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ARMENIA: Ceasing Participation in Treaty Organization Likely Part of Broader Shift

Summary: Yerevan's announcement that Armenia froze its participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) will likely prompt further distancing from Russia, a full withdrawal from the CSTO, and deeper ties with France.

Development: On 23 February, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced that Armenia suspended its participation in the Russia-led CSTO and is reevaluating its membership. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Moscow will contact Yerevan for further information, noting Yerevan's lack of formal action regarding its membership. This announcement comes after several months of criticism of both the CSTO and Moscow by Pashinyan, who repeatedly accused both of failing to uphold their security commitments during and after the Azeri takeover of Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023. Since September, Yerevan repeatedly declined to participate in CSTO events, joined the International Criminal Court, and deepened military and diplomatic ties with Paris. Moscow repeatedly condemned these actions. However, Armenia remains an active member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the Russian military continues to operate a base in Gyumri, Armenia.

Analysis: Yerevan will likely continue to reduce its diplomatic and military ties with Moscow in favor of deeper ties with European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization members, particularly France. Yerevan will most likely increase the number of diplomatic meetings conducted with French officials, with a visit to Armenia from French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal likely imminent. Yerevan will almost certainly expand its arms deals with France as well and will almost certainly not make future arms deals with Russia. Yerevan will likely formally withdraw from the CSTO in 2024 due to a failure to uphold security agreements, which Moscow will likely criticize. However, Yerevan will most likely not request the removal of the Russian troops stationed at Gyumri due to a likely desire to maintain some positive relations with Moscow. Yerevan will almost certainly maintain its economic ties with Russia and its membership in the EEU.

[Christina Muchow]

CHINA: Rising Tensions Likely Caused the Release of a New Cybersecurity Plan

Summary: Rising tensions with surrounding countries and the U.S. likely spurred Beijing's creation and release of a new cybersecurity plan for its industrial sector. Beijing likely intends to prevent major cyber-attack impacts on its industrial and critical sectors.

Development: On 26 February, Beijing's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology released a new plan to improve cybersecurity measures in its industrial sector. The plan encompasses training sessions, the development of security protocols and procedures, and the training of 5,000 security professionals, according to BNN Breaking. China suffered a significant amount of advanced persistent threat (APT) attacks in 2023 from the U.S., India, and Taiwan, according to *Global Times*. These attacks targeted 16 industries, including education, government, national defense, and transportation, according to *Global Times*. Over the last two years, several cyber-attacks used more basic methods, such as spear phishing and watering hole attacks that affected government and military systems, according to Interesting Engineering. Although these attacks use simple techniques, companies and individuals frequently suffer from them. Phishing manipulates the victim into giving sensitive information to the perpetrator and ranks as the third most common cyber-attack, according to CrowdStrike. Beijing also released this report after prominent accusations from Washington of Chinese state-sponsored cyber-attacks. Several organizations in other countries also linked Beijing to significant cyber-attacks over the last year, including Taiwan, the Philippines, and Japan.

Analysis: Beijing created new cybersecurity procedures for its industrial sector to likely try and protect against serious cyber threats from foreign states. Beijing likely hopes to prevent extensive cyber infiltration from APTs and basic phishing attacks. With the prevalence of more basic attacks, the plan will likely focus on these. Beijing will likely expand these efforts to enhance the security of the government sector as well. It will likely attempt to integrate this new initiative with its current offensive strategies for a comprehensive cyber agenda.

[Reina Girouard]

ISRAEL: Hamas Request for Ramadan March Will Likely Lead to Violent Outbreaks

Summary: Hamas's request to march in honor of Ramadan will almost certainly lead to an escalation of violence in the Israel-Hamas War.

Development: On 27 February, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh urged Iranian proxy groups to increase attacks during the Islamic holy month, according to the *Jewish Link*. Jerusalem urges for a six-week ceasefire during Ramadan to exchange hostages, according to *Time*. As Jerusalem struggles to retain international support due to the high death toll among Palestinians, many see a ceasefire as an opportunity to improve Israel's reputation by bringing aid to citizens of Gaza, according to NBC News. Though Jerusalem anticipates a truce, Hamas plans to collaborate with other Iran-backed proxy groups to create a multi-front war for a "second phase of October 7," according to Asian News International. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned that Israel would not let Hamas reach its goal of "unity of the battlefields," referring to its use of proxies to exacerbate tensions with Jerusalem amid their dedicated fasting month, according to *Jewish Press*. Hamas plans to focus its war efforts on Jerusalem and Temple Mount, which is the location of Al-Aqsa Mosque causing Israel to add additional security measures around the area, according to Reuters.

Analysis: Due to Hamas's intention to attack Israel during Ramadan, the group will likely not accept any ceasefire proposal. Hamas will almost certainly use other Iranian proxy groups to assault Israeli citizens during Ramadan to instill fear when working in conjunction with allied forces. To send a clear message about their military strength and intention to win the war, Hamas will likely choose the Al-Aqsa Mosque as its next target.

[Caileigh Tax]

LEBANON: Hezbollah Will Likely Invade Northern Israel in the Coming Months

Summary: After receiving word from Iran, Hezbollah will likely prepare for an invasion of northern Israel in the coming weeks. This will most likely act as a protest to the continued airstrikes in Lebanon.

Development: On 28 February, Tehran signaled Hezbollah to escalate their attacks on the northern Israeli border, according to *Jerusalem Post*. The escalation will continue in response to the bombing in Lebanon, according to *Al Jazeera*. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah started to ramp up his force's activity in northern Israel. On 27 February, Hezbollah fired six rockets from southern Lebanon targeting an air base in northern Israel, according to The Arab Posts. The escalation came in retaliation for an Israeli strike that killed two Hezbollah fighters in eastern Lebanon a day prior, according to The Arab Post. Nasrallah has started to build up his army on the northern border, according to *Foreign Policy*. Nasrallah met with Tehran and concluded that an invasion would promote Hezbollah's power and provide aid to Gaza, according to All Israel News.

Analysis: Hezbollah will likely invade northern Israel in the coming months. Their military buildup on the border indicates a likely invasion. Tehran's approval this week approving will likely cause Nasrallah to continue to grow Hezbollah forces at the border and continue to send airstrikes into northern Israel. A ground invasion will likely follow, prompting Israel to fight a war on two fronts.

[Levi Shoaff]

ISRAEL: Jerusalem Likely to Stall Efforts for a Ceasefire in Gaza

Summary: Jerusalem will probably delay efforts for a ceasefire to allow the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to attack during Ramadan. Western nations will almost certainly push for an end to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Development: On 29 February, the IDF opened fire upon a group of civilians seeking aid, killing over 100 and injuring more than 700, according to AP News. A quarter of 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza face starvation, and 80% have fled their homes, according to the United Nations (UN). The war in Gaza reached a death toll of 30,000, according to *Al-Jazeera*. The IDF confirms an estimated 11,000 Hamas fighters killed or captured, which prompted Jerusalem to comment that “victory is in sight” during a television briefing. Jerusalem continues to launch attacks on Gaza despite calls for a ceasefire from London. Jerusalem indicated that they will send ground forces into one of the last Hamas strongholds if they cannot reach a hostage release agreement by 10 March, according to Asian News International.

Analysis: Jerusalem will likely prolong conflict in Gaza to secure an Israeli victory. The ending of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza will almost certainly receive support from Western nations. With the IDF continuing to strike Gaza, surrounding organizations such as Hezbollah will likely heighten their retaliation. The growing humanitarian crisis among Palestinians will almost certainly lead to other nations joining the UN calling for a ceasefire. Western nations will probably further their diplomatic involvement, pushing for an end to the war in Gaza. Hamas will likely further attack Israel by involving Iranian proxy groups to coordinate strikes against the IDF. Jerusalem will probably attempt to stall agreements with Hamas to enable the IDF to attack on 10 March.

[Elliot Bankler]

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



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