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Federal Intelligence Service FIS

SWITZERLAND'S SECURITY

Situation Report 2018
of the Federal Intelligence Service FIS

Switzerland's Security 2018

Table of contents

The new Intelligence Service Act 'in action'! 5

The situation report in brief 7

Strategic environment 13

Focus: Russia 23

Jihadist and ethno-nationalist terrorism and violent extremism 31

Right-wing and left-wing extremism 55

Proliferation 69

Illegal intelligence 75

Intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation 87

List of abbreviations 91

The new Intelligence Service Act 'in action'!

The new Intelligence Service Act has been in force since 1 September 2017. It gives the Federal Intelligence Service (FIS) new instruments for countering the threats to Switzerland's internal and external security. The situation radar shows that these new tools are needed now more than ever.

For example, the radar indicates that Switzerland's security policy has to remain focussed on the ongoing heightened terrorist threat and the threat in cyberspace (especially from espionage). The latter poses an enormous challenge for Switzerland, as elsewhere. Espionage using information and communications technology, in particular, is now taking place on a large scale in our country. In 2017, we have seen yet another state, North Korea, acquire the means to threaten Switzerland with nuclear weapons from within its territory. This fact, together with the use of chemical weapons in Syria and of chemical agents against a Russian ex-spy and his daughter in the UK, underlines how important it is that efforts to counter proliferation activities should not be relaxed. Relations between Russia and the transatlantic West are steadily deteriorating: In all likelihood, this development, which is relevant to Switzerland's security policy, has not yet reached its lowest point. The inclusion of influence operations in the situation radar demonstrates that Switzerland – be it the country's decision-makers or the population at large – has not remained untouched by this phenomenon.

Switzerland is still a relatively safe country, not least due to the continuing efforts of our security authorities at federal and cantonal level. In order for our country to be able to maintain its security, it is essential that we continue to make consistent and targeted use of the range of preventive and punitive measures available to us. As explained in an appendix to this situation report, since 1 September 2017 the FIS has been actively employing the intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation which are provided for, subject to strict conditions, in the Intelligence Service Act. For example, by the end of 2017 the FIS had opened four operations (cases), as part of which, following authorisation from the relevant political and judicial authorities, it had successfully used a total of 40 such measures. The fact that two of these operations related to terrorism and two to counterespionage shows that use of the new tools is being focussed on the most serious threats.

The publication of these figures demonstrates the increasing transparency of the FIS. While core aspects of intelligence work will always remain secret, the publication of certain key figures relating to the service's work – as is also planned for the 2019 annual report – can only strengthen public confidence in this vital security instrument.

Federal Department of Defence,
Civil Protection and Sport DDPS

Guy Parmelin
Federal Councillor

The situation report in brief

The challenges facing the security agencies have been growing in complexity for years. The FIS's situation radar tool is one of the instruments that offer guidance for Switzerland's security policy and provides Switzerland's inhabitants with an outline of the key issues from an intelligence viewpoint.

- Europe remains under exceptional strain due to internal and external crises. Recently, questions have also been raised about the capability of NATO to act effectively as the foundation of the security order in Europe. The USA has intensified the debate about burden sharing. Alliance member Turkey has ambitions to shape its strategic environment between the EU/NATO, Russia and the Middle East independently of Western ideas of order. Fundamental uncertainty and thus reduced predictability will shape Switzerland's strategic environment for a long time to come.

- Russia is currently more politically stable, economically robust and militarily capable of action than it has ever been since the fall of the Soviet Union, even though long-term challenges remain. The Russian leadership controls both state and society. Russia, a revanchist power, is seeking to restore the historically and ideologically deeply-rooted Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. Ukraine will continue to be the focus of its ambitions. The steady deterioration of the relationship between Russia and the transatlantic West has in all likelihood not yet reached its lowest point and will also have repercussions for Switzerland.

- The Middle East and North Africa, including the Sahel region, are the scene of numerous armed conflicts. For years, the impact of these conflicts has also been felt in Europe, in the form of migration movements and jihadist terrorism. While 'Islamic State' has lost its state-like structure, as well as the bulk of its territories and its openly operating military units, the terrorist threat in Europe from the jihadist movement will continue to be shaped by 'Islamic State' and individuals and small groups controlled or inspired by it. The threat posed by al-Qaeda persists. 'Islamic State' and former jihadist fighters continue to use migration flows to Europa and Switzerland for their purposes. The terrorist threat in Switzerland remains at a heightened level.

- Migration numbers have fallen since the peak levels of refugees and migrants which presented a major challenge for Europe in 2015, but migration potential and the pressure on Europe remain high. At the moment, this issue is not motivating right-wing or left-wing extremists in Switzerland to engage in any significant action. While right-wing extremists are keeping a lower profile than they have done for decades, the threat from left-wing extremists has become more acute over the last twelve months. A cam-

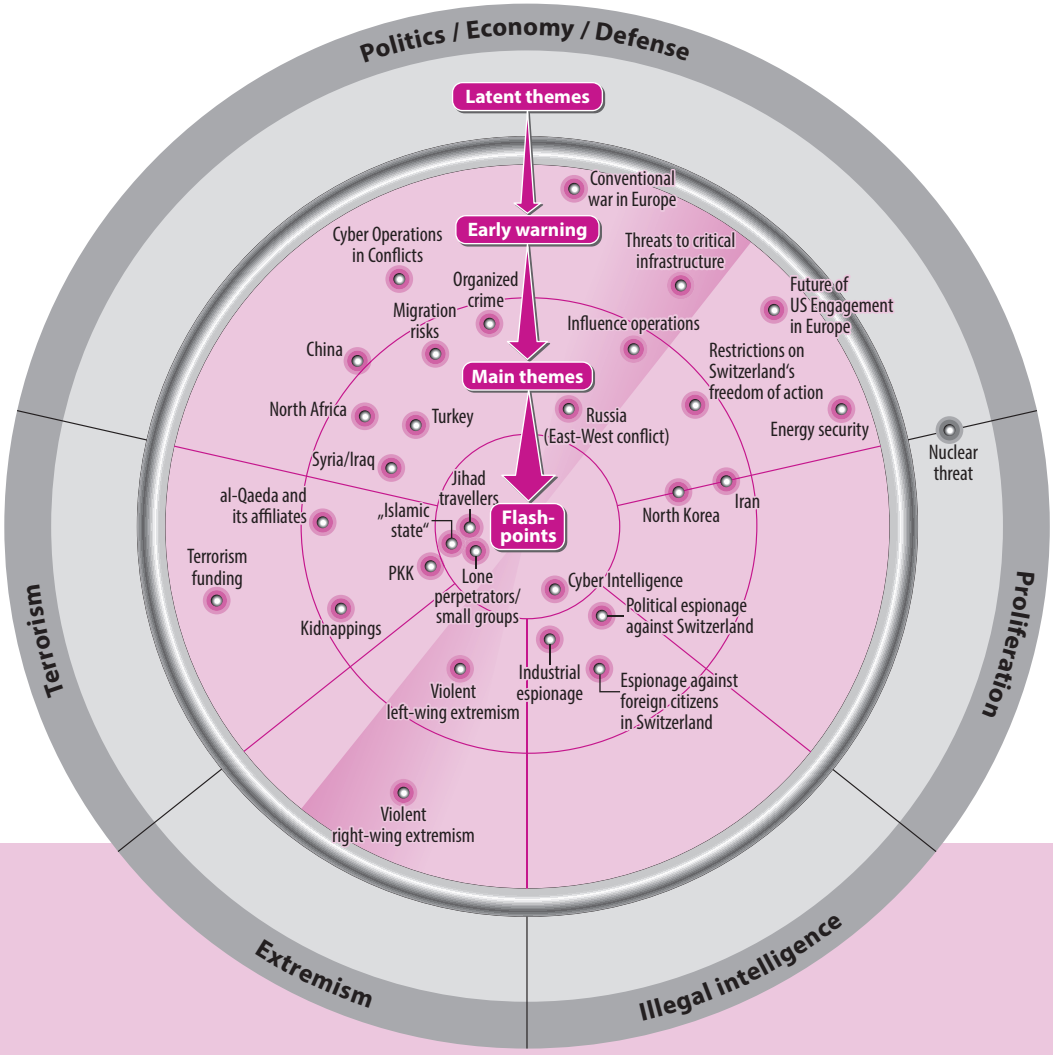
paign against ‘repression’ carried out by the latter in the form of a series of arson attacks led to a significant increase in acts of violence. The high level of aggression against security forces, which has been apparent for some years now, has been manifesting itself with increasing frequency.

- Where proliferation is concerned, terrorist groups are showing interest in obtaining expertise on weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical weapons. The threat is moving closer to Switzerland, as North Korea became the latest state to acquire the means to threaten Switzerland with nuclear weapons in 2017. The nuclear agreement with Iran still stands, although it is under severe pressure from the USA.

- Information of political, economic and military relevance continues to be gathered by means of illegal intelligence. In addition, intelligence services are conducting active operations against their countries' own nationals abroad. Traditional methods go hand in hand with activities in cyberspace – the various forms of illegal intelligence do not compete in any way, rather they complement each other. Access which has been sought and found for the purpose of information gathering can also be used to inflict damage on a state. Acts of sabotage against industrial control systems, which are currently still rare, illustrate this potential. Intelligence service activity and information gained through this play a role in influence operations, with Russia as a prominent actor.

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
Migration risks
Influence operations
China
Restrictions on Switzerland's freedom of action
Main themes
North Africa
Turkey
Russia (East-West conflict)
Energy security
Nuclear threat
Syria/Iraq
Jihad travellers
al-Qaeda and its affiliates
„Islamic state"
Flash-points
North Korea
Iran
Terrorism funding
PKK
Lone perpetrators/ small groups
Cyber Intelligence
Political espionage against Switzerland
Kidnappings
Industrial espionage
Espionage against foreign citizens in Switzerland
Violent left-wing extremism
Violent right-wing extremism
Terrorism
Proliferation
Extremism
Illegal intelligence

Strategic environment

Internal and external crisis situations

Switzerland's strategic environment is still marked by unusually high levels of strain on Europe due to internal and external crisis situations. In the last few years, these crisis situations have been regularly described by the FIS in its situation reports. The Brexit decision has shaken the EU vision to its core and will continue to absorb the EU's energies for years to come. Questions have also repeatedly been raised about the stability of the eurozone and thus also the common currency, and recently, with increasing frequency, about the capability of NATO to act effectively as the foundation of the security order in Europe. At the same time, the periphery of the EU and NATO is under the greatest external pressure it has faced for a generation: in the east from a strengthened and revanchist Russia and in the south from the Middle East and North Africa, where the state order is threatening to disintegrate in some places – with impacts on Europe in the form of migration movements and an increased terror threat, both of which are unsettling populations and placing an extraordinary strain on national and European institutions.

The European order is showing clear cracks

Following the surprising votes for Brexit in the UK and for Donald Trump in the USA, elections in many places in Europe in 2017 confirmed the loss of confidence in the parties of the centre, which have traditionally supported the state and formed the government. In France, the Front National has never been so close to election victory. In Germany, the parties of the grand coalition accounted for not much more than half the seats in the Bundestag. Political forces which are turning their backs on progressive integration as a fundamental idea of the European order now bear governmental responsibility not only in the United Kingdom but also in Greece, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria. These popular votes highlight the extent to which Western political orders have lost the predictability and stability which had characterised them for so long. Long-held political certainties are being questioned and challenged and are beginning to change or are even unravelling. We are only just beginning to get an idea of what will ultimately replace the old certainties. In the wake of a rise in nationalist tendencies, elements of the future might include a return to more national solutions and a narrower definition of European solidarity. As a consequence, Switzerland has entered a prolonged period of fundamental uncertainty and thus reduced predictability in our strategic environment.

The picture painted by election and poll decisions is one which shows the major European institutions in crisis. Although the EU has endured through the challenges of recent years, initiated the search for solutions and the debate about the further evolution of the Union with various proposals, its capability to act effectively is hampered by numerous internal and external crisis situations. Following

the UK's Brexit vote, the EU is now in the middle of the difficult process of redefining its relations with the UK. This process is as complex as was feared, will take more time than both sides would like, and will prolong the uncertainties at the heart of the European order well into the next decade. The Brexit debate will pose fundamental questions for the EU for years to come: if not questions about the continued existence of the institution itself, then about its ability to function as an effective force for order on the European continent and to exert influence at the global level. In any case, there is as yet no sign of the 'salutary shock' anticipated by some, which would provide the political basis to lend fresh impetus to the renewal of the EU. Initial decisions on new joint efforts in the field of European defence still have to pass the test of implementation or will once again prove to be an unfulfilled ambition. The prospect of a multi-speed EU may seem politically desirable as a new vision in some places, but would accentuate the fault lines between a dominant core and a periphery in economic and social difficulties. The movement toward integration between the old member states in the west and the new ones in the east is threatening to come to a halt or even to go into reverse, a development that will be an impediment both to the EU and to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe as organizations relevant for security in Europe. Fault lines in our immediate environment – between north and south, between east and west, between core and periphery – will be thrown into sharper relief.

The eurozone, and with it the common currency, are also in crisis, even if the public is less aware of this. The level of government debt, which has increased sharply since the international financial crisis of 2007/2008, and a fragile banking system, are still leading to concerns about financial stability and even about the survival of the euro. The eurozone as an institution has survived the years of severe crisis surrounding painful economic reforms in countries on the periphery. However, even under the favourable conditions of an expansionary monetary policy, large European economies such as those of France and Italy have not yet been sufficiently reformed and consolidated. These are still of crucial importance to the economic and political future of the continent. The inability to formulate a convincing common way forward in order to overcome the debt crisis across the entire eurozone is one of the reasons for the political crisis. It is undermining not only the European institutions, but also those of the nation states that make up the EU: There is a diminishing political will in the national decision-making bodies to find pan-European solutions, and even national problem-solving mechanisms are coming under pressure from autonomist, separatist and populist movements. Western European states generally have constitutional systems based on stable institutional foundations that can withstand this pressure better and for longer than others. In Central European countries, by contrast, these may fail.

Even NATO, the security cornerstone of the European order, is showing distinct symptoms of crisis. The alliance is having to deal simulta-

neously with a burden-sharing debate that has been intensified by the USA and with recurring tensions in its relations with its member state Turkey. Following Presidential candidate Trump's repeated and trenchant expression of doubts about the benefits of NATO, the US administration has nonetheless reaffirmed its commitment and expressly acknowledged its obligation to provide assistance in the event of an attack (Art. 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty). However, it has not succeeded in dispelling fundamental doubts about President Trump's transatlantic commitment. In addition, NATO's cohesion and capacity to act is increasingly being put to the test by Turkey. The gradual repression of democratic and constitutional norms is only one aspect of broader developments in that country. Across the board, Turkey is adopting an assertive stance in distinct contrast to the Western-dominated European order. In terms of security and military policy, it is also asserting itself decisively as a flexible regional power between the EU/NATO, Russia and the Middle East. Its relationship with Europe and also with the USA is under considerable strain in key areas such as internal security and counter-terrorism (prosecution of actual and alleged government opponents in Europe and the USA), regional policy (Kurdish question) and armaments policy (procurement projects in collaboration with Russia). NATO, confronted with these internal challenges, thus finds itself in the midst of a fundamental debate about its ability to withstand crisis, its political will and capability to meet mutual defense commitments on the European continent and its capability to deter external challenges, all of which have been ascribed to it for decades by its rivals and on which the current security order in Europe largely depends.

Growing pressure from the east

At the same time, external pressure on Europe is increasing. To the east, the Russian state has been reinvigorated under President Putin's leadership. It is currently more politically stable, economically robust and militarily capable than it has ever been since the fall of the Soviet

Union, even if long-term challenges remain, especially about the future viability of the Russian model. For the first time since 2013, the FIS situation report is therefore once again focussing on developments in Russia. The Russian leadership controls the state via a vast apparatus of government agencies vested with extensive powers to control the domestic situation, the economy and society. This apparatus is mostly led by close associates of the president with a proven personal loyalty to Putin. With this power apparatus consolidated internally and with a robust economy, which has continued to ensure the state's financing despite the international financial crisis, the collapse of oil prices and the imposition of sanctions, the Russian leadership is now working to restore the historically and ideologically deeply-rooted Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. Growing Russian pressure in this area has already led to military escalation twice in recent years: in 2008 in Georgia and in 2014 in Ukraine, wars that have extended a chain of de facto Russian military outposts in parts of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Russia's leverage in Europe is not limited to military instruments. it also includes economic influence by legal and criminal means and professionalised propaganda campaigns as well as attacks in cyberspace. This exertion of Russian influence extends far beyond Eastern Europe.

Europe, preoccupied with its many and varied problems and once again thinking in increasingly national or even subnational categories, is struggling to deal with this pressure and to find common European and international answers. In all probability, relations with Russia have not yet reached their lowest point. American-Russian relations remain at a dangerously low level. Based on the trend in recent years, further polarisation and militarisation as well as the establishment of new demarcation lines across Europe must be reckoned with, a process that – before it can possibly have a stabilising effect – carries a considerable risk of conflicts arising in areas where Western and Russian interests have not been demarcated.

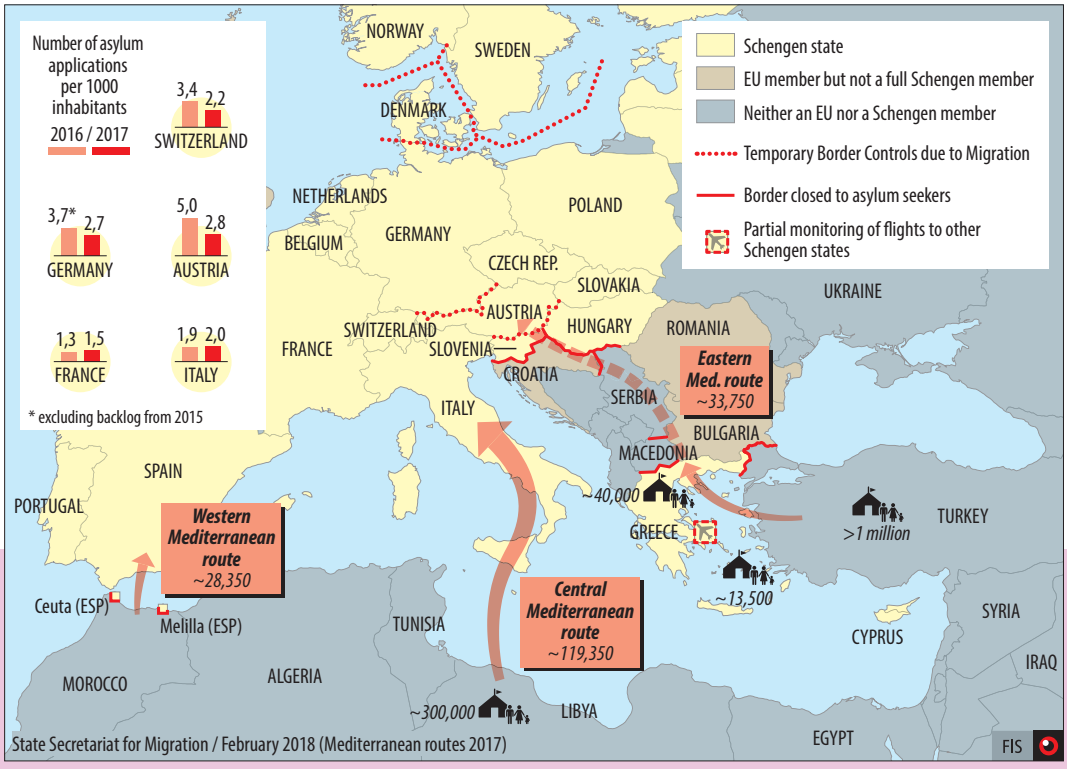
After the end of the Cold War, the armed forces of European states greatly reduced their national and alliance defence capabilities. In parallel, the US also cut its military presence in Europe significantly. While Russia's military resurgence is now already well advanced, corresponding measures by the West have so far failed to keep pace with this development. In an escalating crisis, Russia could therefore use military means to create facts on the ground along the Eastern border of NATO without the West currently being in a position to prevent it. The establishment of the status quo ante would then only be possible by further escalating the conflict. Although the FIS does not currently consider it likely that the situation will evolve along these lines, the risk that interstate conflicts will again be resolved by military means has increased in Europe, too.

The conflict with Russia is not a temporary phenomenon, but a change with lasting effects in Switzerland's strategic environment. A crisis in this area between East and West – whether above or below the threshold of war – could, without much advance warning, become a ma-

jor challenge to Europe's security institutions, in which the goodwill between member states has been eroded by a series of overlapping internal crises, but whose stability since the Second World War has been one of the foundations of Swiss security and defence policy.

Growing pressure from the Mediterranean region

Pressure on Europe has also been increasing for a number of years in the eastern and southern Mediterranean regions. The Middle East and North Africa and the adjacent Sahel region continue to be the scene of complex and prolonged hostilities that are devastating for the governmental structures and the populations. Following the losses of its strongholds of Mosul and Raqqa in 2017, 'Islamic State' has lost the proto-state structure of its caliphate in Iraq and Syria and is turning back into a terrorist organisation that aims to continue its fight through clandestine structures operating underground. In Syria, Russian military intervention has saved President Bashar al-Assad's regime from collapse. Years of fierce battles for the commercial and population centres have not only left a the country devastated by war, but also a regime with greatly reduced capabilities to act as a force for order. In the next phase of the conflict, it is likely that negotiations about a political solution will gradually take on increasing importance, and for many actors the aim here will be to convert military gains into political influence. The country's old political order has been severely damaged, and the state's ability to ever again establish lasting control over the entire country has been called into question. In Iraq, Yemen, Libya and Mali, too, the loss of state control across large areas will continue to cause serious problems for years to come. This challenge to the ruling order and the resulting power-political shifts are also fuelling the old rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia. And there is no sign of a politi-



cal solution in Palestine. Overall, the ongoing conflicts are creating a complex series of fractures right across the whole region, which is in a state of great turmoil and has not yet seen the end of the upheavals.

Europe finally started feeling the effects of these crises in 2015 in the form of jihadist terrorism and the arrival of huge flows of refugees and migrants. The fierce battles for cities in Iraq and Syria are provoking acute humanitarian emergencies, but also highlight the long-term effects of the destruction of social and state structures in the countries affected. It is not clear at present whether there is any chance that the partially collapsed state order in the region can be restored. For the time being, the factors driving jihadist terrorism and migration movements to Europe thus continue to exert their effect. In 2017, the jihadist threat to Europe manifested itself in a series of attacks, in Istanbul, St. Petersburg, Paris, Manchester, London and Barcelona, and this threat will continue after 'Islamic State''s military defeats in Syria and Iraq. Overall migration movements to Europe are below the level of the record year of 2015 but remain high and could once again increase strongly at any time. The EU's agreement with Turkey, under which Turkey takes back migrants who have illegally entered Greece via its territory, is still in force but remains fragile. New measures in the seas between Libya and Italy have also led to reduced migration movements on the central Mediterranean route since mid-2017, but the prospects for the future are uncertain.

In the light of this pressure from the eastern and southern Mediterranean region, Europe's relations with Turkey – a NATO member and a key partner in managing migration flows and curbing the terrorist threat – remain vital. In April 2017, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won the referendum he had long sought on transforming Turkey's political system into a presidential one. He has thus succeeded in strengthening his control over Turkey's institutions since the coup attempt of summer 2016, and in paving the way for autocratic, socially conservative rule and for the accelerated de-

velopment of Turkey into an assertive regional power. Turkey perceives the turmoil in Syria and Iraq as a threat to its core national security interests, particularly in the light of the proclamation of Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria, backed by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Turkey is responding to Europe in an increasingly assertive and decisive way and by using all available resources of state power. The gradual repression of democratic and constitutional norms is one aspect of a broader development. Turkey has ambitions to shape its strategic environment between Europe, Russia and the Middle East independently of Western ideas of order, but is acting circumspectly, aware that it cannot sacrifice strategic relations with the West. While negotiations with the EU on the future shape of strategic relations have not been formally terminated, tensions with Europe are increasing. The reasons for this include the exploitation of widely entrenched Turkish nationalism and action against real and alleged opponents of the government, not only in Turkey but also in Europe. After decades of prospects of a partnership developing between Turkey and Europe, relations have reached a critical point where cooperation on migration and counter-terrorism issues as well as NATO's cohesion and operational capability on its south-eastern borders are at stake.

Switzerland can not remain immune to the risks caused by the difficult and protracted transformation processes taking place in the Middle East and North Africa. Migration from the crisis areas, especially migration to Europe via Libya, has become one of the two greatest and most pressing challenges, due to its potential consequences for security policy. Europe is working to contain and manage the consequences of the crisis situation, as without any imminent prospect of stabilisation in the region, where the disintegration of systems of government does not yet appear to have reached its lowest point, migration pressure on Europe is set to continue at a high level for years to come, which will provide a further boost for nationalist parties. The other major challenge is to tackle the increased threat of terrorism from the region. The phenomenon of jihad-motivated travel, above all the issue of returnees, remains a serious security problem for Western states. Switzerland is among those 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 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.

Focus: Russia

The Russian leadership controls the state via a vast apparatus of government agencies vested with extensive powers to control the domestic situation, the economy and society. This apparatus is mostly led by close associates of the president with a proven personal loyalty to Putin. With this power apparatus consolidated internally, the Russian leadership is now working to restore the historically and ideologically deeply-rooted Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. The three Baltic states

of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, members of NATO and the EU since 2004, are already under considerable pressure from Russia, and this will probably increase still further in the years to come.

Jihadist and ethno-nationalist terrorism and violent extremism

The terrorist threat in Europe and Switzerland comes primarily from the jihadist movement and its two main actors, 'Islamic State' and al-Qaeda. 'Islamic State' and the individuals and small groups controlled or inspired by it continue to be the dominant threat. The threat posed by al-Qaeda persists. In Switzerland, the terrorist threat remains at a heightened level. Swiss nationals could also fall victim to kidnappings or attacks by terrorists in many places abroad.

Ethno-nationalist terrorism and violent extremism remain relevant to the threat situation in Switzerland. The PKK, in particular, has the capacity to mobilise its supporters in Western Europe to take part in coordinated rallies and campaigns at short notice. This could lead to violence, particularly if Kurdish and Turkish nationalist groups were to come into contact with one another.

Right-wing and left-wing extremism

The potential for violence in right-wing extremist circles remains unchanged, while in left-wing extremist circles it has increased; as far as left-wing extremism is concerned, the situation has become more acute. Violence motivated by left-wing extremism is directed not only against property, but also against those perceived as right-wing extremists and, especially during police operations, against the security forces. When using violence, left-wing extremists often display extreme aggression. They are prepared to run the risk of injuring or killing the persons they attack, and in some cases this is even their aim. Even leaving such confrontations out of the equation, an increased number of acts of violence motivated by left-wing extremism were observed in the year under review. At the same time, there was also an increase in the intensity of the forms of violence resorted to. Left-wing extremists maintain and exploit their links with violent left-wing extremist groups abroad. Right-wing extremists are continuing to keep a low profile. Developments regarding asylum and migration have also contributed to the calm situation in this area – but the potential for violence in right-wing extremist circles, especially relating to asylum and migration, remains.

Arson attack on the Police and Justice Centre construction site in Zurich; July 2017

Proliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and the goods necessary for their production continues to pose a threat to security in many regions of the world. Switzerland, as a major exporter of dual-use goods, has a particular responsibility here to work to prevent proliferation. The implementation of the framework agreement with Iran continued in 2017, but progress toward the normalisation of economic relations is still hesitant. Developments in North Korea's weapons of mass destruction programmes have maintained their momentum. The country's proliferation activities are moving beyond the regional context and becoming a global threat. This has changed the rules of the game for dealing with an illegitimate nuclear weapons programme outside the recognised nuclear-weapon states. Chemical weapons were used in Syria again in 2017. Terrorist groups are showing a clear interest in obtaining expertise on weapons of mass destruction; terrorist groups have increased their capabilities to use chemical weapons, in particular. The threat posed by proliferation is also drawing closer to Switzerland.

Illegal intelligence

Illegal intelligence serves the interests of states and in some cases also the private interests of influential persons in these states. Conventional illegal intelligence is a set of long-established practices, which for years now have been supplemented by cyber espionage tools. It can be assumed that there is a constant need to procure and update information, occasionally accentuated by circumstances in which more specific or more detailed information is required. Information is needed in the political, economic and military spheres. Espionage does not just violate the sovereignty of the states in which or against which it is conducted: the data outflow causes direct or indirect damage, members of diaspora communities under surveillance 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.

Focus: Russia

Internal consolidation

Under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, Russia has been steadily growing in strength and confidence, in domestic as well as foreign affairs, for nearly two decades. Putin's re-election as president creates the conditions for this trend to continue over the next few years. Putin and his regime need domestic stability and continuity in order to be able to pursue an accelerated foreign policy strategy aimed at restoring Russia's role as a major power on the international stage. In order to stay in power, Putin and his cronies from St. Petersburg control Russia's domestic political processes and its economy. Key to this control are the so-called power ministries, the most important state agencies for protecting the regime from internal challenges, in particular, but also from external ones. A selection of these agencies is described below.

Presidential Administration

One of the most important management and control instruments is the Presidential Administration under the direction of Anton Waino. It consists of a large number of advisers and officials who influence Russia's domestic, foreign and economic policy. For example, important laws are drafted in the Presidential Administration before they are subsequently submitted to Parliament to be debated and voted on. This is often only a matter of form. The Presidential Administration also oversees the state media and gives them regular and detailed instructions on which topics to report on and what guidelines to follow.

The key person in the Presidential Administration is its deputy head Sergei Kiriyenko, who was in charge of Putin's recent election campaign. Kiriyenko was Prime Minister for a short time in 1998 under Boris Yeltsin and then for many years Director General of the State Atomic Energy Corporation, Rosatom, of which he remains Chairman of the Board of Directors. Kiriyenko enjoys the support of influential bankers from St. Petersburg and has close links to Putin's immediate circle.

National Guard

In 2016, Putin created a National Guard, which today has more than 300,000 employees, to secure internal control and his personal power. It reports directly to him. The National Guard was, among other things, responsible for security during the presidential elections and, together with other bodies, will also ensure security during the 2018 FIFA World Cup. The National Guard's main tasks are to safeguard public order in Russia and to protect state institutions and communication facilities, as well as combating terrorism and extremism.

The National Guard has a country-wide presence through its seven regional commands, with a particular focus on the North Caucasus. In addition, it has numerous mobile special units in Moscow that can be dispatched to the regions rapidly if required. Its formation was planned far in advance, with the preparatory

work being carried out in Putin's innermost circle.

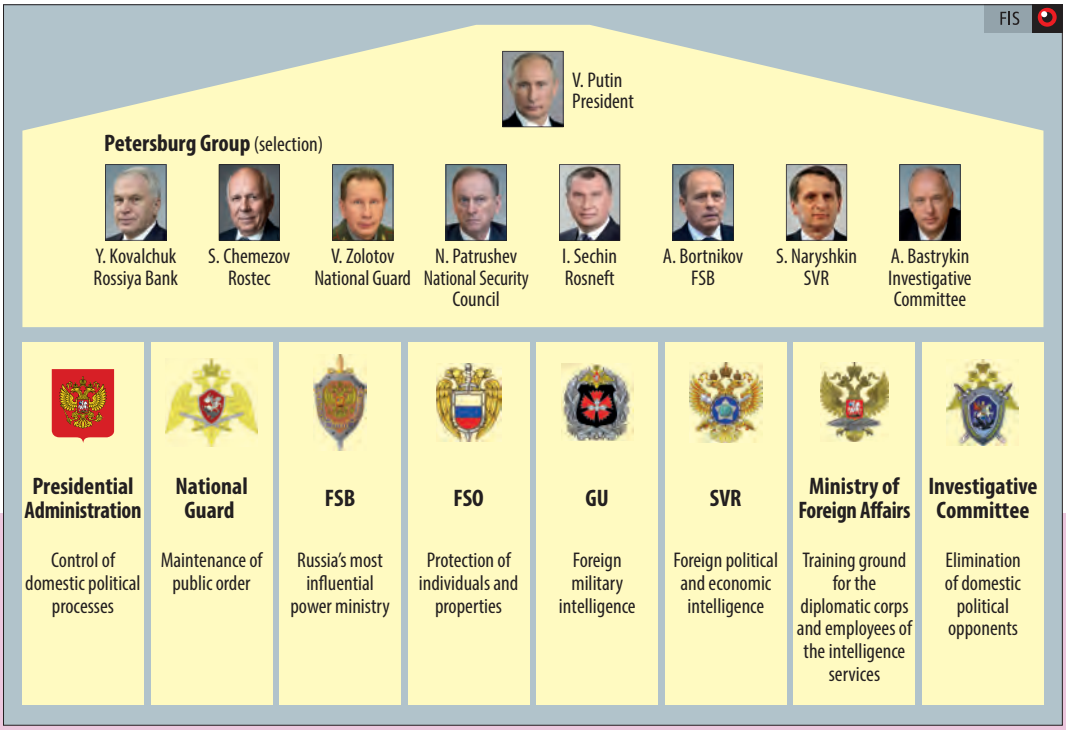
The Director of the National Guard is General Viktor Zolotov, one of the President's closest confidants. From 1999 to 2013, Zolotov was head of the Presidential Security Service, Putin's bodyguard. There is considerable overlap between the competencies of the National Guard and those of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and other power ministries. Among the central security agencies, the National Guard also acts as a counterweight to the FSB.

Federal Security Service

Like the National Guard, the FSB is primarily responsible for Russia's internal security. It employs more than 300,000 people and has regional departments spread across the entire country. Its current leadership is made up of individuals belonging to various factions in Putin's entourage. The FSB is thus not run by a homogeneous leadership, which makes Putin's control over the organisation more difficult. One of its most important departments is that responsible for economic security. This is used by the Kremlin e.g. to control the oligarchs and critical financial flows in Russia. Like most other power ministries, the FSB has its own academy, which is one of the country's most prestigious universities. The FSB can therefore now draw on a younger generation of officers who are also familiar with the latest technologies. One of the areas it covers is surveillance of the Internet and offensive cyber campaigns against domestic and foreign organisations.

Military Intelligence Service

Another large institution in the Russian state apparatus that can carry out cyber operations is the Military Intelligence Service (GU, until 2011 known as the GRU). It reports to the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff. Besides the GU, there are other organisations in the Ministry of Defence that are active in the cyber arena and have been expanded considerably in recent years. The GU has a large number of



specialists as well as state-of-the-art technology at its disposal for offensive cyber operations. It also has numerous armed special units reporting to it. These are stationed primarily in the European part of Russia, but are also deployed abroad. Estimates of the numbers of personnel in these special units vary widely. Since Putin took office in 2000, the Military Intelligence Service's influence vis-à-vis the FSB has steadily declined. However, it traditionally enjoys the support of the military establishment, and in the wake of the Ukrainian crisis and the deployment of the armed forces in Syria it has regained influence vis-à-vis the other power ministries.

Foreign Intelligence Service

When conducting activities abroad, both the FSB and the Military Intelligence Service work together with the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR). Like most other power ministries, it reports directly to the President. Since 2016, its Director has been Putin's trusted adviser Sergei Naryshkin, who previously held a leading position in the Presidential Administration and was Speaker of Parliament. Naryshkin is a political heavyweight who, along with Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev, is seen as a potential successor to Putin as President. Putin still maintains close links not just with Naryshkin but with the other members of the SVR leadership. Historically, the SVR evolved out of the former foreign intelligence arm of the Soviet intelligence service KGB. The present SVR Academy is the successor to the former Red Banner (or Andropov) Institute, whose graduates include both Putin and Naryshkin. The number of SVR employees is estimated at between 10,000 and 20,000. It is mainly active in the former Soviet republics, the rest of Europe and the USA. One of its strengths is industrial espionage. Since 2015, it has also had an increasing presence in Syria.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

As with most of the other power ministries, Putin has a strong personal influence on the Foreign Ministry. This is exerted primarily through his advisers in the Presidential Administration. The leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, consists mainly of graduates of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), the training ground for the diplomatic elite. Like the FSB Academy, this is one of the most prestigious universities in Russia. Formally under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Institute is now an integral part of the regime. The Institute's Board of Directors has several dozen members, who are currently among the most influential decision-makers in Russia.

Federal Protective Service

Like the FSB and the SVR, the Federal Protective Service (FSO) evolved from the structures of the Soviet KGB. Its predecessor organisations in the KGB were responsible for protecting the Communist Party elite. In addition to providing personal protection, it is now primarily responsible for protecting government buildings, nuclear power plants and institutions which form part of the military-indus-

trial complex. It has around 40,000 employees. At its core is the Presidential Security Service, formerly headed by the influential commander of the National Guard, General Zolotov. The Presidential Security Service's functions include organising all of the President's foreign travel. The Special Communications and Information Service is responsible for the operation and security of all information and communication equipment in state institutions. The FSO likewise runs an academy, which also serves as a training ground for other power ministries.

Investigative Committee

One of Putin's most important domestic political instruments of power is the Investigative Committee, which was detached from the Prosecutor General's Office in 2011. Putin uses it primarily to crack down on domestic political opponents, and it is one of the main instruments used by the Kremlin to eliminate extraparliamentary opposition. For ten years it has been headed by Alexander Bastrykin, who studied law with Putin at Leningrad University. He has an authoritarian leadership style, keeping a very close eye on politically sensitive cases, in particular. In addition to its headquarters in Moscow, the Investigative Committee has departments in many Russian cities, including St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Rostov-on-Don, Novosibirsk and Khabarovsk in Russia's far east.

Power ministries and the economy

The relationship between the power ministries is not without friction. Essentially, however, they are instructed by the Kremlin to cooperate. The chief mediator here is Putin, who personally intervenes when rivalries between the power ministries threaten to escalate. In addition to monitoring political and social processes, the power ministries are also responsible for overseeing the economy. The Russian economy is dominated by large corporations, such as Gazprom and Rosneft, and the state banks associated with them. The FSB, in particular, exerts a great deal of influence on the business conglomerates. The corporations' security departments are usually staffed by intelligence service officers. The most important economic sectors that have close links with the power ministries are the energy industry, the financial sector, the arms industry and the telecommunications and information sector. In return, it is the business conglomerates who finance much of the state budget, and thus also the power ministries, through their tax payments. A symbiotic relationship between the power ministries and the large corporations is thus inherent in the system.

The internal consolidation of the Putin system suggests that the opposition in Russia has a tough job and that the regime's dominance has become virtually unassailable. Apart from its dependency on the key figure of Putin, the only apparent potential weakness of the system at present is its dependence on oil price movements. The energy corporations traditionally finance about half the Russian state budget. The Russian oil industry is profitable down to a price of around 30 dollars per barrel. If the price falls below this threshold for an extended period of time, the Russian economy and thus the Putin system may be desta-

bilised. Since its low in 2015, however, the oil price has now risen again to over 60 dollars per barrel.

Increasing pressure on Eastern Europe

In terms of security policy, one of Putin's most important projects is the re-establishment of a Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, a sphere of influence in the sense of a cordon sanitaire, a buffer zone on Russia's western flank. From Russia's point of view, this sphere of influence covers large areas between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. Putin considers it his personal historic mission to establish this zone of influence in order to protect Russia from the expansion of the NATO transatlantic alliance under the leadership of the United States. He sees himself in the tradition of Russian tsars of the 17th and 18th centuries, of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, under whose leadership the territories which today form the Baltic states, Belarus and Ukraine were conquered. The geostrategic struggle for the area between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea is deeply rooted in Russian and European history and will determine the relationship between Russia and the transatlantic West well into the 2020s.

The Russian armed forces will also play a central role here. Under Putin, these have gradually been developed into an instrument that can be deployed in concrete situations. The ongoing operations in Ukraine and Syria demonstrate that there is the political will and sufficient military potential to deploy the armed forces. Russia has modern weapon systems and can thus demonstrate capabilities on a par with those of Western armed forces. It has successfully pushed ahead with the consolidation process in recent years. Under the current armaments program running from 2011 to 2020, it will continue to implement its aims of modernizing its assets according to plan. This is likely to continue at a similar pace in the overlapping follow-on programme from 2018 to 2027. The increased injection of contract staff into the armed forces has led to a significant rise in the levels of training, preparedness and deployability. Several major exercises have demonstrated impressive mobilisation and command and control skills. The nuclear weapon systems of the so-called ‘strategic triad’ continue to be accorded high priority, and Russia invests heavily in their maintenance and renewal. The employment of nuclear weapons is also regularly practised, including in basically conventional scenarios.

The ideological nature of the Russian leadership and the historical development of this region provide an indication of the extent of Russia's ambitions in Eastern Europe. Ukraine, where a war with periodic fragile ceasefires has been ongoing since 2014, will remain in the spotlight. Long-term control of Ukraine is key to the establishment of a Russian zone of influence. As events in connection with Ukraine since 2014 demonstrate, Russia is not afraid of using military force. To the north, Belarus has already been very much reintegrated into Russia's sphere of control in recent years. Its economy is largely dependent on the Russian economy. Since the Ukrainian crisis, President Alexander Lukashenko has been trying to prevent a ‘Ukraine’ scenario, i.e. war on Belarus soil, and therefore favours developing Belarus

Barents Sea
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
Russian border ...
before 1721
around 1725
around 1795
present day
de facto Russian military protectorates
territory ceded to Russia by Sweden in 1721
Helsinki
Stockholm
St Petersburg (est. 1703)
Tallinn
Baltic Sea
ESTONIA
LATVIA
Riga
RUSSIA
Moscow
LITHUANIA
Kaliningrad (RUS)
Vilnius
Minsk
BELARUS
Warsaw
POLAND
Vistula
Kiev
territories appropriated between 1730 and 1795
SLOVAKIA
Eastern Ukraine
KAZAKSTAN
Volga
Budapest
HUNGARY
UKRAINE
MOLDOVA
Chisinau
Transnistria
Dnieper
ROMANIA
Belgrade
Crimea
Caspian Sea
Bucharest
SERBIA
Danube
Black Sea
Abkhazia
South Ossetia
Pristina
KOS.
Sofia
BULGARIA
Tbilisi
GEORGIA
Skopje
MAC.
AZERBAIJAN
ARMENIA
Yerevan
Ankara
GREECE
TURKEY
Athens
500 km
FIS

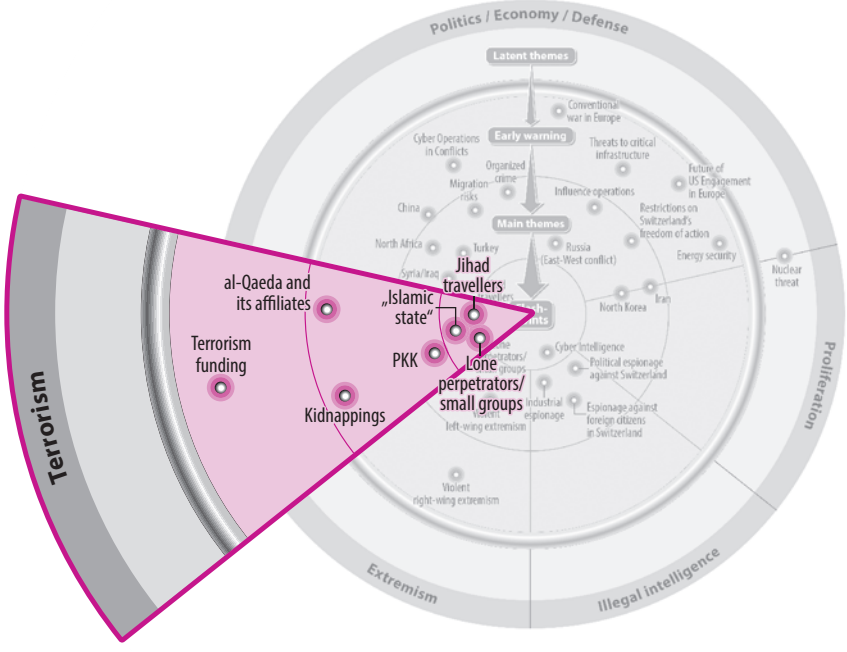
in a way that takes Russian interests into account. The three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, have been members of NATO and the EU since 2004, which is why Russia is avoiding open confrontation with these countries. However, they are already under considerable pressure from Russia, which is likely to increase further in the years to come. In addition to the application of political, economic and propagandistic leverage, cyber attacks with far more serious consequences than hitherto are also a possibility.

Russia and Switzerland

Internal political and economic consolidation has created the essential preconditions for Russia to keep the pressure on Eastern Europe high during what is likely to be Putin's last term in office. The last ten years have been marked by a steady deterioration in relations between Russia and the transatlantic West. The 2008 war in Georgia and the Ukrainian crisis of 2014, as well as the Western sanctions which were imposed in response to them and have been intensified over the past four years, are visible evidence of this. There is currently no sign that Russia's relationship with the West has yet reached its lowest point. On the contrary, this relationship could deteriorate further, in line with the trend over the last several years. The tensions between Russia and NATO and between Russia and the EU will continue to have an impact on Switzerland. In the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, measures have been taken in Switzerland to prevent the country being used to circumvent sanctions. In addition, as a non-aligned country, Switzerland is also of particular importance to Russia as an international trading and financial centre. This gives rise to special requirements, particularly when it comes to handling the Russian elite's assets.

Jihadist and ethno-nationalist terrorism and violent extremism

The terrorist threat in Europe and Switzerland comes primarily from the jihadist movement and its two main actors, 'Islamic State' and al-Qaeda. 'Islamic State' and the individuals and small groups controlled or inspired by it continue to be the dominant threat. The threat posed by al-Qaeda persists. In Switzerland, the terrorist threat remains at a heightened level. Swiss nationals could also fall victim to kidnappings or attacks by terrorists in many places abroad. Ethno-nationalist terrorism and violent extremism remain relevant to the threat situation in Switzerland. The PKK, in particular, has the capacity to mobilise its supporters in Western Europe to take part in coordinated rallies and campaigns at short notice. This could lead to violence, particularly if Kurdish and Turkish nationalist groups were to come into contact with one another.



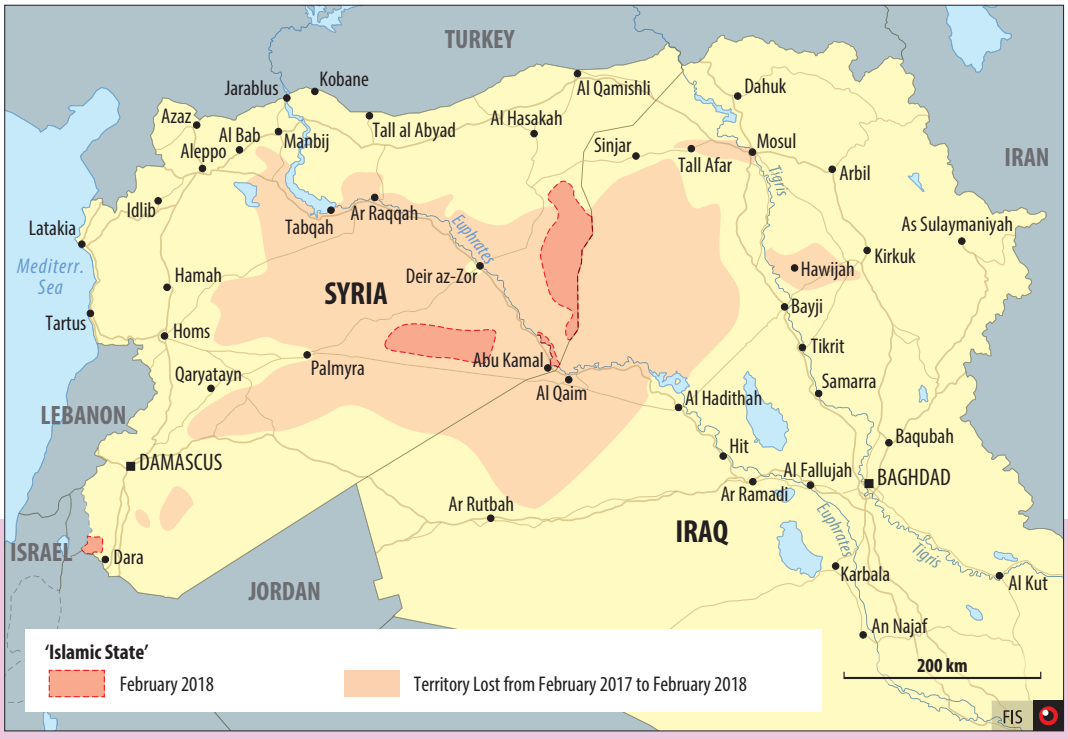
SITUATION

The threat remains at a heightened level

The terrorist threat in Europe and Switzerland comes primarily from the jihadist movement and its two main actors, 'Islamic State' and al-Qaeda. 'Islamic State' and the individuals and small groups controlled or inspired by it continue to be the dominant threat. The threat posed by al-Qaeda persists. The regional affiliates of both terrorist organisations pose a threat to Western and thus also Swiss interests primarily in their respective main areas of operation.

The caliphate loses its territory

In 2014 and 2015, 'Islamic State' transformed itself from a local Sunni jihadist group established in Syria and Iraq under the ideological umbrella of core al-Qaeda into the dominant jihadist terrorist organisation and movement worldwide. During the course of 2017, however, it came under increasing military pressure and suffered numerous defeats in its core territory in Syria and Iraq. Having lost its two major centres, Mosul in summer 2017 and Raqqa in autumn 2017, it also lost the bulk of its remaining territories within the space of a few months. Since the end of 2017, its state-like structures, including its openly operating military units, have been annihilated. A large proportion of its leaders and fighters have been killed in battle. Thousands of local fighters have deserted. Some of these have surrendered. However, some of the leaders and fighters have gone underground in their lost territories or have retreated to neighbouring countries, from where they continue to operate in clandestine cells and networks. A few fighters have joined other jihadist groups in the Levant. In Syria and Iraq, a large proportion of the jihad travellers have been killed or been picked up by



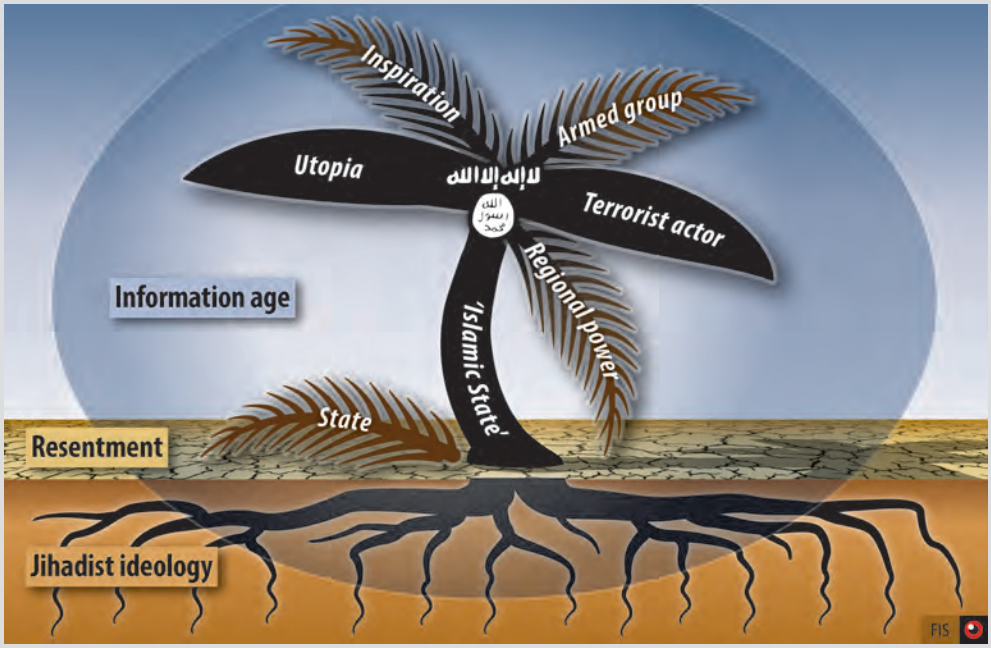
local security forces. Others have travelled on to third countries such as Turkey, gone underground or returned to their countries of origin. However, no large-scale movements to other conflict zones where jihadist groups are operating have been observed.

'Islamic State' has jihadist competition in Syria

'Islamic State' made early preparations for continuing its fight from underground and on a number of fronts, particularly in the second half of 2017, it also pulled out leaders, fighters and their families in good time. Many of the structures and networks established in the region therefore still exist. Consequently, even after the loss of its core territories, 'Islamic State' will be able to continue to make its presence felt in both Syria and Iraq and to undermine its opponents' stabilisation and reconstruction efforts by means of intimidating and violent actions.

In Syria, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS, Organisation for the Liberation of the Levant), in particular, plays an important role in the jihadist scene alongside 'Islamic State'. HTS is an alliance of various jihadist groups and militias; it was founded in January 2017 through the merger of these groups and Jabhat Fath al-Sham (previously Jabhat al-Nusra), which had close links with core al-Qaeda. HTS wants to position itself as the leading coalition in the armed opposition against the Assad regime, particularly in the north-western Syrian province of Idlib, and to this end is also taking action against other opposition groups. The leaders of the major subgroups of HTS are all represented on its executive committee. However, in 2017 it became clear that the alliance's internal cohesion is under threat because of ideological differences and personal tensions.

'Islamic State'



For a better understanding of 'Islamic State', the FIS continues to view it as an integral phenomenon whose transnational jihadist-Salafist ideology grows on a breeding ground of resentment and which in today's information environment is branching out in six different directions with varying degrees of success.

State

'Islamic State' wants to be a state in the literal sense of the word. This ultimate strategic objective still exists, even though its first attempt to establish a state was crushed after about three and a half years, at the end of 2017.

Armed group

In organisational terms, 'Islamic State' should also be viewed as an armed group. The open armed struggle has long contributed to its sense of identity and cohesion. With the break-up of its state-like structures, the military units which previously operated openly have been destroyed or driven underground.

Terrorist actor

'Islamic State' has never abandoned its policy of systematically spreading fear and terror: terrorism remains its primary method. With the destruction of the caliphate, the relative importance of this aspect is growing, as in the early days of the organisation. The terrorist activities of 'Islamic State' and of the supporters and sympathisers inspired by it take place almost all around the globe. 'Islamic State' now also claims responsibility for attacks which it did not carry out itself.

Regional power

'Islamic State' consists essentially of a strategic leadership comprising a small number of men, together with various provinces and affiliated terrorist groups and cells in Syria and Iraq, Africa and Asia. The destruction of the caliphate in the Levant, where its provinces in Syria and Iraq had temporarily formed a contiguous structure, has done nothing to change this fundamental arrangement. However, 'Islamic State''s influence as a regional power declined significantly in the second half of 2017. Nonetheless, its affiliates outside its core territory continue to operate independently of developments in Syria and Iraq. As a result, 'Islamic State' still exerts influence in numerous conflict areas worldwide.

Inspiration

Through its clever use of the information sphere, 'Islamic State', together with its local supporters and sympathisers, manages to inspire people all over the world to take action. This includes carrying out terrorist attacks, disseminating propaganda or providing support through donations. However, toward the end of 2017 there was a significant decline in the quality and quantity of its multilingual propaganda products. 'Islamic State' has lost much of its former appeal.

Utopia

The placeless and timeless utopia of an Islamic world state, the caliphate, in which Muslims can live according to Islamic law, is not a new idea. However, 'Islamic State' succeeded in giving this utopia a new form. Despite major international opposition, it was able to attract mass support and to establish and finance a rudimentary state structure, which it also managed to defend and administer for a certain period of time. Furthermore, outside Syria and Iraq, numerous jihadist organisations pledged allegiance to 'Islamic State', thereby extending its influence and power. Unlike al-Qaeda, 'Islamic State' went at least some way toward making the utopia reality.

Core al-Qaeda wants to regain its appeal

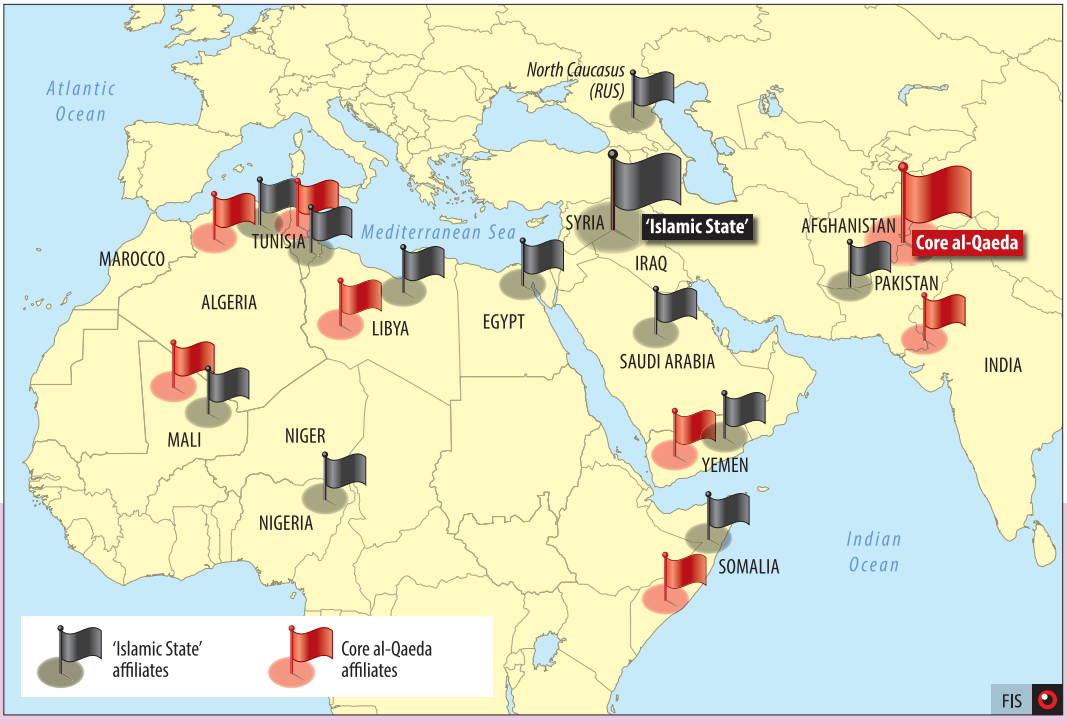
The most recent attack on European soil for which al-Qaeda claimed responsibility dates back to January 2015; it was targeted at the editorial offices of 'Charlie Hebdo' in Paris (France). The fact that al-Qaeda has largely failed to carry out any successful high-profile actions against Western interests has weakened its position vis-à-vis competing jihadist groups. Core al-Qaeda's image was further weakened when Jabhat al-Nusra distanced itself from it in summer 2016. While 'Islamic State' has lost its caliphate, core al-Qaeda is working to recover the considerable appeal it once had in the global jihadist movement. To this end, it is trying to establish Hamza Bin Laden, the son of its killed former leader Osama Bin Laden, as a future leadership figure.

Provinces and affiliates of 'Islamic State' and al-Qaeda

The degree of cooperation between the core structures of 'Islamic State' and al-Qaeda and their respective regional affiliates varies. The affiliates essentially have a high degree of autonomy and for the most part pursue a local agenda. A few affiliates, however, have both the ambition and the necessary capabilities and resources to pursue international jihadist goals. The local affiliates of 'Islamic State' in Egypt, for example, not only carry out regular attacks on Egyptian security forces, Copts and other Muslims, but also occasionally attack international targets, an example being the bombing of a Russian passenger plane in October 2015.

North and West Africa

In Egypt, the Maghreb and West Africa, several jihadist groups have pledged allegiance either to 'Islamic State' or to al-Qaeda / al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Libya continues to play an important role for 'Islamic State', despite the complete loss of territories which had been temporarily under the latter's control. Whereas 'Islamic State' has lost all the territories it controlled in Libya, AQIM has succeeded in maintaining its influence in parts of Libya.



It uses the south of the country, in particular, as a safe haven and supply zone for actions in Mali and other neighbouring states.

The security situation in Mali has deteriorated sharply since 2015, partly because of AQIM's terrorist activities. Since then, increasing numbers of attacks have also been carried out in major centres in West Africa outside AQIM's core area, on targets frequented primarily by foreigners, such as hotels and restaurants; two Swiss nationals were among the victims of an attack in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in January 2016. Kidnappings of foreigners in order to finance terrorist activities have also increased since 2015. A Swiss woman abducted in Mali in January 2016 was still being held hostage at the time of going to press. Since March 2017, when AQIM and other jihadist groups merged to form a coalition called 'Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims', the terrorist threat situation in Mali has escalated further. This merger has led to an expansion of their area of operations and to more frequent attacks.

The jihadist threat is less pronounced in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, chiefly on account of the effectiveness of the security authorities and comparatively stable political conditions in those countries. Although Tunisia has expanded its capacity to combat terrorism over the last two years, attacks by local cells of 'Islamic State' and AQIM pose a threat to foreign, including Swiss interests, even in urban coastal areas.

Central and East Africa

The security situation in the states bordering Lake Chad (Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad) remains precarious due to the terrorist activities of Boko Haram. Since 2009, attacks on the civilian population and security forces have resulted in around 20,000 deaths and displaced more than two million people. In August 2016, Boko Haram split into two factions, with one affiliating itself to 'Islamic State' under the name 'West Africa Province'. The split in Boko Haram has done nothing to improve the security situation. The security forces in the region have not succeeded in weakening the two Boko Haram factions significantly, despite intensified and better-coordinated countermeasures. In East Africa, al-Shabaab still controls substantial parts of Somalia and also continues to pose a threat in Kenya.

Arabian Peninsula

As a result of the conflict between Houthi militia and the current Yemeni government, which is supported militarily by Saudi Arabia, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has been able to consolidate its presence in Yemen. AQAP is willing to attack Western targets and has the capabilities to do so. However, its terrorist activities are currently focussed primarily on local targets. AQAP and 'Islamic State' regularly carry out attacks in Yemen. Compared with AQAP, however, the local affiliate of 'Islamic State' plays a far less significant role.

Afghanistan, Pakistan and South-East Asia

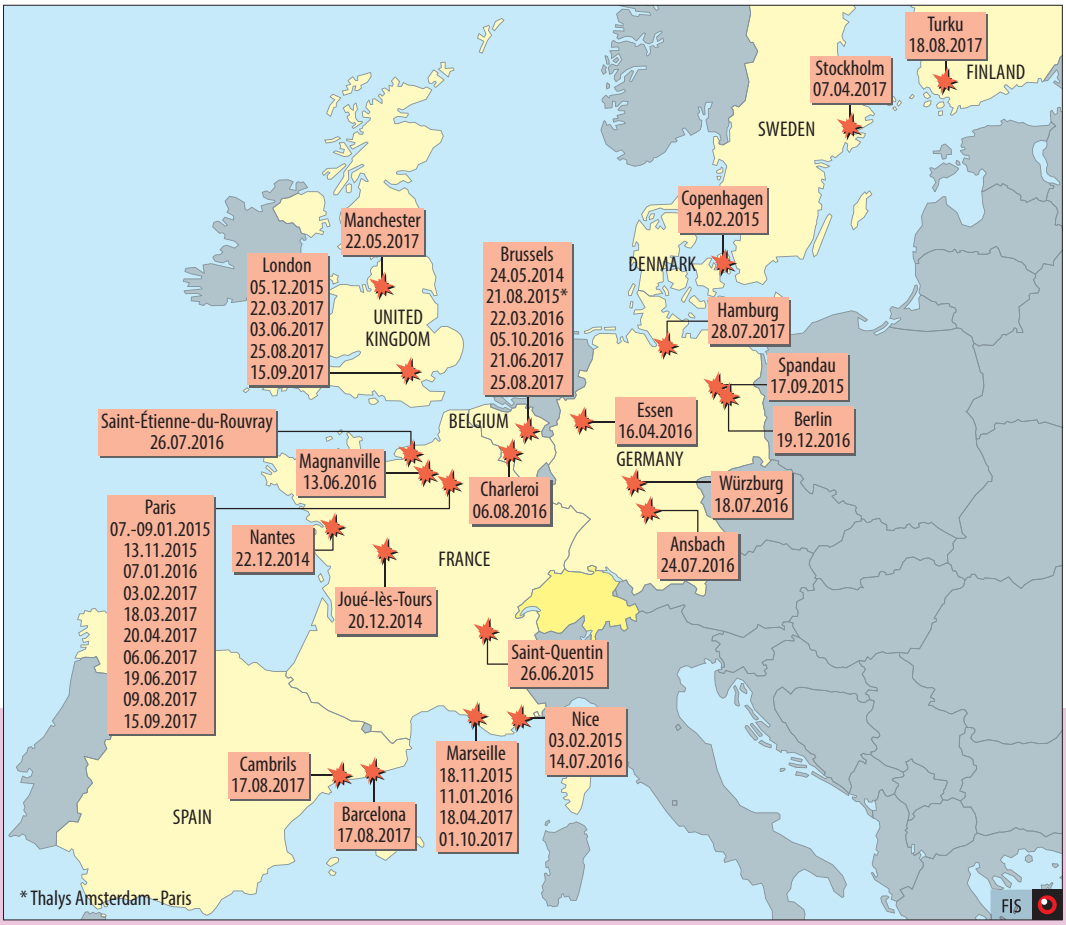
Numerous militant Islamist and jihadist groups have a presence in Afghanistan and on the Indian subcontinent. Alongside elements of core al-Qaeda and its local affiliate al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), 'Islamic State'

has also established a presence in the shape of its Khorasan Province (ISKP). Despite major losses, among them several leaders, ISKP has so far managed to survive – in part through collaboration with other Islamist and jihadist organisations in the region – and to stage frequent major attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In South-East Asia, a number of jihadist groups have been active for a long time. In May 2017, a Philippine affiliate of 'Islamic State' recorded a major success when it took over the city of Marawi (population 200,000) on the island of Mindanao. Only after a several-month-long siege and battles involving heavy losses, as well as the deaths of both the local 'Islamic State' leaders in October 2017, was the city declared liberated by the Philippine security forces. 'Islamic State''s propaganda made much capital out of the prolonged resistance, and the battle for Marawi was marketed as a new focal point for jihad travellers from across the region.

Attacks in Europe

The threat of attacks carried out by jihad-motivated lone perpetrators or small groups is present throughout Europe. Analysis of the major attacks in Europe between 2015 and 2017 shows that the number of attacks has increased steadily over the last three years. Since February 2017, there have been just under two dozen attacks and attempted attacks in Europe. Four of these claimed numerous lives and left many injured. A common factor in all the attacks was that the targets were either uniformed policemen and soldiers or passers-by in the centres



of major cities. The bulk of these attacks were carried out by lone perpetrators operating with minimal logistical resources. Knives or vehicles were used in around three-quarters of the attacks, with the others involving explosives and (only rarely) firearms. Almost all the perpetrators had been inspired by 'Islamic State'. However, no evidence was found of a direct link between 'Islamic State' and any of the perpetrators, even where they acted in line with its aims and in some cases verifiably in its name or where 'Islamic State' subsequently claimed responsibility for the act. The perpetrators were all male, Muslim and between 17 and 53 years of age (average age just under 30). Most of the perpetrators lived in the state concerned or even near the crime scene. Most came from a migrant background, but had been born in the state in which they carried out the attack and/or had acquired citizenship of that state. Approximately half the perpetrators had a North African background. Many of the perpetrators were previously unknown to the security authorities or had attracted their attention only due to involvement in petty crime.

Radicalisation in Switzerland

The phenomenon of radicalisation in relation to jihadist terrorism continues to be an issue for Switzerland. Despite 'Islamic State''s territorial losses and a discernible decline in the quality and quantity of the terrorist organisation's propaganda activities, individuals from a wide range of backgrounds continue to be drawn to the ideas of jihadist terrorism. The FIS has established through its monitoring of jihadist websites that the majority of the users in Switzerland who have come to its attention are still more likely to be 'Islamic State' sympathisers, though the proportion supporting al-Qaeda has once again increased.

Alongside the consumption of jihadist content on the Internet, personal contacts still play a key role when it comes to radicalisation. Such contacts are also more and more often deliberately being arranged outside the confines of institutions such as mosques, for example. As elsewhere, there are a few radicalised individuals in Switzerland who devote themselves to recruitment. They try to win people they know over to Salafism and ultimately to jihad. Particularly in population centres close to borders, there are cross-border links which are also used for recruitment.

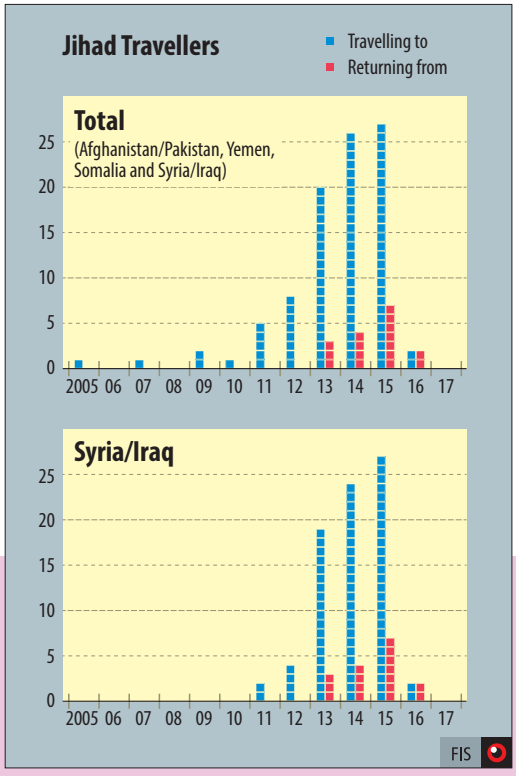
To counter the recruitement activities of salafist networks, a number of measures have been evaluated and initiated. Measures on the communal and cantonal level to stop 'Read' distribution activities, such as the denial of legal permits, have been shown to be the most effective means. Since the authorities began to implement these measures in a more consistent way in the early summer of 2017, a significant reduction of 'Read!' Quran distribution activities has been observed. Sporadic attempts of 'Read!' activists to continue with related activities such as 'Free Quran' or 'We love Mohammed', have also been stopped.

Security authorities are also increasingly focussing their attention on recruitement activities in prisons. Outside Switzerland, a number of attacks have recently been carried out by individuals who had either been radicalised whilst in prison or had radicalised other pris-

oners. Security authorities in Switzerland have also identified occurrences of radicalisation in penal institutions. Since July 2016, Swiss security authorities also have to face the problem of radicalised individuals, who are released at the end of their prison term, but still represent a threat to Switzerland's security due to their radical views. This problem is accentuated by the fact that some of the radicalised individuals without Swiss nationality cannot be deported.

Information on planned attacks

The federal security authorities frequently receive and process information which points directly or indirectly to ideas, intentions or preparatory actions in connection with a possible attack with links to Switzerland. In this context, a rise in the number of direct links between 'Islamic State' and Switzerland has been detected. Based on these findings, a number of individuals have been arrested, and some of these have already been convicted.



Travel movements almost at an end

Since summer 2015, the number of persons travelling from Switzerland to conflict areas for jihadist reasons has fallen significantly; since August 2016, the FIS has not recorded any persons leaving Switzerland in order to travel to a jihad area. This development is consistent with 'Islamic State' propaganda. In 2017, 'Islamic State' made several appeals to people not to travel to the caliphate, but to carry out attacks in the name of 'Islamic State' where they live.

The collapse of the caliphate in the Levant has not so far resulted in a significant rise in the number of persons returning from jihad areas to Europe. And in Switzerland, too, no further returnees have been recorded since the start of 2016. Possible alternative destinations may be third states like Turkey or the countries of origin of the parents or grandparents. Various European states face a situation whereby families have been started in the caliphate and as a result there are increasing numbers of spouses and minors among the returnees. To date, the FIS is aware of around a dozen women and two dozen children among jihad tourists with direct links to Switzerland. The law enforcement agencies are responsible for dealing with such cases.

PKK has high potential to mobilise support

In Turkey, terrorist activities suspected of being linked to the PKK are down compared to 2016. However, fighting between the armed wing of the PKK and Turkish security forces in the region has continued unabated and is claiming losses on both sides. After the attempted coup of July 2016, Turkey declared a

state of emergency, which it has since extended several times, and action is being taken against all opponents, including the PKK.

In the Kurdish region of northern Syria, the PKK's sister party, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), is using its YPG (People's Protection Units) militia to defend the areas it controls, known as Rojava or the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria. Besides demanding freedom for its symbolic figurehead, Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK is focusing its efforts on ensuring the continued survival of Rojava and obtaining international recognition for it. After the referendum on independence for the Kurdish area of northern Iraq in autumn 2017, the invasion by Iraq's central government and the economic sanctions by Iran and Turkey did not trigger any countermeasures by the PKK.

National Action Plan to prevent and counter radicalisation and violent extremism

In December 2017, the Swiss Security Network SSN (Confederation, cantons, cities, municipalities) presented its National Action Plan to prevent and counter radicalisation and violent extremism. The Federal Council took note of the Action Plan and announced its intention to support the implementation of the Action Plan by funding a five-year stimulus programme. The Action Plan focusses on prevention, one of the four action areas laid down in Switzerland's counter-terrorism strategy. This strategy was ratified by the Federal Council in September 2015. Proposals include the use of tools for early detection, the introduction of a threat management system and the development of measures to promote disengagement and reintegration. In addition, the Action Plan recommends various training measures for a wide range of officials and emphasises the foreign policy commitment to preventing violent extremism. It is particularly important to support and empower children, young people and women as important actors in prevention. These measures are to be implemented by the authorities in collaboration with civil society, and where possible are designed to build on and integrate existing measures and programmes. The report lists the specialist units and contact points which anyone with questions relating to suspected radicalisation can and should contact. Some of these units are run by the police. Anyone who has information on radicalisation or violent extremist or terrorist activities can and should contact them. Anything believed to be suspicious can be reported to any police station and, in urgent cases, by calling the 117 police hotline. This ensures that no time is lost before the police can intervene. In this way, spontaneous communications from the public can be processed efficiently by the cantonal and communal police forces and if necessary forwarded to the specialist units responsible or to other security authorities.

Online at:
https://www.ejpd.admin.ch/dam/data/ejpd/aktuell/news/2017/2017-12-04/171204-nap-e.pdf

In October 2017, rumours about the state of Öcalan's health led to – mainly peaceful – demonstrations across Europe. The participants in the rallies were protesting in particular against the ban on visits imposed by the Turkish government. In Switzerland, most of the protest actions passed off without violence. The PKK leadership ensured this by closely monitoring young activists, in particular, but also its left-wing extremist supporters. The amount of money raised to support the Kurdish cause was up compared with previous years. At present, the mood among PKK supporters is one of frustration because they feel that Europe's stance toward the conflict in the Kurdish regions is too passive.

Terrorism-related financial transactions

In Switzerland, there is currently little financial activity suspected of funding terrorism. Nonetheless, in 2017 a slight increase was recorded in transactions out of and into Switzerland that were suspected of serving Islamist or jihadist purposes. These mainly involved small amounts, which are hard to trace. The most reliable indicator is provided by the suspicious activity reports (SARs) sent by Swiss financial intermediaries to the Money Laundering Reporting Office Switzerland (MROS), on which MROS issues a public report annually.

ASSESSMENT

'Islamic State' continues to lead the way

Despite the loss of most of its territory in Iraq and Syria, 'Islamic State' continues to pose a significant terrorist threat to Europe. It retains the capability to launch actions there, albeit in a greatly limited way. As yet, no other jihadist organisation in the Levant has been able to take over 'Islamic State''s leadership role, and there is no sign of any successor organisation to replace it. For the time being, 'Islamic State' therefore remains the leading jihadist terrorist organisation worldwide, but it has lost much of its former potency and appeal.

Going back underground

The retreat underground and the continuation of the jihadist struggle in the form of a decentralised resistance movement employing guerilla tactics and terrorist methods should not be viewed as a change in its strategic objectives. Rather, it is a change in the way in which it plans to use violence in order to achieve the strategic objectives. Its withdrawal underground takes 'Islamic State' back to the place where it enjoyed its initial successes. Today, however, it is able to draw on a wide network that extends beyond the borders of Syria and Iraq and also on the expertise that it has built up over a period of years. The terrorist organisation today is more firmly rooted and has a better network of transnational connections beyond its Sunni region of origin than was the case when the caliphate was proclaimed in summer 2014. Some of 'Islamic State''s decentrally organised media structures and logistics cells are probably still in place. After all, dissemination of ideology over the Internet is not geographically restricted. Another factor is that an important breeding ground on which the jihadist ideology has been able to develop has, in the FIS's view, become even more fertile. After the destruction of the caliphate, Arab Sunnis remain the overall losers in the Levant.

Loss of the main sources of revenue

With the loss of the territories it controlled previously, 'Islamic State' has lost its main sources of revenue (taxes, sale of oil and gas, seized cultural objects, fines). The remaining networks and cells therefore finance themselves primarily through activities familiar from organised crime (extortion, protection money, ransom money, theft, etc.). However, the loss of the territory it controlled, its military units and the administrative bodies it established means that its expenses are also decreasing. Furthermore, promoting its ideology and putting out propaganda on the Internet are inexpensive and can continue even in financially and militarily precarious situations.

Al-Qaeda still in the shadow of 'Islamic State'

The threat posed by al-Qaeda persists. Core al-Qaeda has lost the bulk of its operational capabilities and resources, but it still harbours the intention of carrying out attacks on Western targets. Some of its regional affiliates still have considerable influence in their respective

main areas of operation – e.g. al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) or al-Shabaab in Somalia. They continue to push for global jihad and attacks on Western targets.

Threat in several regions of Africa remains high

The activities of jihadist groups and of affiliates of 'Islamic State', AQIM, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab are resulting in a high terrorist threat level in many parts of Africa. In Libya, 'Islamic State''s remaining cells are attempting to reorganise themselves. They probably still have the capability to carry out occasional attacks in Libya. However, the FIS considers it unlikely that in the short to medium term they will regain the influence and associated territorial control they had up until 2016.

Jihadist groups in West and North Africa continue to see Western interests as legitimate targets. In West Africa and in the Lake Chad region, the main threat comes from AQIM and its allies and from Boko Haram. In the light of the international jihadist agenda, members of international troop contingents or Western civilians are still likely to be the prime targets in Mali. Similarly, in Somalia, al-Shabaab views all allies of the government, whether domestic or international, as legitimate targets.

Jihadist threat in Europe persists

Even though the potency, appeal and credibility of 'Islamic State' have been severely damaged since summer 2017 and the caliphate was destroyed at the end of 2017, 'Islamic State' and its jihadist ideology continue to pose a significant terrorist threat to Europe, including Switzerland. Its remaining cells and networks, which are promoting terrorist activities outside Syria and Iraq, are weakened, but they are still active both physically and virtually. In the light of the terrorist attacks in Europe since 2015 and the developments described above, the terrorist threat in many European countries remains heightened or even high. Attacks are still to be expected. These may range from simple attacks by individuals and small groups to complex operations. Attacks involving little logistical effort, executed by jihadist-inspired lone perpetrators or small groups, can be carried out irrespective of the strength of 'Islamic State' or of al-Qaeda as organisations. Lone perpetrators and small groups inspired by them generally act spontaneously, without any instructions or financial support from outside. Even larger-scale and more complex attacks

involving explosives or simple chemicals such as toxic gases (for example chlorine gas) require relatively few resources and little effort on the part of the perpetrators. The perpetrators do, however, need to have the appropriate expertise. Jihadists will therefore continue to be not only willing but also able to carry out both simple and more complex attacks. The FIS considers that, for the time being, the only threat likely to have been diminished by the destruction of 'Islamic State''s caliphate is that of complex attacks controlled and carried out directly by 'Islamic State'.

Switzerland as a possible target

Switzerland is part of the Western world, classified by jihadists as Islamophobic, and thus from their point of view constitutes a legitimate target for terrorist attacks. However, in the FIS's assessment– based on jihadist propaganda and on attacks that have taken place and those that have been thwarted – the focus is more on other countries. In the event of attacks on Swiss territory, therefore, the interests of other states that are perceived by jihadists as being Islamophobic or which play a prominent role in the international fight against jihadism may also be targeted. Jewish interests may also be affected.

The FIS assesses that attacks involving minimal logistical effort, carried out by individual perpetrators or small groups, are currently the most likely threat in Switzerland. In the FIS's view, the risk of copycat attacks in Switzerland will rise temporarily after each attack abroad. Such attacks will not necessarily be jihad-motivated, but may also have a different motive. The perpetrators are most likely to be individuals radicalised in Switzerland who have been inspired by jihadist propaganda and personal contacts, but who are not in direct contact with a jihadist group or organisation. These include attacks by mentally ill perpetrators whose radicalisation is more the result of their illness than of ideological conviction. Switzerland can also be used by jihadists as a logistics base for the preparation of attacks abroad or as a transit country. The most recent example of this is the itinerary followed by two people who were involved in the attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils in August 2017.

In the areas outside Europe in which jihadist groups operate, there is still a risk that Swiss citizens might fall victim to opportunist abductions or acts of violence.

Fewer jihad travellers with links to Switzerland

'Homegrown' jihadists radicalised in Switzerland have become more significant to the threat assessment than jihad-motivated travellers. The decline in travel to conflict zones by jihadists with links to Switzerland can be attributed to a number of factors. Reports about the harsh living conditions and ultimately the collapse of the caliphate have reduced the appeal of Syria and Iraq to jihad-motivated fighters. In addition, the enhanced countermeasures on the travel routes to Syria and Iraq have made it significantly more difficult to access the conflict area. Lastly, 'Islamic State''s appeals to jihadists to carry out attacks in their own country of origin or residence rather than travelling to its territory have probably also had an effect.

Left:
User with links to Switzerland shares a martyrdom video.

Travel out of the conflict area in Syria and Iraq is not easy. In addition, most surviving jihad travellers are aware that they will be confronted by the law enforcement agencies, which is why they attempt to go underground or to travel on to third countries.

The FIS is therefore not expecting a big influx of returning jihad travellers with links to Switzerland, but only isolated individuals. Some jihad travellers from Switzerland have married and have had children in the conflict area. It is therefore to be expected that possible returnees might bring previously unknown persons with them, possibly including minors. This will present new challenges to the authorities at all levels (legal issues, problems of long-term integration and security issues). It will probably take one or two more years until the extent of the threat posed by returnees can be assessed in a more precise way. The targeted exploitation of migration flows to Europe and Switzerland by 'Islamic State' or by former jihadist fighters will also remain a real issue.

Polarisation can foster radicalisation

Jihad-motivated attacks and migration movements, particularly in 2015, have contributed to a rise in tensions and to increased political polarisation in European societies. This is also true in Switzerland, but to a lesser extent. Such polarisation may exacerbate the negative feelings prevailing in parts of the Muslim community that they are being oppressed and marginalised, and in this way contribute to radicalisation and increase the potential for violence. Salafist and jihadist groups are exploiting this polarisation accordingly.

Turkish-Kurdish conflict carries risks

The PKK has the capacity to stage demonstrations and other actions – including violent ones – at short notice in response to events connected with the conflict in Kurdish areas. Violent clashes between PKK supporters and Turkish nationalists and/or supporters of Turkish President Erdogan currently pose the main threat in Switzerland. Confrontations are generally the result of direct provocation. Turkish institutions and agencies (such as clubhouses, Turkish Airlines (THY) travel agencies and government offices), as well as centres and mosques attended by nationalist or Islamist Turks, are all potential PKK targets.

The present state of emergency in Turkey means that travellers, wherever they come from, risk being turned away or arrested on arrival if there is even a slight suspicion of their being PKK members or supporting terrorism. This also applies to Gülen supporters. In addition, there is still a heightened risk of attacks in Turkey, particularly in the major cities.

Limited significance of terrorist financing

Switzerland as a financial centre does not play a key role in terrorist financing. Whilst there has been an increase in the number of transactions out of Switzerland and within Switzerland which are suspected of being used

User with links to Switzerland shares a propaganda image from 'Islamic State'.

for Islamist or jihadist purposes, it remains difficult to corroborate suspicions of terrorist financing. Once funds are outside the country, they become almost untraceable. The importance of informal funds transfer systems is difficult to gauge owing to the lack of possibilities for monitoring them.

The Money Laundering Reporting Office Switzerland

The function of the Money Laundering Reporting Office Switzerland (MROS) at the Federal Office of Police (fedpol) is to relay and filter information between financial intermediaries and law enforcement agencies. It is the national central office which, in accordance with the provisions of the Anti-Money-Laundering Act, receives suspicious activity reports relating to terrorist financing etc. from financial intermediaries, analyses them and, where necessary, forwards them to the law enforcement agencies. At the same time, MROS is a specialist authority which annually publishes anonymised statistics on developments in combating terrorist financing etc. in Switzerland and identifies typologies, which are passed on to financial intermediaries for training purposes. MROS is not a police agency. It is a member of the Egmont Group, an international association of financial intelligence units. Its goal is to create the conditions required for the secure, fast and legally admissible exchange of information, in order to combat terrorist financing etc.

MROS's annual report can be found at:
https://www.fedpol.admin.ch/fedpol/en/home/kriminalitaet/geldwaescherei/jb.html

OUTLOOK

'Islamic State' will continue its activities

For the time being, 'Islamic State' remains the dominant terrorist organisation worldwide. In the short term, it will be able to carry out attacks itself, both inside and outside its core territory in the Levant, and to inspire others to do the same, including in Europe.

Individual media offices and affiliates of 'Islamic State' will continue to engage actively in online propaganda. However, their links with their parent organisation will be more blurred and no longer easy to trace. Supporters and sympathisers will play their part in spreading these jihadist messages as widely as possible. Even if in future such messages appear less frequently and seem less coordinated and professional, a new set of people will be inspired and radicalised. Together with its supporters and sympathisers, 'Islamic State' will continue to shape the terrorist threat situation in the short to medium term.

Competition between 'Islamic State' and al-Qaeda is intensifying

Al-Qaeda is among those profiting from 'Islamic State''s military defeats in its core territory in the Levant. The competition for the leadership role in the jihadist movement has once again become more open, as, despite its rapid rise to power, 'Islamic State' never succeeded in superseding core al-Qaeda and its affiliates completely. The outcome of this competition remains uncertain. The key factors are whether 'Islamic State' will be able to maintain a minimum level of organisation, how propaganda from 'Islamic State' and al-Qaeda will evolve, and how the various provinces and affiliates and other jihadist groups worldwide will position themselves – particularly if the death or capture of Abu Bakr al-Bagdadi or Ayman al-Zawahiri were to be confirmed.

If 'Islamic State' were to continue to lose influence or if the organisation in its familiar form were even to vanish and core al-Qaeda to regain its former leadership role in the global jihadist movement, al-Qaeda (and some of its affiliates) might – given its unchanged aspirations and the resources available to it – again carry out terrorist actions outside its area of influence. In spite of the collapse of the caliphate, jihadist messages will continue to fall on fertile ground.

Ongoing threat in parts of Africa

In various regions in Africa, jihadist groups are profiting from a combination of destabilising factors. These include political and ethnic tensions, security vulnerabilities and precarious economic and social conditions. The FIS considers it unlikely that there will be a substantial improvement in these underlying conditions in the short to medium term. It must therefore be assumed that the jihadist threat in the African regions listed above will remain high. It is also likely that rival jihadist groups will continue to vie with one another for supremacy in their respective areas of operation. In order to strengthen their position against ri-

val groups, these groups will seek to carry out spectacular attacks that will attract wide media coverage or to take Westerners hostage.

Threat to Switzerland persists

In Europe and Switzerland, the primary terrorist threat comes from jihadist terrorism. Future terrorist events will range from simple attacks by lone perpetrators and small groups to more complex operations involving firearms, explosives or simple chemicals such as toxic gases. For Switzerland, however, attacks involving minimal logistical effort, executed by lone perpetrators or small groups, are the most likely type of threat. Swiss interests abroad may also continue to be the target of attacks; the risk of abduction persists. It is anticipated that there will be isolated cases of jihad returnees to Switzerland. The arrival of persons previously unknown to the authorities must also be expected.

Preventing radicalised individuals or small groups from carrying out attacks remains a major challenge. The fact that they prepare clandestinely and often commit crimes using tools such as knives or motor vehicles, which are readily available and do not arouse suspicion, make early detection more difficult. While it can be assumed that certain targets are more or less likely to be chosen, ultimately it is almost impossible to predict in advance which targets terrorists actually have in their sights – except where specific and credible evidence is available.

Radicalisation as a social problem

The problem of the radicalisation of – mainly young – individuals is one which will persist in Switzerland, as elsewhere, and will possibly become even more acute. Salafist and jihadist groups and organisations will continue deliberately exploiting tensions in society for propaganda purposes in order to exacerbate negative feelings in the Muslim community and to win individuals over to their cause. The debate about a general ban on face coverings will be a test of this prediction.

Turkish-Kurdish conflict continues

The PKK will probably continue to hold protest rallies and cultural events, the majority of which will be peaceful. However, occasional riots and violent actions must also be expected in Switzerland, particularly during emotionally charged rallies. Recruitment efforts are likely to intensify. The PKK is constantly searching for suitable young people to fight on the front line or to join the ranks of the organisation in Europe. Both fighters who have fallen in Turkey or Syria and returnees are idolised as heroes and provide the motivation for young Kurds to carry out revenge or copycat attacks.

User with links to Switzerland prays for 'his brothers' in Raqqa and Mosul.

Risk of terrorist financing remains low

The problem of funds being raised and then possibly misused for terrorist purposes will continue. As a financial centre, Switzerland could be used for transferring such funds. Even in the future, however, the scale of terrorist financing in Switzerland is likely to remain small. If terrorist networks were to make more systematic use of alternative funds transfer systems in Switzerland, then it could increase in volume. New technologies such as the use of social media for crowdfunding or virtual currencies like Bitcoin have as yet played only a minor role. However, crowdfunding, in particular, is likely to become more important in future.

FDFA travel advice

Feeling safe is a subjective matter

A Swiss national wrote to the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) by e-mail from his Central American holiday destination. His friends there had recommended that he should not go out alone at night. He himself did not share this view.

He thought himself safe where others felt threatened. Coming from a Swiss background, he found it difficult to assess the situation at his holiday location correctly.

Travel advice

The FDFA's travel advice can provide guidance here. It focusses on the political situation and crime levels and highlights the risks abroad for travellers. In addition, it provides not only country-specific information but also many universally valid, non-country-specific tips and information relating to all aspects of travel.

The other side of the coin

The Swiss national holidaying in Central America objected that the travel advice, just like the advice from his friends, seemed to him too dramatic. He had not been robbed, nor had he felt threatened.

It is true that the travel advice focusses on risks. That is its job. Whereas tourism advertising extols the virtues of tourist attractions and beaches, the travel advice tends to show the other side of the coin.

What is in the travel advice is based on verified information and long-term observations. If you know the risks and take precautions, you may never see the other side of the coin yourself.

Sources of information for the travel advice

Swiss embassies abroad are the main source of the information which goes into the travel advice. These draw on a large network of contacts: 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. When evaluating the terrorist threat, for example, information from the intelligence services is added. This broadly-based, long-term observation distinguishes the travel advice from the individual snapshots provided by travel blogs.

Attacks and abductions

Another aspect of the other side of the coin are attacks and abductions, which provoke a range of emotions and responses.

If for a certain length of time no further attacks have been carried out or no further abductions have taken place at a particular location, interested parties and travellers sometimes request the travel advice service to stop mentioning these risks. However, the key point is not how long it has been since an attack or an abduction took place, but whether the threat still exists. For example, it is easy to forget that at the time this report went to press, several Westerners, including a Swiss woman, were still being held hostage in the Sahel region. Here, in

particular, the assessments of the intelligence services are of considerable importance to the FDFA's travel advice.

If an attack is carried out, however, anxious travellers frequently expect the FDFA to act quickly to advise against travel to the destination concerned. Particularly if they have been informed by their insurance company or their travel agency that the cancellation costs of the planned travel will be covered only if the FDFA is advising against travel to the country concerned.

In view of the impossibility of predicting attacks, the FDFA does not generally advise against travel to cities and countries which could be or already have been affected by such attacks. The risk is present in virtually every country and especially in places where large numbers of people gather. On the other hand, the FDFA does advise against travel to countries or parts of countries in which there is a high risk of abductions by terrorist groups. This is because terrorists often deliberately seek out foreign nationals as victims in order to make political demands. Abductions can drag on for years and be accompanied by enormous physical and mental stresses on the abduction victims and their relatives.

Personal responsibility

Use of a wide range of sources, long-term situation monitoring and consultation with various offices within the FDFA ensure that the travel advice provides as objective as possible an assessment of the situation.

Travel operators and travel insurance companies decide independently whether travel will go ahead or cancellation costs will be covered. In the same way, you take responsibility for deciding whether or not to undertake a journey. You must also decide yourself whether and where you go out for a walk at night. However, you would certainly be well advised to heed the travel advice – and the recommendations of your local contact person. ■

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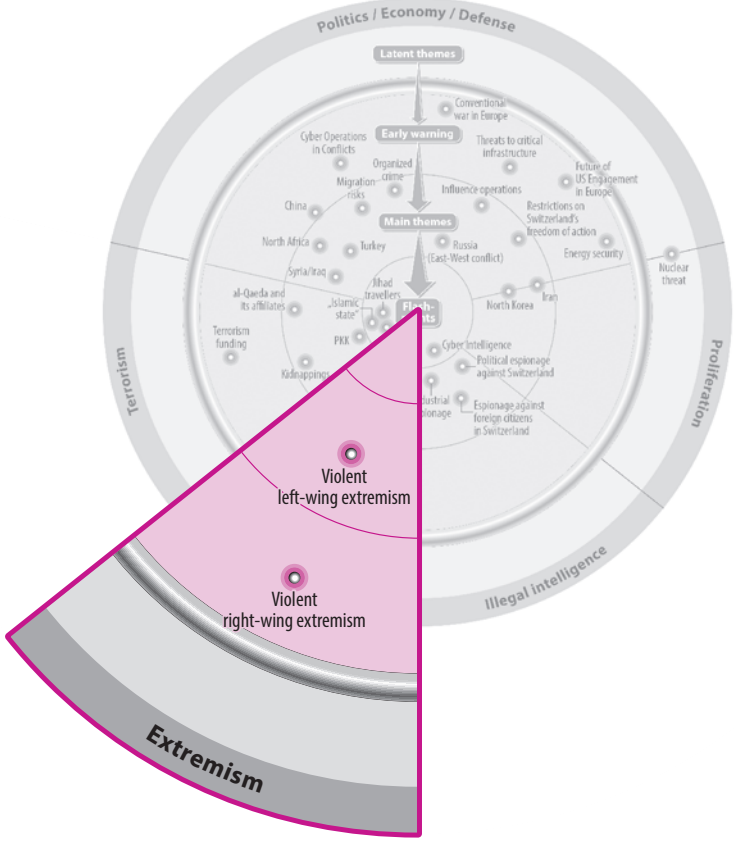
Right-wing and left-wing extremism

The potential for violence in right-wing extremist circles remains unchanged, while in left-wing extremist circles it has increased; as far as left-wing extremism is concerned, the situation has become more acute. Violence motivated by left-wing extremism is directed not only against property, but also against those perceived as right-wing extremists and, especially during police operations, against the security forces. When using violence, left-wing extremists often display extreme aggression. They are prepared to run the risk of injuring or killing the persons they attack, and in some cases this is even their aim. Even leaving such confrontations out of the equation, an increased number of acts of violence motivated by left-wing extremism were observed in the year under review. At the same time, there was also an increase in the intensity of the forms of violence resorted to. Left-wing extremists maintain and exploit their links with violent left-wing extremist groups abroad. Right-wing extremists are continuing to keep a low profile. Developments regarding asylum and migration have also contributed to the calm situation in this area – but the potential for violence in right-wing extremist circles, especially relating to asylum and migration, remains.

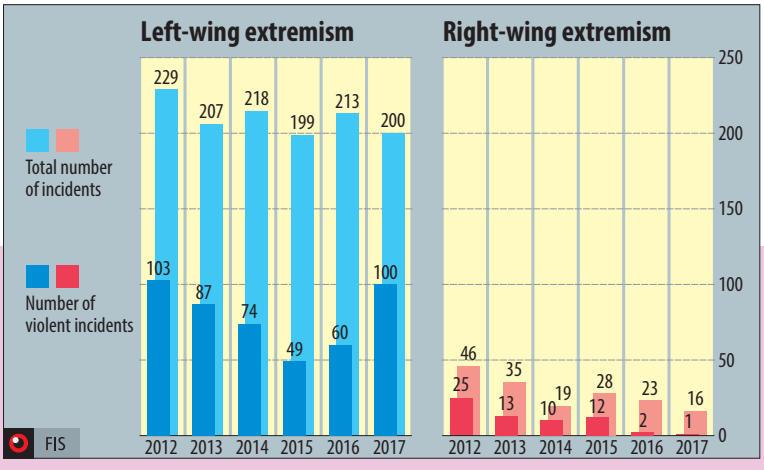


SITUATION

Left-wing extremism: the situation has deteriorated

In 2017, there were 16 incidents connected with violent right-wing extremism and 200 incidents connected with violent left-wing extremism of which the FIS is aware; incidents merely involving graffiti have not been not recorded. In the case of right-wing extremism, this represents a decrease of around 30 per cent, while in the case of left-wing extremism it represents a decrease of around 6 per cent. Due to the low nominal values, however, no trends can be derived from the annual fluctuations. A look back at the figures over several years nonetheless initially confirms a general trend which has been observed for some time: recorded events involving right-wing extremism are rare, while those involving left-wing extremism are comparatively frequent – in the latter case, barely two days pass without an incident, rather than over three weeks in the former case.

Of greater importance to the situation assessment are the figures for events involving violence. In the case of right-wing extremism, just one violent incident was observed – confirming the long-term trend. By contrast, acts of violence involving left-wing extremism have increased by over 30 per cent in absolute terms, and their share of the total number of events motivated by left-wing extremism has risen from 28 to 50 per cent. The same picture of a deteriorating situation emerges when the intensity of violence motivated by left-wing extremism is included: disregarding serious physical violence against the security forces during rallies, the left-wing extremist scene had for years employed more moderate forms of violence. Instead of fire, paint was used, and bomb attacks were rarely carried out – even in 2017, only two attempted attacks using an improvised explosive and incendiary device were identified. Since the spring of 2017, however, arson attacks have become more frequent; as regards acts of sabotage, the element of symbolic protest has become less important – the actions are intended not only to attract attention, but also to achieve an impact, i.e. to prevent a deportation or to paralyse public transport, for example.



Events motivated by left- or right-wing extremism reported to the FIS since 2012 (excluding graffiti)

Right-wing extremism

Right-wing extremists in Switzerland maintain a low profile. The FIS rarely has occasion to record an incident, though there probably are some unreported cases; in public, right-wing extremism is barely noticeable. This restraint has been noted for years. The only act of violence committed by right-wing extremists was a knife attack in Ticino in December 2017, carried out under the influence of alcohol on an individual with different political views.

In 2017, the extreme right-wing scene held three concerts of which the FIS is aware. These concerts were monitored by the authorities more closely than prior to the concert in October 2016 in Unterwasser SG: one was prevented altogether, in the case of the second, entry bans were imposed on two of the three bands, and the FIS only found out about the third – a 'Liederabend' (evening of song performances) – after the event. Even though no right-wing-extremist-motivated attacks on institutions connected with the asylum system were observed in 2017, these remain possible. The motive for throwing a magnesium torch at the transit centre in Enggistein near Worb BE at the beginning of January 2018 and the identity of the perpetrator/s were still unclear at the time of going to press.

There is one exception to the general tone of restraint: the Résistance Helvétique, which is mainly active in French-speaking Switzerland, continues to attract public attention from time to time. On the other hand, there has been no sign of the usual celebration by right-wing extremist groups of anniversaries marking occasions in Swiss history. When right-wing extremism has been discussed in the media, this has been a call to arms for left-wing extremists, who have sometimes used physical violence against people who, for example, were involved in an event.

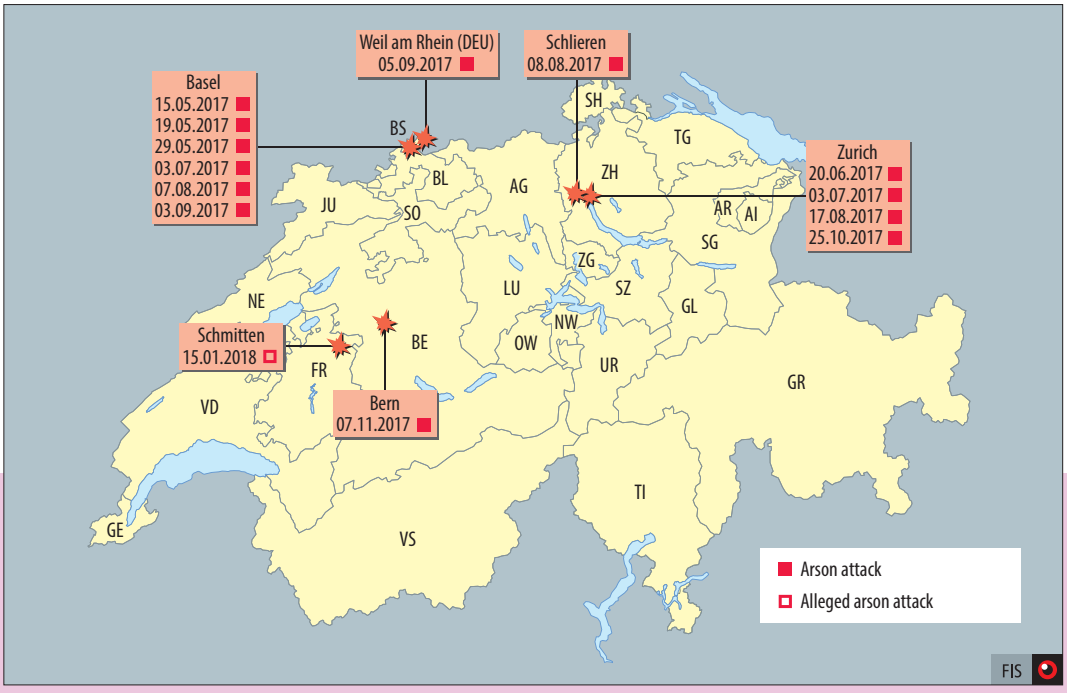
Arson attack on a construction vehicle; Zurich, June 2017

Left-wing extremism

Just a few years ago, the left-wing extremist scene was very much turned in on itself and was unable to find either an inspiring cause or a platform for its actions. In 2014, it seemed that the use and development of urban spaces and the free spaces movement was becoming a focal point of left-wing-motivated activities, and in 2017 it was the campaign against the 'machinery of deportation', but because of the current easing of tensions over asylum and migration, this campaign has largely run out of steam, except in Basel-City. There, the use of the Bässlergut prison as a 'deportation prison' provides a reference point for attacks on the asylum system.

The main emphasis of the campaign against the Bässlergut, however, is on 'repression', which in turn is something that has been on the scene's agenda for years. Besides the Bässlergut, it has also focussed on the Police and Justice Centre (PJZ) in Zurich, with companies involved in the construction projects being attacked as part of a targeted campaign. More than a quarter of all recorded events revolved around 'repression', most of them specifically targeting the Bässlergut; only occasionally did actions not involve violence. The arson attacks on construction company vehicles went beyond the usual levels of damage done to property (see graphic). The series of attacks has continued.

In addition to the arson attacks, vehicles were damaged, and prior to the campaign a list of companies involved in the construction work was published on a relevant online platform. Admissions of responsibility by individuals suggest that anarchists were behind the attacks. The list of possible targets underlines the campaign-like nature of the attacks and is reminiscent of last year's mobilisation against the 'machinery of deportation'. Finally, it should be noted that campaigns against 'repression' are also taking place in other European countries, such as France, Belgium and Germany. These also employ arson attacks and are thought by the authorities to have been carried out by anarchists. It is possible not only that these cam-



paigns influence each other, but also that the actions are more or less firmly linked.

Independently of the campaign, the issue of 'repression / police presence' was the justification for left-wing extremists' use of violence. Violence is directed primarily against security forces, but also against employees of the emergency services in general. They are prepared to run the risk of injuring or killing people, and in some cases this is even their aim. Whereas in the past demonstrations offered the main opportunity for brutality against the police, now police officers are also being attacked when they come across a group of left-wing extremists whilst on duty. For example, on 22 December 2017, on-duty police were attacked with stones and bottles by around two dozen people on the forecourt of the Riding School in Bern. Four days later in Zurich, 200 people attacked police officers with stones, bottles and iron bars. By contrast, in a similar situation on 23 December 2017 in Basel-City around a hundred left-wing extremists were persuaded to withdraw peacefully. On New Year's Eve in Geneva, on the other hand, bottles and stones were thrown at the police, who had been compelled to intervene to deal with a temporary house occupation to hold an unauthorised party.

Serious acts of violence have also been recorded in relation to issues other than 'repression'. Mirroring the acts of sabotage on the railway network in the Zurich area and the attack on the police radio tower at Waid in Zurich in June and July 2016 respectively, there was an attack on the antenna systems on the Gurten and Ulmizberg mountains in Bern canton in June 2017, which in all probability was left unfinished. There were four further arson attacks in the canton of Zurich: attacks were carried out on a post office ATM and a bank branch in April 2017, while Turkish targets were attacked in January and May of the same year.

Other than this, the situation that presents itself is the usual one: the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Labour Day are focal points of left-wing extremist attention, as are events abroad such as G20 summits. In January 2018, left-wing extremists held protests against the WEF on the usual scale, which has declined since the anti-globalisation movement stopped mobilising support. The US President's visit to the WEF did nothing to change this, although his presence meant that greater numbers of peaceful demonstrators were recorded. Free spaces and – depending on the particular person imprisoned – prisoner solidarity will continue to be focal issues. Particularly in the free spaces movement, for example in connection with the clearance of squats, there is a willingness on the part of left-wing extremists to use violence. The issue of asylum and migration offers mobilisation potential that can be tapped into at any time. In addition, it is currently noticeable that left-wing extremists are violently attacking their right-wing extremist counterparts or associated individuals who attract their attention. Time and again, the police are called on to prevent violent confrontations. In addition, the left-wing extremist side tries to expose and pillory its opponents – particularly on the Internet.

International links

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

In the right-wing extremist scene, there are international links on two levels. Firstly, there are the two international skinhead organisations, Blood & Honour and Hammerskins, which have been in existence since the 1980s. They have their roots in the UK and the USA, and offshoots have long been established in Switzerland. Personal acquaintances form the second level of international links in the right-wing extremist scene. The concert at Unterwasser in October 2016 showed the scale of the capacity for concerted action within an individual skinhead organisation. Swiss right-wing extremists continue to attend concerts and events abroad, sometimes not only as consumers: they also give concerts as members of bands or appear as speakers. The influx of German and French right-wing extremists into Switzerland in recent years has allowed members of these groups and their Swiss counterparts to get to know one another. However, it should be noted that when foreign right-wing extremists have taken up residence it has so far not been for political reasons and has not led to changes in behaviour in the Swiss scene.

For left-wing extremists, personal networking is more important than institutional structures. One worth mentioning, however, is the long-established Marxist-Leninist Secours Rouge International. This also has links to the anarchist/autonomous scene. Police arrests in connection with violent crimes and court convictions in Germany and France have shown that Swiss left-wing extremists also engage in violent actions outside the country's borders. International networking was also evident during the violent protests against the G20 summit in Hamburg in July 2017. There are indications that actions were jointly planned in advance by exponents from different countries and carried out during the summit.

The internationalist self-image of left-wing extremism and its search for platforms have repeatedly led it to take up crises and developments abroad as issues. For example, since the battle against 'Islamic State' to liberate Kobane, it has taken a stand in support of the Kurds, and is promoting a positive counter-image to the so-called neo-liberal societies of the West under the name 'Rojava'. It continues to support Turkish left-wing extremists and Kurdish groups, for example the PKK, at demonstrations. In this context, it should be noted that left-wing extremists comply with the instructions of the respective demonstration organisers. This currently means that, for example in the context of a Kurdish demonstration, they do not act violently.

Poster for an 'information event' relating to the G20 protests; June 2017

Of course both scenes also exploit the networking opportunities provided by the Internet, including social media. Language barriers may play a role here, but the left-wing extremist scene, in particular, is actively trying to overcome them. The prohibition in Germany of the website ‘linksunten.indymedia’, which is used for calls to violence, was also discussed in Switzerland, although the Swiss scene was not reliant solely on the use of ‘linksunten.indymedia’ for its own communications, but also had and still has its own platforms on the Internet. Right-wing extremists continue to keep a low profile, including online: beyond Switzerland's borders, they make intensive use of social media for communication, internal information and maintaining contacts, but they have scarcely any public platforms.

ASSESSMENT

Right-wing extremism

In last year's assessment of right-wing extremism, it was still unclear how the scene would react to the major event at Unterwasser SG. It has since become clear that it does not see the fact that the event was able to take place in Switzerland as a sign that it will be able to maintain a higher profile in this country. The response of the public, up to and including violent actions by left-wing extremists, is too unanimous. The Swiss authorities set clear boundaries for extreme right-wing activities. However, on 15 July 2017 an event with 6,000 visitors was held in Themar (Germany), which was organised by the same group of German nationals as the event in Unterwasser. The organisers had also included speeches in the programme and were thus able to contend in court that this was a political assembly. The next such event took place at the same location just two weeks later. As there are currently no rejection factors in Germany and no attraction factors in Switzerland, there is only a slight probability that a right-wing extremist event of the same magnitude as the Unterwasser concert will be repeated in Switzerland in the foreseeable future. On its own, the Swiss scene would probably not be able to organise an event of this magnitude even if it wanted to.

On the other hand, the fact that the scene maintains a low profile and does not make many appearances does not mean that it has lost its potential for violence. In this respect, two circumstances which have not changed should be pointed out. Firstly, some right-wing extremists are armed and carry weapons. Firearms are collected and traded, and there are collections of functioning weapons in the hands of right-wing extremists. Secondly, they practise the use of firearms and train in martial arts.

Flyer for a right-wing extremist event in Germany featuring a Swiss band; May 2017

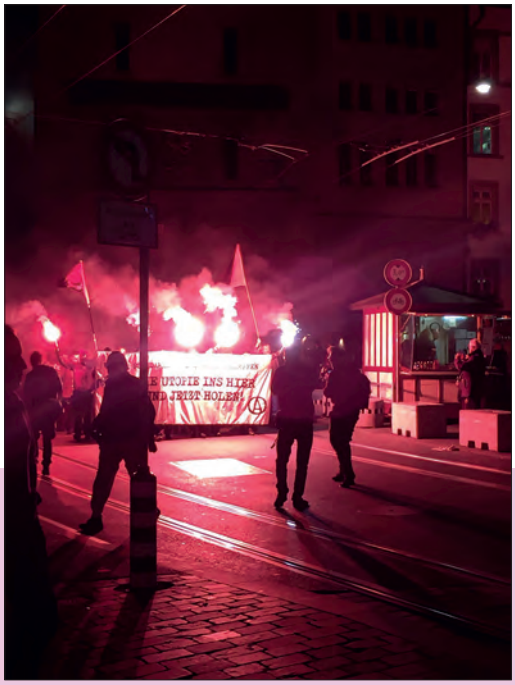
Left-wing extremism

The anarchist/autonomous ideology is becoming more important than its communist (primarily Marxist-Leninist) rival. This means on the one hand that the targets of campaigns are becoming more diverse and on the other hand that sabotage is playing a more important role.

The attacks on communications equipment mentioned above show that sabotage is becoming more important. The arson attacks on construction vehicles also fit into this category. The campaign against the Bässlergut and the PJZ is aimed at getting them to drop the construction projects: they are trying to persuade companies

to cease their involvement in the projects, with the result that construction cannot go ahead. However, arson attacks and damage to property also delay the work on site and must therefore be classified as acts of sabotage. Whereas the FIS is notified of such major incidents, there are many minor acts of sabotage which escape its notice. At rallies, for example, damage to property, including the insertion of coins covered with glue into public transport ticket vending machines, is frequently reported. Outside the context of demonstrations, such actions go largely unnoticed.

It is just as difficult to provide conclusive evidence of the proliferation of the targets attacked. The range of left-wing extremist issues is broad; any issue may be taken up as a cause. Despite its ideologically heterogeneous nature, the scene is united in its broad rejection of existing conditions. However, over the years it has lacked a central theme around which it could mobilise: it is now trying to give itself one through targeted and realistic campaigns. By doing so, however, it is itself once again limiting the range of possible targets, and this also makes them easier to predict. At the moment it is impossible to make a definitive assessment of how many left-wing extremists were actually behind the intensified use of violence in the campaign against the Bässlergut and the PJZ. Furthermore, it should be noted that left-wing extremists can also achieve a great deal of success with smaller, limited actions. In reaction to calls for such actions, events are frequently cancelled because the organisers have security concerns or because they are unwilling or unable to take the necessary measures.



Demonstration by left-wing extremists; Bern, October 2017

OUTLOOK

Potential triggers of violence

As will be explained further in the section below, no change in the situation is expected with regard to right-wing extremism. The use of violence is likely to remain rare and episodic in nature, with alcohol likely to be the main disinhibiting factor. Given the constant potential for violence, however, this remains an uncertain prognosis. What can be indicated more clearly are developments or events that could change the situation, at least temporarily: if numbers of migrants and asylum seekers rise rapidly or if a jihad-motivated attack takes place in Switzerland, violent reactions motivated by right-wing extremism might follow. These are likely to be spontaneous actions without a great deal of preparation, rather than complex, coordinated actions. Acts of violence against migrants or Muslims could also be perpetrated by persons outside the right-wing extremist scene, since xenophobia and racist or Islamophobic attitudes are not limited to right-wing extremists.

The potential for violence in the left-wing extremist scene has increased and is currently manifested in an increased willingness to use greater violence and thus to run the risk of possibly being penalised more severely. It is currently impossible to gauge the role played here by left-wing extremists from countries where the potential for violence is higher. There are three drivers of violence:

- Rallies offer the opportunity to commit serious violence from under the protection of the crowd. Victims of such violence, which is targeted at people and where injury or death is accepted as a possible outcome or is sometimes even the aim, may include members of the security forces or politically unpopular individuals, but also random passers-by. Even encounters between groups of left-wing extremists and police officers on unrelated duty can lead to violent attacks – the basic potential for aggression toward the security forces is high.
- Violence is provoked when left-wing extremists go beyond merely reacting to daily political events and concentrate their actions into targeted and realistic campaigns. This has increasingly been the case since 2016. Perhaps they have also learned from campaigns like Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, which would not be surprising, as animal rights extremists who are prepared to use violence have, after all, been an integral part of the left-wing extremist scene for years.
- Anarchism is gaining in importance at the expense of communism, and so therefore is the desire to damage the ‘system’ as such.

Right-wing extremism

Right-wing extremists lack a strategy and thus the impetus to take action. Their passive attitude is reinforced by public hostility and the predictable personal consequences of being recognised as a right-wing extremist. The most that is therefore likely to happen in the near fu-

ture is that there will be attempts to stage smaller events or take impromptu action; other than that, the scene will be preoccupied with establishing new structures. As usual, events will be prepared in secret and, where possible, carried out in such a way that they will not have any personal consequences. Because of the anonymity they offer, social media will remain a preferred channel for the communication and dissemination of their views.

Right-wing populist discourse and successes in Europe and elsewhere in the world will continue to present both an opportunity and a risk for right-wing extremists in Switzerland. On the one hand, the scene might attract an influx of new recruits or at least gain popularity without having to do much itself, but on the other hand, adherents who are not fully committed to the ideology might drift away and opportunities for recruitment might diminish. Currently, however, there is no sign of the scene drying up. There is also a possibility that right-wing extremists might once more try to gain a foothold in the political system and stand for election. However, a few years ago such intentions were translated into reality only in isolated cases and were ultimately unsuccessful. Such an attempt would in turn be a boost to those advocating refraining from violence.

Left-wing extremism

Whilst construction work is still ongoing, both the Bässlergut in Basel-City and the Police and Justice Centre in Zurich will remain a target for actions motivated by left-wing extremism. Extension of the campaign to similar construction projects in French-speaking Switzerland has already been broached in left-wing extremist circles and is therefore likely to happen. The intensity of any violence used will also depend on whether and when the perpetrators are arrested and subsequently convicted. So far, the law enforcement agencies' successes have calmed the situation, in part simply by taking the potential perpetrators out of circulation, but they have also had a general deterrent effect. The more the extremists' actions are embedded in a targeted and realistic campaign, the worse the prospects of calming the situation. ■

Firearms belonging to
a right-wing extremist,
seized during a house search;
Schwyz canton, September 2017

Left-wing and right-wing extremism in numbers

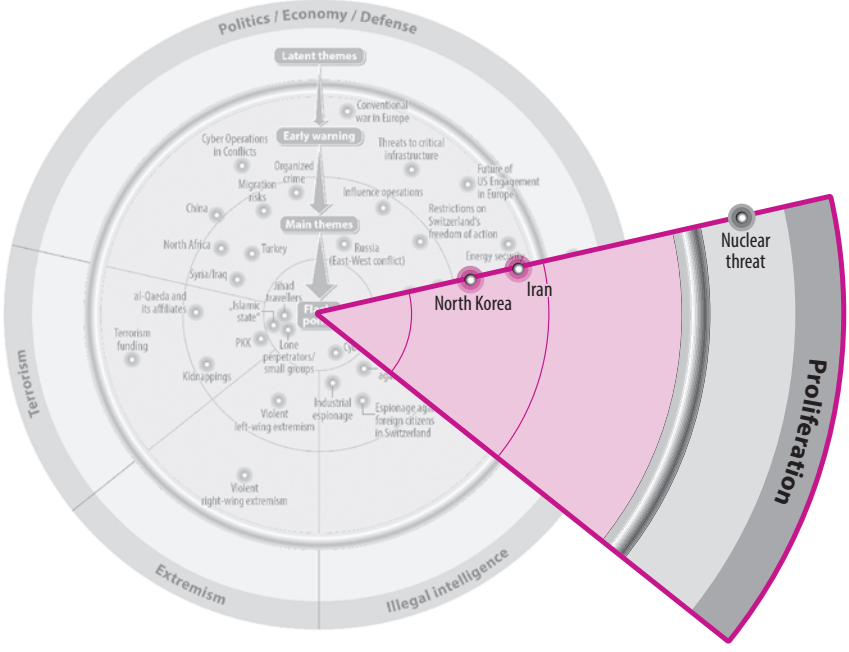
In 2017, the FIS instructed the cantonal intelligence units to record numbers and structures relating to violent extremism in Switzerland falling within their areas of responsibility. In compliance with the FIS's statutory remit, it asked about right-wing extremist and left-wing extremist actors who had used violence or were prepared to do so. The result is a snapshot of the potential for violence of the two scenes. This survey is only of limited comparability with the data published in 'Switzerland's Security 2014'. Despite this methodological limitation, it is safe to assume that the two scenes have decreased in size in recent years. It is also evident that in the left-wing extremist scene, there is a clearer distinction than was previously the case between groups prepared to use violence and moderate sympathisers.

The FIS puts the number of right-wing extremists in Switzerland who are prepared to use violence at around 350. Approximately a quarter to a third of these are not only prepared to use violence but have actually engaged in violence. The biggest numbers of right-wing extremists prepared to use violence were identified in the cantons of Aargau, Bern, Geneva, Zurich, Waadt, Wallis, Schwyz and St. Gallen. Right-wing extremism still tends to be a phenomenon more associated with rural areas.

The number of left-wing extremists in Switzerland who are prepared to use violence is again an estimate; it is put at around 1,000. Approximately a third of these can be seen as having actually engaged in violence. The most notable centres are Zurich, Geneva, Bern, Basel-City and Lucerne, as most left-wing extremists are based in urban environments. However, left-wing extremists may also be active in rural areas, in particular in the anti-fascist movement.

Proliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and the goods necessary for their production continues to pose a threat to security in many regions of the world. Switzerland, as a major exporter of dual-use goods, has a particular responsibility here to work to prevent proliferation. The implementation of the framework agreement with Iran continued in 2017, but progress toward the normalisation of economic relations is still hesitant. Developments in North Korea's weapons of mass destruction programmes have maintained their momentum. The country's proliferation activities are moving beyond the regional context and becoming a global threat. This has changed the rules of the game for dealing with an illegitimate nuclear weapons programme outside the recognised nuclear-weapon states. Chemical weapons were used in Syria again in 2017. Terrorist groups are showing a clear interest in obtaining expertise on weapons of mass destruction; terrorist groups have increased their capabilities to use chemical weapons, in particular. The threat posed by proliferation is also drawing closer to Switzerland.



SITUATION

North Korea

North Korea is pressing ahead with the expansion of its missile and nuclear weapons programme. In September 2017, the country tested its largest nuclear explosive device to date. Comparison of the seismic data with previous tests puts the yield of the explosion at around 300 kilotons. Following the failed attempt in 2016, it can be assumed that in this case a two-stage thermonuclear weapon was tested successfully. The observed yield of the explosion probably also represents approximately the maximum possible for a test on the Punggye-ri site which has so far been used.

In 2017, North Korea also tested new types of missiles. In May, an intermediate-range missile known as the Hwasong-12 was launched successfully for the first time. This type was re-tested in August and in September. It was demonstrated to have a range of over 3,500 kilometres. In July, North Korea twice tested a Hwasong-14 missile, which is the first North Korean weapons system capable of reaching North America. The maiden flight of a Hwasong-15, which potentially has a global range, took place at the end of November. All three missiles probably use different variants of the same newly developed basic engine.

Iran

The nuclear agreement with Iran remains in force, despite contradictory signals from the USA. Iran has complied with the provisions of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and this has been confirmed several times by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. The implementation of the agreement, and in particular the normalisation of economic relations between Iran and Western countries, which have been tense for decades, is a process that will require years to be accomplished in depth. In the absence of rapid economic improvements, the Iranian regime faces the challenge of explaining this reality to its population.

In its missile programme, Iran is largely demonstrating restraint as regards its test series. The country has also declared a moratorium on the development of missiles with a range of more than 2,000 kilometres. In stark contrast to this, however, Iran employed ballistic missiles against targets in Syria in summer 2017. Compared to the well-known Scud family of rockets, the systems used here are characterised by greater accuracy and are much easier to deploy. Furthermore, a report to the Security Council by the UN Secretary-General suggests that Iran is also involved in the use of ballistic missiles from Yemen against targets in Saudi Arabia. Technical analysis of the debris in the target area following such deployment provides valuable information about the origin of individual components of the missile. These could also have been produced in the West.

Syria

Chemical weapons were again used in the Syrian civil war in 2017. Despite formal chemical disarmament in Syria, chemical weapons

and chemicals used for combat purposes are still available. Disarmament cannot prevent that the necessary know-how for the production of such substances, their handling and actual use remains available in the region of conflict. As a consequence, the capability to use chemical weapons and substances for terror attacks, including in Europe, will also remain.

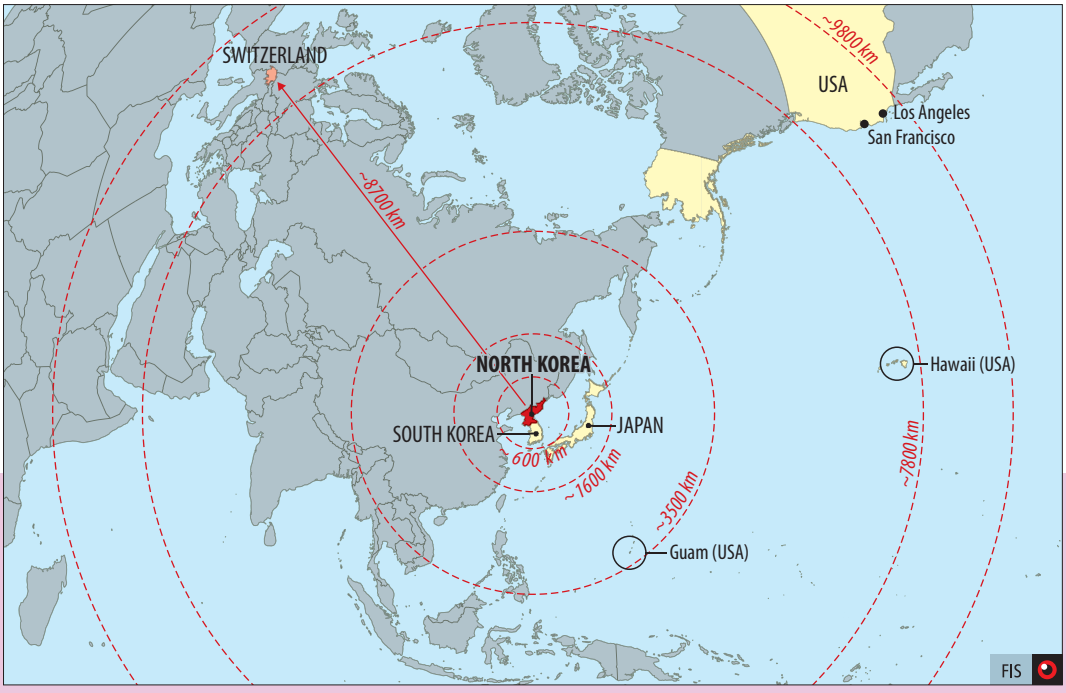
Pakistan

Pakistan is continuing the steady build up of its arsenal of nuclear weapons and the associated delivery systems. In 2017 it continued to test ballistic missiles and cruise missiles which can be equipped with nuclear warheads. Pakistan shows a great deal of interest in goods from Switzerland and is always prepared to violate the internationally agreed export control regulations, including those of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Pakistan is massively expanding its production of weapons-grade fissile material, namely plutonium and highly-enriched uranium, and continues to be reliant on special equipment, for example in the area of vacuum technology, to do so. As regards delivery systems, Pakistan is working on systems with a greater range, of up to just under 3,000 kilometres. At the same time, the country is developing delivery systems for the tactical employment of nuclear weapons and is striving to achieve a second-strike capability using sea-based systems.

ASSESSMENT

North Korean in a new dimension

Following the testing of a hydrogen bomb and the tests of the new North Korean Hwasong-12, -14 and -15 missiles, most of which have apparently been successful, the threat emanating from North Korea is moving beyond the regional context and turning into a global one. Switzerland now falls within the range of another state which can threaten it with nuclear weapons from its own sovereign territory, and moreover a state which regularly violates the norms of international law. What matters here is not just the capability to carry out a direct kinetic attack. A state that has the capability to employ nuclear weapons worldwide is also able to threaten the global information society, for example by detonating a nuclear explosive device outside the Earth's atmosphere in order to generate an electromagnetic pulse. If this were done over the west coast of America, for example, it would have a substantial effect on global data networks and would have a direct impact on everyday life in Switzerland.



OUTLOOK

Risks will become more specifically identifiable

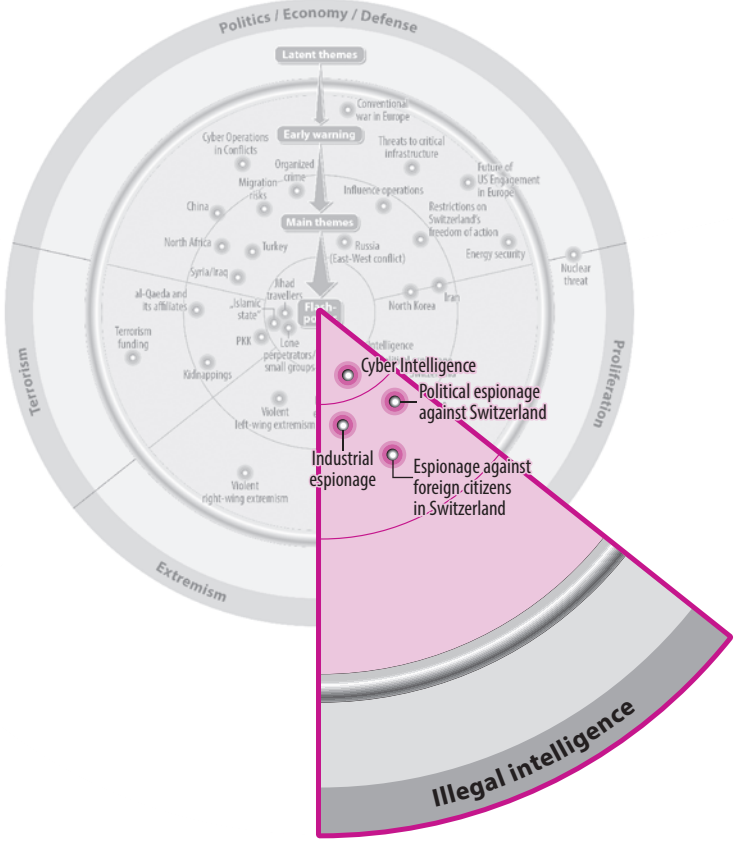
Preventing the supply of controlled goods and technologies to proliferation-relevant states and implementing the applicable embargo regulations are important challenges for Switzerland. Switzerland has excellent industrial capabilities and offers an attractive and, by international standards, open research location that is benefiting from the trend toward isolation in other regions of the world. The Swiss model combines a high degree of openness compared to other research locations with light government regulation. Switzerland thus has to find a balance between freedom and security. The FIS is therefore intensifying its efforts to seek close links with partners in industry, education and research with whom it can collaborate to protect Switzerland from the risks of proliferation activities by foreign states. This mandate is explicitly enshrined in the new Intelligence Service Act.

Switzerland is also working closely with its partners abroad. Cross-border procurement attempts by proliferating countries are regularly identified and jointly prevented.

The employment of ballistic missiles and cruise missiles in conflict regions will trigger investigations in the states concerned and will reveal information about the components used. The traces of these flows of goods will in some cases lead to producers in Western industrialised countries and will disclose the procurement channels used. Similar considerations apply where chemical substances may have been used as a means of terror. In this sense, the risks of proliferation are becoming more visible and are perceptible to a wider public. ■

Illegal intelligence

Illegal intelligence serves the interests of states and in some cases also the private interests of influential persons in these states. Conventional illegal intelligence is a set of long-established practices, which for years now have been supplemented by cyber espionage tools. It can be assumed that there is a constant need to procure and update information, occasionally accentuated by circumstances in which more specific or more detailed information is required. Information is needed in the political, economic and military spheres. Espionage does not just violate the sovereignty of the states in which or against which it is conducted: the data outflow causes direct or indirect damage, members of diaspora communities under surveillance 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

Who is spying?

A number of factors lead to illegal intelligence activities in Switzerland. Switzerland is either the target or merely the setting in which they take place. Switzerland is a target due to the high technological standard of Swiss industry and the quality of its research, as well as its status as a financial centre and a marketplace for energy and commodities trading. Another reason is the presence of parts of the UN and other international bodies based in Switzerland. There are also various diaspora communities in Switzerland, which remain a target of activities by their home countries' intelligence services.

This description alone implies that espionage is a ubiquitous phenomenon. For example, there are around a dozen states that conduct illegal intelligence against their own nationals in Switzerland. How far such activities can go is illustrated by the example of the alleged kidnapping of a Vietnamese citizen in Berlin: he is said to have been abducted to his home country in an intelligence operation in order to bring him to trial there.

All states pursue political, military and economic goals. In order to do so, they deploy intelligence services, which sometimes operate using illegal methods, i.e. methods prohibited in the target country. Swiss interests abroad may also become the target of such measures. There are therefore good reasons why it is not possible to come up with a complete list of the state actors which might at least begin to develop espionage activities in Switzerland or against Swiss interests abroad. However, from the point of view of counterespionage there are around half a dozen states meriting particular attention.

One of these states relies heavily on intelligence officers who are in Switzerland under diplomatic cover. According to well-founded suspicions or confirmed intelligence, about a quarter to a third of the persons in the diplomatic service of this state are intelligence service employees. They can be found in all diplomatic ranks, with the exception of the most senior. In addition (and this is also true of other states), intelligence officers are travelling to Switzerland for operational activities. Switzerland may be the target country of the operation concerned, or merely be the springboard for activities in another European country.

Who is being spied on?

Illegal intelligence is carried out using a tried and trusted package of tools and procedures. Cyber espionage supplements this set; it is supporting conventional illegal intelligence and vice versa. Information is gradually collected about a person, for example, in order to be able to use that person as a source. The person may be aware of this and may even be remunerated for it, but this will not necessarily be the case.

The German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution announced in December 2017 that more than 10,000 recruitment attempts by Chinese intelligence services had been identified in a nine-month period. And

it had not even looked at all the channels, but only one: social networks such as Linkedin. Researchers, civil servants and politicians were contacted via fake profiles and were asked for reports in return for money - sometimes amounting to thousands of euros. Afterwards, if the Chinese side was still interested, invitations to China followed, for example to a conference. Here too, the costs were paid by the inviting party. The figure published by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution shows that this is a mass phenomenon; however, the hard work put in has not led to any further consequences. For one thing, the state actors simply deny the truth of the statements, and for another, one cannot arrest or convict a fake LinkedIn profile or expel it from the country. The figures also show the extent of the resources the opposite side is prepared to deploy - countermeasures such as the identification of individual profiles as fake would only shift the phenomenon elsewhere and would have no effect. The most effective methods here are education and sensitisation.

Cyber espionage

An 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 can normally be raised only by states and not by criminals. As a rule, an APT thus points to 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 five or six 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 considerable resources to develop and carry out cyber attacks for at least twenty years.

Russian hacker groups

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 from Russia

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

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

www.ndb.admin.ch/wirtschaftsspionage
www.ndb.admin.ch/espionnage-economique
www.ndb.admin.ch/spionaggio-economico

have been most prominent. Reports of large-scale cyber attacks which Russia is thought to have been behind 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 indicate 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, disinformation and sabotage campaigns have also been observed. Data which has been stolen has been published on the Internet or disclosed to the media by the perpetrators. All the hacker groups associated with Russia have the following in common: they use highly complex malware, target their actions and pursue the political and economic interests of the Russian government.

Chinese hacker groups

The FIS has detected increased activity against Swiss interests by Chinese hacker groups. Chinese hacker groups with alleged links to Chinese security authorities have been acting in an increasingly targeted way for some years now. They focus particularly on export-oriented Swiss companies and on international organisations based in Switzerland.

North Korean hacker groups

Hacker groups with links to North Korean security authorities have attracted a lot of attention in the last two to three years. Hacker groups from North Korea do not exclusively engage in conventional cyber espionage with the aim of procuring information, but also use cyber tools to try to generate foreign currency for the North Korean state. The FIS has also identified activities by North Korean hacker groups in Switzerland.

ASSESSMENT

Illegal intelligence

Illegal intelligence serves the interests of the states that conduct it, and in some cases 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, and possibly only temporary, need for information. Information of political, economic or 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.

Some states have a lasting interest in illegal intelligence activities in and against Switzerland. They carry out frequent, high-quality attacks on Swiss interests. Besides their political interests, in other cases they either pursue primarily economic goals or target the diaspora communities. As these states are aiming to increase their power projection, it can be assumed that intelligence activities will continue to increase.

Cyber espionage

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

Damage as an aim of intelligence service activity

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 inflicting damage on opponents. For example, attempts to intimidate, politicise or even polarise diaspora communities and to incite people against one another can disturb the peace in the host country. From the Swiss point of view, these run counter to the functions of the state, which is responsible for securing the fundamental rights and freedom of its inhabitants and for guaranteeing security and order. In addition, intelligence activities are used for influence operations (particularly by Russia) and provide states with a range of opportunities, up to and including sabotage.

The intelligence services play a role in Russia's influence operations aimed at achieving power political goals. They have the necessary

resources and capabilities to act either within the framework of a larger campaign or in a mostly autonomous way. In the tradition of the Soviet Union, influence operations conducted by intelligence services are referred to as 'active measures'. The main focus is on the recruitment by the intelligence services of so-called influence agents. These are handled in the same way as sources, but are primarily used for the dissemination rather than the procurement of information. This information does not necessarily have to be false. By skilfully blending facts, false information and opinions, the desired narratives can be disseminated in a way that is tailored to requirements. The portfolio of active measures also includes the leaking of information procured using intelligence tools. This can be used, for example, to discredit undesirable persons or organisations. Allegedly leaked information may also be made up or falsified. For the work of influence agents to be effective, it usually requires coordination with other agencies, such as teams that design narratives, plan actions or distribute information themselves over the Internet. The target groups of the active measures often do not realise that they are the focus of an influence operation.

Sabotage operations may, for ecample, use targeted attacks on industrial control systems. These are still rare. So far, only five malware complexes that have been specifically aimed at industrial control systems are known. Probably the most famous in this context is Stuxnet, a malware that was discovered in 2010. It was used to destroy centrifuges in uranium enrichment plants in Iran. Mention should also be made of the attacks on the power supply in Ukraine in December 2016, using the Crashoverride malware. This was the first incident where a malware program designed to attack a power network was actually used. However, such attacks have so far been used very conservatively. This is probably due to the fact that this type of operation always causes incalculable damage, which also makes the consequences for the attacker unpredictable. For this reason, this type of tool is used for targeted attacks on specific system configurations, which makes the attack correspondingly elaborate. The most recent example is the Triton/Trisis malware, which was aimed at the security control system of a target in the Middle East.

Increasingly, industrial control systems and their operators are being spied on, possibly in order to gain an overview of ways in which they could be manipulated and to be prepared for all future eventualities. The prime example here is the attacks involving the Dragonfly 2.0 complex. At the end of June 2014, an espionage and sabotage preparation campaign called Dragonfly came to light, which was targeted at Western industrial installations and energy suppliers. The follow-up campaign, Dragonfly 2.0, was uncovered in 2017. This version also involves sending e-mails with malware attached to selected employees in the target company. In addition, the repertoire of this espionage complex once again includes targeted infections via websites and trojans. The campaign is primarily aimed at targets in the US and Europe.

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

OUTLOOK

The situation is likely to deteriorate

Intelligence activities will continue to be carried out in Switzerland and against Swiss interests. As already mentioned, the expansion of individual states' endeavours to project power will intensify these activities still further. Assuming that Switzerland maintains its current position, economic, political and military interests will continue to be the target of intelligence activities. In the case of some states, only their democratisation or fundamental pacification will cause them to refrain from exerting pressure on their own nationals abroad.

However, the description and assessment of the situation also show that, in addition to counterintelligence measures, prevention – and thus the behaviour of individuals and groups – is particularly important.

Switzerland will continue to be a prime target of cyber attacks by states or by state-sponsored perpetrators. Swiss interests may be directly affected, e.g. through attacks on the federal administration, on Swiss companies or on international organisations based in Switzerland. However, IT infrastructures in Switzerland may also be deliberately misused in order to attack targets abroad.

Defensive measures

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, then these will be examined using instruments of criminal law. The criminal offences in question require public prosecution, i.e. no criminal complaint by a victim is necessary, as illegal intelligence infringes upon government interests. However, these 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.

Prevention

Despite the range of counterintelligence measures, prevention remains one of the most important tools for countering espionage. Besides the work of the authorities entrusted with prevention, it consists mainly in awareness-raising and training, firstly regarding 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 source becomes deeply ensnared or at least before they have rendered themselves criminally liable.

Over the past few years, the FIS has taken a large number of measures to raise awareness, principally as part of the Prophylax prevention and awareness-raising programme, and to assist companies, universities and research. It will continue with these activities and will develop them further. In addition, it will draw the attention of the Swiss population as a whole to the problem, help everyone to identify illegal intelligence activities at an early stage, where possible, and demonstrate measures to protect against them. The short film 'Targeted', which was produced two years ago, is thus still topical. Like other FIS material, it is publicly available on the Internet. ■

The Internet of Things

In the future, anything that can be connected will also be linked to the Internet. This somewhat exaggerated statement gives an idea of how the Internet will develop over the next few years, which, besides all the convenience it will bring, will undoubtedly generate much debate about security. More and more everyday objects will in future be connected to the Internet. This is why the first manufacturers are already talking about the Internet of Everything, which will integrate people, processes, devices and data into an all-encompassing network. The oft-quoted refrigerator which orders the milk itself is a good example of this. In order to be able to perform this task, however, it requires access to personal data – it would be a nuisance if it did not know that the owners had planned a several-week-long holiday. However, the refrigerator is just one of many examples. There has been a boom in recent years, especially in the area of building management and lighting control. The Internet of Things will in future be much more than it is today. According to Gartner analysts, in 2016 more than six billion 'things' were already connected to the net. This number is expected to increase to over 20 billion by 2020. And the opportunities are far from exhausted. These will increasingly become part of our everyday life and will also influence it.

As the opportunities of the Internet (of Things) grow, we will also be concerned about the risks. Fundamental questions will arise, covering not only maintenance and security standards, but also, in particular, data protection issues. The main purpose of the Internet of Things is to make automatically optimised decisions based on sensor data. Accordingly, an enormous number of data records will be created, all of which will have to be protected. Staying with the refrigerator, the data collected not only gives an interesting insight into the household's milk consumption, but also shows the overall usage of the refrigerator. Such data can be used for marketing purposes, for example. In extreme cases, it could also be used to determine whether a household's eating habits are deemed to be healthy or unhealthy, which could be used, for example, by health insurance companies as an indicator for calculating premiums.

The Internet of Things differs substantially from conventional information and communication technology (ICT): in contrast to computers, Internet-capable household devices are often secured against unauthorised access only to a limited extent, which is why they can be infected with malware by attackers. Firstly, these devices can in many cases be accessed using the default passwords, as these are often not changed after installation or cannot even be changed at all. Secondly, updating the software used is a fundamental problem: the update process is seldom regulated and rarely automated. This gives rise to numerous challenges that will intensify over the next few years: in contrast to conventional ICT devices, which are in service on average for only a few years, Internet devices may be in use for up to ten years or more.

Attackers exploit this by using the Internet of Things for attacks on availability, so-called DDoS attacks. A noteworthy example here is the Mirai botnet, which

infects devices on the Internet of Things and came to light following the attack on the Internet service provider Dyn. Mirai is malware targeting Linux, which is the main operating system used in devices connected to the Internet of Things.

Intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation

To perform its tasks, the FIS is reliant on effective tools for gathering information. The Intelligence Service Act (ISA), which came into force on 1 September 2017, allows the FIS to use new 'intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation'. In early 2014, the Federal Council stated in its memorandum on the ISA that, based on the threat situation at that time, such intelligence-gathering measures would apply in around ten cases a year. However, each case may involve multiple such measures being taken: thus, for example, one person may have multiple telecommunication connections monitored, their vehicle tracked and their hotel room searched. The cases concerned are ones which present a particularly serious threat in the areas of terrorism, illegal intelligence, proliferation, attacks on critical infrastructure or the protection of other important national interests as defined under Article 3 ISA.

Domestic intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation are (Article 26 ISA):

- surveillance of postal and telecommunications traffic in accordance with the Swiss Federal Act on the Surveillance of Postal and Telecommunications Traffic;
- the use of tracking equipment to determine the location and movements of persons or objects;
- the use of surveillance equipment to intercept or record private conversations or to observe or record incidents in locations which are not public or not generally accessible;
- the penetration of computer systems and computer networks in order to gather information that is present in or transmitted from these or to disrupt, prevent or slow down access to information in cases where the computer systems and computer networks are used for attacks on critical infrastructure;
- the searching of premises, vehicles or containers in order to obtain items or information that are present in them or information transmitted from them.

Intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation must in each case be authorised by the Federal Administrative Court and approved by the head of the DDPS following consultation with the head of the FDFA and the head of the FDJP. They are subject to close monitoring by the Independent Supervisory Authority which oversees intelligence activities and by the Control Delegation. The FIS implements the measures in 'operations', which correspond to the cases referred to above. For source protection reasons, neither the types of measures used nor the number of persons af-

fected by an operation can be made public.

However, the FIS can publish the number of operations/cases in which intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation have been used – broken down by individual area of activity – as well as the number of individual measures requiring authorisation which have been approved for each operation.

Domestic operations involving measures requiring authorisation

(1 September to 31 December 2017)

Area of activity (Art. 6 ISA)	Operations	Measures
Terrorism	2	13
Illegal intelligence	2	27
NBC proliferation	0	0
Attacks on critical infrastructure	0	0
Total	**4**	**40**

Operations: operations as part of which intelligence-gathering measures requiring authorisation were carried out.

Measures: approved between 1 September 2017 and 31 December 2017. Extensions of previously authorised intelligence-gathering measures are not counted separately.

Thus in 2017, measures requiring authorisation were used in a total of four operations/cases.

Cable reconnaissance

The Intelligence Service Act has also given the FIS the powers to conduct cable reconnaissance (Article 39 ff. ISA) in order to gather information about incidents abroad that are of relevance to security. As cable reconnaissance is for the purpose of gathering information about other countries, it is not in principle designed to be used as a domestic intelligence-gathering measure requiring authorisation. However, cable reconnaissance can be carried out only with the participation of Swiss telecommunication service providers, which must be presented with a legally valid order to forward the relevant data flows to the Swiss Army's Centre for Electronic Operations. The ISA therefore provides for a similiar authorisation and approval procedure in Article 40 f.

No cable reconnaissance applications were made by the FIS in the first four months following the entry into force of the ISA. The technical capabilities for cable reconnaissance were still being developed at the end of 2017.

Definitions

Operation

FIS operations are defined in Article 12 of the Federal Intelligence Service Ordinance (FISO): 'The FIS can, for limited periods, conduct as operations interconnected procedures which are for the purposes of information gathering as defined under Article 6 ISA and which exceed normal intelligence-gathering activities in terms of importance, scope, cost or secrecy. These must be formally opened and closed and separately documented.' Measures requiring authorisation are always applied for by the FIS within the framework of operations and are implemented if authorisation and approval are granted. Colloquially, an operation corresponds to the terms 'case' or 'case cluster' used prior to the vote on the ISA.

Intelligence-gathering measure requiring authorisation

For the purposes of these statistics, a measure requiring authorisation is a measure as defined under Article 26 ISA against a person. In telecommunications surveillance, each addressing resource monitored counts as one measure (if, for example two mobile phone numbers of the same person are monitored, this counts as two measures); the same applies if, for example, a tracking device is used and telecommunications surveillance is carried out on one person (also two measures).

Cable reconnaissance order

Cable reconnaissance orders are intelligence requirements for gathering information about significant security-related incidents abroad in relation to a particular reconnaissance area as defined in Article 39 ff. ISA and Article 25 FISO. Only cross-border signals from cable networks may be recorded.

List of abbreviations

APT ..... Advanced Persistent Threat
AQAP ..... Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
AQIM ..... Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AQIS ..... al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
FDFA ..... Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
Fedpol ..... Federal Office of Police
FISO ..... Federal Intelligence Service Ordinance / Nachrichtendienstverordnung
FSB ..... Federal Security Service (Russia)
FSO ..... Federal Protective Service (Russia)
GU (previously GRU) ..... Military Intelligence Service (Russia)
HTS ..... Hayat Tahrir al-Sham / Organisation for the Liberation of the Levant
ICT ..... Information and communication technology
ISA ..... Intelligence Service Act / Nachrichtendienstgesetz
ISKP ..... Khorasan Province of the 'Islamic State'
JCPOA ..... Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MELANI ..... Reporting and Analysis Centre for Information Assurance
MGIMO ..... Moscow State Institute of International Relations
MROS ..... Money Laundering Reporting Office Switzerland
NATO ..... North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PJZ ..... Police and Justice Centre / Polizei- und Justizzentrum (Zurich)
PKK ..... Kurdistan Workers' Party
PYD ..... Democratic Union Party
SAR ..... Suspicious activity reports
SSN ..... Swiss Security Network / Sicherheitsverbund Schweiz
SVR ..... Foreign Intelligence Service (Russia)
TAK ..... Kurdistan Freedom Falcons
WEF ..... World Economic Forum
YPG ..... People's Protection Units

Editor

Federal Intelligence Service FIS

Deadline

February/march 2018

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Distribution

BBL, Verkauf Bundespublikationen,
CH-3003 Bern
www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch
Art.-No. 503.001.18eng
ISSN 1664-4719

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Federal Intelligence Service FIS, 2018

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