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RUSSIA: Negligent Drone Usage Likely to Continue Infringing Upon Romania

Summary: Russia will most likely continue to intrude upon Romania and keep hold of the Black Sea through persistent drone attacks in Ukraine. These attacks continue to spill over into Romania, and Moscow will likely continue to do so as Bucharest refuses to retaliate. Desperate to win the war, Moscow will most likely not cease these attacks and instead make Bucharest and Kyiv fear expansion unless they withdraw themselves.

Background: On 6 September, Russian drone fragments found on Romanian soil signaled a violation of airspace, according to *The Washington Post*. At first, Bucharest denied the incident but upon further review acknowledged Moscow's flagrant breach. Ceatalchioi Mayor Tudor Cernega commented, "Two months ago when I mentioned the suspicion that a drone might have fallen here, I wasn't taken seriously... Things have changed now," according to Reuters. Two more drone attacks occurred within the month of September in the towns of Galati and Tulcea, Romania off course of Izmail and Reni, Ukraine. On 25 October, Moscow attacked the Ukrainian Khmelnytsky Nuclear Power Plant and in turn retaliated against the Russian Kursk Nuclear Power Plant, each using drones.

Controlling the Black Sea: Moscow will almost certainly deploy strategies to retain control over the Black Sea to gain the advantage of accessibility against Kyiv. Annexing and taking control of Crimea, Moscow's ability to reestablish "Russia's position on the Black Sea," proved, "vital to extending and controlling its borders and as a springboard for projecting power into Europe, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean," according to The Washington Institute. Moscow's ability to control these waters influences trade and travel for all the surrounding nations. In July, Moscow pulled out of the Black Sea Grain Deal making it difficult for any shipments to travel whatsoever without Moscow's interference. Crimea and the Black Sea appear as "the region where the current war in Ukraine began, and it holds the potential solution on how to best end it," according to The Washington Institute.

Drone Attacks Spreading: Russian drone attacks will almost certainly increase against Ukraine and continue to spill over into Romania to influence its power. With Romania as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Association (NATO), Moscow's power to inflict damage on its territory occurs frequently and recklessly. Moscow's repeated offenses include multiple occurrences of drone remnants found in Tulcea and Galati in September as well as a drone crater found in

Plauru on 12 October. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg stated, “So far, there has been no need,” for invoking Article Four of the NATO treaty, concerning the security and territorial integrity of a member, yet Romanian President Klaus Iohannis stated these drone attacks “cause real risk to the security of Romanian citizens in the area,” according to the *Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette*. The conflicting views almost certainly inflicted fear upon local citizens and government figures who may need to decide whether these drone attacks appear as an introduction to Russian expansion or an empty threat.

Desperation to Win: Appearing confident at the start of the war, Moscow may now become desperate for a means to end the conflict. Director of the German Marshall Fund’s Warsaw office Michal Baranowski states, “The war is pretty much at a stalemate,” according to CNBC. Anything Moscow or Kyiv does, the other retaliates as well. This includes drone attacks on nuclear power plants, putting out warrants for officials’ arrests, and more. By challenging outside countries, like Romania, Moscow may force Kyiv to take a step back and think of the surrounding countries and the implications if they get involved.

Outlook and Implications: Romania will most likely persist as a factor in this war and shift the tactics Moscow and Kyiv respond with and retaliate against each other. Moscow’s control over the Black Sea allows it access to Romania where many of its drones will possibly continue to interfere with Romanian airspace instilling fear in the citizens. Bucharest will most likely never retaliate and instead want Kyiv to act on its behalf. While Moscow believes it harnesses an advantage, it must stay defensive as Kyiv increases its offensive capabilities. This demonstrates Kyiv’s persistent position in the war despite Moscow’s threats of expansion and will most likely not retreat with the support of other countries.

[Morgan Finch]

IRAN: Escalation of Israel War into Regional Conflict Likely Will Depend on Tehran

Summary: Amid the war between Jerusalem and Hamas, Tehran uses proxies to further its interests against Israel. While Tehran and its allies have not officially declared war, the possibility of their involvement remains. If Tehran decides to escalate its involvement, it will likely dictate which of its proxies will enter the conflict and to what magnitude.

Background: On 7 October, Hamas attacked Jerusalem from the Gaza Strip. Tehran long ago declared Jerusalem an enemy and has engaged in direct conflict with Israel. Currently, Tehran wields significant influence in countries surrounding Israel and contains a history of using proxies such as Hezbollah, Syria, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad to confront Jerusalem, according to The Wilson Center. Given Jerusalem's current engagement with Hamas and Tehran's regional influence, Tehran's involvement poses a threat to its power now more than ever.

The Threat of Hezbollah: The involvement of Hezbollah, a militant group backed by Tehran, would likely change the course of the war as allies of Hamas. Hezbollah controls much of nearby Lebanon and poses an exceptionally powerful military threat. They hold the title as the world's most heavily armed non-state actor, according to Wilson Center. They have publicly stated they will not directly involve themselves with the war unless Tehran tells them to, according to *Al Jazeera*. Israel expressed fears of Hezbollah joining the war, as they contain 10 times as many missiles and a more professional fighting force than Hamas, according to Bloomberg.

Damascus and Tehran's Close Ties: Syria's involvement in the war would serve as beneficial to Hamas, which Tehran would likely dictate. Damascus largely depends on Tehran for military power and defense, according to *The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*. In return, Tehran uses Syria as a land corridor, hosting military operations in Syria and engaging in conflict with Jerusalem from Syrian territory, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies. If Tehran decides to declare official war on Israel, Damascus will likely feel obligated to send their own troops who Tehran trained and funded. Israel previously expressed fears of Damascus becoming involved, according to *The Washington Post*.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Israel's Backyard: Tehran may possibly leverage Palestinian Islamic Jihad against Israel. Tehran provides funding for the anti-Israel militant group, according

to the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Islamic Jihad, allied with Hamas, involved themselves in the 7 October attack against Israel, according to Reuters. Islamic Jihad poses a potential threat to Israel because it has the second-largest armed network in Gaza behind none other than Hamas itself, according to Reuters. Since they have a history of engaging against Israel, Islamic Jihad could pose another threat to Jerusalem as a militant group backed by Tehran.

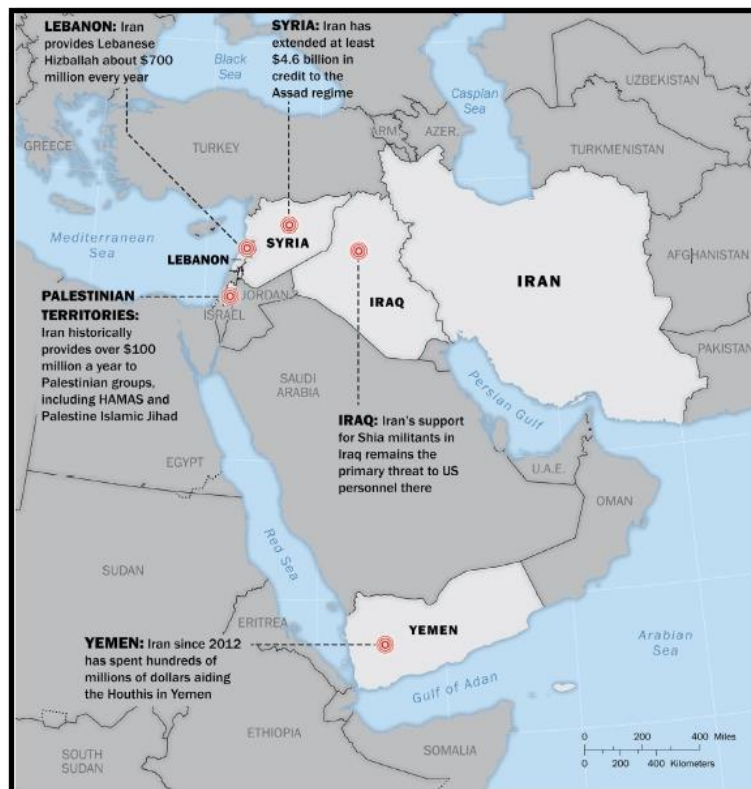


Figure 1: Countries that provide funding to Hamas, Hezbollah, and other militant groups

Outlook and Implications: If the Israel-Hamas war spreads regionally, Tehran will likely play a pivotal role. Tehran will probably decide to involve one or more of the aforementioned groups if it decides escalation will benefit its realm of power. If Hezbollah becomes more involved, it will likely turn the war in Hamas' favor. If Syria joins the war, it will likely prove a valuable bridge for Tehran-backed forces against Israel. Tehran may involve Islamic Jihad, which would join forces with Hamas and potentially help them defeat Israel. If the conflict continues with Iran-backed Hamas losing progress, Tehran could decide to become involved.

[Linnea Carlsson]

MEXICO: Drug Cartels Will Likely Gain Complete Control of Chiapas

Summary: The rise in drug cartels and gang-related violence in Chiapas-led organizations like the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) caused Mexico City to dissolve its townships and send reinforcements into the state. The lives of citizens, law enforcement officials, and the indigenous population will likely worsen due to the increased levels of violence. Mexico City will likely struggle to stop the violence, and the drug cartels' battles for power and territory will probably completely take over the state.

Background: Chiapas experienced increased levels of violence throughout recent years caused by gang-related issues and drug cartel turf battles. Despite thousands of soldiers and National Guard troops Mexico City sent to the state, it remains a dangerous place for citizens, with several road blockades, shootings, and kidnappings occurring every month. Chiapas shares a border with Guatemala, making it an enormous target for territory battles between gangs and cartels, according to AP News. The EZLN owns most of southern Chiapas. The group established several autonomous municipalities in Chiapas after the Zapatista uprising. On 1 January 1994, a war began between the EZLN and Mexico City because of mistreatment and abuse towards the indigenous population of Chiapas, according to The Australian Institute of International Affairs. Since this war, the EZLN remained in its isolated townships in Chiapas, yet it recently came out with a statement announcing the dissolution of these municipalities. The statement addressed the EZLN's new structure, the increased levels of violence, and Mexico City's failure to combat the violence. The EZLN did not state the reason for the dissolution of its townships, according to AP News.

Increased Violence in Chiapas: The increased levels of violence in Chiapas may lead Mexico City to lose complete control over the state. Over the past year, Chiapas has experienced extreme levels of violence with murders, abductions, and turf wars. On 27 June, gang members abducted 14 police officers on a highway by the Guatemala border, according to AP News. On 25 September, drug cartel turf battles between the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel shut down the state. These turf battles cut off electrical power, and the cartels prevented government officials from entering the rural towns to fix the power, according to *AP News*. Attacks like these will likely continue in the upcoming year, and people carrying out these attacks will likely receive zero punishments. Due to the attackers' ability to get away with every

attack with no repercussions that impact them, they probably do not view Mexico City as a threat. Their attacks disrupted the lives of citizens and led Mexico City to send reinforcements, proving the immense amount of power they had gained. The drug cartels likely see EZLN’s township dissolution as confirmation of successful attacks. The EZLN owned most of the southern part of the state, and now that it has dissolved these townships, the cartels will probably target these areas until they get control over the territory.

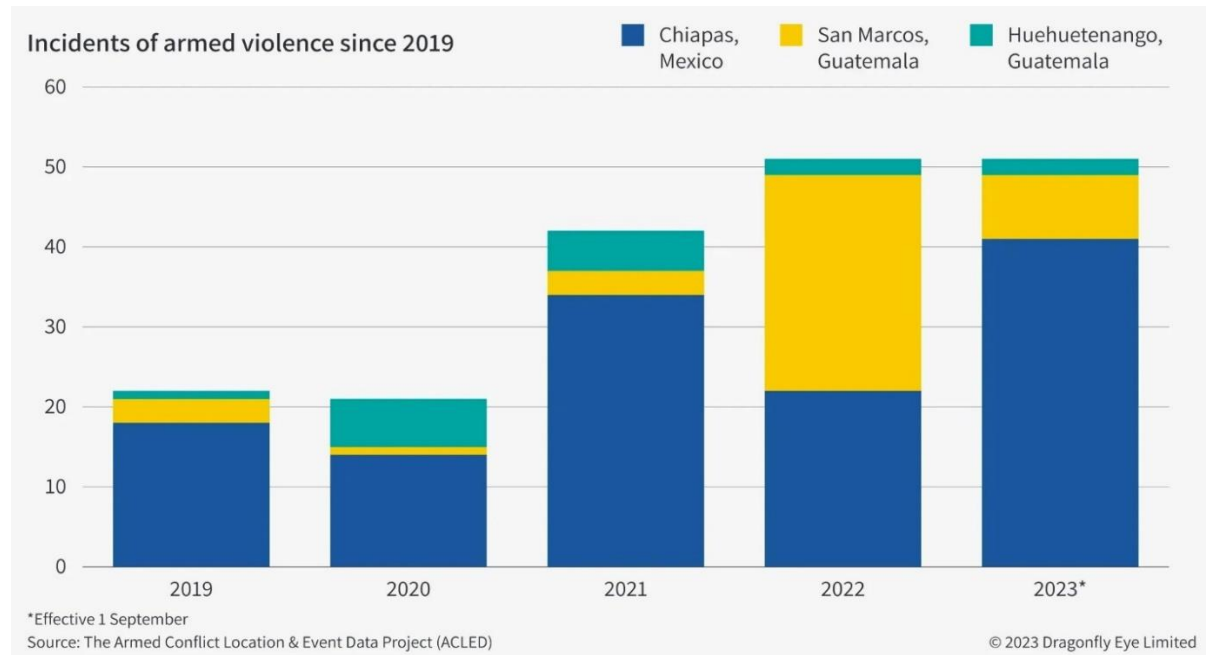


Figure 1: Graph of armed violence incidents in Mexico and Guatemala between 2019 to 2023.

EZLN Dissolution of Townships: The increased levels of gang and drug-related violence in Chiapas likely led to the EZLN’s dissolution of its autonomous municipalities. While in its statement, it did not explicitly state its reasoning for dissolving its townships, it did mention the “road blockades, robberies, kidnappings, extortions, forced recruitment, and shootouts,” according to AP News. The group wants better opportunities for the indigenous people of Chiapas, and with numerous attacks occurring in the state, it may struggle to accomplish its goal. The EZLN may recreate its townships in a safer part of the state further from the border, yet this will likely take a while. In its statement, the EZLN linked the violence to Mexican political parties, Mexico City, and the tourism industry. It asserted that Mexico City only sent reinforcement to Chiapas to “stem migration,” according to AP News. Mexico City’s attempts will likely continue to dissatisfy the EZLN, which may stem from a history of disagreements

between the EZLN and Mexico City, including the 1994 uprising. While decades have passed since the uprising, the EZLN will likely continue to show dislike and distrust towards Mexico City until it succeeds in ceasing the violence in Chiapas.

Mexico City Involvement: Mexico City could halt its attempts at quelling the violence in Chiapas if its attempts continue to fail. Despite the presence of several troops and soldiers in the state, violence increased. Mexico City will likely need to send more reinforcements into the state to stop the gang members and cartels, but this may require more resources and people than Mexico City possesses. After the drug cartel turf battle between rival drug cartels earlier this year, Mexico City issued a statement claiming that it sent “800 soldiers, police, and National Guard members” into the state due to reports of “gang roadblocks,” according to *AP News*. Since then, the attacks have continued, proving Mexico City’s lack of success in its attempts to stop the violence. Many organizations, including the EZLN, do not trust Mexico City or its intentions regarding the troops it sent, according to *AP News*. With allegations about the reinforcements, it sent to Chiapas and the EZLN’s resistance to receive any aid from Mexico City, it may give up altogether. If Mexico City completely cuts off its involvement with the situation in Chiapas, then the drug cartels may gain complete control over the territory within the upcoming years.

Outlook and Implications: The increased levels of violence in Chiapas, EZLN’s dissolution of its municipalities, and Mexico City’s failure to cease the drug cartels’ actions show the high probability that the cartels will take complete control over Chiapas within the next few years. With the EZLN giving up its territory, the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel may fight over the newly dissolved townships, leading to another turf battle. If another turf battle occurs, citizens will likely struggle to continue with daily activities due to complications such as power outages. Mexico City may send more reinforcements to fight the cartels and gang members, but it will likely not succeed in stopping them. If Mexico City’s attempts continue to fail, it will probably withdraw reinforcements completely, leaving citizens and the indigenous people of Chiapas in extreme danger. If Chiapas ends up without aid from Mexico City and the EZLN does not reclaim its past territory, the drug cartels will likely battle for the territory until one of them wins. If one of the rival cartels gains control over Chiapas entirely, the state will probably become the central hub for drug trafficking between Mexico and Guatemala.

[Isabel Marley]

ISRAEL: The Influx of Palestinian Refugees Indicates Likelihood of Military Engagement

Summary: Cairo, Sana'a, Beirut, and Damascus will likely get militarily involved due to the increase of violence in the Gaza Strip pushing civilians to evacuate. The continuous violation of international law between both Hamas and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) contributes to the likelihood of violence spreading into the West Bank.

Background: On 11 November, the Al-Shifa hospital shut down due to loss of fuel and the increase of IDF violence, according to *Al-Jazeera*. Jerusalem issued evacuation orders, but the increase in airstrikes makes evacuation unsafe for the refugees at Al-Shafia. The Rafah Border, the only open border crossing, allows limited evacuation and aid. Due to the belief that Hamas used refugee camps for militant operations, the IDF targeted both Jabalia and Bureij camps, according to CBC News. The IDF continues to target suspected Hamas military operations, which include hospitals, refugee camps, and ambulances.

Increasing Tensions along Rafah Border: An influx of Palestinians finding refuge in Egypt will potentially jeopardize its long-lasting peace treaty with Jerusalem. On 3 November, the IDF launched airstrikes on ambulances transporting patients to the border, according to *Al-Jazeera*. Airstrikes and IDF control prevent Palestinians from crossing safely at the Rafah border. Evacuation orders announced by Jerusalem continue as Palestinians attempt to evacuate from Gaza. Cairo opposes Palestinians emigrating yet continues to support Gaza, providing humanitarian aid, according to CFR. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah states his concerns about the mass influx of Palestinians coming into Egypt, according to AP News.

Non-Operational Hospitals Increase Violence: Limited medical supplies, loss of fuel, and increasing violence will almost certainly create new operation points for IDF on-the-ground violence. On 18 October, airstrikes launched on Al-Ahli Arab Hospital killed at least 500 people, according to *Al-Jazeera*. Airstrikes launched by IDF on hospitals take away refuge and safety for displaced Palestinians who need medical attention. Jordanian King Abdullah II uses planes to airdrop medical supplies into Gaza but remains firmly against allowing Palestinian refugees into Jordan, according to *The Jerusalem Post*. On 15 November, The IDF infiltrated the Al-Shifa Hospital due to the belief Hamas occupied the hospital, according to *The Washington Post*. The IDF currently controls the largest hospital in Gaza, violating international humanitarian law.

Conflict Spreads into the West Bank: Due to increasing damage and airstrikes in Gaza, Palestinians in the West Bank will likely engage in the ongoing conflict. On 14 November, Houthis launched Ballistic missiles toward Eilat, according to *Al-Jazeera*. Hezbollah and Houthis both exchanged fire with the IDF along the border of Israel. On 16 November, a shooting occurred between Palestinians and Israelis at a checkpoint in West Bank, resulting in three deaths and multiple injuries, according to *Al-Jazeera*. Israeli settler violence toward Palestinians increased to seven incidents per day in the West Bank since the war erupted in Gaza. The death toll since 7 October in the West Bank consists of 183 Palestinians and 3 Israelis, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).



Figure 1: Worsening Conditions in the Gaza Strip

Outlook and Implications: With the increase of Palestinian refugees crossing the Rafah Border, Cairo will likely request assistance from other Middle Eastern countries to offer refuge. Palestinian refugees who emigrate to other countries would most likely engage in conflict, triggering a domino effect. Jerusalem will almost certainly continue to use airstrikes and on-the-ground violence on supposed areas of Hamas military occupations to justify their actions. Fighting in Gaza will most likely worsen and directly encompass the West Bank.

[Michelle Malan]

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



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