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GEORGIA: New Prime Minister Unlikely to Significantly Alter Foreign Relations

Summary: Despite statements by new Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, Tbilisi will probably not take definitive steps towards European Union (EU) membership or significantly alter its relations with Russia.

Development: On 8 February, Tbilisi officially appointed Irakli Kobakhidze, former chairman of the ruling Georgian Dream party, as the new prime minister. In recent statements, Kobakhidze stated economic development and deepening the country's relationship with the EU as priorities for the nation. Despite applying for membership in the EU in 2022, Tbilisi must implement reforms that include anti-corruption measures. In recent Twitter statements, Tbilisi claimed that other high priorities for the new administration included increased government transparency and accountability. Kobakhidze recently praised oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, Georgia's richest person and honorary chairman of the Georgian Dream party, as invaluable. Kobakhidze also emphasized Tbilisi's goal of reclaiming the Moscow-occupied breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Analysis: Kobakhidze will most likely not make significant changes to Tbilisi's foreign policy. Given Kobakhidze's recent comments in favor of Ivanishvili, he will probably not take significant steps to reduce the influence of Georgian oligarchs. This will likely prevent Tbilisi from meeting the EU's requirements for accession. Kobakhidze will almost certainly not take considerable action to reclaim South Ossetia and Abkhazia due to Moscow's control of both territories. Given a likely desire to maintain the current state of relations and to improve its own economy, Tbilisi will likely not sanction Moscow or escalate tensions with Moscow. This goal would almost certainly prevent any significant attempt to reclaim the breakaway territories. However, the widespread popularity of both eventual EU membership and eventual reclamation of the breakaway territories will almost certainly prevent Tbilisi from publicly abandoning either goal.

[Christina Muchow]

SERBIA: Investigation into Election Fraud Likely to Strain EU Accession

Summary: Belgrade will likely experience setbacks in its European Union (EU) accession process after members of the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for an investigation into Serbian parliamentary and municipal election irregularities.

Development: On 8 February, members of the European Parliament voted in favor of conducting an independent investigation into allegations of election irregularities in parliamentary and municipal elections held in Belgrade on 17 December 2023. The Serbian Progressive Party won 129 seats of the 250-seat National Assembly during the 2023 election. A combination of harsh rhetoric, bias in the media, pressure on public sector employees, and misuse of public resources likely critically impacted voting results in the election, according to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Preliminary reports also mentioned several allegations of vote-buying and ballot box stuffing occurring during the election. In addition to the resolution, lawmakers also called for the suspension of EU funding to Belgrade, should it not comply with the investigation of voter fraud. Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić criticized the resolution, calling it scandalous and an attempt to humiliate the citizens of Serbia. Brnabić also condemned members of opposition parties, Serbia Against Violence and Serbian Green-Left Front, for traveling to the EU legislature to lobby for the resolution, declaring that they sought the abolition of the sovereignty of their own country.

Analysis: The resolution likely represents an expression of concern by European powers towards the status of democracy in Belgrade. Although Belgrade already applied for accession into the EU, progress remains unlikely until they implement certain democratic reforms that support EU foreign policy. However, it seems unlikely that Belgrade will cooperate with the EU due to Brnabić's hostility towards the resolution and suspension of EU funding. As a result, progress made to join the EU will likely backslide considerably, especially if the investigation finds officials implicated in conducting a fraudulent election.

[Brandon Greenaway]

UKRAINE: Potential Disadvantage for Kyiv After Confirming Moscow's Use of Starlink

Summary: Kyiv now faces possible technological disadvantages after confirming Moscow's use of the SpaceX satellite system, Starlink, which Kyiv also uses for front-line communication.

Development: On 11 February, Kyiv's Defense Intelligence claimed it confirmed Moscow's use of satellite communications in occupied areas of Ukraine, according to CNN. The Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense in Ukraine said Moscow's 83rd Air Assault Brigade used the Starlink terminals in their battle near the towns of Klishchivka and Andriivka, according to Reuters. Kyiv publicized a short conversation between Russian soldiers where they mentioned using Starlink and installing Starlink terminals to access the internet, according to *Politico*. Starlink enabled front-line forces in Kyiv to communicate via secure internet messaging apps, which allowed them to contact each other without relying on cell or radio signals, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Analysis: The confirmation of Moscow's usage of Starlink possibly shows the shrinking gap in communication abilities between Moscow and Kyiv. The communication disadvantage that Moscow faced against Kyiv as the sole users of Starlink now most likely will pivot against Kyiv since Moscow now has the advantage of using satellite internet to communicate.

[Amy Bodenhamer]

RUSSIA: Sanctions Likely Allude to Possible War Strategies from Great Britain

Summary: Moscow likely imposed sanctions on British defense experts to steer them from possibly developing a war strategy supporting Ukraine in the Russo-Ukraine war.

Development: On 12 February, Moscow imposed sanctions on 18 British academic experts and defense officials. Moscow sanctioned the individuals to halt their demonization of Russia in the Russo-Ukraine war, according to *Hindustan Times*. Russia's foreign ministry stated that British citizens openly discredit Moscow's constitutional system and socio-political process. Therefore, Moscow charged them with anti-Russian sentiment, according to Reuters. On 24 January, British Army General Patrick Sanders warned UK civilians that they should prepare for a "hypothetical land war" since the British military remains too small to take on escalating challenges alone, according to CBS News. Sanders further stated Kyiv demonstrated how "citizen armies" make significant impacts in times of war, according to CBS News.

Analysis: Moscow's recent sanctions placed on British academic experts and defense officials likely suggest Moscow assumes that British officials want to plan a potential war strategy regarding the Russo-Ukraine war. Sanders's recent statements further allude to possible military preparations for theoretical scenarios that most likely align with strategies the 18 British experts might plan. His statements to the public regarding Kyiv's model of citizen armies almost certainly influenced Moscow's sanctions on key British defense officials, reflecting Moscow's vigilance toward London's potential strategies throughout the Russo-Ukraine war and represent a warning to London, suggesting Moscow's anticipation of responding if London considers various courses of action.

[Lauren Estrada]

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.

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



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