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BRIEFS

BRAZIL: First Foreign Policy Reformation May Spark Unrest in Middle East

Summary: President-elect Jair Bolsonaro has confirmed his campaign promise to move Brazil's embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which would likely aggravate the existing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Development: On 2 November, Bolsonaro confirmed that Brazil will move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to respect Israel's sovereignty. The Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) condemned Bolsonaro's plan to move the location of its embassy, upholding a past statement that the OIC will take political or economic action against countries who choose to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The OIC is the second largest inter-governmental organization behind the United Nations and the largest organization of Muslim states. Brazil will follow the United States and Guatemala as the third country to move its embassy to Jerusalem.

Analysis: Brazil's embassy relocation will likely spark more tensions in the Middle East and could undermine Palestinian hopes for sovereignty. Additionally, his decision to relocate the embassy most likely reflects his desire to align himself with foreign leaders who share similar world views, such as the President or Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who congratulated Bolsonaro on his victory and encouraged Bolsonaro's plan to relocate its embassy. Bolsonaro will likely take advantage of all recognition and support gained through building stronger ties with Israel as a key actor in the Middle East.

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CAMEROON: Suspected Separatist Abductions May Prompt Government Support

Summary: Recent separatist violence, including their alleged student kidnappings, may drive Anglophones to seek government protection despite the social consequences.

Development: On 5 November, unknown assailants abducted at least 78 students and several faculty from the Presbyterian Secondary School in Bamenda. Government officials suspect separatists of the kidnapping after a video leaked of the students claiming the "Amba boys" abducted them. The "Amba boys" refers to Ambazonia, a self-proclaimed Anglophone state. This suspected separatist kidnapping follows a string of violence against those who ignored separatist calls to set curfews and close schools in Anglophone regions to protest ongoing marginalization of the Anglophone minority. Conflict in western Cameroon began in 2016 when Anglophone protests against government policies escalated to violence.

Analysis: Continued separatist violence could result in widening support for Cameroonian military intervention in the west and even a schism among Anglophones. Although military

intervention in the past had garnered more Anglophone support for separatists, the recent abductions, murders, and brutality by separatists against other Anglophones may have weakened Anglophone support for separatism. Anglophones fearing separatist violence may welcome government protection and even begin supporting the government over separatists should the government intervene to stop brutality. Any future separatist violence on citizens will likely further drive a wedge between separatists and other Anglophones.

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GERMANY: Woman's Rape Sparks Immigration Debate

Summary: A recent incident involving seven Syrian men raping a German woman will very likely lead to an increase in debate over Germany's immigration policies, possibly influencing the vote on lifting the current deportation ban.

Development: On 5 November, conservative politicians in Germany called for the government to lift the ban on deportations to Syria. This follows a rape incident that occurred in mid-October in the city of Freiburg in which seven Syrian men and one German man are suspected of raping an 18-year-old female student. After the incident, Mathias Middelberg, a domestic policy spokesperson for the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), called for an end to the complete ban on deporting Syrians. Lawmakers instituted the ban in 2012 to protect the refugees from the dangers of returning to their war-torn countries but will put it up for review at the end of 2018 and requires the unanimous vote of nine CDU members and seven Social Democrats (SPD) to lift it. Many in Germany, including the Alternative for Germany (AfD), have long been calling for the deportation of Syrian refugees and other immigrant groups.

Analysis: The rape incident will most likely again stir up an anti-refugee sentiment across Germany. AfD, a party with a strong anti-immigration platform, will almost certainly use this incident to cement itself as the leading opposition party. However, given the requirement for a unanimous vote, it will not likely pass because the SPD has little incentive to cooperate. The SPD's progressive platform, its status as a minority party, and its significant political losses over the last 18 months will likely drive its members to vote against lifting the ban. Only serious pressure from voters could cause the SPD to vote to lift ban. In the unlikely event that Germany lifts the ban, then deportation trials will probably immediately begin for many Syrians. If the vote does not go through, then it will likely bolster AfD's anti-immigration rhetoric and attract more supporters, and potentially weaken the CDU's power and influence on the political stage.

[Paris Lorts]

IRAQ: International Attention to Mass Graves of IS Victims to Incite Investigation

Summary: Growing international attention to recently discovered mass graves in Iraq may prompt Baghdad to begin an investigation to help build legal cases against and convict members of IS and provide relief to the victims' families.

Development: On 6 November, the UN Human Rights Office released a report on the findings of over 200 mass graves in northern and western Iraq territory, formerly controlled by the Islamic State (IS). Iraq has excavated 28 graves and recovered the remains of 1,258 bodies, and the UN believes there could be over 12,000 people buried at the sites. IS controlled this region from 2014 to 2017, placing the inhabitants under strict Sharia Law and killing those that opposed IS rule. In the report, the UN made recommendations to the Iraqi government on preserving the proof of these deaths to better identify the victims and collect evidence of potential war crimes such as crimes against humanity and genocide. International law requires the Iraqi government to follow certain procedures after grave site discoveries.

Analysis: With pressure from international attention and the responsibility to abide by International Law, the Iraqi government will likely follow these guidelines closely and begin investigating the deaths immediately to potentially prosecute the IS members responsible. Iraq will likely spend years recovering remains from the burial sites as the body count continues to rise, and predictions set the death toll at tens of thousands of people. Additionally, Iraq may discover some mass graves containing victims of Saddam Hussein's rule, making the preservation of evidence and thorough investigation even more important to identify the proper offenders. Within the last year, Iraq and close allies detained thousands of suspected IS fighters, which may now face potential genocide charges from evidence recovered at the grave sites. Because the victims' families are pushing for answers and harsh action, Iraq's counterterrorism courts will likely favor execution sentences for the convicted IS members once convicted.
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JAPAN: Seeks a Strong Bilateral Relationship with India Amid China's Regional Presence

Summary: Japan strengthened its relationship with India by advancing its economic and security ties likely as a counterweight to China's growing power in the Indo-Asia region.

Development: On 29 October, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe agreed to strengthen economic and security ties between Japan and India, with Tokyo agreeing to extend new loans for seven projects in India worth \$2.8 billion. One loan will fund a 500-kilometer railway project connecting Mumbai and Ahmedabad worth at least \$1.3 billion and another loan worth \$3.5 billion will fund road construction in southern India. Modi endorses Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy as Abe pledged to assist countries in the region in developing high-quality infrastructure to advocate mutual economic prosperity.

During the meeting, Abe and Modi also discussed an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement that would allow Japanese and Indian military forces to share services and supplies.

Analysis: Japan agreed to strengthen its economic and security ties with India likely as a strategy to counter China's growing economic and military presence in the Indo-Asia region. Although Abe agreed with Chinese President Xi Jinping to improve China-Japan relations, Abe probably hopes its investments and economic aid to India will drive out Chinese competition in the region and hamper Chinese growth. Japan's decision to advance its military ties with India likely indicates its desire to enhance India's security amid such strong Chinese presence, as India has direct access to the Indian Ocean, a strategic waterway for China's One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR), which involves building Chinese ports and other infrastructure around the Indian Ocean. India may see this as a potential threat to its security and its sovereignty and also strongly opposes OBOR—perhaps further elucidating Japan's motivation in improving India's military and security to counter such activities. Ultimately, the agreement will likely set up for a strong bilateral relationship between Japan and India built partly on inhibiting Chinese expansion in the Indo-Asia region.

[Gabriel-Michael Longboy]

[JAPAN: Okinawa Governor Will Visit US to Gain Public Support on US Base Dispute](#)

Summary: In a recent interview, Okinawan Governor Denny Tamaki indicated intentions to visit the US to spread awareness on Tokyo and Washington's plan to relocate Futenma Air Station in Okinawa. His new strategy of using public pressure will probably not bring about direct change, as the base's relocation lies in both Tokyo's and Washington's best interests.

Development: On 31 October, Tamaki announced plans to visit the US in November to spread awareness of Okinawa's opposition to Tokyo and Washington's plan to relocate the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station in Okinawa to a more rural part of the prefecture. The Okinawan government has opposed the plan since Tokyo and Washington agreed to it in 1996, and Tamaki and his predecessor have argued that the US should remove the base from Okinawa completely. Many Okinawan residents view the US military presence in Okinawa negatively due to past incidents of US soldiers engaging in unlawful behavior such as rape and vehicle hit-and-runs. Tamaki said he does not plan to meet with the President during his visit to the US. Five days prior to Tamaki's announcements, the Okinawa government voted to hold a non-binding referendum on the base relocation to properly gauge public opinion on the issue in Okinawa.

Analysis: After he failed to stop the plan using legal action, Tamaki appears to have shifted his focus to using public pressure to resolve the dispute, but his visit to the US will likely not significantly impact the outcome of the base relocation dispute unless he meets with US government officials. Additionally, Tamaki may have difficulty gaining widespread attention in the US, but his visit will likely spread awareness of the issue across Japan. Considering the largely negative popular sentiment in Okinawa concerning the plan, the referendum's results will

likely put more pressure on Tokyo than Tamaki's visit to the US and may encourage Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to resolve this issue with Tamaki diplomatically rather than ignore the Okinawan opposition. Regardless, the Japanese government will probably deny Tamaki's desire to remove the base entirely because its strategic location in Okinawa benefits both Tokyo's and Washington's interests in monitoring activity the East China Sea as well as the South China Sea. [Brandon Nepute]

RUSSIA: Teenager Bombs FSB Office in Arkhangelsk

Summary: A Russian teenager's suicide attack wounded three Federal Security Service (FSB) employees. The resulting investigation may lead to increased online and physical security in other Russian cities.

Development: On 31 October, 17-year-old local student Mikhail Zhlobitsky detonated an explosive device in the office of Russia's main security agency FSB in the northern city of Arkhangelsk, injuring three FSB employees and killing Zhlobitsky. This event follows the 17 October school shooting in Crimea. Russia's Investigative Committee opened an investigation following the incident but did not announce any motives for the attack amid speculation over Zhlobitsky's social media identity and political affiliation. The FSB security agency oversees Russia's border guard services, counterterrorism, and counter-intelligence. Controversy followed the agency throughout the year over cases involving interrogations of leftist politicians accused of plotting violent uprisings.

Analysis: Although investigators did not announce Zhlobitsky's motives for the bombing, the controversy surrounding the FSB may possibly provide one, as social media profiles linked to Zhlobitsky identify him as an anarchist seeking revenge against the FSB for the so-called fraudulent cases. If so, the role of social media in this event may strengthen the case for stronger internet and communication controls, especially following the attack in Crimea, which also saw social media play a role in the attack. In addition to an increase in online security, Russia's security services may seek to strengthen physical security presence in other cities like Arkhangelsk to mitigate any new risk of attacks. Opposition groups in Russia may also experience new pressure and scrutiny as investigations continue.

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TUNISIA: New Security Bill may Instigate Increased Terrorist Activity

Summary: A security bill currently in consideration in the Tunisian legislature seeks to expand police powers to carry out counter-terrorism operations. This bill will likely only increase infractions against civil liberties and may lead to more terrorist incidents.

Development: On 29 October, parliament proposed to accelerate the consideration of a bill titled “Rejection of Assault against Armed Forces” in response to a suicide bombing that occurred in Tunisia hours prior, which wounded 20. The bill would grant more freedom to security forces in combating terrorism while simultaneously outlawing “denigration” of the armed forces. Several international watchdog groups pointed out that the policies in this bill are reminiscent of those from previous, more repressive regimes. Surveys revealed that a high percentage of imprisoned terrorists in Tunisia radicalized as a result of state repression.

Analysis: Although parliament intends for this bill to combat terrorism, it may have the opposite effect, as international watchdog groups long expressed concern with authoritarian practices in Tunisia possibly leading to a repressive state that could likely instigate radicalization among citizens or aggravate already active terrorist groups. While Tunisia could use the bill to enhance its national security, stifle criticism of the government, and quash dissent, such a move would likely increase indignation among the populace, leading to more terrorist activity in the future. If passed, the new legislation may contribute to more arrests and suppression, and current terrorist organizations could likely wield it as a recruitment tool to sway more people to join their cause in fighting back against a repressive government. Ultimately, parliament will likely pass the bill to protect its tourism market (which accounts for about 8% of its GDP) as such a move would probably reassure potential tourists and consumers to still visit the country in the future.

[Thomas Perkins]

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