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RUSSIA: European Union Secondary Sanctions Likely to Reduce Oil Evasion

Summary: Expanded European Union (EU) secondary sanctions will likely reduce Russia's ability to evade energy restrictions. In turn, this would probably increase Moscow's reliance on narrower trade partnerships and less transparent logistics networks.

Development: On 9 February, the EU proposed a new sanctions package targeting third-country ports and commercial entities that facilitate Russian oil exports. The measures focus on closing enforcement gaps that previously allowed Russian crude and refined products to reach global markets through indirect routing hubs, reflagged vessels, and intermediary firms outside the EU sanctions regime, according to Reuters. The proposal expands beyond direct Russian entities and instead targets foreign infrastructure and service providers that enable Russian energy trade, according to the *Kyiv Post* and United24 Media. Despite earlier price caps and shipping restrictions imposed, EU officials stated the package aims to tighten compliance and reduce sanction evasion following continued Russian energy flows, according to Reuters. Several non-EU ports and logistics operators have increased Russian-linked throughput volumes over the past year, creating alternative export pathways, according to United24 Media.

Analysis: The expanded sanctions will likely constrain Russia's energy export flexibility by increasing transaction costs, legal risk, and logistical complexity rather than immediately reducing export volumes. Moscow will likely adapt by shifting additional shipments to less transparent trading networks, smaller intermediaries, and politically aligned states, but these channels typically reduce profit margins and reliability. Targeting third-country facilitators signals a transition from primary to secondary enforcement pressure, which will likely deter some neutral commercial actors from participating in Russian oil transport. This shift will likely deepen Russia's dependence on a limited group of permissive jurisdictions, increasing long-term vulnerability to disruption and bargaining pressure. The measures also reinforce the EU's role as a principal economic adversary in Moscow's threat framing, which will likely support continued Russian countersanctions, alternative payment systems, and parallel trade mechanisms.

[Aston Shah]

TAJIKISTAN: Likely Encouraging Aid to Kabul to Protect Domestic Economy, Security

Summary: Dushanbe is likely encouraging international cooperation with and humanitarian aid to Kabul, despite the persistent threat to its borders from Afghanistan-based militants, in an attempt to prevent refugee flows from endangering its economy and security further.

Development: In a press conference on 8 February, Tajik Foreign Minister Sirajuddin Mehruddin highlighted Dushanbe's humanitarian aid to and cooperation with Kabul and encouraged the international community to do the same given the humanitarian crisis in the country. These statements come despite at least five border clashes between Tajik security forces and Afghanistan-based militants since December 2025, according to Atlas Press. In July 2025, Dushanbe deported 1,288 people out of an estimated 10,000 to 13,000 Afghan refugees in the country, according to Eurasianet. In 2024, remittances made up 45.4% of the Tajik GDP and the country had a 20% poverty rate, according to the Caspian Post and the World Bank.

Analysis: Dushanbe is likely encouraging international aid to Kabul, despite the security situation, to reduce refugee flows into Tajikistan and protect its economy. Given Tajikistan's high poverty rate and extremely heavy reliance on remittances, it almost certainly cannot support large volumes of refugees competing for scarce domestic jobs and social support. Dushanbe almost certainly recognizes this, given its recent mass deportations despite recognizing the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Dushanbe likely judges that the economic need to reduce migration into the country outweighs the security risk posed by Kabul's refusal to address militants based out of Afghani territory, thus motivating its recent statements and actions.

[Christina Muchow]

PAKISTAN: Extremist Attack Likely to Deepen Conflict and Mistrust in Region

Summary: The 6 February Islamic State (IS)-claimed suicide bombing at a Shi'ite mosque in Islamabad will likely intensify sectarian tensions within Pakistan and exacerbate political frictions with India over the next 90 days.

Development: On 6 February, an extremist attack in Islamabad killed at least 31 people, leaving more than 170 others wounded, according to Reuters. The attack occurred at a Shi'ite mosque on the outskirts of Islamabad. Guards challenged the attacker at the gate of the mosque, exchanging gunfire, before the attacker detonated the suicide vest he was wearing, according to police official Zafar Iqbal. The IS within Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement issued by their Amaq News Agency, according to the Associated Press. The IS suggested in the statement that they viewed Pakistani Shi'ites as legitimate targets, referring to them as a "human reservoir" from which Shi'ite militias fighting IS in Syria recruited. Defense Minister Khawaja Asif, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and his spokesperson Mosharraf Zaidi all claim the attack "is only the latest in a series of murderous terrorist attacks orchestrated by India," according to TRT World. The Indian External Affairs Ministry issued a statement condemning the attack and dismissing any claims of Delhi's involvement, calling the claims "pointless" and "baseless."

Analysis: This mosque bombing will likely adversely affect regional stability over the next 90 days. Internally, tensions and conflicts between Shi'a and Sunni populations will likely escalate, as Shi'ite extremists and organizations within Pakistan and neighboring countries retaliate. Based on the statement provided by the IS after the attack, the main motive behind the attack was likely to damage the Shi'ite civilian population in retaliation for recent setbacks in Syria. Additionally, this attack will likely increase tensions between India and Pakistan as Islamabad continues to claim Delhi's involvement in the attack. These claims will likely amplify nationalistic rhetoric and diplomatic friction, potentially entrenching both states in more hostile narratives than already exist. Delhi's immediate rejection of the claims reduces the likelihood of rapid military escalation, although sustained public attribution from Islamabad increases that risk.

[Armaan Needles]

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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Christina Muchow, 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 or Professor Avery at 928.777.4708. If you use material from this publication, you should attribute: Eagle Eye Intelligence Edition 489, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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