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## CHINA: Vaccine Efficacy Results May Disrupt Distribution Plans

**Summary:** Beijing admitted to low efficacy rates for its current COVID-19 vaccines, which will likely set back its distribution plans. Nations that accepted vaccine shipments from China may also need to change course.

**Development:** On 10 April, Director of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CCDC) Gao Fu announced China's inactivated virus COVID-19 vaccines lack the efficacy of mRNA vaccines. Gao advised that efficacy could improve by mixing doses, although Beijing has yet to approve any foreign vaccines for emergency use. The announcement breaks the trend of the CCDC warning against mRNA vaccines. After the announcement gained widespread attention, Gao reversed his original statements, saying that he only intended to speak generally about vaccines as a whole, not just Chinese vaccines. China currently relies exclusively on its own vaccines from companies like Sinovac and Sinopharm for vaccine distribution. Beijing also sent hundreds of millions of doses abroad to aid smaller, less wealthy nations.

**Analysis:** Gao likely made his initial statement to prove to the international community that China does not withhold crucial information that could impact global health. Beijing will likely continue to donate doses of its vaccines despite the new efficacy data. This will probably lead to a large variance in virus immunity between developing nations and wealthy ones. Beijing will likely approve mRNA vaccines in the coming weeks so that it may begin mixing doses for increased efficacy. The demand for mRNA vaccines will almost certainly rise after the announcement, particularly in nations that previously relied heavily on donations from China. With every negative announcement regarding COVID-19 vaccines, public trust in the CCDC and vaccines will likely diminish.

[Savannah Grace Riddles]

## JAPAN: Planned Release of Treated Radioactive Water Likely to Raise Tensions

**Summary:** Plans to release treated radioactive water will almost certainly raise domestic and international tensions, due to the unknown impact of the water.

**Development:** On 12 April, Tokyo announced plans to release treated radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean in two years. The contaminated water comes from the 2011 Fukushima nuclear plant's meltdown that resulted from a massive earthquake and tsunami. The Fukushima Daiichi plant currently collects and stores the water, but reports show that the storage will reach capacity by late 2022. Eradication of the radioactive material remains impossible despite treatment, although scientists can reduce it to disposable levels. The total amount that would remain in the water remains unknown. Environmental groups, officials from local fisheries, residents, and neighboring countries spoke out against the proposed plan, citing the unknown environmental and human impact of the decision.

**Analysis:** Tokyo will almost certainly go through with releasing treated water despite the backlash, likely raising domestic and international tensions. The plan to release the treated waters likely represents for Tokyo the lesser of two evils, with fears of what could happen should the current storage for the contaminated waters exceed its capacity. Opponents of the plan will probably call for increased research and testing on the impact of the treated water on the environment and residents prior to the official release date. Tokyo's plans to move forward despite the outcry will almost certainly increase tensions domestically, probably prompting Tokyo to quickly agree to any calls for further research that may arise. Neighboring countries may attempt to pressure Tokyo into changing its plans or delaying the release of treated waters until more information regarding its impact becomes available. Tokyo's almost certain decision to press forward with the plan for treating and releasing the water would almost certainly cause tensions to rise, especially while the amount of remaining radioactive material in the water post-treatment remains unknown.

[Alli McIntyre]

## IRAN: Nuclear Facility Sabotage Likely Israeli Attempt to Prevent Renewed JCPOA Talks

**Summary:** The Natanz Iranian nuclear facility attack likely indicates an Israeli attempt to impede Iran and disrupt the recent attempts to revive the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which put regulations on Iran's uranium enrichment program.

**Development:** On 11 April, an Iranian nuclear facility located in Natanz suffered a sabotage attack a day after publicly revealing new uranium enrichment equipment. The cyber-attack comes a day after President Hassan Rouhani publicly recognized the installment of new centrifuges, devices used to enrich uranium, at the Natanz site. In recent weeks, diplomatic efforts to discuss a renewed JCPOA deal resumed while Israel continues to voice its opposition of a return to the deal. While Jerusalem has yet to claim responsibility for the attack, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu emphasized that working against Iran remains a priority.

**Analysis:** Jerusalem probably utilized the cyber-attack to disrupt renewed JCPOA talks to prevent Tehran from improving its economic situation and limit its nuclear capabilities. Jerusalem remains the most likely saboteur as Tehran continuously voices its animosity towards the state of Israel. The announcement of new enrichment technology by Tehran most likely influenced Jerusalem to engage in preemptive defensive action.

[Tim Fergus]

## NOTHERN IRELAND: Rising Violence Unlikely to End despite Efforts for Peace

**Summary:** Violence in Belfast will almost certainly continue despite calls for peace from clergy and political officials trying to avoid a second wave of religious-based violence called The Troubles seen in Northern Ireland from the 1960's to the 1990's.

**Development:** On 9 April, in response to rising civil unrest throughout Belfast, clergy from the four most prominent religions in Northern Ireland held a service bringing together people of all faiths to promote peace. The current violence, spurred by rising tensions from Brexit and COVID-19, bares resemblance to The Troubles, threatening the durability of the Good Friday Agreement. Prominent public figures encouraged those with influence to speak out against the violence and encourage peace. An increase of youth actors contributed to the violence, encouraged by adults, and committed serious crimes including violence towards police officers.

**Analysis:** Belfast officials and church officials will almost certainly increase efforts to quell the spread of violence to avoid the appearance of another major sectarian event. An emphasis on resolving the tension by peaceful means seems unlikely due to the involvement of individuals and encouragement of youth, thus conveying a sense of impulsiveness. Furthermore, the increase in youth participation, especially in committing violent crimes against officers, indicates an anticipated defensive shift as officers and police exhaust peaceful solutions. Youth that escape the law may create religious and political shifts as they come of age and advocate their collective opinions, potentially signaling the beginning of a period of increased unrest.

[Savannah Gallop]

## TAIWAN: Beijing's Aggressive Zone Intrusions May Encourage International Support

**Summary:** As Beijing continues to intrude on Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), Taiwan will likely receive further attention and global support.

**Development:** On 10 April, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) broadcasted footage of PLA Navy's simulated "island capture" landing exercises. Taiwan also reported growing developments of PLA Air Force drone incursions in nearby islands. Despite current Chinese-Taiwan ADIZ tensions, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and other military officials oversaw the new launch of the Yushan, Taiwan's new amphibious transport dock. Taiwan is also expected to receive 400 Javelin anti-tank missiles and 42 launch systems from Western allies by 2022. International reports indicate increased reports of neighboring nations protesting Beijing's increased aggression and expansion in the South China Sea.

**Analysis:** As Taiwan continues to receive more international assistance and equipment, China will most likely attempt to block and intercept foreign aid and assistance. As Beijing continues to occupy and establish a stronger aerial and naval presence within the South China Sea, neighboring countries may attempt to force Chinese transports from their paths, indicating the potential for stronger support of Taiwan against Chinese aggression. Due to current military interactions and lingering pandemic repercussions, commercial travel between two countries will almost certainly suffer. This lack of interaction between the two countries may increase tensions among citizens which will pressure and encourage their respective governments to act.

[Clarisse Joy Absalon]

## **TURKEY: Reaffirms Commitment to Contested Maritime Deal with Libya**

**Summary:** Ankara's renewal of its commitment to a maritime deal with Tripoli will likely increase tensions with Greece and Cyprus in the eastern Mediterranean.

**Development:** On 12 April, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with Libyan Interim Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah in Ankara and reaffirmed commitment to a 2019 maritime agreement. The agreement redefines the maritime boundaries between the two countries in the Mediterranean and rights to drill for oil and natural gas, triggering protests from Greece and Cyprus. Both countries denounced the agreement, saying it was a serious breach of international law that disregarded the rights of other eastern Mediterranean countries. Erdogan said that Ankara would strengthen "solidarity and cooperation" with Libya. Erdogan also pledged to support to Libya's unity, its reconstruction, and its military. Ankara would also send 150,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses and manage a pandemic hospital in Tripoli to help the North African country battle its outbreak.

**Analysis:** The reaffirmations of this agreement almost certainly indicates Ankara's commitment to expanding its influence with Tripoli. Tripoli will likely continue to sign agreements with Ankara to ensure that it continues to receive medical and infrastructure support in the future. Greece and Cyprus likely believe the reaffirmation of this agreement may threaten both nations' maritime borders and overall strength in the eastern Mediterranean. This could negatively influence their willingness to work and trade with Turkey and Libya in the future. The redefining of maritime jurisdiction and affirmation of drilling rights for natural resources almost certainly strengthens Ankara's regional position in both the eastern Mediterranean and in North Africa.

[August Kather]



## 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.

EE does not cite sources in the final publication; however, we log every source we use in our research and are happy to share them upon request. The official EE Source Database is available on our website's resources page for a general overview of our sourcing methods.

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](mailto:editorsee@gmail.com) or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708.

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