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CHINA: Disengagement Discussions with India Unlikely to Result in Long-Term Retreat

Summary: Negotiations between Beijing and New Delhi over disengagement at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) will probably decrease tensions, although a full retreat remains unlikely.

Development: On 6 November, Chinese and Indian commanders met for the eighth round of disengagement discussions over the disputed LAC territory on the China-India border. While both sides continue to negotiate a disengagement plan, Indian and People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers endure negative 18-degree Celsius conditions awaiting orders. The plan includes enacting no-patrol zones and pulling back all tanks, artillery, and armored vehicles to their original positions. Additionally, both sides suggest the use of surveillance drones to ensure that the other follows the agreement. Chinese and Indian diplomats also negotiated a buffer zone including the entire Kailash mountain range. However, India faces disapproval from Hindus as the Kailash range serves as an important religious region. Some Chinese sources indicate that Beijing requires Indian resources to make the first move of withdrawal from the area while others deny the existence of disengagement discussions at all.

Analysis: Beijing and New Delhi will likely agree to the discussed conditions, although both sides may face backlash from their citizens, prompting the continuation of armed forces stationed at the LAC. China claims sovereignty over the disputed territory and argues that giving it up would suggest weakness to its citizens. The religious importance of the Kailash region for Hindus would almost certainly provoke backlash should the region become part of a buffer zone and may prompt New Delhi to reconsider the terms of the disengagement plan. While the plan relieves immediate tensions, the likelihood of one side or the other returning if provoked remains high. With temperatures dropping in the area, China and India almost certainly will weigh the survival of soldiers and the disputed territory. However, retreat of either side before reaching a certain mutual agreement remains highly unlikely.

[Savannah Gallop]

TAIWAN: Escalating Chinese Military Incursions May Spark Direct Conflict

Summary: China's fighter jets progressively expand its presence in Taiwan's air space, which may cause conflict.

Development: On 16 November, 39 incidents occurred since September of China's People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) aircraft intruding Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). The PLAAF incursions started on 10 September and progressively escalated in testing its military presence within the southwest corner of Taiwan's ADIZ. Chinese state media suggests that PLA fighter jets must fly over Taiwan islands to assert national unity and that Beijing will consider any harmful interference to the PLAAF aircrafts a declaration of war. Chinese media repeatedly showed videos of Chinese citizens agreeing with the actions of the PLAAF. In response, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense directed its Air Force to closely observe and intercept further threats.

Analysis: Beijing likely wishes to use small challenges to Taiwan's sovereignty to goad Taipei into responding with force, giving Beijing justification to invade Taiwan. Beijing remains cognizant of Taiwan's current undeveloped military that likely permits the continued PLAAF flyovers. Tensions will almost certainly continue to escalate while PLAAF drills continue over Taiwan. Beijing may view Taipei's directive to intercept further incursions as threatening and may use that as justification for utilizing more force.

[Clarisse Joy Absalon]

PERU: New President May Provide Short-Term Political Stability Despite Civil Unrest

Summary: The newly-elected President Francisco Sagasti will likely provide short-term political stability following a prolonged period of political and civic unrest.

Development: On 16 November, the Peruvian Congress swore in Sagasti as president of Peru. Sagasti became the third person to hold the title a week, following the ousting of previous Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra on 9 November, and the resignation of President Manuel Merino after only five days. Peru went an unprecedented 24 hours without a leader. Vizcarra held the support of the people but lacked the backing of a party in Congress, ultimately resulting in claims of corruption and leading to his resignation. Following the appointment of Merino, protestors violently clashed with law enforcement. Sagasti holds some public support following his vote against Vizcarra due to his reputation for building consensus. He remains a member of the Purple Party, which holds a small number of seats in Congress. Sagasti vowed to fight against corruption, work towards reform, and praised protestors. Some citizens began to express hope that Sagasti will bring forth more political transparency and stability.

Analysis: Sagasti will likely provide short-term political stability in Peru while citizens consider his political reform promises. However, civil unrest will probably continue if protestors see Sagasti's promises as fraudulent. Sagasti will likely have more political success than Vizcarra due to party support in Congress, slightly easing the way for the passage of reforms and other legislation. Unrest will probably continue until Congress agrees to enact reforms. Protestors may call for an earlier election to replace current members of Congress. Sagasti may also bend to protestors' demands to quickly gain support in the 2021 elections, likely resulting in more political stability leading to the elections.

[Alli McIntyre]

NIGERIA: Protests and Global Scrutiny Unlikely to Prompt Government Action

Summary: Recent protests against Nigeria's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) garnered global attention and increased international scrutiny on police brutality in Nigeria. However, the government will probably not make substantial changes despite international exposure.

Development: On 13 November, reports stated that Nigerian officials claimed to support reforms while continuing harsh crackdowns against protestors. In recent weeks, the youth inspired movement named #EndSARS received global support and recognition as the police brutality Nigerians face continues to intensify. On 20 October, videos of violence against protestors went viral on social media following the death of several protestors. Reports indicated that there were about 80 cases of torture, ill treatment, and even corrupt executions by SARS officers between January 2017 and May 2020. While the administration under President Muhammadu Buhari has promised to disband SARS multiple times, the government continues to take no action to effectively disband the brutal force or remedy its policies for the people.

Analysis: Government inaction despite the unrest will likely continue to enrage the population of Nigeria. However, protests may subside for the time being while protest leaders strategize and prepare for future protests. Further demonstrations will probably draw continued scrutiny as several world leaders condemned the Nigerian government. Regardless of the immense pressure mounting on the administration, ubiquitous government corruption will likely prevent any real civil improvements from occurring.

[Tim Fergus]

IRAN: Nuclear Developments Indicate Policy Shift, May Prompt Sanctions

Summary: Iran recently activated centrifuges in defiance of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) regulations. Tehran will almost certainly shift away from JCPOA prohibitions and further develop Iran's nuclear capabilities.

Development: On 18 November, Tehran claimed it would return to following international nuclear commitments, but the regime currently shows no indications of taking this policy stance in practice. Iran activated advanced uranium-enriching centrifuges at its underground site in Natanz. The JCPOA states Tehran may only utilize certain types of centrifuges at the Natanz site, which do not include the ones currently in use. Iran continues to breach restrictions imposed by the deal including clauses on uranium purity and enriched uranium stocks.

Analysis: Tehran will likely continue to shift away from international restrictions and further develop its nuclear program despite claims otherwise. Iran will almost certainly upgrade its centrifuge capabilities to produce increased quantities of enriched uranium. JCPOA restrictions and prohibitions will probably not deter Iran from furthering its nuclear program and the accompanying capabilities. Iran may be met with sanctions, but these will likely pose minimal impact to Tehran's ambitions.

[Max Olson]

About GSIS

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's (ERAU) Bachelor of Science in Global Security & Intelligence Studies (GSIS) degree program at our Prescott Campus blends both academic and professional studies to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become future leaders in intelligence, security, and law enforcement. The program provides students with a sound foundation in the liberal arts, including international relations, foreign languages and cultures, international law, foreign policy, political and military history, and other essential topics.

About EE

Eagle Eye Intelligence (EE) is an intelligence and research organization led by the students of the GSIS program at ERAU in Prescott, Arizona.

Dr. Philip E. Jones founded EE and Embry-Riddle's GSIS program in 2002, following a career with the Central Intelligence Agency and consulting work in international development and global security. Professor Dale R. Avery, a former career intelligence analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency and Office of the Director of National Intelligence, serves as EE's faculty advisor.

EE strives to provide actionable intelligence and analysis to its customers during the academic year. We are driven by a number of goals – continuous development, nonpartisanship, interdisciplinary studies, global awareness, and professionalism.

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Riley Coder, a senior in the GSIS program, currently serves as EE's Editor in Chief. For questions or comments, contact the team at editorsee@gmail.com or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708.

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