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Authors

Austin Perez
Savannah Riddles
Amalie Hansen
Erik Lechleitner



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RUSSIA: Suez Canal Blockage Likely to Lead to New Arctic Trade Route Benefits

Summary: The recent Suez Canal blockage enabled Russia to promote its Northern Sea Route (NSR), which may lead to new diplomatic opportunities and shipping efficiency.

Development: On 29 March, Russia's Energy Ministry released a statement describing the reliability, security, and competitiveness of its NSR, an infrastructure plan proposed by President Vladimir Putin which exploits increasing polar ice melt to open Arctic shipping and development. This announcement followed the six-day blockage of the Suez Canal by Rotterdam-bound *Ever Given*, halting international trade shipping routes, costing billions in lost trade revenue. In 2020, Moscow released a sweeping plan to open Arctic shipping routes including construction of new ships, mapping of natural resources in the region, and developing airports, ports, and railways in Northern Russia. Russian officials utilized the Suez Canal choke point to promote the NSR with hopes of reaching 80 million tons in shipping volume by 2024.

Analysis: The Russian Federation will likely see an increase in interest in the NSR from foreign transportation companies due to the benefits of diversifying their shipping routes. Allowing nations to access secondary or tertiary routes would most certainly serve as an alternative to the Suez Canal and allow shipping to continue in the event of another crisis. Moscow almost certainly recognizes this as a long-term project partially reliant on the continuation of global warming, making Russian interest in curbing any effects to that unlikely. The development of the NSR will most likely encourage countries interested in partnering with Russia to emerge in order to gain access to the upcoming trade route. This will likely further diplomacy with Moscow from countries that have a vested interest in shipping products as well as the potential for companies to create deals for access to the waterway.

[Austin Perez]

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: New Evidence of Ebola Relapse Likely to Affect Outbreak Contingency Plans

Summary: New research showing that a Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) man suffered a relapse infection of Ebola will likely increase the duration and magnitude of future outbreak responses.

Development: On 1 April, the New England Journal of Medicine published evidence that recovered Ebola patients can experience relapse even months after the initial infection and despite vaccination. The research follows the death of a DRC man who died of the disease after becoming reinfected and spreading it to 91 people during the current outbreak. The man received a vaccination and tested negative for the virus twice before relapsing six months later. In addition to both polymerase chain reaction tests, the man's semen underwent testing only once. Ebola can remain in semen for over a year after recovery, contributing to the risk of reinfection.

Analysis: Public perception of previously infected Ebola patients could shift out of fear, ostracizing recovered persons and discouraging them from getting tested or seeking medical treatment. Global health organizations like the Red Cross may face long-term resource demands for impacted regions after outbreak containment. Male patients may become a greater concern in future containment efforts and may need to submit to regular testing throughout the recovery period. This may unintentionally lead to discriminatory practices in medicine against women seeking care. Previously affected regions will probably experience future outbreaks of Ebola, which could result in an increase of international surveillance of countries with repeat outbreaks. This may influence the willingness of other nations to engage in trade or travel with the DRC or other nations with previously reported cases.

[Savannah Grace Riddles]

[AUSTRALIA: Russia Possibly the Foreign Actor Behind News Channel Cyberattack](#)

Summary: Moscow most likely initiated the cyberattack on Australian news network Channel 9, prior to the planned broadcast of a controversial segment investigating Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Development: On 28 March, the Australian news network, Channel 9, experienced a cyber-attack seemingly of a ransomware type. The attack, consisting of malware spreading between devices at Channel 9's Sydney headquarters, left the data and production system inaccessible and thereby prohibited it from broadcasting the show "Under Investigation" scheduled for 10 a.m. that morning. The episode intended to discuss an investigation related to Putin and his involvement in chemical assassination. No one thus far claimed responsibility for the attack, and Channel 9 states that they have yet to receive a ransom payment request. The lack of payment request likely means that a foreign actor initiated the attack for propaganda purposes, according to security professionals.

Analysis: Moscow seems most likely to have initiated the attack, as the episode of "Under Investigation" planned to investigate Putin. The spread of malware indicates that the actor had undetected access to the system for a decent amount of time in advance to the cyber-attack event taking place. The sophistication of the attack also indicates that Moscow could possibly hold responsibility as it remains home to some of the world's most skilled hackers. Canberra will almost certainly wait for confirmation of the actor's identity before taking retaliatory action.

[Amalie Hansen]

RUSSIA: Recent Troop Movements Likely Indicate Kremlin Power Play

Summary: The movement of Russian troops to the Ukrainian border suggest an attempt to pressure and intimidate Kyiv while gauging international response to the escalation.

Development: On 30 March, Russian troops and equipment began deploying to the Ukrainian border in greater than average quantities. Russian daily newspaper Kommersant news reported the Kremlin acquired thousands of flatbed rail cars with the purpose of moving much greater quantities of military equipment to the Ukrainian border. This escalation, along with the killing of four Ukrainian soldiers on 26 March, prompted Kiev to release a statement demanding Moscow cease all hostilities and calling for foreign governments to increase political and economic pressure on Russia.

Analysis: These Russian troop movements likely act as an attempt to intimidate Ukraine and to test the foreign response to an escalation. The lack of discretion in the movement of troops suggests a high confidence in the success of any action the Kremlin takes. Moscow likely hopes to assert Russian power in the region in an attempt to gain an advantage in future negotiations. Large scale military exercises will likely occur on both sides of the border in response to the escalation. Tensions will likely continue to intensify along the Russia/Ukraine border.

[Erik Lechleitner]

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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Eagle Eye Intelligence
3700 Willow Creek Rd.
Prescott, AZ 86301
eagleeyeintel.com