

16 September 2022

An Analytic Intelligence
Wire Prepared by The
Students of Embry-Riddle
Aeronautical University

Issue 410

Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

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Aljazeera



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ETHIOPIA: Addis Ababa Likely to Delay Negotiations Amid International Calls for Peace

Summary: Tigray's forces battling Addis Ababa and its allies claim willingness to enter negotiations towards peace as fighting renewed in recent weeks. Addis Ababa will likely delay negotiations despite mounting international pressure from the West and African Union (AU).

Development: On 12 September, Ethiopia's Tigray forces expressed a willingness to halt all hostilities and engage in negotiations as the AU calls for peace. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) agreed to such negotiations assuming Addis Ababa lifts all restrictions on basic services and humanitarian aid. Addis Ababa continues to hold the position of remaining open to negotiations, assuming no preconditions. On 24 August, renewed fighting shattered a five-month ceasefire of a conflict sparked in November 2020 when TPLF forces seized military bases across the region, according to Reuters. Humanitarian efforts to aid the region continue to face barriers as Addis Ababa restricts basic services such as banking and telecommunication since the conflict began. Asmara and other neighboring countries face mounting international criticism for fueling the conflict by aiding Addis Ababa in cutting off the region from the rest of the world.

Analysis: Addis Ababa will likely delay negotiations despite mounting pressure from the AU, European Union, and other Western actors by continuing to restrict basic services and humanitarian aid efforts. The TPLF will likely continue fighting until Addis Ababa lifts its restrictions as it faces pressure from the Ethiopian troops and neighboring countries. Conflicting preconditions toward negotiations may increase the international mediation of the process, which could alienate Addis Ababa on the world stage as it absorbs much of the blame for the humanitarian crisis. Addis Ababa likely sees itself as winning the conflict due to the extremely dire state of the Tigray region, and probably will delay calls for peace to prevent any regrouping efforts by the TPLF and avoid concessions of its own.

[Tim Fergus]

CHINA: Earthquake Casualties Will Likely Continue to Rise

Summary: Earthquake casualties will most likely continue to rise in the short term due to the large quantity of severely injured residents. Additional earthquakes may occur due to triggered tectonic shifts.

Development: On 12 September, the death toll from the 6.8 magnitude earthquake in the Sichuan province of China rose to 93. On 5 September, the earthquake started in the mountains of Luding County, causing landslides in Chengdu and other cities where residents remained in COVID-19 lockdown procedures despite only 146 cases. On 6 September, residents continued to feel aftershocks. The earthquake damaged the electric grid, resulting in the loss of electricity for 40,000 people. Almost a week later, the death count continues to rise. In response to the earthquake, Beijing declared a Level 3 emergency response and dispatched emergency crews for search and rescue. Earthquakes as large as these can trigger more quakes along the fault line.

Analysis: The death count will likely continue to climb in the short term as some individuals succumb to their injuries and as search and rescue teams find more people in the rubble. International responses may display concern over continuing COVID-19 protocols without large numbers to warrant the need for their continuation. Additional concerns could rise if studies show the high casualty count links to the lockdown procedures.

[Savannah Gallop]

RUSSIA: Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict Likely to Expend Additional Military Resources

Summary: Moscow probably will intervene militarily in the resurgence of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict to preserve regional stability and influence.

Development: On 12 September, Armenian and Azerbaijani forces engaged in hostilities along their shared border. Armenian news and military sources indicate that Azerbaijan instigated the conflict with artillery fire. Additionally, Yerevan stated that Azerbaijani forces killed a conscript on 5 September. In contrast, Baku claims Yerevan instigated the conflict through acts of sabotage. Moscow brokered the last deal between Yerevan and Baku in 2020. Moscow's deal included the deployment of peacekeeping forces in the region. However, many Russian peacekeepers left the region to support Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Analysis: Moscow will likely have to expend additional military resources in Armenia and Azerbaijan to retain influence in the Caucasus region. Moscow will likely use military forces to enforce peace in the region and increase stability. Increasing regional stability will also probably garner Moscow additional support and legitimacy after the Ukraine invasion.

[Edward Micklos]

JAPAN: New Warships Unlikely to Fulfill Missile Defense Role Completely

Summary: Tokyo's proposed sea-based missile defense systems will unlikely compete with the rapidly advancing missile capabilities of Japan's neighbors.

Development: On 8 September, Tokyo's Ministry of Defense (MOD) revealed more details of its plan to build two Aegis system-equipped vessels (ASEVs) for missile defense costing \$7 billion. The ASEVs will use the same SPY-7 radars intended for the scrapped plans of a land-based Aegis missile defense system. The new vessels will complement the eight existing missile defense destroyers using older, smaller versions of the radars equipped on the ASEVs. The MOD requested a record amount of \$40 billion for the 2023 budget, citing concerns about the advancing missile capabilities of Moscow, Beijing, and Pyongyang in its annual defense report. In the past, both Beijing and Pyongyang fired missiles into Japan's exclusive economic zone in the sea. Beijing and Moscow recently held joint naval-airborne drills in the Sea of Japan. The MOD reported that each nation currently possesses and tests hypersonic missiles, capable of flying at irregular patterns at Mach-5 speeds making them capable of defeating traditional missile defense systems. The MOD dedicated an undisclosed portion of the budget towards hypersonic missile defense, intended for the ASEVs and other platforms.

Analysis: The proposed ASEVs will most likely not fully satisfy the demand for missile defense due to the small number of warships compared to the varied missile attack methods of Tokyo's potential adversaries. A joint attack by any combination of Tokyo's adversaries would most likely overwhelm the two ASEVs advanced missile defense capabilities with sheer numbers. Even with Tokyo's hypersonic missile defense project, hypersonic missiles may still strike targets due to the unpredictable flight nature of hypersonic missiles. The heavy emphasis on missile defense may compromise the ASEV's anti-submarine and anti-ship capabilities, potentially making the warships a vulnerable target.

[Sebastien Bragg]

UNITED KINGDOM: Attack on Public Infrastructure Likely to Continue

Summary: A cyberattack hit London's public transportation infrastructure in the middle of an acquisition deal with the Australian and New Zealand bus networks. London's transportation infrastructure will likely remain a target of cyber-attacks until the cause is rooted out.

Development: On 6 September, the British public transportation company Go-Ahead experienced a cyberattack. The company accounts for almost 25 percent of the public transportation infrastructure in the United Kingdom. The targeted vulnerability remains unidentified, but it would come as no surprise if it turns out that the main objective of the attack relates to ransomware, according to lead security awareness advocate Javvad Malik. London recently experienced a spike in cyberattacks targeting its public transport infrastructure such as the attack on Nottingham City Transport, and the ransomware attack on Northern Rail franchise's self-ticketing system. The attack hit just before the Australian and New Zealand bus network Kinetic could go through with its deal of acquiring Go-Ahead. A deal with an estimated value of \$677 million.

Analysis: The trend of attacks targeting public infrastructure seems likely to continue based on recent attacks and trends. If ransomware surfaces as the mode of attack, then it seems likely that the attacker will reach out with demands soon. The cyberattack will most likely affect the outcome of the ongoing deal between Kinetic and Go-Ahead.

[Amalie Hansen]

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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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 Business, Security, and Intelligence.

Savannah Gallop, 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. If you use material from this publication, you should attribute: Eagle Eye Intelligence Edition 410, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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