

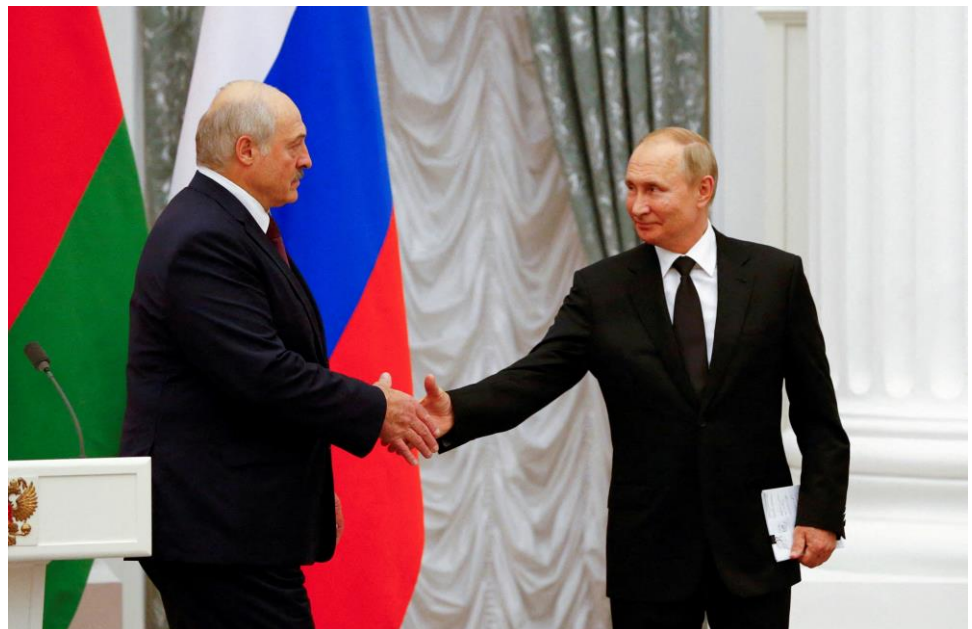
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RUSSIA: Belarus Joint Military Drills on Ukraine Likely Indicates Imminent Action

Summary: Following the recent announcement of military exercises conducted alongside Belarus and the slow evacuation of the Russian Embassy in Kyiv, Russian President Vladimir Putin will likely take swift action on the Ukraine conflict in the near future.

Development: On 18 January, Moscow announced joint military exercises with its ally Belarus near Ukraine's borders scheduled for early February. The exercises come amid the high tensions with NATO regarding the Russian-Ukraine dispute, following events like the UK's announcement to send military supplies to Ukraine. Belarus President Lukashenko stated the drills act as a perfect plan in confronting the Western powers. While Putin sent various military convoys to the Ukraine border in the past, Russian military presence increased on the Belarus front while Moscow prepares to conduct "strong" military drills alongside the nation, according to Lukashenko's announcement. Western officials continue to express worry over Moscow's increasingly aggressive posture. However, Putin continues to deny any decision regarding an invasion. Coincidentally, Kyiv reports that Russia began a slow evacuation of its embassy in Kyiv, seeing non-combat personnel and their families leaving for Moscow.

Analysis: As the call for military drills on Ukraine's border plans to take place early next month, Russia will likely take decisive action against Ukraine soon. Since the announcement, it remains almost certain that the exercises come as a response to the UK's announcement that it will provide military supplies to Ukraine. Putin most likely believes that winning a war over Ukraine will prove harder as NATO nations continue to increase Kyiv's military defenses. This will likely prompt Moscow to act before Ukraine can increase its capabilities against it. The slow evacuation of Russia's embassy in Kyiv likely signals imminent action as Moscow warns its non-combatants to return home. While Russia sent troops to Ukraine's border, Putin most likely is preparing to hold forces in the north through Belarus to further restrain Ukraine.

[Damon Reyes]

BURKINA FASO: Military Coup May Trigger Regional Ripple Effect

Summary: The initial success of the coup in Burkina Faso may increase the likelihood of additional coups in the region.

Development: On 24 January, a military spokesperson announced the suspension of Burkina Faso's constitution and the dissolution of the government. Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba replaced ousted President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, who faced an increasing amount of public discontent and calls for resignation. The criticism stemmed from Kaboré's inability to combat increasing Islamist militant attacks, which in 2021 displaced 1.4 million people and caused 2,000 deaths, according to the *New York Times*. Soldiers seized multiple military bases across the country on 23 January and moved into Ouagadougou before making its announcement on 24 January. The Economic Community of West African States and the African Union condemned the actions, making similar statements to those made after coups in Mali, Chad, and Guinea. Similar Islamist militant attacks continue to occur in countries across West Africa, contributing to increasing public discontent.

Analysis: The initial relative success of the coup may prompt militaries in neighboring countries to follow suit. Increasing public discontent and political instability combined with continued attacks and limited international backlash will likely embolden military and opposition leaders looking for a similar opportunity. The factors that contributed to this coup will likely remain present in other West African countries, increasing the likelihood of additional coups. The ability of Damiba and the military to combat militant attacks will almost certainly determine the amount of public support the new government receives. Damiba will most likely work to quickly consolidate power. The success of Damiba in retaining power may also influence other actors considering the same action.

[Alli McIntyre]

NORTH KOREA: Unfreezing ICBM Testing Unlikely Due to Past Launches

Summary: Pyongyang probably will not lift the temporary ban on testing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) due to the harsh reaction by the international community the last time it launched an ICBM.

Development: On 20 January, Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Un considered lifting the temporary suspension on all nuclear and ICBM tests, according to the *Associated Press*. This follows the launch of two alleged hypersonic missiles capable of flying at five to ten times the speed of sound on 5 and 11 January. Pyongyang launched a total of eight missiles in January. Kim vowed to prepare for a long-term confrontation with Western powers for their hostile policies towards Pyongyang. ICBM testing stopped in 2018, shortly before South Korean President Moon Jae-in met Kim in a peace summit. Pyongyang launched one ICBM in 2017, causing the United Nations Security Council with members such as China and Russia to impose sanctions on Pyongyang.

Analysis: Kim seems unlikely to follow through with lifting the current pause on researching ICBMs due to the repercussions from Pyongyang launching an ICBM in 2017. The recent missile tests most likely occurred to test the military capabilities of Pyongyang's new missile technology over any political objective. Kim probably uses the missile tests for political reasons for concessions, but testing its recent military developments remains the primary objective for the launches. However, a full lift of the pause on ICBM testing remains unlikely.

[Sebastien Bragg]

TURKEY: Protests Against Olympics Will Likely Exacerbate Relations with China

Summary: Protests for boycotting the Beijing Winter Olympics in Istanbul will likely lead to increased conflict as the Turkish Olympic Committee decides how to proceed.

Development: On 23 January, protesters gathered in Istanbul outside the Turkish Olympic Committee building to urge the committee to boycott the Winter Olympics in Beijing due to Beijing's treatment of Uighurs and other Muslim minorities. Protesters, carrying independence movement of East Turkestan flags, called for Beijing to stop the camps in the Xinjiang province that Beijing labels vocational training centers. According to Aljazeera, "Beijing says the independence movement of East Turkestan threatens the western region of Xinxiang." These protests take place a month after 19 Uighurs filed complaints against Beijing for genocide, torture, rape, and crimes against humanity. The United Nations estimates Beijing captured over a million Uighurs and others from other Muslim minorities in the camps. As a result of Beijing's actions in the Xinjiang Province, several countries including Britain, Canada, Australia, Japan, and Denmark refuse to send diplomats to the Winter Olympics.

Analysis: Despite protests, the Turkish Olympic Committee will most likely follow the example of other countries and continue plans to attend the Winter Olympics if Turkish officials do not. Protests will likely increase in frequency and size until the committee reaches a decision. If the decision strays from the desires of the protesters, the protests may become more severe and violent. If the decision meets the desires of the protesters, tensions with Beijing will likely increase, and Beijing may feel that East Turkestan's independence movement provides too much of a threat in the Xinjiang Province, causing further worsening relations.

[Savannah Gallop]

IRELAND: Russian Fire Exercises May Give Opportunity to Disrupt Undersea Cables

Summary: Moscow sent notice to Dublin that it will perform live fire naval exercises off the Irish coast. The exercises likely represent a Russian show of force and an opportunity to tap undersea cables to mainland Europe and may presage an invasion of Ukraine.

Development: On 24 January, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, made a statement that the Russian Navy plans to host live fire exercises about 150 miles off the Irish coast in early February. Coveney made it clear that Dublin did not clear or promote these exercises, particularly with the heightened tensions from the current Russia-Ukraine situation. Moscow announced new naval exercises in all its fleet locations, with exercises in the Mediterranean, North Sea, Okhotsk Sea, Pacific Ocean, and off of the Irish Coast. The rough positioning of submarine cables compared to the exercise location has influenced some defense analysts to question the true meaning of these exercises. These cables lead straight to mainland Britain and continental Europe from across the globe.

Analysis: These Russian naval exercises could position Moscow to disrupt underseas cables and may presage a two-pronged attempt to prepare a ground invasion of Ukraine. If Moscow truly has an invasion of eastern Ukraine planned, a show of force off the European coast may allow for Russian spy submarines to tap or tamper with the submarine cables and go undetected. Russian surface warships live-fire launches and propwash may allow the submarines acoustics signatures to remain unheard. Communications disruptions across Europe could ensue if the Russians disconnect these cables.

[Tamhas Morgan]

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, 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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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. If you use material from this publication, you should attribute: Eagle Eye Intelligence Edition 396, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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