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AFGHANISTAN: Increasing Child Labor Likely to Receive Backlash from United Nations

Summary: A recent study found that close to one million children may be working in Afghanistan to support their families. This likely will prompt backlash from the United Nations (UN), which remains in the process of sending humanitarian aid to the country.

Development: On 14 February, a study published by Save The Children found that one in five families are sending their children to work to supplement income. Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, around 80% of families lost some amount of income. Of those families, one third reported losing all income. The UN appealed for \$4.4 billion at the beginning of this year for humanitarian aid to go to Kabul. The UN report at the time suggested a dire lack of food. However, Save The Children disputed this claim by stating in the recent report that food remains available, but families do not have enough money to afford the food.

Analysis: The contradictions in recent reports, along with reports of child labor, will likely cause the UN to reevaluate its humanitarian aid allocations. This may lead to a withdrawal of aid from Afghanistan or sanctions placed on the Taliban. Any pull back on humanitarian aid will almost certainly serve to worsen the humanitarian crisis and a pull back from the UN may also cause other countries to second guess sending aid, furthering Kabul's unstable foreign relations.

[Liam Black]

ECUADOR: Trade Negotiations with Beijing Likely to Produce Economic Growth

Summary: President Guillermo Lasso's recent negotiations with Beijing will most likely spark a new trade deal between the two countries, possibly indicating further trade deals and cooperation between the two nations as well as settlement on debt commitments.

Development: On 9 February, during a press conference, Lasso expressed his optimism towards negotiating a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the People's Republic of China (PRC) in hopes of producing new economic growth and eliminating national debt, according to Macau Business. This press conference follows Lasso's discussions with PRC's President Xi Jinping after the opening Olympic ceremony in Beijing on 5 February. With Quito's monetary reliance on Beijing for project finance since 2008, along with a debt of \$11 billion, Lasso reiterated Quito's continued goal of avoiding more foreign debt. This reliance on Beijing began in 2008 when Western sovereign credit markets cut off Quito. Despite Beijing lending diminishing, Quito still currently owes \$5 billion, roughly 11% of its total external debt. With plans of assured funding from higher oil prices and tax collection, Lasso stated he intends to break away from Quito's past reliance on creditors, as seen in the previous administration. Beijing also announced the two countries agreed to open negotiations for a free trade pact, according to Reuters. Xi added these negotiations should act as an opportunity to deepen practical cooperation between the two countries, while aiding Ecuador's continued fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Analysis: Quito will likely seek out an FTA and future economic deals with Beijing coupled with plans of economic growth and counteracting economic losses from COVID-19. Although Quito prefers a trade agreement with closer Western trade partners, Lasso will most likely accept help from Beijing to help promote economic growth. This new partnership will almost certainly encourage further cooperation between the two nations. With added economic pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic and debt commitments, Quito will most likely aim to increase its exports of raw materials to China to compensate for past transactions.

[Michael Tokos]

UKRAINE: Citizens March Will Likely Aid in Unity and Propaganda Efforts

Summary: As fears of a Russian invasion of Ukraine skyrocketed overnight, citizens of Kyiv calmly took to the streets, likely unifying the nation against the common enemy while also aiding anti-Moscow propaganda efforts.

Development: On 12 February, thousands of Ukrainian citizens joined together to protest Russia's military hostilities, which included the assembly of over 100,000 troops surrounding the nation's border. This follows the 11 February warnings of increasing likelihood of a Russian invasion. Warnings that Western citizens should evacuate Ukraine remain at emergency levels, leaving Ukrainian citizens desperate for a resolution to the turmoil. Despite this, Moscow claims that a decision to invade Ukraine, due to possible national security issues should it join NATO, remains highly unlikely. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy carried out numerous procedures and drills publicly announcing the need for his citizens to remain calm.

Analysis: The show of unity in Kyiv likely bolstered Ukrainian nationality and public agreement to stand firm against Moscow's show of military strength. Should Moscow choose to invade in the coming days, while possibly being initially reluctant to declare all-out war, Kyiv would first likely launch a propaganda initiative to air anti-Moscow reports while victimizing Ukrainian citizens. This could garner greater global support from Western and NATO nations to take part in the effort to defend Ukraine's sovereignty.

[Dyanna Henriquez]

IRAN: Second Attempt at Nuclear Deal Likely a Strategy to Lift Crippling Sanctions

Summary: Tehran will likely utilize the second attempt at reviving the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to lift crippling economic sanctions by threatening the possibility of completing its nuclear program.

Development: On 8 February, negotiations aimed at reviving the JCPOA reopened in Vienna after a 10-month break. The JCPOA, also referred to as the Iran Nuclear Deal, represents an agreement made by the international community and Tehran in 2015 that places parameters on nuclear enrichment and stockpiling. The deal fell apart several years later. After negotiations to revive the JCPOA in 2018 failed, further economic sanctions against Tehran's oil exports devastated its economy. Following this, Tehran rapidly ramped up its nuclear efforts far beyond the 3.7% purity limit outlined in the JCPOA. According to United Nations (UN) Nuclear Watchdogs on 26 March 2021, Tehran enriched its uranium to 60% purity, with a 90% purity level required to produce a nuclear weapon. Currently, exact statistics regarding Tehran's nuclear program remain largely unknown due to Tehran's efforts to prevent inspectors from monitoring its nuclear program. However, the "breakout period," which refers to the length of time Tehran would need to develop enough enriched uranium to construct a nuclear bomb, approximates to a few weeks, according to Western officials.

Analysis: The second attempt to salvage the 2015 JCPOA likely attempts to lift sanctions while using its nuclear program as leverage. Tehran's goal of sanction relief likely eliminates its ability to fully complete its nuclear program as successful completion will almost certainly lead to increased tensions in addition to harsher sanctions. Instead, Tehran likely will come close but not fully complete its nuclear program in exchange for as much sanction relief as possible. The 2021 Nuclear Watchdog report's findings likely indicates that Tehran intentionally stalled its nuclear weapons program for better leverage in ongoing negotiations as it could have easily completed its nuclear program within the last year. The talks will also likely stall Tehran's nuclear efforts long enough for international powers to devise plans on how to handle Tehran in the future if Tehran goes nuclear.

[Michael Doolan]

NORTH KOREA: State Actors Likely Targeting Defense Industry to Spread Malware

Summary: North Korean Lazarus Group's suspected of using spear phishing attacks to inject malware into potential job applicants' computer systems indicates a likely attempt to target and weaken the defense industry.

Development: On 8 February, Qualys Senior Threat Research Engineer Akshat Pradhan unveiled information on Lazarus Group's most recent attack campaign. The attack sends malicious code through email attachments' macros which take control of user signal flow and create time-activated behavior, according to The VPN Guru. Lazarus' previous attacks focused on cryptocurrency organizations and increased the size of Pyongyang's weapons research coffers by approximately \$1 billion from 2018 to 2021, according to Security Week. New features include living off the land binaries (Lolbins), as stated by Pradhan. Any specific dangers from the spread of this malware remain unknown, as Qualys failed to gain any further information on the return payload.

Analysis: Lazarus' attack on the defense industry likely indicates intention to spread malware among future workers in defense companies. This diverges from previous attacks possibly because of the change in the mission. Lazarus is probably no longer interested in raising funds available as its primary objective, and the use of Lolbins will likely result in cyberespionage and persistent cyber-attacks on the affected devices.

[Stephen Levy]

TAIWAN-INDIA: Satellite Partnership Likely to Evolve into Additional Developments

Summary: The successful collaborated launch of the INSPIRESat-1 CubeSat (IS-1) between Indian and Taiwanese organizations, and the support from Taipei and New Delhi likely indicates additional joint-efforts to enhance space programs.

Development: On 14 February, the joint development between Taiwan and India successfully launched the IS-1 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. Taiwan Central University partially funded the project to study wireless communication in the ionosphere and the sun's coronal heating process, according to Taiwan News and Focus Taiwan. Taipei supported the groups involved in the satellite's development and commended the contribution to Taiwan's space involvement. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated India's Space Research Organization on its sizeable contribution to funding and launching the IS-1.

Analysis: The cooperation between organizations from Taiwan and India to launch the IS-1 will almost certainly persist in order to continue collaboration on projects advancing space interests for the two countries. The praise given by leaders of both countries indicates that cooperation may happen from a state funded level for one, if not both countries in the near future. Knowledge gained from the IS-1 launch will likely also prompt other launches.

[Savannah Gallop]

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 399, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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