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Press background information on Situation Report 2013 of the Federal Intelligence Service (FIS)

None of the mentioned threats is so important as to be the overriding focus of attention. Looked at in the long term, and compared with very many other countries, Switzerland finds itself in a very stable and peaceful situation. Although the threats and dangers to Switzerland which have been identified are real, they could pose a threat to the state as a whole only under unfavourable conditions which at the present time do not apply.

In the **strategic environment**, the European debt crisis and the Arab Spring are calling long-held certainties into question, and Russia is once again playing a more important role in dealings with Europe, particularly as an 'energy superpower'.

Switzerland is still **not a priority target for jihad-motivated attacks**. However, Swiss citizens are at greater risk than before of politically- or terrorist-motivated kidnappings abroad. Especially in conflict zones in Islamic regions, they, like others, could at any time be the victims of kidnappings or of jihadist acts of violence or terror. Across Europe, jihad-motivated travel to conflict zones is still on the rise.

For years, intelligence services throughout Europe have been observing persons who travel to war zones to join a jihad or terrorist movement. Some of these **jihadist motivated travellers** participate in acts of war, others give logistic support to jihad organisations. Others again undergo training in camps with the intention to practise what they have learnt on location or in Western states. While several hundred jihadist motivated travellers from Europe could be established over the past ten years less than 20 known journeys were made from Switzerland to jihad areas (of which a third were confirmed - the rest, unconfirmed, may have been language-based visits). Particular attention is given to persons returning who have attended a jihad training camp in a jihad area or participated in combat. There is the risk that such homecomers will carry out attacks in Europe or serve as examples for potential jihadists. Cases like the attacker of Toulouse have impressively demonstrated this danger. In Switzerland there have been no established cases to date of such homecomers. Up to now, it has been not been possible to confirm the evidence.

Several cases of jihad motivated travel from Switzerland to **Somalia** have been confirmed. Assessed by the number of confirmed cases and unconfirmed evidence Somalia is the most frequent destination for jihad sympathisers from Switzerland.

With regard to **Afghanistan/Pakistan**, a classic jihad region, the case of Moez Garsallaoui has to be mentioned, who was killed in Pakistan in the autumn of 2012. There are no other confirmed cases of such travel between Switzerland and Afghanistan/Pakistan.

The **Syrian** conflict is increasingly attracting foreign fighters and is gaining in importance as a destination for jihad sympathisers, not least because it is relatively easy to travel to Syria. However, not all travel to Syria is motivated by jihad. Although the FIS has found individual cases relating to jihadist motivated travel from Switzerland to Syria, the information does not yet allow us to speak of confirmed cases.

Unimpeded or even increasing travel from Switzerland could considerably damage **Switzerland's reputation**. Switzerland might serve as preparation and recruitment area for terrorists. On the other hand, people with a direct relationship to Switzerland might be involved in terrorist acts. This could in the long term increase the danger of attacks in Switzerland and/or against Western targets abroad.

Within the framework of the legal resources at its disposal, the FIS is observing the situation in order to recognise in good time networks that radicalise and recruit adherents as well as potential jihad motivated travellers and homecomers.

The potential for violence among **right- and left-wing extremists** persists, but on the whole does not threaten Switzerland's internal security. The situation as regards left-wing extremism has eased slightly, and it is likely that punitive measures such as arrests and convictions have contributed to this. In right-wing extremist circles, clandestine behaviour has increased. It cannot yet be foreseen what the consequences of this will be.

The **proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems** is one of the great problems of our time. Iran and North Korea are still the main focus of concern. The international sanctions against Iran have been tightened dramatically. This also increases the risk of attempts to circumvent them in breach of Swiss and international law.

Illegal intelligence operations continue to be carried out in Switzerland, with IT resources increasingly often one of the means via which information is being leaked.

Because the way in which Switzerland functions is dependent on an ever more closely interconnected network of information and communications facilities, **cyber risks** are rising markedly. These facilities offer many opportunities for misuse, manipulation and damage, particularly as they can be used largely anonymously and with relatively little outlay.

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Link to the report:

http://www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/vbs/en/home/documentation/publication/snd_publ.html