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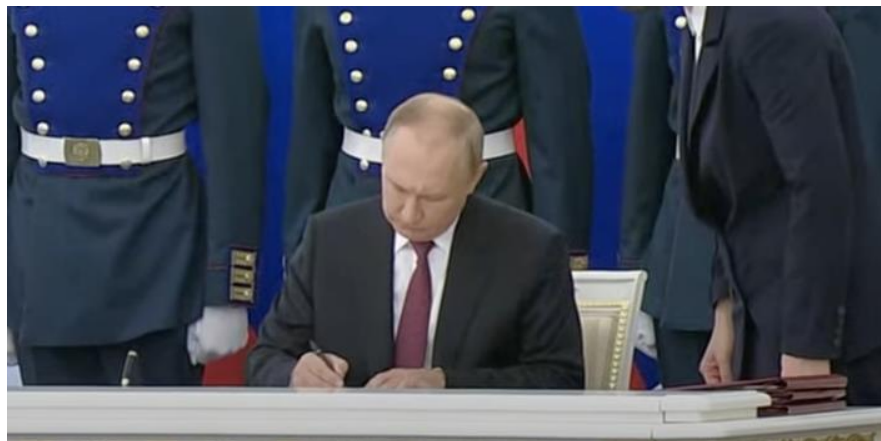
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Issue 412

Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

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Insider



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RUSSIA: New Economic Sanctions Likely to Result in Economic Depression

Summary: Businesses and investors fear economic sanctions in response to Moscow's annexation agreements which could result in a long-lasting economic depression, as major industry partners and jobs leave Russian markets.

Development: On 30 September, Moscow signed annexation agreements for Ukrainian territories: Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk. Moscow faces a new onslaught of economic sanctions as many foreign governments reject the legitimacy of Moscow's actions. Major corporations and investors fear the effects the new economic sanctions pose on trade and the economy. Russian markets watched 114 companies leave the country and 1,122 companies work towards exiting, according to *Leave-Russia.org*. Unemployment rates hit a low since beginning a steady decline in August 2020, and sanctions continue to weaken the ruble and its global trading value.

Analysis: Additional sanctions seem likely to cause an economic depression affecting Russian industry, technological, and energy sectors due to gaps in production as companies remove themselves from Russian markets. Moscow faces the potential loss of major technology and energy companies, which could place Moscow at a disadvantage in technological advancement and strain Russia's ability to produce and trade natural oil and gas. As industry equipment partners leave Russia, it could become increasingly difficult to fill the gaps left behind and cause the number of unemployed workers to further increase.

[Katie Larson]

CHINA: Military Blockade of Taiwan Likely to Escalate into War

Summary: Taipei may interpret a military blockade as an act of war due to the serious economic harm Beijing could inflict by preventing sea trade.

Development: On 30 September, reports concluded Beijing's military drills as an attempt to form a blockade in the Taiwan Strait. A senior Taiwanese official stated that if Beijing imposes the blockade, Taipei will choose to interpret it as an act of war, according to *Reuters*. The Economic Democracy Union prepared strategies to preserve Taipei's economy in the case of a siege, according to *Taipei Times*. Chinese surveillance technology in Taipei's public infrastructure imposes a security risk of potential breaches, according to *Taipei Times*.

Analysis: Taipei will likely retaliate if Beijing establishes a blockade. Beijing may attempt to corner Taiwan in a blockade to force negotiations between the two nations. Beijing may deploy submarines seen in the military drills to prevent vessels from transporting through Taipei's ports and exhaust the economy. Sieging ports would likely weaken international trade and wither Taipei from stability.

[Lauren Estrada]

TAIWAN: End of Quarantine Requirements is Likely to Cause Economic Growth

Summary: Taipei's decision to stop required quarantining for arrivals will likely cause an increase in economic activity. This growth could give Taiwan the upper hand over China's economy, which is struggling from the country's "Zero-COVID" policy.

Development: On 29 September, Taipei stated it will end its mandatory COVID-19 quarantine policy on 13 October. The current three-day minimum isolation period will transition to allow guests to self-monitor their health for a seven-day period instead. The government will enforce a weekly maximum of 150,000 arrivals into Taiwan, but that amount will steadily increase over time, according to *Taipei Times*. This decision follows a decline of COVID-19 cases in Taiwan, and as those with the virus display more mild symptoms. Taipei's preparedness to reopen itself to the world strongly contrasts with Beijing's "Zero-COVID" policy which aims to eliminate the virus. Beijing's enforcement of this policy resulted in many shortages of goods. The policy also leaves millions of people under lockdown, leading to a major disruption in Beijing's economy.

Analysis: This decision to reopen Taiwan will likely cause a spurt of economic growth beginning in mid-October that will continue well into the next year. Tourists will most likely display more willingness in traveling to Taiwan because of the relaxed arrival requirements. Increased revenue from tourism will almost certainly lead to a higher-performing economy. Taipei's economy may gain an advantage over Beijing's currently downturned economy.

[Alix Craft]

CHINA: Talks of Peace in Ukraine May Weaken Alliance with Moscow

Summary: Chinese United Nations (UN) Ambassador Zhang Jun spoke about peaceful resolutions to the war in Ukraine. Beijing's mention of peace talks could weaken its future relationship with Moscow.

Development: On 28 September, Zhang spoke to the UN Security Council calling for de-escalation in Ukraine. Zhang discussed opening a political option as well as reminding the Council that "peace must be upheld," according to *South China Morning Post*. During the session, no major country stood with Moscow and its position on the war, according to *The Guardian*. Zhang's statement on peace contrasts with Moscow's goals in Ukraine. Beijing and Moscow had made a pact in February before the invasion of Ukraine with both parties making an "unbreakable bond" according to *Taipei Times*. Earlier this month, Russian President Vladimir Putin acknowledged Beijing's concerns over the war after a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, according to *The Guardian*.

Analysis: Beijing's talk of a peaceful resolution to the war in Ukraine may lead to a weaker alliance with Moscow. Beijing may step back on its support of Moscow to keep its goal of global peace clear to Western nations. Beijing's actions may lead to further isolation of Moscow and increased pressure to halt its invasion of Ukraine.

[Gunnar Snyder]

IRAN: Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan Will Likely Lead to Sanctions

Summary: With the Taliban's control over Kabul, Tehran will likely impose sanctions on select Afghan individuals.

Development: On 28 September, Zahra Ershadi, Iran's deputy ambassador to the UN, spoke at the UN Security Council meeting to discuss the ongoing challenges in Afghanistan. The Iranian spokeswoman expressed how Afghan citizens are facing a humanitarian crisis. Kabul currently faces an economic downturn, and Afghani women face a denial of human rights and education. During the meeting, Ershadi spoke on the emergence of other terrorist organizations in Afghanistan. Ershadi reported the resurgence of Daesh-affiliated terrorist groups.

Analysis: The Taliban takeover in Afghanistan will likely lead to sanctions imposed by the Iranian government. The sanctions will likely cause tension between Tehran and the Taliban. The imposed sanctions will likely increase economic profit and assist with the humanitarian crisis. UN assistance will likely limit the power of terrorist groups like Daesh and Al-Qaeda.

[Blake Kaplan]

MOROCCO: Relations with Algeria Likely to Improve After Arab League Summit

Summary: It remains likely that Algeria's decision to personally invite Rabat to the upcoming Arab Summit will create a bridge to mending the countries' strained relationship.

Development: On 27 September, Algiers invited Rabat to the upcoming Arab Summit. Algerian Minister of Justice Abderrachid Tebbi arrived in Rabat and personally delivered a formal invitation to the summit. This invitation comes after years of tension and zero direct dialogue between the two countries. In August 2021, Algiers cut all diplomatic ties with Rabat following a string of wildfires that Algiers blamed on Rabat. In addition, both countries disagree on what should happen with Western Sahara. Algiers vies for its freedom, while Rabat claims that it rules over the smaller nation. Despite this tension, Rabat and Algiers will both attend the Arab Summit occurring in Algeria in 2022. King of Morocco Mohammed VI last attended a summit in 2005. In July, Mohammed requested that the two countries conduct an open dialogue with each other to re-establish normal relations.

Analysis: The Arab Summit will most likely fail to mend all issues between Algiers and Rabat, although it will most likely open a dialogue between the two nations. Any amount of dialogue will likely improve their relations. If the two countries can communicate at the summit, Algiers and Rabat will most likely resume normal dialogue outside of the summit as well. Other countries attending the summit will probably show caution in case of flaring tensions, despite the lack of direct contention between Algeria and Morocco. Algiers and Rabat's issues take low priority at the summit due to the minimal current severity, but any progress made behind the scenes will almost certainly benefit the two nations' relations in the future. Mohammed's presence at the summit will likely improve chances of mending relations between both countries.

[Rion Stevens]

NORTH KOREA: Resumption of Trade with Beijing May Indicate Need for COVID Relief

Summary: The decision to resume overland trade with Beijing due to the absence of SARS-Cov-2 cases at both borders will likely improve the North Korean quality of life. However, the resumption at this time may indicate a dire need for external aid amid the ongoing pandemic.

Development: On 26 September, a cargo train crossed from China to North Korea using the Friendship Bridge, breaking the five-month trade hiatus. Pyongyang and Beijing originally closed the trade route at the beginning of 2020 due to closing borders to quarantine the country from the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic. The countries reopened the route in January 2022 which closed again in April. The goods do not reach consumers immediately due to the state policy of disinfecting and quarantining imports for three months. The second reopening this year comes a month after North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un had “suffered from fever” and declared victory over SARS-CoV-2, although the World Health Organization (WHO) stated doubts about North Korea’s reported case numbers. On 28 September, Pyongyang allegedly launched a vaccination program, becoming one of the last countries to do so, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Pyongyang has released no further details about vaccinations.

Analysis: Pyongyang may need more external relief from food insecurity and the SARS-Cov-2 pandemic than it portrays. Despite not reporting large numbers of SARS-Cov-2 cases, the pandemic may serve as a major reason why officials quickly completed negotiations with Beijing. Now that Kim himself has reportedly gotten the virus, the lack of medicine imported into the country likely serves as his real motivation for expediting trade renegotiations. Within the coming weeks, Kim may provide more public information about the vaccination program. Beijing will likely provide the majority of vaccinations now due to the re-establishment of its trade relationship. Pyongyang’s economy and agricultural health have remained insecure, and the timing of the resumption of trade and the vaccination program beginning may indicate its need for immediate relief.

[Abby Slease]

CHINA: Espionage Hackers Targeting Tibetans May Cause Tensions to Rise

Summary: The release of information about potential state-sponsored Chinese hackers spying on Tibetans will likely cause an increase in tensions between minority groups and Beijing.

Development: On 26 September, international news outlets reported on the ongoing exploitation of the LOWZERO backdoor, by the Chinese hacker group known as TA413, to gather intelligence on Tibetans and Tibetan entities through the Follina vulnerability and other attacks. TA413 has regularly targeted Tibetans with a multitude of attacks, such as a zero-day vulnerability in the Sophos Firewall and phishing. Beijing's ongoing sanctions and mistreatment of minorities and non-nationals continue to cause rising tensions in the country, and the use of cyber-attacks for espionage shows an escalation of the discrimination against Tibetans by the Chinese government. Throughout recent years Beijing ostracized Tibetans and treated them as lesser people, and the Tibetans constantly fight to keep their own culture alive.

Analysis: With tensions between Beijing and Tibetans rising in recent years, the release of information on likely government-tied hackers spying on Tibetan entities, probably will cause a greater divide between Beijing and minorities in China. This may cause a rebellion from minorities in China due to Beijing consistently oppressing minorities and invading their online privacy. TA413 probably spies for Beijing to gather information on Tibetans due to its persistent targeting of intelligence on the Tibetan community. Beijing will likely continue its espionage on Tibetans as it has little regard for its world image currently, and Tibetans will likely continue their efforts to conserve their culture and rebel against Beijing's oppression.

[Brandon Hammer]

VENEZUELA: Open Trade Border with Colombia Will Probably Bolster Both Economies

Summary: Caracas' tensions with Bogotá have begun easing in response to reopened borders between the two neighboring nations, likely strengthening the Colombian economy while alleviating the economic struggle of Venezuela and bolstering each leader's image.

Development: On 26 September, Caracas opened its border for trade with Bogotá. Newly elected Colombian President Gustavo Petro crossed the Simón Bolívar International Bridge the same day, abandoning his conservative predecessor's opposition to Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and seeking to re-establish relations with Caracas. The border opening marks the first time that high volumes of cargo crossed between the two countries since Maduro ordered the closure of crossing points in 2015, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Caracas estimates commercial exchange within a year will likely exceed \$4 billion from about \$400 million last year, according to *The Associated Press*.

Analysis: With Venezuelan and Colombian trucks already traveling across the border, the cargo trade will bring much-needed assistance to the Venezuelan economy and will likely benefit the economy of Colombia. The legalization of cargo trade will likely reduce illegal smuggling at the border and will probably reduce violent crime in border areas. Maduro's fragile world image will likely improve due to his willingness to work with a democratic country. Given the success of reviving diplomatic ties between Caracas and Bogotá, Petro's image will likely strengthen due to keeping this key promise made during his campaign.

[Julian Romano]

RUSSIA: Asylum Seekers Will Likely Create a Serious Cyber Threat

Summary: The constant ongoing threats of cyber-attacks and the increasing number of citizens seeking asylum from Russia may introduce increased physical and cyber threats against Ukraine and its allies. This would likely put Russia in an advantageous position.

Development: On 26 September, Ukrainian military intelligence announced that the Kremlin is planning to carry out massive cyber-attacks on the critical infrastructure facilities of Ukrainian enterprises and its allies. Key Ukrainian infrastructure remains a prime target of Russian cyber-attacks. Russian state-sponsored cyber operations included distributed denial of services (DDOS) attacks against Ukrainian organizations, according to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. These attacks usually start with a botnet that overloads a network's bandwidth. Most cyber-attacks in the countries surrounding Russia use botnets, according to *Check Point's Live Cyber Threat Map*. President Vladimir Putin's announcement of a partial mobilization of military forces caused an increase in Russian citizens attempting to seek asylum in neighboring countries. Over 66,000 Russian citizens entered the EU from 19 to 25 September, according to Frontex.

Analysis: Russian asylum seekers would likely pose a serious cyber threat for countries allied with Kyiv because of the increased potential of existing cyber threat actors among those who seek refuge. Some Russian asylees may act as a cyber threat who could introduce malicious software that can disrupt critical infrastructure. These malicious attacks would likely take the form of DDOS attacks carried out through botnets. Russian asylees could intentionally or unintentionally implant these botnets.

[Jerome Lacaden]

UGANDA: Ebola Outbreak Will Likely Spread Due to Late Identification and Prevention

Summary: The Ebola-Sudan (EBOV-S) virus outbreak will likely escalate in response to poor preparation and prevention measures within the health industry. Without a vaccine, doctors and officials may not fully contain the virus.

Development: On 26 September, Uganda's EBOV-S caseload rose to 36, killing 23 of those so far. Four days prior, Uganda only confirmed seven cases and one death. While the EBOIV-S virus originated in Mubende, officials discovered its spread to Kyegegwa. The virus poses a greater threat in Kyegegwa due to its proximity to busy roads, according to the World Health Organization. Officials expressed concerns over large funerals for the first few victims and confirmed EBOV-S cases around an active gold mine. Both events indicate the presence of undetected transmission chains, according to the World Health Organization. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) plans on utilizing a team of health workers for an immediate response. No vaccines currently exist to treat EBOV-S. As a result, Mubende officials restricted travel and non-essential work.

Analysis: The EBOV-S outbreak will likely continue to increase in intensity due to its late discovery before creating transmission chains. The lack of quarantine and distancing procedures after infection likely contributed the most to the virus' spread. Mining within Mubende may decrease or halt temporarily after miners' exposure to the virus and its likelihood of worsening. Interruptions in other industries may also occur since already established transmission chains remain unidentified. If conditions continue to worsen, bordering countries may close their borders to Uganda to prevent its spread throughout Africa. Development of a vaccine will almost certainly begin but will likely not produce in time to prevent the virus from multiplying.

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



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