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Authors

Katie Stonecypher
Riley Grant
Connor Jay Tremblay
Mikinzi Strykul
Tayte Domine
Emma Mcleod



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PERU: Recall of Mexican Ambassador to Likely Further Strain Relations

Summary: Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra permanently recalled Lima's ambassador from Mexico City following comments made by Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The comments will likely lead to tension between Lima and Mexico City.

Development: On 24 February, Boluarte announced the return of the Lima ambassador stationed in Mexico. The definitive removal of the ambassador arose because López Obrador publicly voiced his support for Boluarte's overthrown predecessor, José Pedro Castillo Terrones, according to *Aljazeera*. Two months prior to the recall of the ambassador, López Obrador granted political asylum to Castillo and his family, which led Boluarte to kick Mexico's ambassador out of Lima, according to *BBC News*. At the recent news conference, López Obrador declared Mexico will continue to support Castillo, who was unjustly and illegally removed from office, according to *Aljazeera*. Several leaders in Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Argentina, and Colombia, along with Mexico, serve as fervent supporters of Castillo, according to *Aljazeera*.

Analysis: The recall of the Mexican ambassador will likely tarnish or ruin the existing relationship between Lima and Mexico City. Trade restrictions on imports will likely add to the current declining economic state of Peru. In addition, as several other Latin American countries support Castillo over Boluarte, depending on her future consultations with López Obrador, the stability of Lima's relations with surrounding countries could lessen.

[Katie Stonecypher]

[SYRIA: Meetings with Arab League Will Likely Result Damascus Rejoining](#)

Summary: Meetings between Syrian President Bashir al-Assad and representatives from the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) would likely allow Damascus to reintegrate into the Arab League.

Development: On 25 February, delegates from Baghdad, Amman, Ramallah, Tripoli, Cairo, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, and Beirut met in Damascus, according to *Al Jazeera*. The meeting considered the possibility of reintroducing Damascus as a member of AIPU, according to the *Associated Press*. The AIPU is the legislative body of the Arab League. Speaker of Egypt's House of Representatives Hanafy Ali el-Gebali from Cairo and Speaker of the Council of Representatives Mohamed Rikan Hadid al-Halbousi from Baghdad headed the talks during the meetings, acting as the two most prominent figures, according to the *Associated Press*. Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Hassan Shoukry from Cairo followed the meeting by pledging more humanitarian aid for earthquake victims in Syria, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Shoukry also mentioned how Cairo wants to normalize relations with Damascus, according to Reuters.

Analysis: Including Damascus in political dialogue by members of the AIPU will likely allow Damascus to begin the repatriation of citizens within the Near East to allow for economic growth. The opening of relations shows how Damascus could return to the Arab League with support from Near East nations. The membership could allow for increased economic assistance to help Damascus economy from the civil war and earthquakes. The incoming support could include continued humanitarian aid or loans from the Arab League funds. Many Syrian citizens displaced from the civil war living in the Near East could possibly return due to the transportation provided between members of the Arab League. Their return could allow for an increase of workers which in turn helps the Syrian economy. The combination of financial aid from the Arab League and citizens returning could help to stabilize the Syrian economy.

[Riley Grant]

CUBA-VENEZUELA: Russia May Gain Full Access from Developing Alliances

Summary: Russian Security Council Secretary visits Venezuela and Cuba consecutively to discuss Russian relations and security assistance to counter revolutions and may act as an excuse to begin placing forces in the Latin Americas.

Development: On 28 February, Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev visited Venezuelan Secretary-General of the National Defense Council Jose Ornelas Ferreira with officials from both nations to discuss cooperation between Moscow and Caracas security and to discuss international relations, according to *Tasnim News Agency* and *Weekly Blitz*. On 1 March, Patrushev visited Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel and Army General Raul Castro to discuss Russia-Cuba relations and particularly the strategic priorities of Moscow and Havana, according to *Weekly Blitz*, as well as “Color Revolution” prevention, according to *UrduPoint*. On 2 March, Diaz-Canel expressed in a message that he wants Hanoi and Havana to continue working together “in the common effort to build socialism,” according to *Prensa Latina*.

Analysis: Patrushev's visits and Diaz-Canel's message may indicate a repeat of Moscow and its allies placing forces in the Latin Americas to threaten the United States. Patrushev visited Venezuela and Cuba to supposedly discuss security and stability as the Russian Security Council reported “Color Revolution Prevention,” which may act as a misdirect to covertly deposit forces in Cuba like during the Cold War to threaten the U.S. His visit to Venezuela embodied similar purposes, including placing troops near the U.S. Diaz-Canel's message stating his wish to “build socialism” with Vietnam, once again like Russia's purpose during the Cold War, may foreshadow the mentioning of Moscow and Havana’s “strategic importance.

[Connor Jay Tremblay]

CHINA: Global Bans on TikTok May Reveal Cyber Security Threats

Summary: Beijing's response to the recent international bans on the social media platform, TikTok, may allude to additional cyber security threats.

Development: On 28 February, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Mao Ning responded at a press briefing to the recent bans of the app TikTok, a popular social media application owned by the Chinese company ByteDance. On 23 February, the European Union (EU) had temporarily banned the usage of TikTok by employees on both personal and government-issued devices, according to *Security Week*. Cyber security analysts conclude that TikTok possesses the ability to collect and store user data, even if the user does not interact with shareable content, according to *CISecurity*. Mao expressed during a press briefing that Beijing viewed the ban as global powers suppressing the foreign company, according to *The Hill*. Ning further expressed that the world's superpowers fearing a youth-oriented app made Western powers appear hesitant. Beijing believes the EU must respect a general business environment and fair competition, without enacting bans in defense of its national security, according to the Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union.

Analysis: Beijing's defensive response towards the TikTok bans may indicate the likelihood of user data collection through user activity in the app. If the EU successfully bans TikTok, then Beijing will undoubtedly lose revenue from advertisements on the platform. The reaction by Mao may indicate that Beijing knows that TikTok has a younger demographic, therefore it may try to appeal to younger audiences to lobby against the bans. Beijing will likely avoid physical intervention to prevent the ban and focus on swaying public opinion to gain support. A possibility remains open for the audience on TikTok to react against the ban despite the app almost certainly posing a security risk for personnel working with sensitive information.

[Mikinzi Strykul]

IRAN: Poisoning of Schoolgirls Likely to Increase Social and Governmental Tensions

Summary: Since the start of November, 650 Iranian schoolgirls suffered from poisonings by a toxic gas causing respiratory issues, dizziness, fatigue, and nausea. As a result of the poisonings, social and governmental tensions in Iran will likely rise, and protests may increase.

Development: On 28 February, Iranian schoolgirls suffered from another wave of chemical attacks in the city of Pardis, according to *The Guardian*. The first reported poisoning occurred on 30 November 2022 at Nour Technical School in the city of Qom, where 18 students got transported to the hospital, according to BBC News. Schools in 15 different Iranian cities struggle with poisoned students, and a total of 30 different schools reported cases of poisoning, according to NBC News. Deputy Health Minister Younes Panahi stated that the poisonings came from commercially available chemicals that do not show signs of a virus or bacteria, according to *Aljazeera*. On 14 February, the parents of those children who fell ill gathered outside the governate in Qom, demanding an explanation for what happened to their kids, according to *The Times of Israel*.

Analysis: The governmental and social tensions in Iran will likely increase due to the recent poisoning of children, ultimately causing further political unrest and protests leading to police brutality and citizens going to jail over the fight for women's rights. The ongoing poisoning of children will most likely further the Iranians' anger toward Tehran and increase their fight for women's rights. The lack of action from Tehran in protecting schoolgirls will most likely further upset the parents of those children who have fallen ill due to the poisonings. Not all Iranian citizens stand together in support and as a result, those fighting for women's rights could face pushback in the forms of laws passed, as well as other social pressures from traditionalist supporters. The fight for women's rights could potentially limit access to education for women.

[Tayte Domine]

COLOMBIA: Hacker Group Targets Industries Likely to Steal Information

Summary: A research and intelligence group recently exposed malware found on computers across Colombian organizations, most likely used for spying. This discovery follows a series of phishing attacks by a hacker group known currently as the Blind Eagles.

Development: On 1 March, BlackBerry Research and Intelligence group reported that it observed many industries suffering the effects of the same malware. The attack affected a wide range of business types, from health companies to law enforcement and even an agency that negotiates peace in the nation. Backtracking the malware showed a connection between the virus and a series of spear-phishing emails in which the attackers acted as the Colombian government tax agency, the National Directorate of Taxes and Customs. The hackers also falsified documents to make it look as though the recipient needed to pay an outstanding balance. This attack paralleled those seen previously, and BlackBerry concluded the responsibility fell on the Blind Eagles. The group integrated the same tactic before and continued to use due to its proven effectiveness. Once the email recipient fell for the false email, they would open the information provided by Blind Eagle, which would then allow the spy malware to infect the computer.

Analysis: With access to these computers at any time, Blind Eagle could gather pertinent information, likely leading to its use for espionage. The injected malware would provide the group access to a series of spies, with the likely purpose of collecting data for further use. Since the malware spanned across multiple industries, this would probably allow them access to important information across the board, some of which would make for easy blackmail targets. Blind Eagles could use this leverage for seeking more information or to gain financial benefits.

[Emma McLeod]

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



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Eagle Eye Intelligence
3700 Willow Creek Rd.
Prescott, AZ 86301 eagleeyeintel.co