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SUDAN: Tensions with Ethiopia Likely to Escalate over Grand Renaissance Dam

Summary: Tensions between Sudan and Ethiopia will likely increase as talks regarding the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam (GRD) break down.

Development: On 6 February, Sudan's Irrigation Minister Yasser Abbas warned Addis Ababa that any step to fill the GRD, located on the Blue Nile near Ethiopia's border with Sudan, would threaten Sudan's national security. This follows the breakdown of talks between Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt that began in January. Relations between Addis Ababa and Khartoum have also deteriorated in recent weeks over the Al-Fashaqa border region where Ethiopian farmers cultivate fertile land claimed by Sudan. Addis Ababa continues to emphasize the importance of the GRD its economic development.

Analysis: Ethiopia's continued construction of the GRD likely indicates a desire to assert dominance in the Horn of Africa. Khartoum will almost certainly increase its presence in the Al-Fashaqa border region to deter Addis Ababa from filling the GRD, the complete construction of which may decrease the flow of the Blue Nile to Sudan and destabilize the country. The combination of Sudan's presence in the Al-Fashaqa region and the continuation of the GRD project will almost certainly result in increased tensions.

[August Kather]

UNITED KINGDOM: Harsh Criticism for Arms Sale Unlikely to Prevent Future Deals

Summary: While the UK faces harsh criticism following the recent \$1.9 billion arms deal to support Saudi Arabia's fight in Yemen, it seems unlikely to impact future arms sales as the UK continues to gain large profits from the war.

Developmental: On 9 February, the UK government approved an arms deal worth \$1.9 billion with Saudi Arabia to provide support in its fight against the Houthis rebels in Yemen, despite many Western powers' moves in recent weeks to halt further arms sales to Riyadh and promote peace talks. Some 40% of London's arms exports since 2010 went to Riyadh, with an estimated profit of \$9.3 billion since 2015, according to The Guardian. This break with other Western powers follows recent actions in London to reestablish the authority and independence of the UK in following the 2020 enactment of Brexit.

Analysis: Ongoing international pressure from Western nations will likely not prevent future arms deals between Riyadh and London. The UK will probably continue to act in its own economic interests while it recovers from the financial severance of Brexit, regardless of pressure from international powers. London will almost certainly feel that the economic boost and potential strengthened relations the deals provide will outweigh any potential concerns the deals raise, including the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

[Tim Fergus]

INDIA: Flood Likely to Prompt Stronger Climate Related Policies

Summary: A major flood in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand will almost certainly push climate-related issues into the spotlight and prompt stronger policy initiatives.

Development: On 7 February, part of a glacier in the Himalayan mountains broke off, prompting a flood that destroyed two hydroelectric power projects in Uttarakhand and killed seven people and left over 100 people missing. At the power plant on the Dhauliganga river, rescue efforts continue for workers trapped in tunnels following the flood. In 2013, landslides and floods in Uttarakhand killed thousands. Scientists are beginning to attribute the breaking of the glacier to climate change, and former Minister for Water Resources and River Development Uma Bharti had warned against placing the projects so close to the mountain range. On 9 February, Prime Minister Narendra Modi signaled interest in strengthening his stance on climate-related issues.

Analysis: The flood will likely bring greater attention to climate related issues in India and may force swift action from policy makers. Officials will likely seek to help Uttarakhand recover from this flood, especially because New Delhi may face criticism following this second major flood in Uttarakhand in recent years. The destruction of the hydroelectric power plants may place further scrutiny on government officials for ignoring warnings during the planning stages of the project. The human impact of the flood will likely serve as a rallying point for those in favor of stronger climate-related policies to gain public support.

[Alli McIntyre]

CUBA: New Stance on Private Businesses Unlikely to Significantly Change Status Quo

Summary: Due to COVID-19, Havana lifted the ban on private businesses, allowing for increased operation with some restrictions. These limitations will likely allow the Cuban government to control the amount of change while also stimulating the economy.

Development: On 7 February, Havana announced that it would lift its ban on private businesses in response to the economic downturn caused by COVID-19 and Western-imposed sanctions. However, a large number of restrictions on private enterprise remain. For example, Cubans cannot form corporations and must usually finance their business on their own, leaving the business owner liable for all risk. Even so, the international community encouraged the lifting of the ban.

Analysis: Havana's moves may have little long-term impact on the Cuban economy. The restrictions on creating corporations and receiving business loans will likely continue to inhibit the start of new business, restricting entrepreneurship to the Cuban elite. This will almost certainly ensure Havana controls the rate of change and protects its own interests. Even so, the new economic policies may help to improve relations with the West, creating the opportunity for potential foreign investment and tourism, and start to stimulate the economy without major concessions.

[Ethan Theobald]

HUNGARY: Media Censorship Likely Indicates Slide into Authoritarianism

Summary: Budapest's censoring of Klubradio, one of Hungary's few remaining opposition-led radio stations, likely indicates an increasing shift toward authoritarian rule.

Development: On 9 February, Hungarian judge Regina Antal rejected Klubradio's appeal for license reinstatement after the government-controlled Media Council revoked it last year. Klubradio's censoring removed one of the few opposition media outlets in the country. The International Press Institute condemned the Hungarian court's decision, labeling the ruling as a blow to media-pluralism in Hungary. Hungary's ranking in the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index fell 66 spots since President Viktor Orban took office in 2010.

Analysis: Klubradio's censoring will almost certainly damage both media and political pluralism in Hungary. Budapest will likely continue censoring or intimidating other forms of media-based opposition throughout the country. However, opposition groups will likely continue broadcasting either through social media, the internet, or from stations in other countries. Despite the efforts of opposition groups, Budapest's attacks against media-pluralism likely indicates a further shift into authoritarian control over political freedoms in Hungary.

[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. Currently, 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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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not represent the position Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University or the College of Security and Intelligence.

Alli McIntyre, a junior 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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