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QATAR: Mediation Over Afghan Peace Talks Will Likely Reinforce Regional Influence

Summary: Doha's role in mediating talks between the Taliban and Afghan government will likely boost Qatar's regional standing in coming months due to its influence over the Taliban.

Development: On 11 September, peace talks began in Doha between the Taliban and Afghan government. The talks will focus on the transfer of power to a new Afghan-Islamist government led by the Taliban with the hope of bringing peace to the region. On 12 September, Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani visited Kabul and met with the acting prime minister of the Taliban's new government Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund. Abdulrahman also met with former President Hamid Karzai to discuss the current situation in Afghanistan. Doha acted as a regional diplomat for Islamist governments in the early days of the Arab Spring and hopes to hold a similar diplomatic position with the new Taliban government.

Analysis: Doha's influence over the Taliban will likely boost Qatar's regional influence while it plays a key role in the mediation between the new Taliban government and the ousted Afghan government. Doha will likely continue acting as the sounding board for the Taliban as it creates plans for the future. This mediation will probably propel Doha to the world's center stage as interested world powers monitor the Taliban's actions in Afghanistan. However, should the newly formed Taliban government fail and betray the expectations set by the peace talks, regional animosity toward Qatar will likely surge.

[Tim Fergus]

ARGENTINA: Primary Election Results Indicate Possible Opposition Victory

Summary: Primary election results show an increase in support for the primary opposition party, a trend that will likely continue amid rising poverty and inflation rates.

Development: On 12 September, results from Argentina's primary election showed conservative opposition party Together for Change taking the lead in key electoral provinces including Buenos Aires. On 4 November, citizens will cast their votes for the midterm general election, in which 127 out of 157 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 24 out of 72 seats in the Senate remain up for election. President Alberto Fernandez stated that his coalition party, the center left Frente de Todos, would learn from its mistakes and grow stronger in the months leading to the general election. Frente de Todos risks losing its majority in the Senate and its largest minority position in the Chamber of Deputies. The poverty and inflation rates continue to increase following an ongoing recession while contributing to current discontent among the public.

Analysis: Together for Change will likely continue to capitalize on public feelings of discontent, indicating its probable victory in the general election. Significant gains for Together for Change will almost certainly negatively impact Fernandez's ability to govern effectively. Fernandez may attempt to pass new policies while Frente de Todos retains its majority and will likely try to focus on economic revival. The Together for Change campaign may try to paint any action taken as "too little, too late" and focus on the increasing poverty rates occurring under Fernandez. Together for Change will likely see success from this strategy and carry its momentum through the general election. Significant gains for the opposition party may lead to blockage of Frente de Todos' proposed legislation. This could prompt a shift in focus towards more conservative policies. Public discontent with the Frente de Todos party remains unlikely to dissipate due to economic hardships. This trend may not change before the November elections, leading to the probable continuation of opposition electoral success.

[Alli McIntyre]

JAPAN: New Defense Deal with Hanoi Likely to Escalate Chinese Aggression

Summary: The signing of a new defense partnership between Japan and Vietnam will likely prompt increasingly aggressive military and diplomatic responses from Beijing.

Development: On 11 September, Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi signed a defense partnership deal with Vietnamese Minister of National Defense Phan Van Giang in Hanoi, which grants Japan the ability to export defense technology and equipment to Vietnam. This comes in response to the increased Chinese coast guard presence in the East China Sea near the disputed Japanese-controlled Senkaku islands. Protests continue against the Chinese aggression towards the contested islands. Hanoi and Beijing have disputed control of the Spratly and Paracel island groups in the South China Sea. Tokyo and Hanoi initiated the partnership to increase cooperation against Beijing. Similar partnerships exist between Tokyo, Manila, and Jakarta. During the signing of the partnership, Kishi stated the importance of strengthening defense cooperation and allowing free naval and flight navigation of the Indo-Pacific region without the threat of Beijing.

Analysis: Due to the disputed territories, it remains unlikely that Beijing will decrease its aggressive actions seeking control of the region. Tokyo will most likely seek to create a strong alliance with its partnered countries to help resist Chinese control of the region. The regular protests in Tokyo could influence Japan to seek alliances with other nations. Among the new defense partnership, Hanoi will probably increase its military presence within disputed islands with the help of Japanese military cooperation. An increase in Vietnamese defense capabilities remains very likely because of the aspect of the deal that allows the export of Japanese defense equipment and technology. Because of the increased diplomatic pressure against Beijing, it will likely continue to increase military presence against Hanoi and Tokyo.

[Damon Reyes]

AFGHANISTAN: Humanitarian and Economic Issues Likely to Continue to Grow

Summary: Ongoing instability following the Taliban's seizure of power will likely prolong continued economic deterioration and humanitarian issues.

Development: On 10 September, the United Nations (UN) made an announcement highlighting Afghanistan's need of humanitarian support due to ongoing political and economic turmoil within the country. Climate experts state that the country is currently experiencing its second major drought in four years, worsening conditions for citizens. Prior to the Taliban takeover about 35% of Afghans faced food insecurities, according to the World Food Program. The UN's announcement stated that 18 million citizens currently rely on daily humanitarian aid. The effects from the COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden change in leadership also contribute to increasing poverty levels and dire state of the country.

Analysis: The Taliban takeover of Kabul will likely prompt continued economic deterioration and a rise in humanitarian issues. Due to the unstable state of Afghanistan, citizens will probably continue to require humanitarian aid. Concerns regarding the ongoing drought and food insecurity will likely continue to increase as the winter months approach. These compounding factors will likely prolong economic issues, likely leading to increased poverty levels and suffering within the country. This instability may prove very difficult for the Taliban to manage while it works to legitimize its hold on power.

[Autumn Champlin]

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 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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