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In This Issue

| | |
|---|---|
| ISRAEL: Oil Ship Attacked by Iran Likely Signals Escalation Against Regional Shipping | 1 |
| PERU: Machu Picchu's Reopening Could Lead to Economic Improvement | 2 |
| Russia: Newest Round of EU Sanctions Will Likely Not Impact Military Production | 3 |
| BAHRAIN: Cyberattacks Likely to Incite New Form of Digital Activism | 4 |
| SYRIA: New Border Crossings Could Lead to New Trade Opportunities | 5 |
| CHINA: Beijing Likely to Become Global Leader in Artificial Intelligence | 6 |
| ROMANIA: Tensions in NATO Could Rise If Missiles Continue to Stray | 7 |

[ISRAEL: Oil Ship Attacked by Iran Likely Signals Escalation Against Regional Shipping](#)

Summary: The oil tanker *Campo Square* received an attack from drones launched by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Tehran is likely to increase its attacks on shipping lanes across the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Development: On 17 February, reports went public that the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IGRC) launched an attack using several Iranian ships and HESA Shahed 136 drones against the oil tanker *Campo Square*. The ship flies under a Liberian flag but belongs to Zodiac Maritime Company, owned by Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer. A U.S. Military official and a senior regional military source reported to *BBC Persia* that the attack happened on 10 February and confirmed the use of HESA Shahed 136 suicide drones in the attack. The report also mentioned that the ship did not suffer serious damage. Attacks of this nature occur semi-regularly, as Tehran has escalated attacks on shipping in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea since 2018 and seized and attacked several other oil tankers over the past few years. This attack marks the third time a Zodiac and Ofer-owned ship suffered an attack in the past two years. Following the report of the attack on *Campo Square*, a Saudi news outlet also reported Tehran carried out another attack at the same time and in the same vicinity against a United Arab Emirates-owned ship.

Analysis: Iranian attacks against shipping in the Persian Gulf likely signal an emboldened Tehran, and this attack confirms the likeliness of Tehran increasing its battle against Israeli and Saudi shipping in the region. The use of the HESA Shahed 136 suicide drone also signals a probable increase in Iranian military production. The attack on *Campo Square* demonstrates not only Iran's increased capacity to produce unmanned aerial weapons but also the IGRC's likely willingness to continue using them in carrying out strategic attacks against shipping.

[Theo Feldman]

PERU: Machu Picchu's Reopening Could Lead to Economic Improvement

Summary: After shutting down for over three weeks amid anti-government protests, Machu Picchu reopened to the public. Reopening one of the most visited sites in Latin America will likely lift Lima's economy only slightly since visitation rates remain low.

Development: On 15 February, the historic Incan citadel, Machu Picchu, reopened to tourists after multiple weeks of inactivity. The sanctuary welcomes roughly 2,500 visitors a day, generating around \$36 million per year for Peru's economy, according to *Andina*. As anti-government protests engulfed the country, Lima cut off access to the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu for 26 days, according to NPR. The closure of Machu Picchu forced the airlift of more than 400 tourists by helicopter to the city of Cusco, according to *Travel Weekly*. On-the-ground sources reported that citizens in Cusco monetarily live day-to-day, with several relying on the tourists moving through the Incan ruin city, according to *PBS News*. Tourism plays a key role in Lima's economy, and the ongoing protests caused an approximately \$6 million drop in the economy, according to *BBC News*. Peru currently sits at a level 3 U.S. travel advisory due to the crime and civil unrest in the region, according to the *U.S. Department of State*.

Analysis: Reopening one of the largest sources of Lima's economy will likely tug Lima from its economic decline. After a steep economic decline in recent weeks, the city of Cusco will probably return to normalcy in business once again. However, with political turmoil across Peru and a travel advisory, the destination may not appeal to international tourists. Due to a large portion of Lima's economy relying on tourism, Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra will likely place higher security and precautions around tourist sites like Machu Picchu to protect the site's visitors. Boluarte will probably also publicly address the economic burden the protests put on Lima, hoping to evoke enough of an emotional response to encourage the protestors to cease their destruction. Lima will likely continue to see a static state of tourism until international travelers feel safe. If the protests endure, Lima's economy will likely continue to drop dramatically.

[Katie Stonecypher]

RUSSIA: Newest Round of EU Sanctions Will Likely Not Impact Military Production

Summary: Moscow will likely adapt and maintain their robust economy, despite a new proposal for sanctions by the European Union (EU).

Development: On 15 February, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the EU's proposal for a 10th round of sanctions against Moscow, totaling \$12 billion. The proposal includes bans against imported weapon components for drones, missiles, helicopters, thermal cameras, and products used in military vehicle construction. It specifically targets seven key Iranian entities that for Moscow's use of Shahed drones on civilian infrastructure. Additionally, the proposal introduces measures to prevent states from escaping the new sanctions. Members of the EU plan to vote by 24 February. If the vote is unanimous, it can potentially eliminate all tech products found on the battlefield, according to Ursula von der Leyen.

Analysis: Moscow may suffer initially from the sanctions, but it will likely recuperate its losses. They may sustain production by use of import substitution or by turning to Beijing, Ankara, and Pyongyang. There are still several places it can possibly find economic support and weaponry supply. Allied powers do not have an accurate measurement of Moscow's reserves; therefore, it is possible that the effects of the sanctions will not be substantial.

[Gracie Bryner]

BAHRAIN: Cyberattacks Likely to Incite New Form of Digital Activism

Summary: Politically motivated hackers modified and shut down various websites to bring attention to an Arab Spring uprising twelve years ago. The cyberattacks will likely set a precedent in the country to utilize hacktivism to avoid physical conflict with the government.

Development: On 14 February, a group of hacktivists named the Al-Toufan claimed responsibility for cyberattacks against multiple relevant websites, according to *Bloomberg*. This began with the Bahrain International Airport, which slowed in connectivity until it became completely unusable for over thirty minutes during midday. The hackers also claimed the simultaneous cyberattacks on Manama's chamber of commerce. In addition, the group modified various publications on the website of *Akhbar Al Khaleej*, a loyalist daily newspaper. As a result, the news website remains offline with no progress in reactivation. Manama historically silenced political uprisings with physical force with the support of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The cyberattacks occurred on the twelfth anniversary of the 2011 national uprising, a part of the Arab Spring anti-government protests at that time, according to AP News.

Analysis: The physical suppression of political activists will likely encourage followers to use alternative forms of activism to maintain relevance. The activists will most likely embrace digital hacktivism and take down additional critical digital assets as a act of rebellion. The rebellion could lead to further breaches and shutdowns of website content regarding government support. In response, the Manama government may enforce higher cybersecurity standards in its digital assets to counteract the growing risk of cyberattacks.

[Ryan Ilic]

[SYRIA: New Border Crossings Could Lead to New Trade Opportunity](#)

Summary: The opening of new border crossings by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad will likely allow Damascus increased leverage in sanction negotiations and new trade opportunities.

Development: On 14 February, al-Assad opened two new border crossings to Turkey. Bab al-Salam and Al Raée will remain open for three months in Northwest Syria, according to the United Nations (UN). The UN sent 58 trucks with supplies to Bab al-Hawa, the only other border crossing in the North. The shortage of humanitarian supplies prompted UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths' arrival to the area. The UN attempted to deliver supplies to the North through Damascus-controlled areas, but Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an Al-Qaeda affiliated group, prevented the passage. Griffiths continues working with those in Damascus, sending larger quantities of resources to those affected the most. President al-Assad contacted Egyptian President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi to attempt normalization between the two nations. Tunis and Abu Dhabi continue rebuilding relations with Damascus.

Analysis: The initiative by al-Assad regarding more border crossings will likely allow for positive economic relations with Near East nations. Economic sanctions from the UN could stay in effect until the final distribution of aid release. Because of the uncertainty, the UN almost certainly would not want to lift sanctions that could benefit Damascus' military. Damascus may turn to its neighbors for support if sanctions remain in place, allowing for potential trade opportunities and unfreezing portions of Damascus' financial assets.

[Riley Grant]

CHINA: Beijing Likely to Become Global Leader in Artificial Intelligence

Summary: The Bureau of Economy and Information Technology issued a plan to forward the development of artificial intelligence (AI) in Beijing, likely increasing the implementation of AI into multiple key sectors and taking the lead in the AI race.

Development: On 13 February, the Beijing Artificial Intelligence Industry Innovation and Development Conference occurred. Attended by big Chinese tech companies, this government-sponsored conference aimed to promote the AI industry in Beijing and explore its opportunities. At the conference, Beijing's Bureau of Economy and Information Technology issued its plan for the growth of AI in the city. The plan states that Beijing will support businesses, universities, and research institutions to promote the development of an AI innovation source with global influence, according to *Technode*. The bureau said it would explore ways to conduct research for ethical governance and that government agencies will open up data sources for use towards such goals. The bureau stated that Beijing would support key firms by investing money to build an open-source framework and accelerate the supply of basic AI data, according to *Reuters*.

Analysis: Beijing will likely become the global leader in artificial intelligence due to the Bureau of Economy and Information Technology's plan. A larger portion of Beijing's budget may shift to the artificial intelligence industry to support AI government-funded research. The increase in research will likely lead to more discoveries and implementations of artificial intelligence in different key sectors including: manufacturing, information technology, aerospace, and military. The government likely plans that advancements in AI will benefit the economy and result in more investments in key technology companies located in Beijing. These advancements in research and financial support from Beijing will likely result in Beijing leading the AI race.

[Rebekah Sokoloski]

ROMANIA: Tensions in NATO Could Rise If Missiles Continue to Stray

Summary: Russian missiles near Romanian airspace could result in heightened tensions within NATO.

Development: On 10 February, Russian missiles entered Moldovan airspace 22 miles from the Romanian border. NATO redirected two fighter jets to the border until facts emerged. In November 2022, a stray Ukrainian missile hit a farm in NATO country Poland. NATO originally assumed the missile being of Russian origin, highlighting the dangers of the Ukraine conflict extending beyond the country's borders. Countries near Russia want a unified defense within NATO, while other Western countries want to wait for more facts to emerge, creating division within the organization.

Analysis: If missiles edge closer to NATO countries, the likelihood of those countries taking defensive action may increase. If the war continues to expand beyond Ukraine's borders, then the pressure of external countries to end Moscow's aggression will likely escalate. Direct involvement of NATO countries means almost certain horizontal expansion of the conflict.

[Lauren Stonefeld]

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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Savannah Gallop, 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 424, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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