

20 October 2023

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

Issue 436

Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

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Reuters

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RUSSIA: Selection of Wagner PMC Leader Will Likely Give Moscow Control of Activities

Summary: Moscow's public announcement of a new leader for Wagner PMC will likely turn the private military contractor's main attention to the Ukraine conflict. Wagner PMC operations in Africa will likely continue despite the reorientation.

Development: On 29 September, President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin spoke with the former senior Wagner PMC commander Andrei Troshev in Moscow, according to Reuters. Troshev served as an executive director who transferred Wagner PMC information to Moscow's Federal Security Service before Wagner PMC's coup attempt in July, according to *GlobalSecurity*. Moscow announced that Troshev now works in the Ministry of Defense, according to BBC. In the meeting, Moscow stated that it would provide "state-sponsored support" for volunteer groups that fought in Ukraine. Deputy Minister of Defense Yunus-Bek Yevkurov also appeared in the meeting, according to *The New York Times*. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov informed Moscow's allies in Africa that Wagner PMC will continue its operations in the continent, according to *The Moscow Times*.

Analysis: The promotion of Andrei Troshev will likely return control of Wagner PMC to Moscow. Troshev's experience and supply of Wagner PMC information likely indicate a strong loyalty to Moscow. Moscow's offered support and the presence of the Deputy Minister of Defense will likely direct Wagner PMC's focus back to the Ukraine conflict with closer state oversight. The Foreign Minister's comments followed Wagner PMC's summer coup attempt and likely support Moscow's interest in maintaining a tangible sphere of influence in Africa. The balance of these objectives likely reinforces Moscow's value in Wagner PMC despite the brief rebellion.

[Markus Weinzinger]

RUSSIA: Drone Strikes Likely to Continue Violating Romanian Airspace

Summary: The Russian drone strike across the Danube River recklessly targeted Ukrainian ports and likely appears as intentional as Moscow crosses the Romanian border leaving drones behind.

Development: On 30 September, the Romanian Defense Ministry reported Russian drones targeting Southern Ukrainian ports across the Danube River encroached Tulcea and Galati, Romania, violating NATO's no-fly zone agreement. Alerts sent to citizens in the local areas advised them to take cover around 0000 GMT to 0200 GMT. Since Moscow pulled out of the Black Sea grain deal in July, Ukraine continued to export vital grain to the global food supply chain, according to Reuters. Russian drones appeared three times in Crimea last month, violating Romanian airspace, despite Moscow claiming otherwise. Crimean ships in the Black Sea report Moscow responsible for blocking GPS signals, allowing the possibility of "incidents with missiles or drones falling by mistake," according to Romanian Chief of Staff General Daniel Petrescu.

Analysis: Moscow's drone strikes will most likely continue to infringe upon Romania's territory. While these attacks remain aimed toward bordering Ukrainian infrastructure and not specifically Romania, they will likely enhance threats of war expansion against NATO policy. This will possibly continue to involve Bucharest and potentially cause a shift in monitoring drone signals with either advanced radio frequency sensors, high-resolution radars, or pan-tilt-zoom cameras that use GPS technology. Using GPS may result in problems for Bucharest since Moscow continues to interfere with ship signals, leading Bucharest to misinterpret oncoming drone attacks.

[Morgan Finch]

SLOVAKIA: Moscow Likely to Gain Bratislava as Ally Following Recent Election

Summary: Bratislava may ally with Moscow after Slovakian politician Robert Fico won the parliamentary election.

Development: On 30 September, Fico, former Slovakian Prime Minister and leader of the Direction-Social Democracy party, won the parliamentary election. Fico won 22.9% of the votes, causing Slovakian President Zuzana Čaputová to mandate Fico a two-week window to negotiate a coalition government, according to Reuters and AP News. Fico displayed a pro-Russian stance and stated he wanted to start Russia-Ukraine peace talks. Fico pledged to block Ukraine's NATO ambitions, according to CNN. Fico proposed ending military support to Ukraine and also criticized the EU's sanctions on Russia, according to Politico. The Slovakian population, primarily in small and rural areas, supports Fico's ideology. The majority of Slovaks believe either the West or Ukraine bears primary responsibility for the war, with 51% agreeing with this mindset, according to the *New York Times*.

Analysis: Moscow will likely gain Bratislava as an ally in the Russian-Ukrainian War after the parliamentary election. Fico's chances of reelection probably increased due to the absence of a majority party and the formation of a coalition government under Fico. Moscow will likely start talks with Bratislava after Fico assumes the role of Prime Minister because of his pro-Russian ideology and his stance on the Russian-Ukrainian War. Moscow will likely initiate talks, especially if Fico becomes successful in blocking Ukraine's NATO ambitions and Bratislava ends its military support. Moscow will probably see this as aid or support from Bratislava, which implies Moscow will see it as an ally. With much of the general Slovakian population agreeing with the pro-Russian ideology, it will make it easier for Bratislava officials to talk with Moscow and possibly ally with it.

[Amy Bodenhamer]

TURKEY: The Increase of Terrorism Will Likely Spike Conflict

Summary: The increasing conflict between Ankara and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorist group will most likely lead to an increase in suicide bombings and airstrikes.

Development: On 1 October, the PKK launched a suicide bomb attack in Ankara, according to *Al-Jazeera*. The Turkish military seized illegal arms after the bomb detonated and responded with airstrikes in northern Iraq. The Turkish Defense Ministry's airstrikes targeted about 20 PKK members, according to AP News. More than 6,000 people died since 2015 due to PKK terrorist attacks, according to *Crisis Group*. Due to large earthquakes, the PKK declared a temporary cease-fire from mid-February to late June. The Kurdish population makes up about 20 percent of the country, according to CNN. In the past eight years, the PKK recruited many supporters from the Kurdish population in Turkey.

Analysis: Due to the end of the ceasefire, violence will probably increase in Ankara, including the use of suicide bombs. The suicide bombing in Ankara will likely increase tensions between the PKK and Ankara. The PKK will likely strengthen due to Ankara's harsh treatment of the Kurds. Terrorism in the cities of Ankara and Istanbul will likely continue and will probably lead to a larger conflict.

[Michelle Malan]

ISRAEL-IRAN: Large-scale Conflict Likely to Arise Soon

Summary: Jerusalem will likely start a large-scale conflict against Tehran if it claims the recent airstrikes in Syria. Tehran will likely use its newest military hardware against Jerusalem.

Development: On 1 October, Jerusalem allegedly launched an airstrike on Iranian weapons shipments in al-Dimas, west of Damascus. The airstrike primarily targeted the Syrian Army and pro-Iranian militia groups in Syria. Jerusalem previously conducted raids on Tehran-backed groups to intercept arms shipments intended for Hezbollah in Lebanon. On 2 October, Jerusalem performed a second airstrike on Iranian targets in Deir al Zor, Syria, according to *Iran International*. The Islamic Republic of Iran Army revealed its latest creation, the Kaman 19 drone, during a large-scale military drill. A spokesman for the Joint Drone Exercise Brigadier General Alireza Sheikh stated the drone exercise successfully used electronic warfare and air base disruption activities. Tehran recently barred one-third of all International Atomic Energy inspectors from the country's nuclear facilities.

Analysis: Tehran and Jerusalem will likely continue to prepare for a large-scale conflict. If Jerusalem claims it conducted the recent airstrikes in Syria to diminish Iranian groups and Tehran-affiliated groups, then Jerusalem may escalate to a larger attack on Tehran. Tehran preventing inspectors from entering nuclear facilities may indicate the concealment of weapons of mass destruction like nuclear weapons. If not already, Tehran will probably start plotting against Jerusalem. Tensions will likely escalate further and likely cause war between Jerusalem and Tehran.

[Alexis Creager]

ISRAEL: Deadly Israeli Airstrikes on Damascus May Signal Resolution from Jerusalem

Summary: Jerusalem attacked two Iranian weapon targets in Deir Az Zor, Syria, which Damascus, Tehran, and the terrorist group Hezbollah jointly control. The airstrikes resulted in six casualties, likely indicating a new standard of violence from Jerusalem.

Development: On 2 October, Jerusalem struck two military targets in Eastern Syria, injuring two Damascus soldiers and killing four Iranian militia members, according to *Al Jazeera*. The attacks occurred in the Deir Az Zor region, where Tehran, Damascus, and Hezbollah hold heavy influences, according to *The Times of Israel*. The Dier Az Zor strikes mark an expansion of Israeli military operations, fitting Jerusalem's history of targeting Syrian and Iranian weapons systems and engaging with Hezbollah, according to *Haaretz*.

Analysis: Jerusalem likely will crack down on Iranian support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to weaken Damascus and Hezbollah. Jerusalem possibly utilized the airstrike as a warning to Tehran that Israeli violence would spread into new territory if support for Assad and Hezbollah did not cease. The conflict between Damascus, Tehran, and Jerusalem will almost certainly continue. The recent airstrike on Damascus likely signals a future of Jerusalem conducting intensified attacks on targets.

[Linnea Carlsson]

JAPAN: Tokyo Unveils New Aircraft Design That Will Likely Shift the Aerospace Market

Summary: Tokyo's new Airbus A350-1000, featuring superior technical capabilities and comfort for long flights, will likely cause an increase in competition.

Development: On 2 October, Tokyo unveiled a new airbus with a high-tech interior and very comfortable passenger arrangements. One of the main considerations for the new aircraft relates to long flights and passenger comfort. Premium economy offers better privacy and amenities for the cabins, along with more legroom compared to regular economy seats, according to CNN. With long flights in mind, Airbus A350-1000's business class cabins have privacy doors, flat beds, a large TV, and built-in headphones. However, the first-class cabins offer much more than the previous cabins, with only six cabins offered per plane. The layout of the first-class cabin includes a bed, overhead storage, a closet to hang clothing, a small couch, and maximum privacy; these features make the cabin feel like a small room for the passenger. In addition to the first-class cabins, they have built-in headphones, as does the business cabin. Tokyo's new airbus also increased the seating capacity to 54 from 49, according to *Simple Flying*.

Analysis: Tokyo's new aircraft will most likely push for better technology and passenger safety within the industry. The aircraft will also highly likely cause an increase in competition between aircraft suppliers. Big companies such as Boeing may try to outdo the new aircraft, causing an increase in competition. With this new technology, the plane most likely reaches out to travelers who love to travel in luxury with large budgets; however, the added luxuries may disadvantage travelers who travel on a budget. Passenger safety and comfort may increase with competition. With new technologies coming out and new designs of aircraft, passengers will probably have better flying experiences soon.

[Victoria Hinesley]

MEXICO: Sinaloa Cartel Will Likely Use Fentanyl Ban as Diversion

Summary: The Sinaloa cartel displayed banners along roads that stated it banned the production and sale of fentanyl. Despite the low probability that it will follow the ban, it may lessen the amount of blame it receives for fentanyl trafficking.

Development: On 2 October, the Sinaloa cartel hung banners along streets in Sinaloa that claimed it banned the production and sale of fentanyl. The bottom of the banners read, “Att: Chapitos” and “Sincerely, Chapitos,” according to *Mexico News Daily*. The Chapitos, sons of the imprisoned drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, control many of the cartel’s operations, according to Insight Crime. They created the ban due to Mexico City’s failure to investigate those responsible for the epidemic, according to AP News. Mike Vigil, former head of international operations for the Drug Enforcement Administration, clarified that the cartel is the “biggest producer of fentanyl in Mexico.” Then he voiced that the recent reward for capturing the Chapitos increased, according to *The Washington Times*. Vigil guaranteed that the cartel made copious amounts of money from fentanyl trafficking, despite its recent statement, according to ABC News.

Analysis: The banners written by the cartel show a high likelihood that it will attempt to deploy more distraction techniques to shift attention away from its role in fentanyl trafficking. The capture reward for the Chapitos may not continue to increase because of their claims on the banner. Considering the money, the Sinaloa Cartel makes from fentanyl production and sale, it will likely not abide by the ban but continue to enforce its claims to protect itself.

[Isabel Marley]

TAIWAN: 2024 Presidential Election Likely to Decrease Military Tension

Summary: Taiwan's presidential vote on the horizon will likely soften the People's Liberation Army's military drills.

Development: On 4 October, a senior Taiwanese official stated Beijing possesses very diverse ways of interfering in Taiwan's elections in January. Taiwan National Security Bureau Director-General Tsai Ming-yen believes Beijing can use military pressure, economic coercion, or fake news to interfere in elections. In 1996, Beijing launched several missiles into Taiwan to intimidate the island's voters against voting for pro-independence, according to Reuters.

Analysis: Ahead of the 2024 Taiwan presidential and parliamentary election, Beijing will potentially de-escalate military tensions between Taipei. Intimidation tactics to sway the Taiwanese voters will likely result in the adverse effect of inevitably forcing voters to vote for pro-independence Taiwan. Thus, military tension will likely soften. However, Beijing's manipulation of public information to interfere with the election will probably remain.

[Jungsoo Noh]

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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Sebastien Bragg, 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 436, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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