expansion of its sphere of influence

President Xi Jinping has succeeded in placing many of those loyal to him in senior positions in the Party and the state and has been able to impose his political and ideological line. His main aims are to strengthen the Party's control over China, to raise the population's living conditions to a new level and to place his country at the forefront of technological developments. Supported by the growth of the domestic market, the economy has seen solid growth, although it is under pressure from both internal and external factors (over-indebtedness, American tariffs and other trade restrictions). This, in combination with efficient measures against Covid-19, has allowed China to take the arrival of 2021, the year of the hundredth anniversary of the Communist Party, in its stride, while the human rights situation in the country continues to deteriorate.

The Party is absolutely determined to drive forward the country's economic and political rise and to exert increasing influence on the international order. China is presenting itself as a supporter of multilateralism and an advocate of free trade. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will enable it to continue to expand its economic and political influence in Asia. This increases the pressure

Pacific: Trade agreements and economic areas



on the USA to strengthen its presence in Asia. Since the pandemic began, at least, China has been polarising opinion globally. China's propagandistic staging of its system, increased influence and selective economic sanctions are further fuelling the systemic conflict between China and the liberal states of the West.

China takes an uncompromising stance in its territorial demands in peripheral regions such as the South China Sea or Taiwan. It relies primarily not on the People's Liberation Army, but on the exertion of political and economic pressure. In territorial conflicts in the South and East China Seas, civilian and paramilitary actors are at the forefront of the defence of China's interests. The modernisation of the armed forces being vigorously pursued by President Xi is cementing China's claim to leadership in the region.

Russia: consolidation of its sphere of influence

In 2020, President Vladimir Putin initiated formal preparations for securing power beyond the year 2024, the end of his fourth term as president. In a referendum in July 2020, he obtained approval for a change to the constitution which keeps all options open for him to continue in a central role. The Russian leadership is relying on internal controls which are constantly being tightened. In August 2020, Alexei Navalny, the most well-known opposition figure, was poisoned with a military-grade nerve agent. After his convalescence and return to Russia, he was arrested and in early 2021 had to begin serving a previously suspended sentence of several years' imprisonment. In September 2020, the ruling United Russia party easily won the regional and municipal elections, which also served as a bellwether for the elections to the State Duma (lower house of parliament) to be held in September 2021. Economic policy is struggling with the severe consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as with sanctions by Western states. So far, however, Russia's leadership has stuck to its fiscally conservative course, which gives a higher weighting to setting aside reserves, self-sufficiency and resilience than to investment and social spending.

In terms of foreign and security policy, Russia continues to focus on regaining the influence lost with the collapse of the Soviet Union – on its western border (in the strategically important area facing NATO and the EU) and on the southern border (in the area facing the Middle East). Russia has increased its influence in Belarus: in the crisis following the disputed presidential election in August 2020, Russia largely sealed the scene off from Western influence and helped prevent the fall of President Alexander Lukashenko's regime, thereby putting itself in a position to bind Belarus to it for the long term. In Ukraine, Russia is working to exploit the weak presidency

and influential oligarchs to establish pro-Russian structures, in order to regain a sufficient degree of influence on strategic decision-making in Kiev in the medium term. The pro-Russian separatist areas remain Russia's most important lever for preventing Ukraine aligning itself with the West. In 2020, Russia confirmed its dominant role in the South Caucasus when it brokered a ceasefire in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and, as the guarantor of the ceasefire,

Russia's military spheres of influence (regional excerpt)

expanded its own military presence in the region. Russia secured the post-war order in coordination with Turkey, without involving the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Facing the Middle East, with its serious levels of instability and security risks, the Caucasus is a strategically important part of Russia's border defences. In recent years, Russia has developed strong relations with Turkey – which controls the Bosphorus, which provides access to the Mediterranean that is vital to Russia's economy – especially in the areas of energy and armaments. The benefits to Russia of this partnership include the weakening of its main opponent, NATO, and Turkey uses it to support its expansionist regional policy. Russian-Turkish relations are currently pragmatic, with the two presidents repeatedly finding ways to demarcate their competing zones of influence – for example in Syria, Libya, and most recently in the Caucasus.

USA: difficult legacy for Joe Biden

The strategic rivalry with China remains the focus of US security policy. President Trump was able to rely on a broad consensus within America for a hard line policy toward China, even though his unilateral actions and the focus on erecting high customs barriers were controversial. Trump would also have been able to find broad international support on key concerns such as combating China's problematic trade practices. His actions (e.g. imposing tariffs on allies, pursuing nationalist policies during the pandemic, or withdrawing from the WHO and the UN Human Rights Council) were even counterproductive.

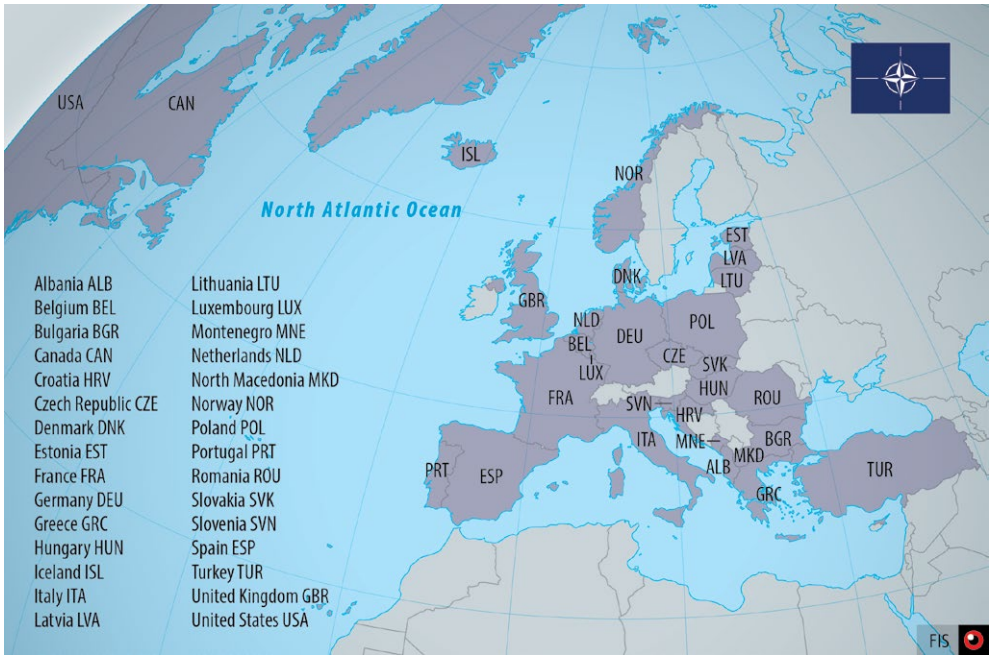
The Trump administration codified an antagonistic policy towards Russia in its 2017 and 2018 strategy documents. Trump himself, however, also attempted to achieve normalisation in the relationship between the two nuclear powers. However, due to factors such as the controversy surrounding Russian influencing of elections in the USA and the US Congress's tough sanctions policy, but also Russia's interventions in Ukraine, Syria, Libya and Belarus, as well as the assassination attempt on Navalny, Russian-American relations continued to deteriorate to the end of his administration.

Under Trump, the USA continued to expand its military engagement on NATO's eastern flank and in particular strengthened the role of Poland, as well as its ability to redeploy reinforcements rapidly from the USA to NATO's eastern flank. However, Trump also criticised the allies, aroused doubts in the USA's security guarantees and even indicated that he might leave NATO. Even though his criticism of European

defence efforts as insufficient was not unjustified, he inflicted considerable damage on NATO with his excessive rhetoric and his decision to reduce American troop strength in Germany.

Trump's Iran policy also contributed to strained transatlantic relations. The policy of maximum pressure and the extraterritorial effect of its hard secondary sanctions have seriously weakened international support for the USA's line against Iran. While the USA's actions have inflicted serious damage on Iran's economy, they have not achieved the objective of limiting Iran's nuclear and missile programmes more effectively, nor caused Iran to depart from its regional policies, seen by the Americans as 'malign'.

NATO members



What does the FIS expect?

Switzerland/Europe: increase in threats, particularly in cyberspace

The three great powers and the two regional powers Turkey and Iran will continue to wrestle for influence. Their struggle for power impacts on the security of Europe and thus also of Switzerland. Switzerland must assume that the USA under President Biden will continue its efforts to involve Europe as much as possible in a common technology policy toward China. Even though Biden will adopt a more conciliatory and diplomatic approach, the USA will continue to pressure Europe to limit Chinese technology companies' access to European markets and to join in coordinated export control measures against China.

As the Covid-19 pandemic subsides and travel restrictions are lifted, legal and illegal migration to Europe and Switzerland will increase again. Regional conflicts will add to the existing migration movements.

Threats in cyberspace, where large-scale attacks are carried out daily either by state actors or by financially motivated cyber criminals, will become more and more apparent. In cyberspace, new doors for economic, political and military espionage are opening all the time. Cyberspace is also of major importance to the activities of terrorist and violent extremist groups.

China: rise all but certain

President Xi Jinping will probably remain party leader in 2022 and head of state in 2023. Under his leadership, China will prioritise work to restructure and stabilise its own economy. China will invest in cutting-edge technology that serves its military and civilian interests. The outcome of this will be mixed: sectoral crises are likely. However, a deep systemic economic crisis is not on the horizon. Domestically, Xi Jinping will maintain his present course: he will try to strengthen the authority of the Party, sinicise the minorities and establish tight Chinese control over Hong Kong. The strategic plan to turn China into a power with global influence by the centenary of the founding of the People's Republic (1949) will remain the cornerstone of government action, although it faces obstacles such as the alarming and as yet unresolved problem of an increasingly ageing population, coupled with an international environment that is more hostile than in the past.

China's rise to global great power status now appears to be all but certain. China will only accept integration through the adoption of international standards and

1st Island chain: China's core strategic interests
2nd Island chain: Zone of interest with a direct impact on China's security

rules where this is considered to be in the national interest. In addition, China is increasingly seeking to shape the current world order to promote multipolarity and ideological plurality. The Communist Party of China presents China's authoritarian, state-capitalist government model as an alternative form of government to liberal democracy within a global order where no single state can have a determining role.

In the long term, China aims to bring the areas to which it lays claim fully under its control. To this end, it will continue to expand and consolidate its control capabilities in the claimed territory, while at the same time avoiding overly provocative steps as far as possible. As the armed forces continue to reform and modernise, they will become increasingly self-confident and will also be deployed selectively at greater distances from mainland China for foreign-policy and security purposes. Their presence, especially in areas which are of strategic relevance to China, will increase. However, China will continue seeking to avoid confrontations in more distant regions.

Russia: maintaining internal stability and securing its sphere of influence

Domestically, Russia is undergoing an orderly restructuring to secure the Putin system beyond 2024. Further legislative, institutional and staffing measures designed to guarantee internal stability for at least another decade are expected to be part of this process. Rejuvenation at all levels is probably one of the main aims of these measures, together with the extension of control mechanisms and deterrence of internal dissent. Of particular importance for stability is the preservation of a balance among the Putin system's central organs of power and among the powerful interest groups in the leadership core that control these organs of power. The global economic consequences of the pandemic are also posing challenges for Russia. At the moment we are a long way from a sustained collapse of oil prices below the 30 dollars per barrel mark which is critical for Russia, so it should be possible to maintain the resilience of the system for the foreseeable future.

The strong focus on the internal development of the system may limit the pace of Russia’s foreign and security policy but not its scope for action. The states in Russia’s western and southern zones of influence, for their part, are experiencing difficulties which are exacerbated by the economic consequences of the pandemic. With Belarus, Russia will be able to conduct the ongoing negotiations on enhanced political, economic and military ties from a position of strength. In Ukraine, which is historically and strategically key to Russia, Russia can expect that the power struggles will weaken the presidency and the course of reform, and that the oligarchs

will increasingly realign their political and business relations toward Russia. The ceasefire in eastern Ukraine is likely to be broken frequently but not officially terminated. In the South Caucasus, Russia will be able to exploit the ongoing conflicts of interest between Armenia and Azerbaijan in order to advance its own interests and, over time, to limit the room for manoeuvre available to Georgia, the country in the Caucasus which has been least closely aligned with Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Russia's strong relations with Turkey are based on effective economic drivers and on frequently parallel confrontational policies toward Europe. In the absence of any serious deterioration of their economies or escalation of bilateral conflicts of interest, it can be expected that these relations will improve further in the medium term. Russia and Turkey could thus both strengthen their positions vis-à-vis Europe and gain further influence in conflicts in the Mediterranean region, from the Aegean to Syria and Libya.

USA: back to the future?

Coping with the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences will absorb much of the new administration's energies. In the first few months of his term in office, President Biden has nonetheless already made efforts to set priorities for foreign and security policy which are new or which tie in with those of the pre-Trump era. Cultivating the USA's global system of alliances, returning to active diplomacy within a multilateral framework and defending democratic values are key elements of Biden's programme.

In this context, relations between the USA and Europe are already showing significant improvement. Biden wants to revitalise the transatlantic alliance and reassert the USA's leadership role in NATO. At the same time, however, like Obama and Trump before him, he wants to strive for fair burden sharing between the USA and Europe and, despite the pandemic and the economic crisis, to demand higher defence expenditure from the allies. The Biden administration will also give high priority to cooperating with the allies in dealing with global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, proliferation and terrorism. Looking beyond the Biden presidency, the outlook for transatlantic relations remains uncertain.

No substantial improvement of US-Russian relations is anticipated in the near future. However, President Biden will endeavour to make progress in arms control, which is particularly important to the relationship between the two nuclear powers. The extension of the New START treaty on limiting strategic nuclear forces marks an early and important success in this area.

Under Biden, the global rivalry with China will continue to shape the USA's agenda. A particular focus will be on securing a leading position for the USA in technologies critical to future economic and military strength. Restrictive measures such as limiting Chinese access to American cutting-edge technology by means of export controls or the substantial exclusion of Chinese suppliers from the US telecommunications market will continue to play a major role. At the same time, the new administration will attempt to strengthen the USA's position in global competition by investing in infrastructure, research & development and education and by supporting important branches of industry.

In his China policy, too, President Biden will count on the USA's global network of allies. NATO must expect that the USA will increasingly be seeking support for its position in the global competition with China. However, the USA's broad network of allies and partners from Japan and South Korea to the south-east Asian states, Australia and India remains of central importance to its strategic position in the Indo-Pacific region. Biden will reaffirm the USA's security guarantees in the region. At the same time, however, it will be difficult for the Biden administration to

USA: Allied and strategic partners in the Pacific

counter a further shift in the military balance of power towards China. Overcoming the coronacrisis and Biden's other domestic political priorities will limit the financial leeway for costly programmes to modernise the armed forces.

Biden will endeavour to keep the USA's military engagement in the conflict regions of the Middle East as low as possible. In the conflict with Iran, the new administration is prioritising negotiations, in order to achieve effective long-term limitation of the Iranian nuclear programme and to defuse tensions in the Gulf region.

Horn of Africa: Ethiopia and Sudan in the maelstrom of change

Ethiopia | Ethiopia is the main actor in the Horn of Africa: it houses the headquarters of the African Union (AU) and plays a key role diplomatically and militarily in resolving the conflicts in neighbouring countries, in particular Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The regional peace initiative launched in 2018 by the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has led to a calming of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea. This earned Abiy the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019. Domestically, however, the fragile political balance among the ethnic groups was disrupted by regional elites' opposition to Abiy and by political and federal tensions, particularly between the central government and the Tigray region. These tensions culminated in armed conflict in November 2020: federal forces restored control over Tigray's capital city.

The restrained reactions of the international community and support from China and Russia regarding the conflict in Tigray have strengthened Prime Minister Abiy's resolve to pursue a hard line against autonomist movements in the regions, if necessary. This also puts him in a promising position for possible re-election in 2021. However, the pacification of Tigray does not necessarily represent a permanent return to peace. On the contrary, it might incite the opposition groups to switch to guerrilla campaigns. Despite Abiy's strengthened grip on the federal and regional political authorities and the interest of Horn of Africa states in regional stability, Eritrean support for Ethiopian federal troops in Tigray could slow down the regional détente process. The effects of this crisis, in terms of both security and the humanitarian situation, are also being felt in Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. Internationally, the situation could also impede negotiations which are intended to settle legal disputes with Egypt over the Nile waters and the use of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

Sudan | Under the regime of Omar al-Bashir (1989-2019), armed opposition groups formed in several regions of Sudan. After six months of popular protests linked to the catastrophic economic situation, Bashir was toppled from the presidency in 2019. A compromise between civilian and military actors enabled the establishment of provisional institutions aimed at managing the difficult transition. In October 2020, after a year of negotiations, the transitional government and the majority of the armed groups signed a peace treaty. The treaty was welcomed internationally, notably by the UN, the AU and the EU, although it prolonged the transitional phase from 2022 to 2024. While it does not ensure unanimity and is fraught with numerous implementation difficulties, it represents a step in the right direction for the signatories, as it allows them to participate in the transition process and influence its outcome.

The implementation of the October 2020 peace treaty in Sudan is benefiting from circumstances more favourable to resolution of the conflict in Darfur than in previous attempts. For example, the transitional government shows greater interest in integration and is determined to shift the balance of power in the country. However, there will be major difficulties in the way of implementation, particularly in terms of the economy and security. While the lifting of the latest US sanctions (following Sudan's removal from the list of state sponsors of terrorism) will allow the mobilisation of international financial aid, this will not be sufficient to stabilise the economic situation in Sudan. The military will try to extend their mandate in the transitional government before placing power in civilian hands. This will complicate the negotiations that are necessary in order for the peace treaty to be implemented and will adversely affect the transition.

Horn of Africa

Jihadist and ethno-nationalist terrorism

What does the FIS see?

Terror threat remains elevated

In Switzerland, the terrorist threat remains at a heightened level. It emanates primarily from the jihadist movement. The attacks in 2020 in Switzerland and in the neighbouring countries of France, Germany and Austria confirm this assessment. Attacks involving little organisational or logistical outlay, carried out by lone perpetrators acting autonomously, remain the most likely threat. Attacks are likely to be carried out primarily against so-called soft targets such as groups of people, poorly secured buildings and public transport facilities. Increasingly frequently, the perpetrators show signs of radicalisation and violent tendencies combined with personal crises or psychological problems.

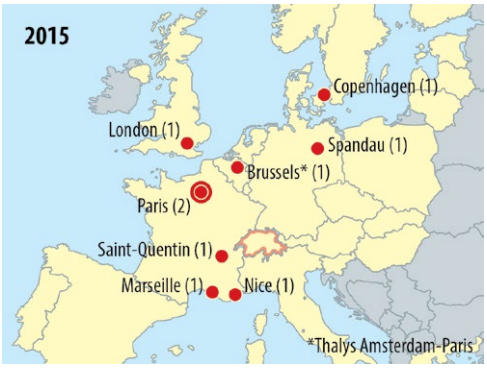
The jihadist movement and its principal actors, 'Islamic State' and al-Qaeda, pose the dominant terrorist threat in Europe and thus also in Switzerland. 'Islamic State' continues to pursue its international agenda but has suffered massive losses in terms of its capabilities and resources. The FIS estimates that the core organisation of 'Islamic State' is currently scarcely in a position to prepare or carry out attacks in European countries itself. Although the propaganda activities of 'Islamic State' have come under pressure, its ideology remains intact as a breeding ground and a source of inspiration.

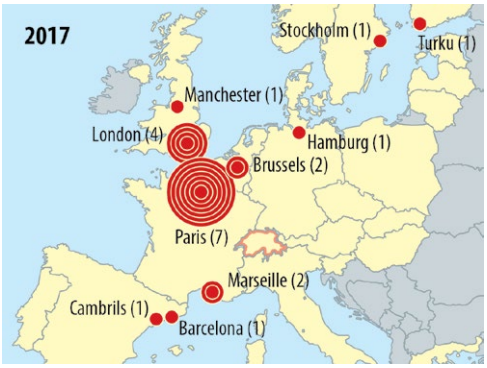
Attacks in Europe

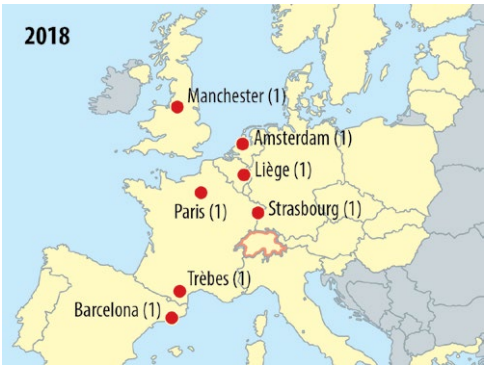
Since 2017, attacks and planned attacks in Europe have had rarely any direct link to the core organisation of 'Islamic State'. The attacks in France, where three people were stabbed to death in a basilica in Nice at the end of October 2020, and where attacks had taken place in and around Paris before, were carried out by lone perpetrators, as was the attack in the Austrian capital, Vienna, where four people were shot dead and over a dozen wounded at the beginning of November 2020.

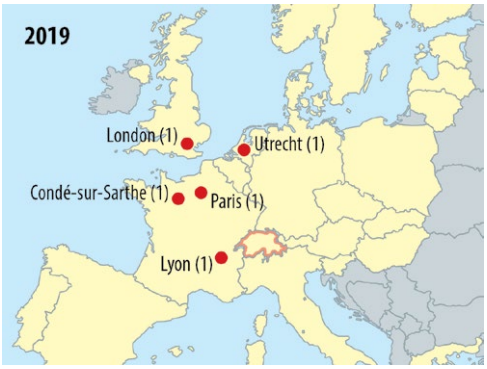
These attacks confirmed that the jihadist movement is internationally connected and that personal contacts extend beyond national borders. 'Islamic State'-influenced jihadist content is still widely disseminated, particularly in cyberspace. Besides the central propaganda apparatus, 'Islamic State' supporters acting autonomously all over the world continue to put a great deal of time and effort into spreading jihadist ideology on the internet. In this way, they reach a large audience, not least due to the social consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, as social contacts are increasingly shifting to cyberspace during this global crisis.

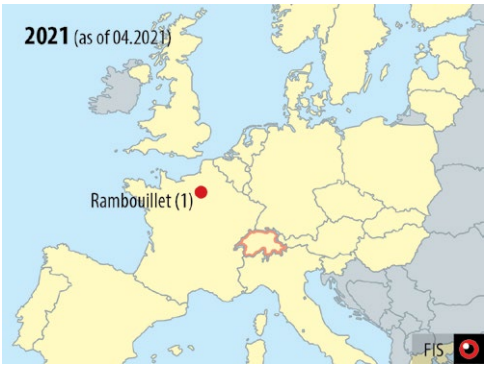
Jihad-motivated terrorist attacks in Europe
(Schengen area and United Kingdom)
since 2015
(in brackets: number of attacks)











'Islamic State' 2.0.1

The core organisation in the conflict area in Syria and Iraq is geographically dispersed, operating from underground. Although the core organisation of 'Islamic State' lost the territorial caliphate in spring 2019, it had prepared itself for this foreseeable loss and moved higher-ranking personnel and financial resources to safe locations. At the regional level, intact structures still remain; attacks are regularly carried out in Syria and Iraq.

Transnational networks and regional groups affiliated to the terrorist organisation are proving resilient, such as in Afghanistan, for example. In other regions, these groups, some of which are only loosely linked to the core organisation of 'Islamic State', are even increasing their activities and expanding their influence. For example, the insurgency by a jihadist group in the north of Mozambique has been continuing for three years now. In 2019, the group openly pledged allegiance to 'Islamic State'. Its activities have been steadily increasing since 2020 and now threaten multi-billion-dollar natural gas projects in the region. While no direct links to this regional group are known, the core organisation of 'Islamic State' makes use of these acts of violence for propaganda purposes.

All the 'Islamic State' groups currently pursue a primarily regional agenda. In West Africa, 'Islamic State in the Greater Sahara' attacks mainly local targets, but also international security forces and the staff of humanitarian organisations. It also attempts to strike Western targets in the region and abducts nationals of Western states. Besides an ideological motivation, some of the groups also have criminal intentions.

Threat from al-Qaeda persists

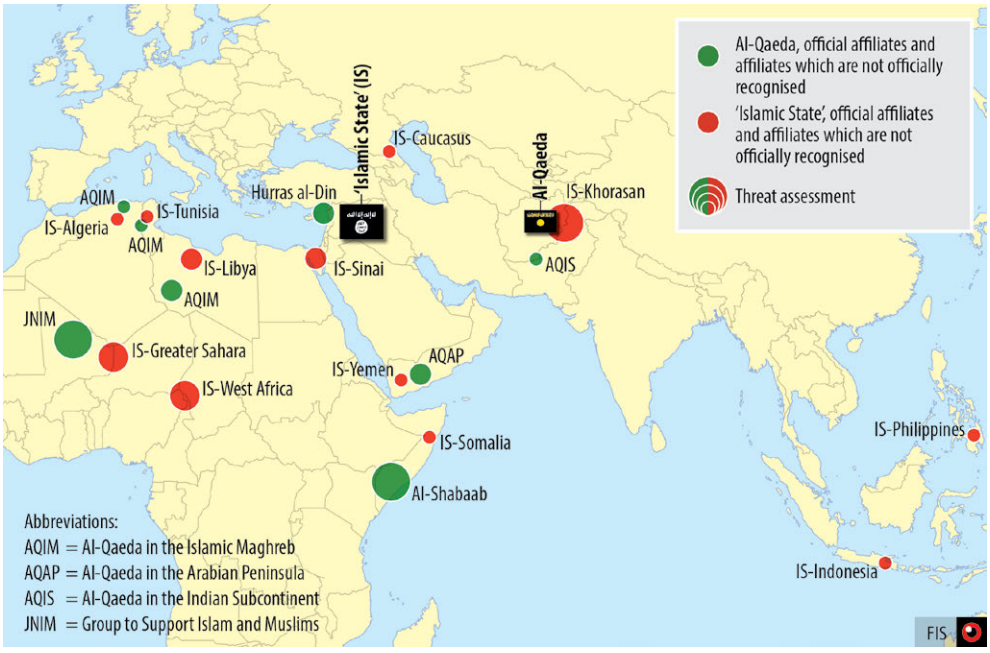
Core al-Qaeda is still seeking to carry out attacks on Western targets. In December 2020 in France, several people were handed custodial sentences, some of them lengthy, for providing logistical support for terrorism in connection with the January 2015 attacks on the satirical magazine 'Charlie Hebdo' and the hostage-taking in a Jewish supermarket near Paris. The two perpetrators of the attack on the 'Charlie Hebdo' editorial offices had links to al-Qaeda. Its regional affiliates, such as al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and al-Shabaab in Somalia, are still sometimes able to exert a great deal of influence in their respective areas of operation. They continue to push for global jihad and attacks on Western targets. However, the strengths and capabilities of the individual affiliates vary, and some of them have operational capabilities that pose a threat to Western interests in their areas of operation.

Other al-Qaeda-affiliated jihadist groups are active in various regions of Africa, carrying out acts of violence and kidnappings.

In the Afghanistan/Pakistan/Kashmir region of the Indian subcontinent, by contrast, core al-Qaeda no longer has any capabilities of real significance. A number of the organisation's leaders have been killed. However, as core al-Qaeda is able to draw on numerous potential leaders from its own ranks and the groups associated with it, these losses have thus far had very little impact on the stability and continued existence of the organisation.

Attacks in Morges and Lugano

The killing in Morges (Vaud) on 12 September 2020 and the attack in Lugano (Ticino) on 24 November 2020 were both inspired by the jihadist movement. In both cases, knives were used and the perpetrator's distressing personal situation and psychological problems played a role.



Islamist actors in Switzerland

The Islamist scene in Switzerland is disparate in nature and largely uncoordinated. The vast majority of Islamist actors do not pursue acts of terrorism in Switzerland as a goal. The threat manifests itself primarily in calls for violence against Muslim minorities, the Jewish community or Western states that are involved in military action in Islamic states. Nonetheless, a minority of individuals may be providing financial and logistical support to violent Islamist actors abroad.

European prisons still contain hundreds of jihadists and individuals who have been radicalised during their time in prison. Even after they have served their sentences, released prisoners may continue to adhere to jihadist ideology and therefore support terrorist activity or even engage in it themselves after their release. In Switzerland, as elsewhere, the federal and cantonal security authorities are concerned about radicalised released prisoners.

Returnees from conflict zones

Some jihad-motivated travellers who have travelled from Switzerland still remain in the conflict areas in Syria and Iraq. Of the recorded jihad-motivated travellers, 16 have so far returned to Switzerland: the last return took place in 2016. With a few exceptions, the returnees maintain a low profile.

PKK continuing with its dual strategy

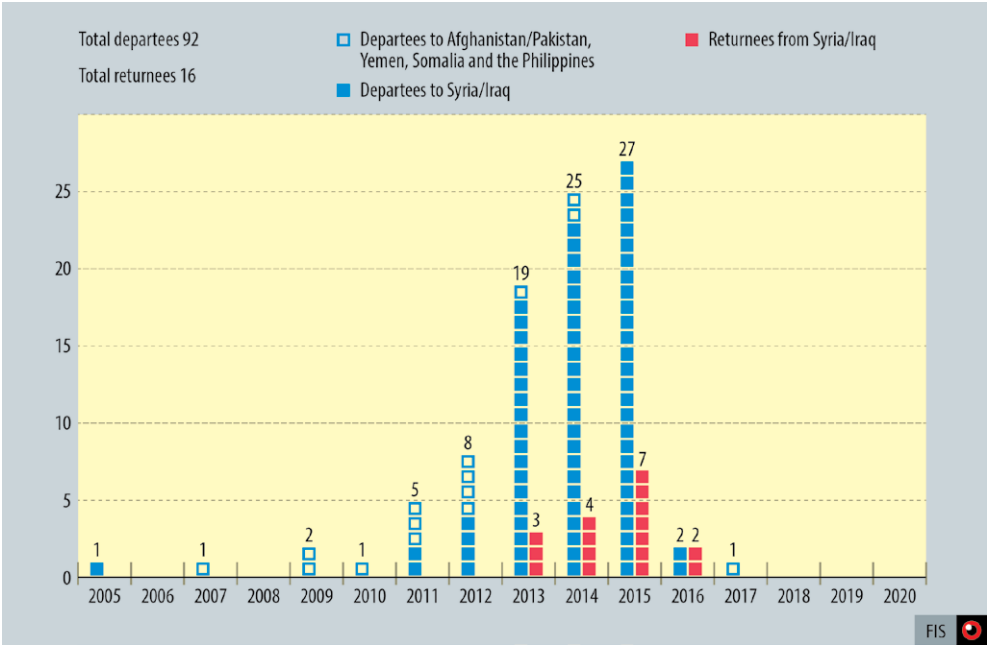
The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has been professionally organised in Europe for decades and, with its parallel structure, pursues a dual strategy: in addition to a visible legal and political arm with local cultural associations, it has a well-established and stable structure, which operates covertly and sometimes illegally, providing funding and personnel to support the armed struggle in the Kurdish regions. The organisation finances its activities through its annual fundraising campaign, together with revenues from legal and illegal businesses.

Lebanese Hezbollah

In countries with a large Shiite Lebanese diaspora community, Lebanese Hezbollah plays its part in promoting cohesion in the community through cultural and religious activities. There are probably a few dozen people in Switzerland, who actively support Hezbollah. In Germany, the organisation has been banned from operating, because it is classified as a terrorist organisation. The threat from Lebanese Hezbol-

lah in Europe and also in Switzerland stems mainly from the tensions between Israel and Hezbollah on the one hand and between Iran and Israel on the other.

Jihad-motivated travellers



What does the FIS expect?

What remains of 'Islamic State'?

According to the FIS's assessment, 'Islamic State' could significantly gain in influence, particularly in Iraq, and thereby expand its scope for action. However, the organisation will probably not be able to capture new territory. Developments will depend on the military pressure, the state of affairs within the core organisation and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Like the affiliated regional groups, for example in West Africa, the core organisation may focus increasingly on its opponents in the region. The threat to Europe and thus also to Switzerland will consequently emanate mainly from individuals and small groups acting autonomously, who, though inspired by 'Islamic State', are not directly guided by it.

Regional threats in Africa

The jihadist threat in Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria remains elevated. Despite pressure from the multinational military missions, the jihadist groups in the region still have the capability to attack protected targets. Besides attacks, abductions pose the greatest risk in the region. Although the security situation in Chad is relatively stable, the situation in the north remains tense, and terrorist groups active in the region could take advantage of this. The entire region is facing increasing levels of activity by terrorist groups. In the countries on the Gulf of Guinea, the first signs of an expansion of the activities of jihadist groups can be seen.

The terrorist group Islamic State in Libya persists, despite some losses of personnel. It is able to use security vacua particularly in the south, as a safe haven. Here, its members cooperate occasionally with local groups and carry out attacks primarily on forces linked to Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. Islamic State in Libya will probably not succeed in expanding its capacities in the short term, because it lacks the necessary support from abroad.

On the Sinai peninsula, the local affiliate of 'Islamic State' still regularly carries out attacks, primarily on Egyptian security forces and their supporters. The group, which originally operated in the north-east, has succeeded in extending its operating range to the north-west of Sinai.

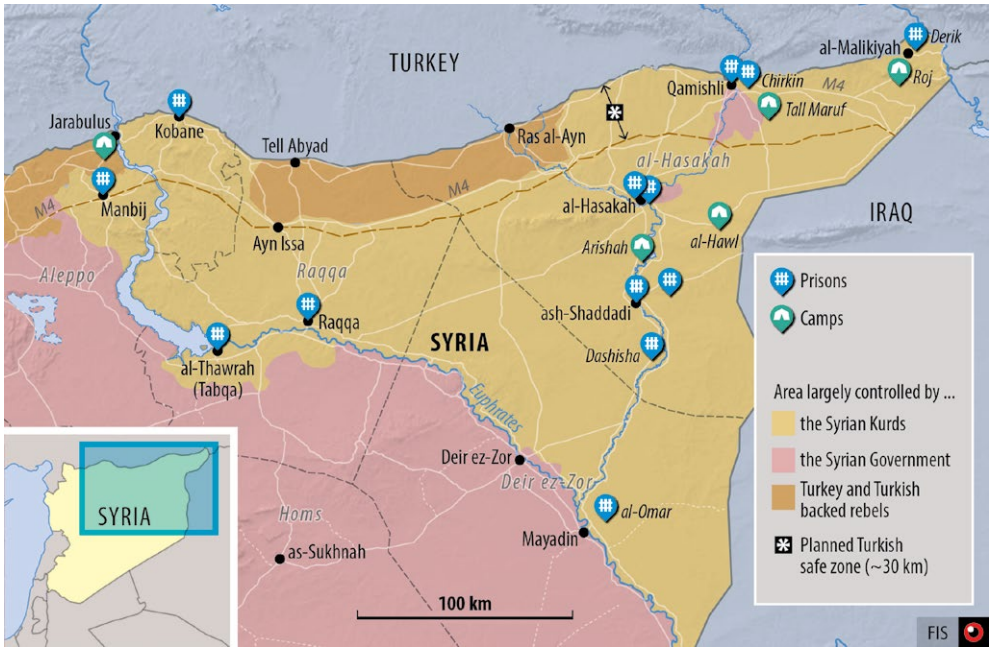
On the Arabian Peninsula, for example in Yemen, the risk of abductions remains high. The terrorist groups active in the region have proved to be resilient and could expand their influence.

Dealing with jihad returnees

There are only a few jihad-motivated travellers with Swiss nationality in the conflict areas of Syria and Iraq. Of these, a few individuals might try to return to Switzerland. Despite the relatively small number of returnees Switzerland might face, dealing with these individuals presents a major challenge. Deradicalising them and reintegrating them into society would probably be a lengthy undertaking, with uncertain prospects of success. If mobility in Europe increases again after the Covid-19 pandemic, the likelihood that returnees will be able to network and move around across state borders will also increase.

The situation is similar when dealing with individuals who have become further radicalised during their time in prison or who discovered jihadist ideology there. Reintegration into society remains difficult, and released prisoners cannot be watched around the clock. In Switzerland, as elsewhere, it is sometimes impossible to execute deportation orders, even when they are legally binding.

North-eastern Syria: prisons and camps housing 'Islamic State' fighters and supporters as well as their family members.

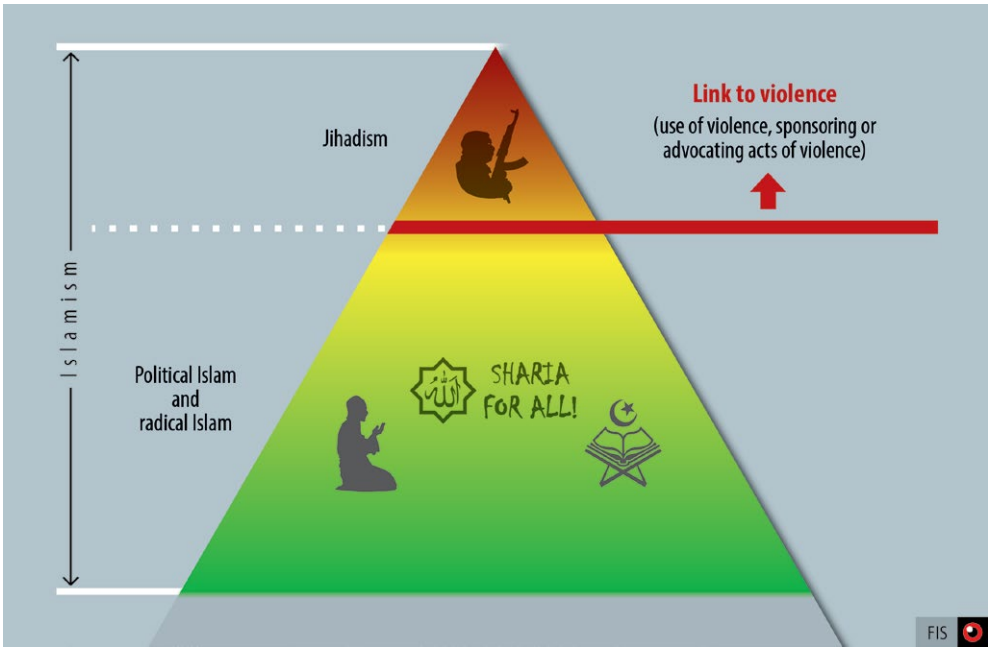


Jihadist propaganda continues

One of the consequences of the measures to counter the Covid-19 pandemic has been the restriction of people's mobility. As a result, the relevance of cyberspace as a propaganda location has increased further. 'Islamic State''s propaganda apparatus continues to function, but it is increasingly showing signs of decline, which can be seen e.g. in the fall in the number of online publications. Nonetheless, it must be assumed that 'Islamic State'-related jihadist content will continue to be disseminated rapidly in cyberspace, also due to the activities of autonomously acting supporters of the terrorist organisation. Measures to counter radicalisation could bring countries such as France more into the propaganda spotlight. Jihadist content, including instructions for terrorist attacks, is often shared encrypted on social media.

Development of the Islamist scene in Switzerland

Although the Islamist scene in Switzerland is limited in scale and little organised, it could in the long term pose a threat to the security of Switzerland. The dissemination and consumption of jihadist content in cyberspace lead to the emergence of small groups of sympathisers whose members might become radicalised. In this scenario, socially isolated and psychologically unstable individuals, in particular,



might be motivated to commit violence. The Muslim communities in Switzerland are subject to influencing attempts by Islamist actors and face a climate of mistrust and suspicion.

Attacks by lone actors

Attacks like those in Morges and Lugano could be repeated anywhere in Switzerland. The federal and cantonal security authorities are in close and continuous contact with each other and with institutions attending to radicalised individuals. Particular attention is paid to individuals in whom radicalisation and violent tendencies are combined with personal crises or psychological problems. These individuals often become perpetrators spontaneously, without putting in much logistical or organisational effort beforehand. The weapons they use for committing their crimes tend to be knives or vehicles. Particularly in the case of acts of violence whose perpetrators have only marginal links to jihadist ideology or to jihadist groups, it is often hard to determine the primary impetus – psychological illness or ideological motivation.

Controversial discussions in the broader public may further exacerbate the existing social and political tensions in Europe. Such discussion might be sparked, for example, by caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed, Koran burnings or mosque closures. The threat could thereby escalate rapidly at any time, in Switzerland as elsewhere. In this type of situation, violent attacks on Muslims and Muslim institutions would be likely to occur. They are regarded by right-wing extremists as enemies.

The jihadist threat in Switzerland remains elevated. Switzerland is part of the Western world, considered by jihadists as Islamophobic. One of the tasks facing the security authorities is the early identification of radicalised individuals who have no or only marginal links to local Islamist circles, before such individuals start making concrete plans for a terrorist attack or are on the verge of carrying one out.

The main targets of jihad-motivated attacks are states that play a prominent role internationally in fighting jihadist groups. The interests of these states might also be attacked on Swiss territory. Depending on geopolitical developments, Jewish institutions could become the target of acts of violence. Critical media reports, attacks on Muslim institutions and actual or perceived discrimination against Muslims may also have a mobilising effect on the Islamist scene. The Jewish and Muslim communities remain exposed to other risks, such as attacks by violent right-wing extremists. For Swiss nationals abroad, the risk of falling victim to opportunist attacks or abductions persist.

No fundamental change in the PKK

In the long term, it is unlikely that any change will take place in the PKK in Europe and thus also in Switzerland. Its structures have been stable for more than three decades, and the organisation's supporters have been indoctrinated across generations. Even a change in the situation in the Kurdish areas is unlikely to alter this for now. If, however, the PKK's founder Abdullah Öcalan, imprisoned for over twenty years, were to die or if credible rumours of his death were to start circulating, riots would likely occur.

Hezbollah's network intact

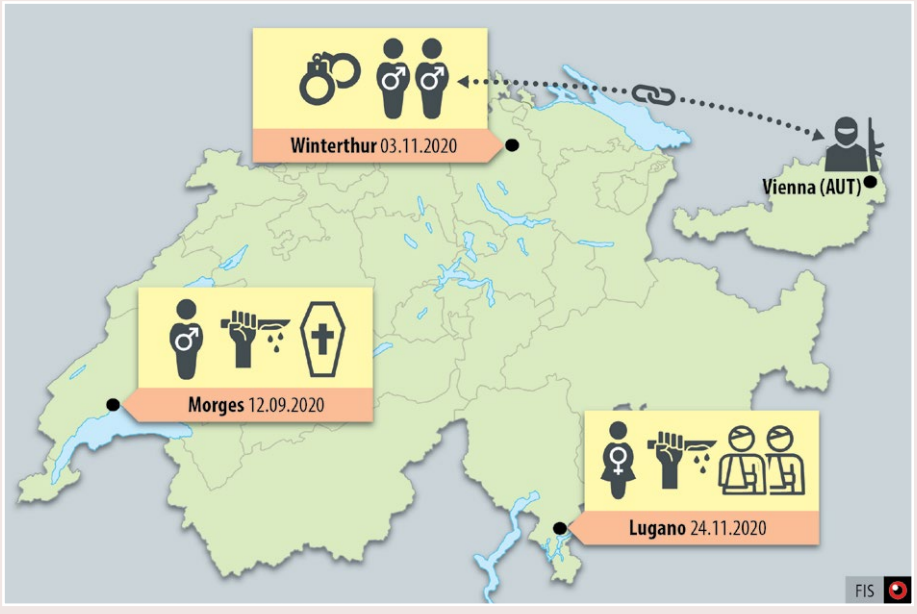
Hezbollah maintains a network of individuals in Europe that it can call upon to respond, also in the form of terrorist acts, if it thinks these are required by the circumstances, such as a large-scale Israeli attack on its positions in southern Lebanon or a bombing of Iranian nuclear facilities. Such circumstances do not currently apply.

Isolated acts of terrorism – also in Switzerland

The jihadist threat in Europe and thus also in Switzerland emanates primarily from jihadist-inspired lone perpetrators or small groups, generally acting spontaneously without any instructions or financial support from outside. Increasingly, these include perpetrators in whom radicalisation and violent tendencies are combined with personal crises or psychological problems. Particularly in the case of acts of violence where the perpetrators have only marginal links to jihadist ideology or to jihadist groups, it is often hard to determine the primary impetus. It is thought that the two attacks in Switzerland in 2020 were carried out by such individuals: on 12 September 2020, a man stabbed another man to death in Morges (Vaud), and on 24 November 2020 a woman wounded two women with a knife in Lugano (Ticino). The perpetrators were both psychologically unstable, but both crimes were essentially also jihad-motivated.

Lone perpetrators acting autonomously are often adherents of the international jihadist movement, but do not belong to any organisation, group or network, act not on direct orders but outside the bounds of any hierarchical structures, plan their actions independently and carry them out on their own. The acts of violence are therefore often shaped by the individual situation of the perpetrator.

Isolated attacks with jihadist motivation in Switzerland and arrests due to potential contacts to assailants of the attack in Vienna



While individual terrorist acts are committed by individuals, the process of radicalisation is embedded in a social context in which interaction within the jihadist scene and issues of general public debate are of equal importance. In addition, propaganda, particularly that of 'Islamic State', has contributed to the increase in terrorist acts committed by people acting on their own initiative who have only indirect links to a terrorist organisation.

Early detection of individual acts of terrorism is a huge challenge. It is often not possible to determine the motives of the perpetrators clearly in advance. Lone perpetrators are often in contact with the jihadist scene and consume jihadist propaganda. However, some remain marginal figures in this environment, do not establish lasting relationships, and do not become integrated in jihadist circles.

The National Action Plan to prevent and counter radicalisation and violent extremism – and consequently also terrorist activities – comprises a range of measures for creating practical tools and preconditions that will enable all the agencies involved to cooperate in order to take pre-emptive action against and, as far as possible, prevent radicalisation and violent extremism.

Violent right-wing and left-wing extremism

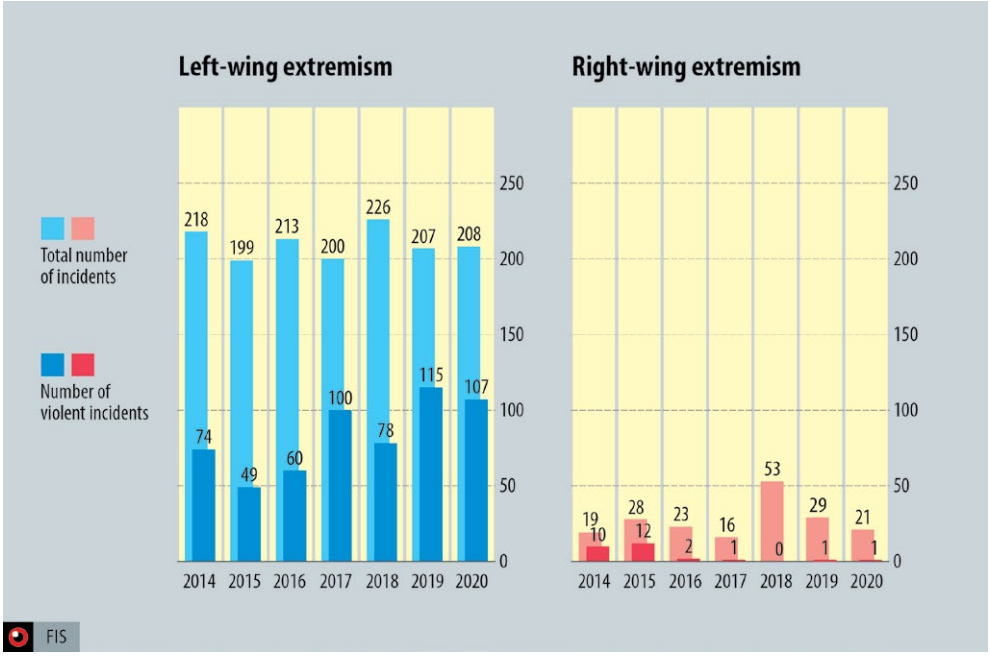
What does the FIS see?

Incidents and potential for violence

In 2020, the FIS recorded 208 incidents linked to left-wing extremism and 21 linked to right-wing extremism. While in the case of right-wing extremism the number has continued to fall, in the case of left-wing extremism it has remained stable. There were a total of 107 acts of violence linked to left-wing extremism, while in the case of right-wing extremism, only one incident involving violence was recorded. The left-wing and right-wing extremist scenes have a significant threat potential. Left-wing extremist circles regularly make use of violence.

Violent left-wing extremists in Switzerland are currently preoccupied with the Covid-19 pandemic. They are keeping a particularly close eye on the anti-COVID-19 safety measures, but are largely accepting these as necessary restrictions and abiding by the rules. However, they criticised the ban on demonstrations during the lockdown starting in March 2020 and the measures taken to protect employees, which they saw as insufficient. As a result of the pandemic, they have been able to conduct fewer demonstrations than in previous years, and have concentrated more on alternative forms of protest, such as online campaigns.

Events motivated by left- or right-wing extremism reported to the FIS since 2014 (excluding graffiti)



The travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic have reduced international contacts for both violent left-wing extremists and violent right-wing extremists in Switzerland. Although physical meetings between Swiss violent extremists and their counterparts abroad have continued to take place, a large proportion of contacts with foreign violent extremists have probably shifted to the virtual realm.

Before the end of the year, FIS anticipated that the climate movement or the Black Lives Matter activists would separate themselves from the violent left-wing extremists. There currently is no reason to change this assessment. However, in some European states it can be observed that right-wing extremists are attempting to make use of the amorphous coalition under the banner 'opponents to anti-Covid measures'. In doing so, they may foster radicalisation going as far as the use of violence. Particularly in protracted or exacerbating crises, there is furthermore the risk that protests intensify and in parts turn violent even without the involvement of the left- or right-wing extremist scene.

Right-wing extremism

A number of changes have been observed recently among violent right-wing extremist groups; several existing groups have been disbanded and several new ones have formed. Such changes are common in the violent right-wing extremist scene

Propaganda video of the group 'Junge Tat', filmed in Zurich, published in November 2020

and tend to occur in waves; at present, however, the number of changes exceeds the normal level. Both in German-speaking Switzerland and in French-speaking Switzerland, these changes have brought together the most motivated and radical individuals in new groups.

Generally, such changes and the right-wing extremist scene's activities take place discreetly. However, these new groups are pursuing an unusually provocative public communication strategy on social media. Whether out of a desire to be provocative or out of naivety regarding the consequences of such publications: propaganda videos and photographs of events are increasingly frequently being posted on networks and profiles that are publicly accessible.

Left-wing extremism

There has been no substantial change in the issues preoccupying violent left-wing extremists in Switzerland, who are continuing their activities in various areas. The issues of greatest importance to them can be summarised under the keywords 'anti-capitalism', 'migration and asylum', 'anti-fascism', 'anti-repression' and 'Kurds', but the scene is heavily influenced by current events. For example, the violent left-wing extremist scene has exploited the Covid-19 pandemic for its narrative, in order to vindicate its traditional concerns – it demonstrates against Covid-19 measures, which it sees as restricting freedom of expression.

Arson attacks have been carried out and property has been damaged in connection with criticism of the state's asylum and migration policy. The main targets have been companies responsible for providing security for asylum facilities.

The violent left-wing extremist scene continues to wage its ideological war against fascism and everything it perceives to be fascist and has even been intensifying it. There has been an increase in the number of activities by violent left-wing extremists linked to the ideological conflict between left and right. The left-wing extremist scene has also added the issue of 'corona-sceptics' to its repertoire. It believes that some of the corona-sceptics belong to right-wing extremist circles. Left-wing extremists have therefore organised counterdemonstrations under the banner of 'anti-fascism'.

Since the end of May 2020, the police violence in the USA has lent momentum to the left-wing extremist campaign 'Struggle against repression'. This has made left-wing extremists feel called upon more than ever to demonstrate against the police, to attack police officers directly and to inflict damage on the infrastructure of the police and other security forces. At least in Zurich, violent left-wing extremists are less inhibited than ever about attacking the police.

The violent left-wing extremist scene continues to advocate for the Kurdish autonomously administered areas in Rojava in northern Syria and for the Kurds in general. The links between Swiss and Kurdish or Turkish left-wing extremists have long been close, due to their ideology and overlapping goals. Violent Swiss left-wing extremists support the Kurdish cause both in Switzerland and on the ground in Rojava. To this end, left-wing extremists in Switzerland organise events, sometimes their own demonstrations, participate in demonstrations by the Kurdish diaspora community in Switzerland and collect money for aid supplies such as respirator masks, medicines or bandages for the fighters on the ground.

What does the FIS expect?

Right-wing extremism

Up until now, the right-wing extremist scene has had the potential for violence, but has lacked the motivation to carry out violent attacks. One of the main reasons for this lack of motivation was right-wing extremists' fear of having to face personal consequences if they outed themselves as such in public. However, there has also been a lack of unifying issues and charismatic leaders able to give clear, focused, and thought-out direction to their actions. In parts of the Swiss right-wing extremist scene, this is beginning to change. Further factors are contributing to the deterioration of the situation:

- The appeal of shooting and martial arts remains, and right-wing extremists' capabilities in these areas are increasing. The concentration of influential, capable and motivated proponents in individual groups is giving them a sense of superiority. This is increasing their confidence to show their faces in public and to seek confrontation.
- When groups break up, some violent right-wing extremists are left without ties to any right-wing extremist group. Such individuals usually join another group quickly, but some remain without ties to a particular group. As a general rule, established violent right-wing extremist groups exercise a certain degree of social control over their members and tend to discourage them from committing acts of violence. Therefore, if violent extremists who have lost their affiliation to one group do not manage to affiliate themselves to another group, there is a higher probability that they will become radicalised privately.
- Furthermore, the exchange between young activists without criminal records and older right-wing extremists significantly increases the new groups' capacity for action. The latter have many years of experience within these groups, and also with criminal prosecution and confrontation with anti-fascists, from which the younger activists can learn.

Based on these findings, it should be noted that the situation as regards violent right-wing extremism is deteriorating and the likelihood of acts of violence is increasing. An increase in acts of violence by violent right-wing extremist groups is therefore to be expected.

Left-wing extremism

The violent left-wing extremist scene will retain its commitment to all its issues. It will set thematic priorities depending on the situation and the issues of the day, and will step up its activities accordingly.

In particular, the violent left-wing extremist scene will carry on its ideological fight against fascism and everything it considers to be fascist. As soon as it perceives individuals or groups to be right-wing extremist, it will react. Its reactions may be of a violent nature, whether in the form of damage to property or isolated physical attacks on individuals. The extent to which such actions will be directed against corona-sceptics will depend largely on the course the pandemic takes, the measures taken to combat it and the prevalence of corona-sceptics among the public.

The violent left-wing extremist scene in Switzerland will continue to monitor the state's measures to curb the Covid-19 pandemic. As long as these are considered reasonable, the majority will accept them and comply with them. However, if measures are taken that left-wing extremists see as disproportionately restricting fundamental rights, they will respond with actions or unauthorised demonstrations.

Violent left-wing extremists will also maintain their commitment to the autonomy of Kurds in Switzerland and abroad, and will continue to take violent action in Swit-

Attack under the banner 'Fight for Rojava' on an arms manufacturer in Zurich with an improvised explosive devise

zerland against people they view as opponents of this struggle for autonomy and against so-called war profiteers. The level of their engagement will depend on the actual situation in the Kurdish autonomously administered areas.

The issue of 'anti-repression' will continue to play an important role in the violent left-wing extremist scene in Switzerland, with the police portrayed as the main enemy. Aggression against the police and other law enforcement entities will persist or possibly even increase.

The transfer of WEF 2021 to Singapore deprives left-wing extremists of one of their main platforms for drawing attention to their anti-capitalist cause. It remains to be seen how they cope with this. However, it is expected that they will attempt to draw attention to the WEF in Singapore by means of actions or a demonstration.

Actions based on the ideological conflict between left and right

Violent left-wing extremists see violent right-wing extremists as their ideological enemy, and vice versa. Both sides act accordingly. 2020 saw a significant rise in the number of actions that had their roots in the ideological conflict between left and right. The actions included provocation and surveillance, demonstrations and counterdemonstrations, property damage and physical attacks. The vast majority of actions were carried out by violent left-wing extremists. The rise is a consequence of violent left-wing extremists' response to the fact that right-wing extremists, especially the younger generation, have been becoming more visible. Left-wing extremists have responded by stepping up their anti-fascist activities.

The actions of violent right-wing extremists against those they perceive as left-wing extremists tend to be spontaneous, sporadic and lacking a strategy. Where violent left-wing extremists are concerned, the assessment is completely different. For them, the anti-fascist struggle is central to their sense of identity, and many violent left-wing extremists define themselves by their opposition to fascism. Those who are committed to anti-fascism see their mission as drawing public attention to right-wing extremist tendencies and racially motivated incidents. People suspected of being right-wing extremists or belonging to the scene are to be prevented from conducting their activities, so that no right-wing extremist groups can form. Left-wing extremists show themselves to be organised, disciplined and capable of a high degree of mobilisation. They consider it acceptable to injure individuals whom they assess to be right-wing extremists.

Proliferation

What does the FIS see?

The traditional actors

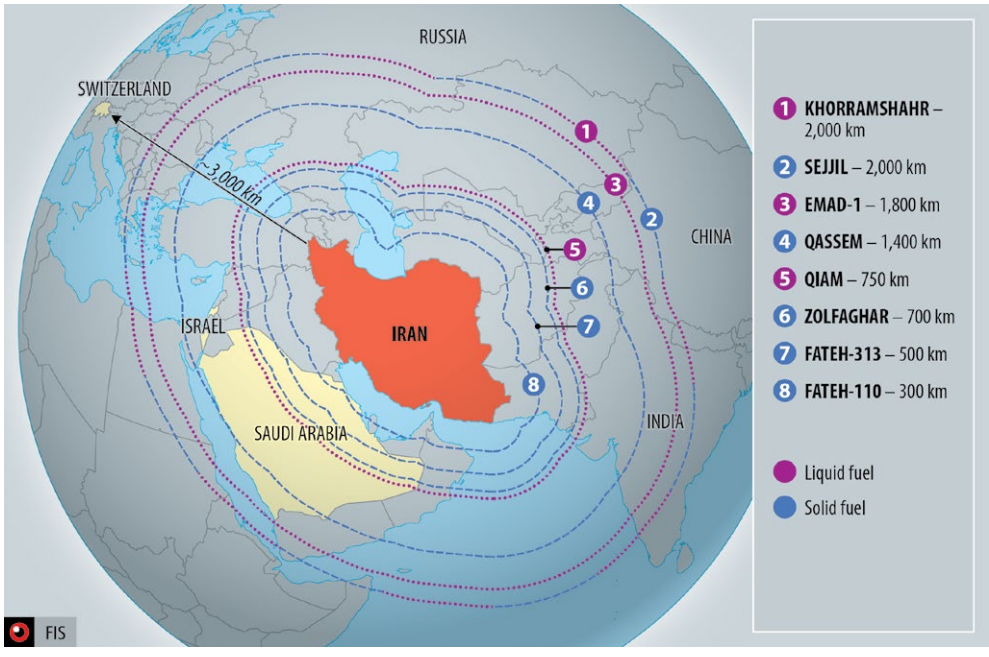
Weapons of mass destruction remain highly attractive. Foreign actors continue to attempt to procure materials in Switzerland for their weapons of mass destruction programmes or for the manufacture of delivery systems. In the recent past, Iran has made major improvements in the quality of its solid-fuel missile systems and its cruise missiles. Some of the materials used for this came from Switzerland.

Pakistan is still extremely interested in know-how and goods from Switzerland, particularly for use in the expansion of its nuclear programme. It is investing substantial resources in its nuclear arms programme and will probably soon have more nuclear warheads in its active arsenal than the UK with its current stock of 120 operational warheads.

Strategic trends

The nuclear powers are working on the comprehensive modernisation of their arsenals. Although the system of strategic arms control is showing signs of disintegration, the deterrence relationships between the major nuclear powers remain stable. The development of hypersonic weapons in the shape of conventional cruise mis-

Iran's currently most relevant ballistic missiles and their range



siles as well as hypersonic glide vehicles on strategic weapons systems represents a notable qualitative advance. In both cases, advance warning times are cut and the possibilities of interception are reduced. The boundaries between conventional and non-conventional weapons systems are also becoming increasingly blurred. Weapons systems which were developed for the delivery of a nuclear weapon are being modified and prepared for deployment with conventional warheads.

- Russia is upgrading its capability to wage war against a powerful conventionally-armed opponent. The country is investing considerable resources in the modernisation and expansion of its armaments industry. Switzerland has been significantly affected by this, especially in the mechanical engineering sector, as a significant proportion of the machinery requested by Russia is destined for the arms industry or defence-related companies.
- China is resolutely pursuing its policy of civil and military fusion. Goods which it is seeking to procure in Switzerland are often closely technically related to ongoing efforts to enhance its military capabilities.
- NATO is continuing to expand its deterrence and defence capabilities in Europe. It is expanding both regionally and in terms of the issues it covers. It is paying greater attention to China's ambitions and the instruments for their implementation, such as the policy of civil and military fusion mentioned above. NATO will therefore once again be focussing more on the monitoring and control of its own industrial base.

What does the FIS expect?

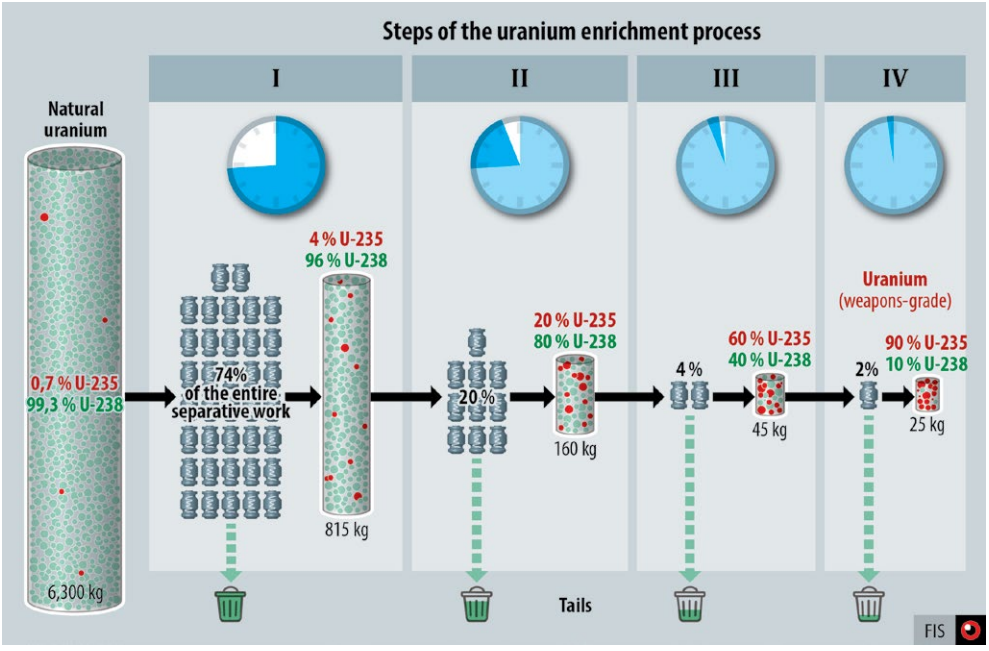
Clean-up operations: Iran

In proliferation, as in other areas, 2021 began with cleaning up the legacy of President Trump's time in office. In the conflict with Iran, the dismantling of the nuclear agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, JCPOA) has continued. With Iran restarting uranium enrichment to 20 per cent, another major red line has been breached. However, there is still no sign of a definitive break with the concept of the JCPOA as an instrument for the long-term normalisation of relations between Iran and the West. Iran probably does have an interest in negotiations with the USA but will not accept demands for significant restrictions on its missile programmes.

North Korean successes

In relation to Iran the American policy of maximum pressure did not lead to the desired outcome, and in relation to North Korea the same can be said of President Trump's charm offensive toward Kim Jong-un. The attempt to achieve an amicable relationship with North Korea on the basis of the personal chemistry between the two leaders failed. However, both sides reached a tacit agreement to refrain from

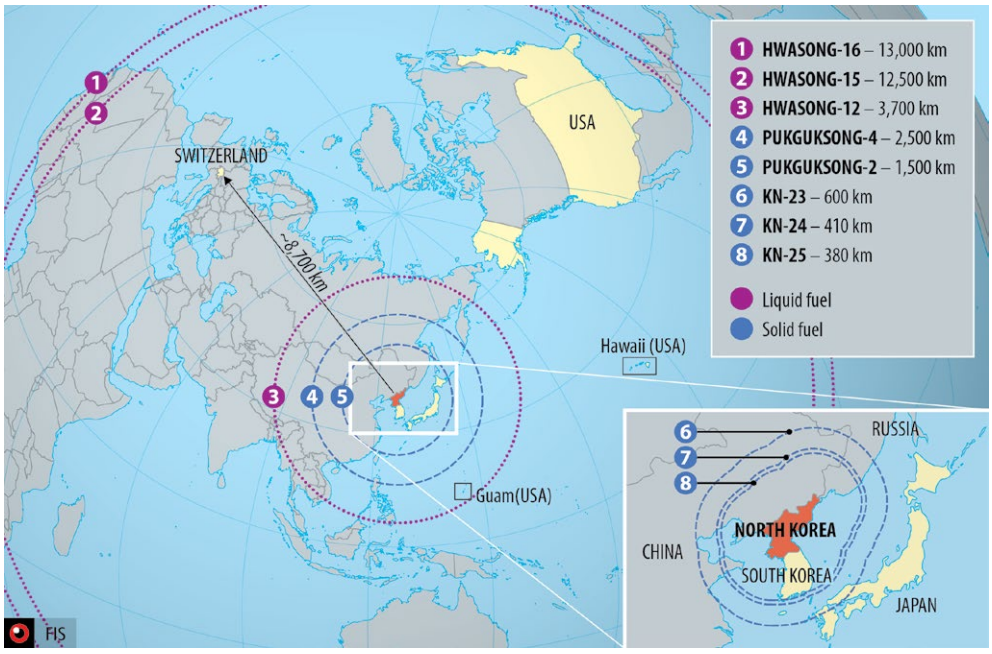
Enrichment of natural uranium to weapons-grade, step by step. The content of the isotope U-235 is gradually increased at the expense of U-238. The first two steps of the process require most of the separative work.



taking overly provocative steps. In particular, North Korea did not carry out any weapons tests that might be interpreted as being targeted directly against the USA. Under the cover of this de-escalation phase, North Korea continued to work successfully on upgrading the quality of its missile systems. Several new types of solid-fuel-propelled short-range missiles have probably reached series-production readiness and are now being made available to the armed forces. These missiles will probably replace at least some of the old Scud-type systems that are still in use. These systems, which would then be superfluous, might be sold and resurface in conflict regions.

The development of a new intercontinental ballistic missile has been another significant success for North Korea and creates the impression that North Korea's industrial base is more powerful than had been assumed. This new missile has not yet been tested in flight. Its test would, however, be ideally suited for reminding the USA of North Korea's potential to stir up trouble, in order to spur them into negotiations. Such behaviour would be in line with North Korean tradition and is likely to happen in 2021.

North Korea's newest, most powerful and relevant ballistic missiles and their ranges



Security autonomy requires an industrial base

Proliferation reacts to higher-level developments, as it has recently, for example, in response to the strengthening of authoritarian systems relative to democratic systems of government. Authoritarian systems are less inclined to resolve problems and conflicts within the established collective security mechanisms, which is why their strengthening is leading to a weakening of these mechanisms. COVID-19 has exacerbated this trend and reinforced the impression that the nation state ultimately has to fend for itself and has to be capable of acting alone.

States which strive for security autonomy and use military means to back up their foreign and security policy have to build up an independent arms industry. The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 provided an example of this. In recent years, Turkey has invested massively in expanding its industrial base and in doing so has acquired the capability to conduct and support a successful aerial war autonomously, using its own unmanned aerial vehicles and its own precision-guided munitions. At the same time, the conflict also revealed gaps in Turkey's capabilities: Canada was able to prevent the delivery of motors from Austria for the Turkish drones, as the producer there is owned by a Canadian company. Other key components which Turkey is not yet able to manufacture independently – for example sensor technology – are also being prevented from reaching the Turkish drone producers.

In order for a country to become strategically autonomous, its arms industry must therefore be able to manufacture not only the armaments, but also their key components, independently of foreign suppliers. The necessary know-how is often to be found in specialist and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises or start-ups. The simplest way of gaining access to their expertise, and one that is also open to smaller states, is to buy them. Switzerland is rich in start-ups and innovative companies and is consequently particularly prone to becoming a target of strategic proliferation efforts. It does not operate a state-controlled industrial policy, nor does it systematically keep track of the key competencies that exist in the country, and it lacks robust tools for detecting and, if necessary, preventing state-sponsored investments by third parties in Switzerland. To adapt a well-known phrase, it might be said that every country has an industrial policy – either its own or somebody else's.

Illegal intelligence

What does the FIS see?

Foreign intelligence services: differences and similarities

For many states, intelligence services remain a preferred instrument for detecting and averting threats at home and abroad and for ensuring that the security situation is continuously monitored. There are marked differences in how these threats are perceived and what countermeasures are taken.

Foreign intelligence services vary greatly in terms of their capabilities, available resources, targets, competencies and procedures. They also differ in terms of the legal framework by which they are bound and the oversight to which they are subject. However, it should be noted that while constitutional democracies tend to augment parliamentary oversight and legal control of their intelligence services, the focus here is on their own nationals at home and abroad and on their own territory, with the legal regulations governing intelligence gathering abroad remaining general and leaving a lot of room for manoeuvre. In parallel with increased oversight and control, however, new powers are being called for and introduced, in particular with regard to the surveillance of networks, electronic devices and encrypted communications. When it comes to intelligence gathering abroad – including in Switzerland – reticence and restraint tend to be due to political considerations.

Digitalisation and interconnectedness allow intelligence services to gather more information – and more accurate information – faster. They facilitate espionage. Now and in the future, the challenge for intelligence services consists not so much in gathering information as in efficiently and effectively processing and preparing the information they have collected.

Foreign intelligence services: priorities and capacities

One focal point of intelligence work is the gathering and analysis of information on the political, economic and military capabilities and intentions of states that play a role globally or in the respective region. A second focal point relates to information, which helps in defending against threats such as terrorism, violent extremism, proliferation and espionage. Combating terrorism remains a priority for many intelligence services, but greater emphasis is increasingly being placed on intelligence gathering on state actors. This is a consequence of the more frequent use of instruments of power and the growing competition between the three superpowers USA, China and Russia. On a more limited scale, individual regional powers are also behaving in a similar way, leading to an intensification of espionage activity worldwide. At the same time, this competition and conflicts arising from it are forcing other states to invest more heavily in their intelligence services.

Superpowers

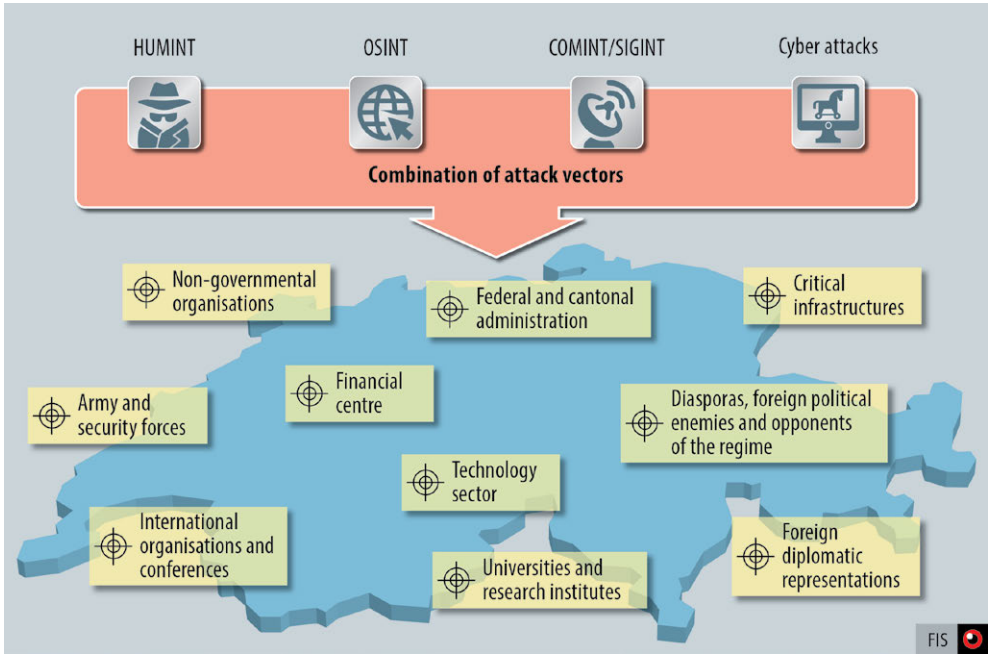
The competition between the three superpowers is in part being waged by the means of intelligence. Mutual surveillance is increasing and is also being carried out in third countries. The focus of the American intelligence services remains on combating terrorism and gathering intelligence on strategic rivals. The same applies to China and Russia, which in addition to that devote a considerable proportion of their intelligence resources to gathering information at home and abroad both on economic actors and on communities and individuals that they perceive as a threat. As in other autocratic states, such activities by the intelligence services not only serve the interests of the state but also play a significant role in helping the ruling elites to retain or expand their power. Although the intelligence services of the USA, China and Russia, like others, have to set priorities, they also have the capacity to gather intelligence on many other actors.

Continuing espionage against Swiss interests

Espionage by foreign intelligence services continues to affect Switzerland significantly in a number of respects.

- Large numbers of natural and legal persons resident/domiciled in Switzerland are direct targets of foreign intelligence services. This includes members and employees of government agencies, parliament, the military, research institutes and the media. Many different branches of the economy are also affected. Swiss nationals and interests abroad are also a target for espionage by foreign intelligence services.
- Foreign intelligence services also take action against their own nationals in Switzerland, especially against regime critics, opposition members and members of ethnic or religious minorities. They sometimes do this overtly.
- Intelligence services of other states engage in surveillance of one another on Swiss territory. Switzerland is one of the most important locations worldwide for such activity. The presence of numerous international organisations and diplomatic missions in Geneva is an important factor. The major foreign intelligence services, in particular, can draw on established structures and extensive networks for this purpose.
- Switzerland remains a popular location for so-called third-country meetings because of its simple entry requirements, good infrastructure and central location in Europe.

Espionage attack vectors and targets in Switzerland



What does the FIS expect?

Continuity is expected

Espionage is an ever-present phenomenon, whose aims and methods have essentially remained the same over time. Consequently, the FIS does not expect any fundamental changes.

The objectives of intelligence gathering and the subjects on which it will focus will continue to be determined by the political priorities of the respective governments. With more intense competition between superpowers and regional powers and with the use of instruments of power continuing unabated, illegal intelligence by superpowers and regional powers will gain in importance. However, counterterrorism will remain a prime occupation of the intelligence services, particularly in Western states. In the event of a major armed conflict in Europe or between the superpowers, a significant short-term shift of intelligence resources from counterterrorism to the surveillance of state actors is to be expected.

Intelligence services rely on information from different sources as much as possible independent from one another, so that the credibility of the information can be verified. Accordingly, a variety of information-gathering methods will continue to be used in the future. Digitalisation and interconnectedness will, however, contribute to improving the quality and increasing the quantity of technical information collection – especially in cyberspace.

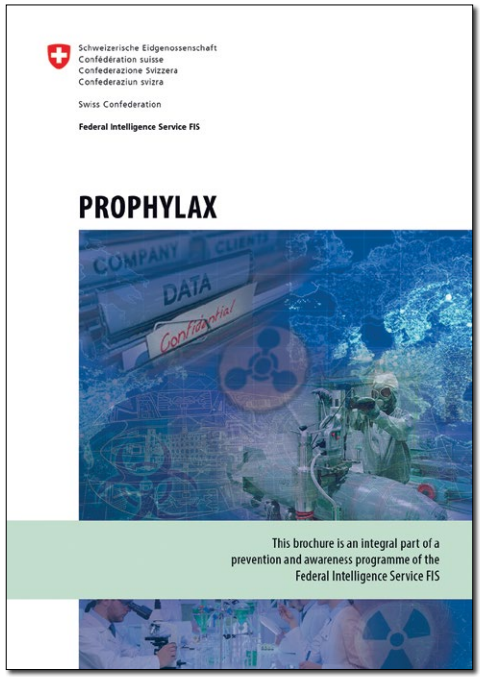
Switzerland remains key for state actors

As far as Switzerland is concerned, no major changes are to be expected. Geneva remains the geographical hotspot for illegal intelligence in Switzerland, because numerous international organisations, diplomatic missions, non-governmental organisations, financial institutions and trading companies are based there. However, other major Swiss cities will also remain relevant in terms of illegal intelligence.

The targets of espionage in Switzerland will essentially remain the same. In domains, where developments make it seem worthwhile, increased targeting of Swiss-based companies is to be expected. This will affect, for example, companies in the fields of information technology, chemical and pharmaceutical technology, mobility, renewable energies and armament.

Whether and how individuals who have sought refuge in Switzerland are spied upon, and the degree of pressure that is exerted on them, will depend largely on developments in their respective states of origin. For refugees from Asia and Africa, neither the scale of the surveillance nor the pressure will diminish. Leading figures

from diaspora communities, fled journalists and politicians as well as representatives of groups and organisations that are classified as a threat in the state of origin, will continue to be particularly targeted.



The brochure on the 'Prophylax' prevention and awareness-raising campaign is available on the Internet

www.vbs.admin.ch (EN / Documents and publications / Publications / Prophylax)

Intelligence services – instruments serving a variety of purposes | Many states do not use their intelligence services merely for gathering and analysing information and disseminating the findings. Military intelligence services as well as civilian internal and foreign intelligence services are assigned additional tasks. They are to help shape security policy and to exert covert political influence abroad, which may even go as far as overthrowing a government. They are to procure goods that are difficult to obtain at home or goods that are subject to sanctions. They are to abduct individuals or to carry out acts of sabotage, attacks, targeted killings or covert military actions against political and military opponents.

Such actions can serve several purposes simultaneously. For example, the targeted killing of a terrorist or regime critic is, from the viewpoint of the party sponsoring the killing, designed not only to eliminate a threat but also to deter or intimidate others. If this is carried out abroad, the sponsor is thus sounding out the political limits and the capabilities of the security and law enforcement authorities in the state concerned.

The leading actors engaging in activities that go beyond the gathering, analysis and provision of information include not only autocratic states, but also constitutional democracies; most are involved in military conflicts.

In such cases, some actors will operate under a false flag, not just in conflict areas but also in states at peace. Due to the covert way in which they operate, it will remain difficult to identify the perpetrators and the sponsors of such actions, if indeed they are even recognised as such. It is therefore also difficult to determine these actions' scale. Furthermore, intelligence services will learn from their errors and seek to avoid these in future actions.

Switzerland as a secondary theatre for such activities | By global standards and generally speaking, Switzerland is not very much affected by intelligence activities other than espionage. No acts of sabotage, attacks, abductions or targeted killings by foreign intelligence services have been recorded in Switzerland in recent years. There is, however, information indicating harassment, threats and intimidation, suspected to emanate from foreign agencies, directed against individuals who have fled to Switzerland as refugees. For this reason – and in the light of specific incidents in neighbouring states and in other European countries – acts of violence by foreign intelligence services also remain a possibility in Switzerland.

Networks for the procurement of goods in Switzerland and in other European states also have branches in Switzerland. Some foreign intelligence services are involved in covert and unwanted influencing operations in Switzerland. Mem-

bers of the respective diaspora community and Swiss organisations, as well as media representatives, are among those made use of to this end. FIS assesses the effect of such operations in Switzerland currently as being minimal.

Short film 'Im Visier' on the subject of 'industrial espionage in Switzerland'

Available on the internet (in German with French and Italian subtitles):

www.vbs.admin.ch (Weitere Themen / Nachrichtenbeschaffung / Wirtschaftsspionage)

www.vbs.admin.ch (Autres thèmes / Recherche de renseignements / Espionnage économique)

www.vbs.admin.ch (Altre tematiche / Acquisizione di informazioni / Spionaggio economico)

Threat to critical infrastructure

What does the FIS see?

Increased vulnerability of the information infrastructure

The advance of digitalisation in the economy, in society and in public institutions is inexorable. Digitalisation is underpinned and is being driven forward by technological development, which is constantly opening up new possible applications, and by the efficiency gains promised by digital solutions. It is all-embracing and has become an unstoppable force, because without it linking up to the growing number of areas and processes that have already been digitalised is no longer possible.

Critical infrastructure operators across all sectors are under particular pressure to digitalise. As a result, analogue services are gradually being cut back. The energy market is also investing in smart metering systems and power grids, and industrial control systems are being both operated and maintained remotely. In health care, the number of medical devices is increasing, as are technological advances including analytical devices which patients wear and operate themselves. Coverage in Switzerland by the latest generation of mobile phone technology (5G) is being extended continuously, and trials are being conducted in a wide range of industries to assess the potential offered by artificial intelligence. In order to avoid being left behind and missing opportunities and to cut costs, new technologies are being introduced rapidly.

Since spring 2020, this long-running trend toward digitalisation has been further accelerated by the measures taken to combat the pandemic. The required restrictions on personal contact have led to increased demand for ways of working together virtually, such as video conferencing. In order to minimise the risks to employees of becoming infected at the workplace or on the way there, a wide range of occupational groups have been provided with remote access to the information and systems relevant to their work, enabling them to work from home. In many cases, technical, physical and organisational risks relating to information security were not fully taken into account – in the search for solutions, rapid availability was the primary deciding factor. However, each new component in company networks and each additional system access option increases the number of vulnerabilities via which networks can be penetrated or systems disrupted.

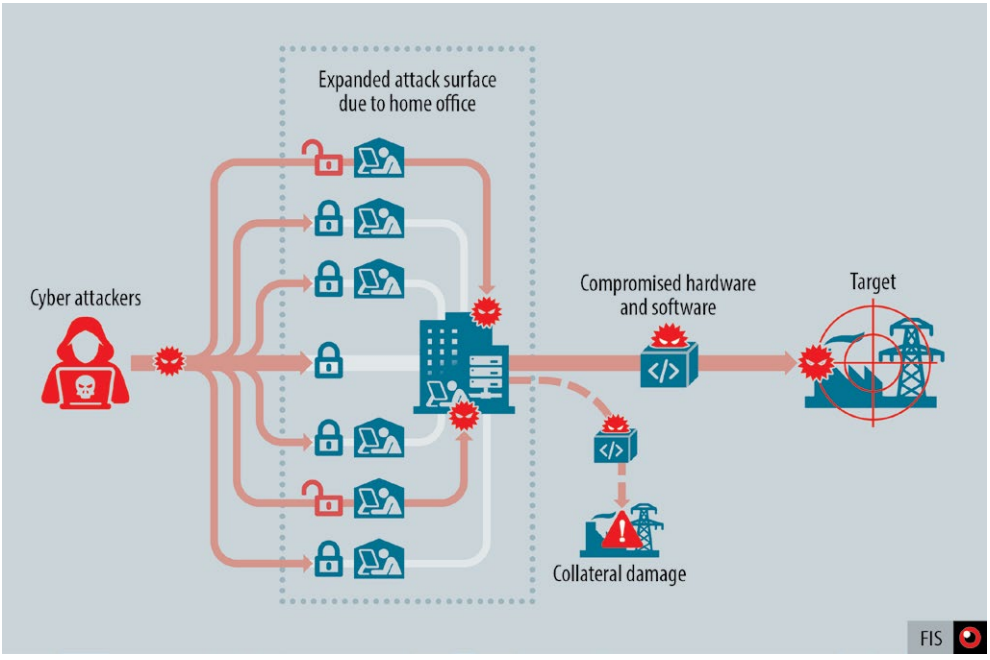
Attacks on suppliers of critical infrastructure

Supply chain attacks continue to occur. Because interdependencies are growing and the security precautions of critical infrastructure operators are improving, companies which provide equipment and specialist services for critical infrastructure operators are becoming the attackers' preferred target. There are numerous such companies in Switzerland, supplying operators in Switzerland and abroad. Their

products are frequently used by multiple operators, and some suppliers have not yet invested enough to be able to guarantee their own security and that of their products. This makes them a rewarding target not only for criminal organisations but also for state-sponsored actors.

In accordance with the national strategy for the protection of Switzerland against cyber risks, Switzerland plans to establish a National Test Institute for Cyber Security (NTC). While the NTC will be able to check key items of equipment, this will be no substitute for the investment which is needed from Swiss suppliers in order to safeguard their own security and thus also that of the operators which are dependent on them. In order to be able to take full advantage of digitalisation, Swiss companies must take greater account of the risks associated with it and of the measures for mitigating these risks. Increasingly, this also applies to companies supplying critical infrastructure operators.

The increased usage of remote access, for example due to home office, expands the attack surface of networks.



What does the FIS expect?

Greater vulnerabilities and more complex supply chains

There will be an increasing move toward digitalisation. If aspects such as functionality and speed of availability are prioritised at the expense of security, this poses a considerable risk. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the installation of digital solutions has been carried out under time pressure, with health protection taking precedence. This time pressure has resulted in insufficient attention being paid to the safeguarding of new functionalities.

System landscapes increasingly comprise products from a diverse range of manufacturers and connections to external resources such as those offered by cloud providers. The vulnerability of critical infrastructure to potential threats is thus increased substantially, both directly and indirectly, for example due to the large number of companies involved in the various supply chains of IT products. Dealing with the changing risk landscape over the next few years will present a formidable challenge for economy, society and state, one that they will have to tackle together.

Diversification and emergence of the crime-as-a-service model

Cyber criminals are continuing to diversify their strategies for maximising profit and are specialising in specific individual aspects. For example, in ransomware attacks the infiltrated system is not simply encrypted: sensitive data is first stolen and then used to blackmail the owner or sold on in the underground market. Each of these steps is performed by a different actor who has specifically mastered and perfected the procedure concerned. The division of labour is being further refined, in criminal circles as elsewhere.

An increasing number of criminal groups, most of them financially motivated, are offering access to third-party networks, stolen information and technical expertise as a de-facto service to third parties. The developments in the area of digitalisation described above, together with increasingly complex supply chains, are thus opening up new areas in which cyber criminals can operate. Such offers may also be of interest to state actors, which makes it more difficult to identify perpetrators and trace attacks, thus hampering the tracing of state attacks.

Sunburst: international attack via the supply chain

Attacks via the supply chain, in which software developers and suppliers are exploited as attack vectors, are not a new phenomenon. This method has been known since at least 2011, when the Stuxnet malware was planted via a supplier in an Iranian uranium enrichment facility. Since then, similar international-scale incidents have occurred on a regular basis: in 2017, Ukrainian tax accounting software was compromised, leading to the outbreak of NotPetya, an encryption trojan which caused damage around the world. The same year saw the detection of the espionage operation Cloudhopper, in which customer data was stolen via various IT service providers, in particular cloud service providers. In 2019, campaigns following a similar pattern targeted users of ccleaner software and Asus devices.

In December 2020, the cyber espionage campaign Sunburst came to light: the companies Fire Eye, Solarwinds and Microsoft announced that unknown perpetrators had launched an attack on numerous government agencies and companies around the world via the supplier Solarwinds. Solarwinds is a large American supplier of network management systems. In October 2019, the attackers had gained access to its system and integrated malicious code into Orion IT software. The updates to this software published between March and June 2020 were thus compromised, and the malicious code – the Sunburst malware – that was fed in was in this way disseminated widely via an application that was actually legitimate. The update provided the attackers with a means of distributing the malware and thus also with a point of entry to selected victims.

The damage has been immense. Solarwinds indicated that in total around 18,000 of its 300,000 customers had downloaded the update. This does not mean that the perpetrators have been spying on all these customers. Rather, the attackers proceeded selectively and actively continued with the attack only on those victims who were of interest to them.

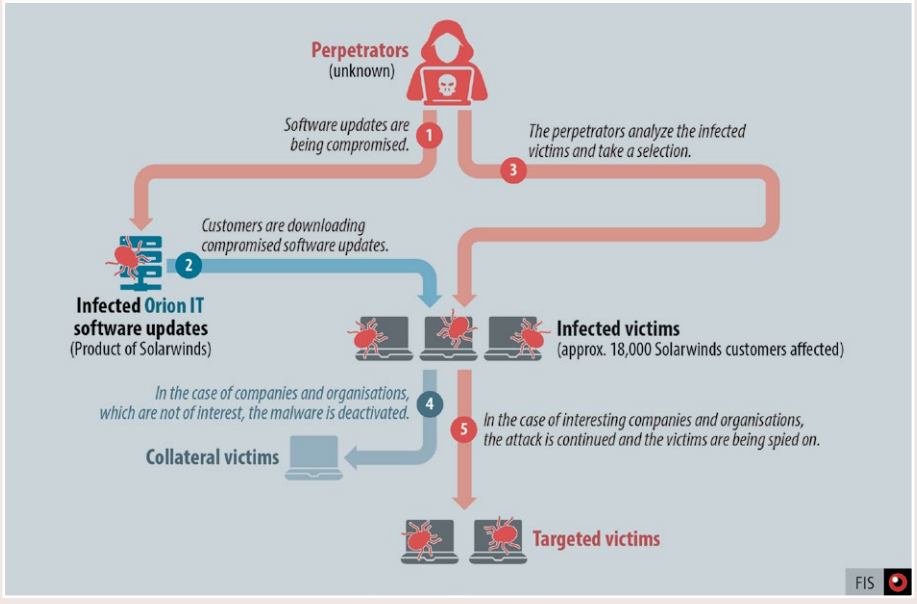
There are initial indications that the perpetrators have hacked even more companies and used their IT products as entry vectors for their campaign, which seems to have been designed with espionage and not sabotage in mind. Since the detection of the attack, investigations and system clean-ups have been carried out in the USA and in numerous other states. In view of the scale and complexity of the campaign, the FIS is proceeding on the assumption that it will be a long time before reliable statements can be made about the scale of the attack and the extent of the damage.

Several Swiss companies were among those which downloaded the compromised update and had their systems infected with Sunburst in this way. However,

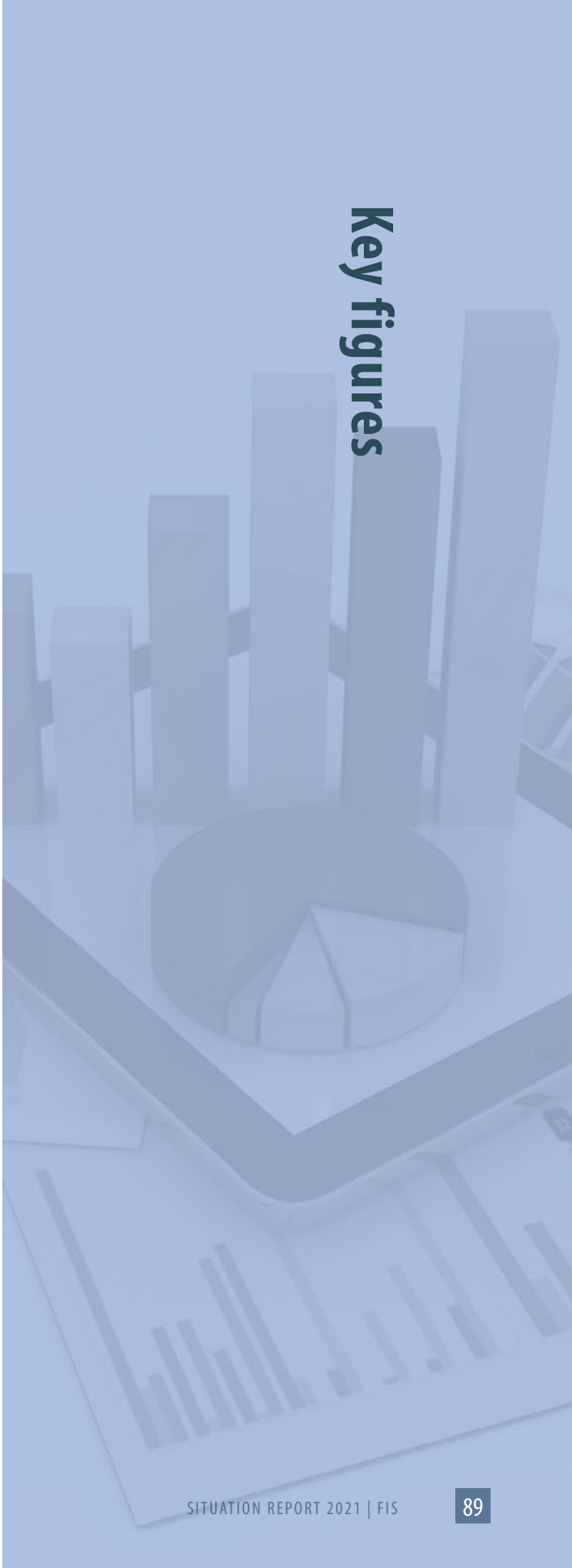
there are as yet no signs to suggest that the perpetrators have taken the attack on Swiss companies further. They are believed to have been chance victims of a cyber attack that was targeted primarily against others.

There is every reason to assume that such attacks will take place again in future. The potential damage which a successful compromising attack can do, particularly with widely used products and market-leading manufacturers, is enormous. Switzerland is highly interconnected, and critical infrastructure operators purchase a wide variety of digital services and products. Complex supply chains and accelerated digitalisation processes also threaten critical infrastructure and increase the risk of falling victim to an attack via the supply chain.

The supply chain attack with compromised software updates from Solarwinds



Key figures



Structure, staffing and finances

At the end of 2020, the FIS had 159 female and 239 male employees, corresponding to a total of 363 full-time positions. The FIS attaches particular importance to family-friendliness, and in 2016, it was one of the first federal offices to be certified as a particularly family-friendly employer. The breakdown of employees by first language was as follows: almost three-quarters German-speaking, just over a fifth French-speaking, around four per cent Italian-speaking and one per cent Romansh-speaking.

The expenditures of cantons for their intelligence services were compensated with CHF 18 million; the FIS's expenditure on personnel amounted to CHF 61.9 million, and expenditure on materials and operating expenses amounted to CHF 23.8 million.

International cooperation

The FIS cooperates with foreign authorities that perform duties as defined by the Intelligence Service Act (ISA). To this end, the FIS also represents Switzerland in international bodies. Specifically, the FIS exchanges intelligence with over a hundred partner services from various states and with international organisations, including the competent institutions at the UN and the EU dealing with security issues. The FIS currently receives around 13,500 messages a year from foreign partner services and sends around 6,000 messages a year to foreign partner services.

Information and storage systems

In 2020, a total of 572 requests for information based on Art. 63 ISA and Art. 8 Data Protection Act were received. 488 applicants received a two-part response: firstly, the FIS provided them with complete information in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and secondly, it deferred the response regarding the systems in accordance with Art. 63 (2) ISA (Deferral due to non-recording, secrecy interests, third-party interests). In 17 cases, the FIS exceptionally provided the applicants, without prejudice to secrecy interests and the protection of third parties in relation to all the systems, with complete information on whether it had processed data on them, and if so what data. In 16 cases, the formal requirements (such as the provision of proof of identity) for the processing of an application were not met, despite reminders being issued. These applications could therefore not be processed. At the end of 2020, 51 requests for information were still undergoing processing.

In 2020, the FIS also received 18 requests for access under the Freedom of Information Act.

Situation assessments

The FIS presents its situation report on Switzerland's security annually. This contains the situation radar, the classified version of which is used on a monthly basis by the Security Core Group for assessing the threat situation and for setting priorities. Recipients of the FIS's situation assessments include the Federal Council, as well as other political decision-makers and competent authorities at the federal and cantonal levels, military decision-makers and the law enforcement agencies. The FIS provides them, either when requested or on its own initiative, with periodic, ad hoc or scheduled information and findings, either in written or verbal form, covering all areas of the ISA and the FIS's classified mission statement. For example, in 2020 the FIS once again supported the cantons with a platform for intelligence sharing managed from its Federal Situation Centre (World Economic Forum Davos).

Reports to be used in criminal and administrative proceedings

The FIS provides unclassified information to the competent authorities for use in criminal or administrative proceedings. In 2020, for example, it delivered 25 official reports to the Office of the Attorney General, 27 to other federal authorities such as the Federal Office of Police, the State Secretariat for Migration or the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, and two to cantonal authorities (excluding supplements to existing official reports). 34 of these reports were related to terrorism, three to illegal intelligence, seven reports each to proliferation and violent extremism, and three were not dedicated exclusively to any of these topics.

Measures

Counterterrorism | The FIS regularly publishes figures relating to counterterrorism – individuals assessed as posing a risk, jihad-motivated travellers, jihad monitoring – on its website.

www.vbs.admin.ch (Weitere Themen / Nachrichtenbeschaffung / Terrorismus) – available in German, French and Italian

The Prophylax awareness-raising programme | The FIS, together with the cantons, continued its programmes for raising awareness of illegal activities relating to espionage and to proliferation: the Prophylax awareness-raising programme and the Technopol awareness-raising module for institutions of higher education, as part of which companies, universities and research institutes, as well as federal offices, are contacted. In 2020, 39 awareness briefings were held in the context of the Prophylax programme and 14 as part of the Technopol programme. In addition, 13 awareness-raising sessions were conducted.

www.vbs.admin.ch (Weitere Themen / Nachrichtenbeschaffung / Wirtschaftsspionage) – available in German, French and Italian

Intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation | In cases presenting a particularly serious threat in the areas of terrorism, illegal intelligence, proliferation, attacks on critical infrastructure or the protection of other important national interests as defined under Article 3 ISA, the FIS can use intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation. Such measures are regulated under Article 26 ISA. They must in each case be authorised by the Federal Administrative Court and approved by the head of the DDPS following consultation with the head of the FDFA and the head of the FDJP. The authorisation is valid for a maximum of three months. After the expiry of this period, the FIS can submit a request making an argument for an extension for a maximum of a further three months. The measures are subject to close monitoring by the independent supervisory authority, which oversees intelligence activities and by the Control Delegation.

Authorised and approved measures 2020

Area of activity (Art. 6 ISA)	*Operations*	*Measures*
Terrorism	3	21
Illegal intelligence	1	6
NBC proliferation	0	0
Attacks on critical infrastructure	0	0
Total	**4**	**27**

Individuals affected by these measures in 2020

Category	*Number*
Targets	4
Third persons (as defined under Article 28 ISA)	1
Unknown persons (e.g. only phone number known)	3
Total	**8**

Counting method

- In the case of measures, an authorised and approved extension (which can be granted several times, for a maximum of three months in each case) is counted as a new measure, as it had to be applied for and justified anew in accordance with the proper procedure.
- Operations and individuals affected, on the other hand, are counted only once a year, even where measures have been extended.

Cable communication intelligence | The Intelligence Service Act has also given the FIS the powers to conduct cable communication intelligence in order to gather information about security-relevant events abroad (Article 39 ff. ISA). As the purpose of cable communication intelligence is to gather information about other countries, it is not designed to be used as a domestic intelligence-gathering measure, requiring authorisation. However, cable communication intelligence can be conducted only with the obligation of Swiss telecommunications service providers to forward relevant signals to the Swiss Army's Centre for Electronic Operations. The ISA therefore provides under Article 40 f. an authorisation and approval procedure for orders to the providers, which is similar to that for intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation. At the end of 2020, two cable communication intelligence orders were being processed.

Radio communication intelligence | Radio communication intelligence is also directed at foreign countries (Article 38 ISA), which means that only radio systems located abroad may be recorded. In practice, this relates primarily to telecommunication satellites and short-wave transmitters. In contrast to cable communication intelligence, radio communication intelligence is not subject to authorisation, because in radio communication intelligence, it is not necessary to oblige telecommunications service providers to record data. At the end of 2020, 33 radio communication intelligence orders were being processed.

Screenings by the Foreign citizens' service and requests for entry bans | In 2020, the FIS's Foreign citizens' service screened 3,752 profiles for threats to internal security (accreditation of diplomats and international officials or visa applications and applications for work and residence permits required under the law on foreign nationals). The FIS recommended the refusal of one residence permit application. The FIS also screened 861 asylum dossiers for threats to the internal security of Switzerland. In 12 cases it identified a security risk. Of the 37,140 applications for naturalisation screened by the FIS in accordance with the ISA, it recommended refusal of the naturalisation application or raised security concerns in four cases. As part of the Schengen visa consultation procedure called Vision, the FIS screened 163,792 records for a threat to Switzerland's internal security, but did not recommend refusal in any of the cases. In addition, the FIS screened the API (Advance Passenger Information) data for 815,647 individuals on 6,218 flights. API data that does not yield any matches with the data held by the FIS is deleted after a processing

period of 96 hours. The FIS also submitted requests for the issue of 157 entry bans to fedpol (86 were issued, 63 were still being processed at the end of the year and 8 requests were rejected).

Personnel security screening | In the context of personnel security screenings, the FIS conducted 2,006 verifications abroad and undertook 150 in-depth assessments of individuals recorded in its information and storage systems on behalf of the national specialist unit for personnel security screening of the DDPS's information security and facility protection office and the Federal Chancellery.

List of abbreviations

API	Advance Passenger Information
AU	African Union
EU	European Union
ISA	Intelligence Service Act
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
New START treaty	New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
NTC	National Test Institute for Cyber Security
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
UN	United Nations
WEF	World Economic Forum

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