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# Issue 462

## Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

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## CHINA: Brokered Myanmar Ceasefire Likely to Last Longer than Broken 2024 Ceasefire

**Summary:** The ceasefire agreement between the Junta military regime and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) will likely last longer than the January 2024 ceasefire agreement due to the Junta reestablishing control of Lashio.

**Development:** On 20 January, Beijing facilitated a ceasefire agreement with the Junta Myanmar military and MNDAA. The ceasefire requires the MNDAA to withdraw from the previously Junta-controlled city of Lashio. Lashio hosted a major regional military center for the Junta, which it lost during the second phase of Operation 1027, executed by the MNDAA and its two allies in the Three Brotherhood Alliance. During the first phase of Operation 1027, the alliance captured substantial portions of Myanmar's borders with neighboring countries, including China. China brokered a ceasefire with the Three Brotherhood Alliance and the Junta in January of 2024, ending the first phase of Operation 1027. The ceasefire lasted until June 2024, with Junta airstrikes against the rebels eventually culminating in the second phase of Operation 1027, which eventually captured Lashio. Lashio plays a critical part in the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) plan as the largest city near the Myanmar-China border, making it the first destination of the corridor on its way to the Indian Ocean. Beijing invested millions in Myanmar as part of CMEC, which would connect Beijing to the Indian Ocean. After the rebels captured Lashio, the Junta government conducted airstrikes in the city leading to significant infrastructure damage and Beijing, stopping the supply of MNDAA-controlled territories after its capture.

**Analysis:** The current ceasefire agreement will likely last longer than the one from January 2024, with the Junta government regaining control of Lashio. The recapture of Lashio will likely prevent airstrikes against the rebel groups, which the rebel groups claimed as the reason for violating the ceasefire themselves. Beijing almost certainly desires stability in Lashio and the region connecting to protect its multi-million-dollar investments. Beijing will likely pressure both parties to respect the ceasefire agreement, especially regarding Lashio. The MNDAA will likely uphold the ceasefire due to the pressure of Beijing cutting off supplies to its territories again. However, this ceasefire agreement is unlikely to achieve lasting stability as the rebel groups still control large parts of Myanmar's international borders and territory.

[Sebastien Bragg]

## IRAN: Killing of Judges Indicates Emboldened Internal and External Adversaries

**Summary:** Recent events, such as the fall of the Assad regime and Israel's dismantling of Iran's proxy groups Hamas and Hezbollah, have emboldened Iran's enemies. This will likely force Tehran to crack down on the Iranian populace to save face and dissuade further outbursts.

**Development:** On 18 January, a lone gunman shot and killed two prominent Supreme Court judges, Ali Razini and Mohammad Moghisseh. These judges have connections to the 1988 mass execution of dissidents following Iran's war with Iraq. Moghisseh oversaw numerous unfair trials in which the court disregarded evidence and did not substantiate charges, according to the U.S. Treasury report imposing sanctions on him in 2019. This event occurred weeks after the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, occurring on 10 December 2024 when Syrian rebels took Damascus and toppled the long-ruling and oppressive ruler. Syria has long stood as a key player in Iran's "axis of resistance" and has allowed Iran to support its proxies and influence events in the Levant area. One of Iran's key proxies in Lebanon, Hezbollah, lost six commanders and its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, to Israeli airstrikes in late September due to the ongoing Israel-Hamas war.

**Analysis:** With the compounding factors of Israel dismantling its proxies and the loss of influence over Syria, it is likely that either a dissident group, or this gunman alone, saw Iran's leadership in confusion and decided to eliminate these judges as a message of defiance. The recent events display issues with Iran's hold on the region, including internal and external affairs. These issues make Iran a target to outside forces like Israel and internal dissidents and protesters. These judges assisted in killing tens of thousands of prisoners and facilitating the corrupt Iranian judicial system, likely making them the target of vengeance and justice for anti-government groups in Iran. This likely sparked the killing, which may in turn embolden more Iranians to partake in protests or violence. Tehran will likely implement measures to mitigate potential future attacks and crack down on rhetoric that it deems either supportive of this behavior or inflammatory. This will likely take the form of increased media censorship and surveillance as they try to find and eliminate this behavior. Tehran will also need to investigate new methods of supporting their proxies in the region as they attempt to repair their "axis of resistance."

[Hunter Flanagan]

## **RUSSIA-IRAN: Strategic Partnership Treaty Unlikely to Significantly Alter Relations**

**Summary:** The Russia-Iran comprehensive strategic partnership treaty signed last week likely represents a codification of the pre-existing status quo, indicating Moscow and Tehran's intent to deepen ties without creating significant binding commitments.

**Development:** On 17 January, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian visited Moscow, where he met with Russian President Vladimir Putin and signed a strategic partnership treaty. It calls for increased bilateral trade, Russian access to Iranian ports and oil pipelines, opposition to Western-led sanctions, support for one another within international forums, increased joint military training, intelligence sharing, and support for their mutual territorial integrity. The treaty does not include specific details for the implementation of these agreements, according to *Middle East Eye*. Although the treaty forbids supporting an aggressive act against the other country, it does not include a mutual defense pact, unlike the Russia-Belarus and Russia-North Korea agreements signed in 2024. The treaty will last 20 years, with potential extensions after.

**Analysis:** This treaty likely represents a formal codification of pre-existing trends towards increased ties without significant commitment, rather than a significant development in the Moscow-Tehran relationship. While this treaty may provide a framework for subsequent economic agreements, it does not create new obligations nor demonstrate a new development in this area. Despite its calls for deeper military relations, neither Moscow nor Tehran will likely offer a significant contribution to the others' military capacity. Both Moscow and Tehran face significant ongoing or potential military threats, from Kyiv and Jerusalem respectively, likely limiting the amount and type of weaponry they would be willing to sell or trade to others. Despite the implementation of similar pacts elsewhere, the lack of a mutual defense pact in this agreement demonstrates that neither side would be willing to join the other in their conflicts with the West. Moscow and Tehran's competing desire to act as a primary power broker in the Middle East, but mutual recognition of their relative isolation in the international community and need for international partners, likely led to the limitations of both this treaty and the general Russia-Iran strategic relationship.

[Christina Muchow]

## 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.

Lauren Estrada, 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](mailto:editorsee@gmail.com) or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708. If you use material from this publication, you should attribute: Eagle Eye Intelligence Edition 462, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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