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# Issue 492

## Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

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## **SOUTH SUDAN: Almost Certainly Returning to Civil War Amid Political Instability**

**Summary:** Rising political instability, violence, and economic hardship in South Sudan will almost certainly lead to a return to civil war.

**Development:** From 20 to 27 February, security forces arrested at least five formerly high-ranking government officials connected to the South Sudanese financial system. This follows the March 2025 arrest of opposition leader Riek Machar, whose trial for treason and other crimes is ongoing, and purge of his allies from the government, according to the AP. Since Machar's arrest, violence has spiked in the region, according to the AP. Nearly 10 million South Sudanese require humanitarian assistance and more than 2.3 million are displaced, according to the United Nations. On 23 February, militants allied with Juba killed more than a dozen civilians after luring them out of their homes with the promise of humanitarian aid, according to the AP. On 28 February, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk warned that the country's 2018 peace agreement has "come under severe strain" and the country could return to all out civil war.

**Analysis:** This political instability and growing militant activity almost certainly represent the early stages of a return to civil war. Militant activity will almost certainly grow as humanitarian pressures rise. Escalating political instability and the removal of opposition figures, many of whom are members of the Nuer ethnic minority, will also likely exacerbate violence in the country. Demonization of the Nuer from Juba incites more widespread violence from Juba-allied militias and exclusion from the legitimate political system, rising repression and widespread poverty encourage more violence from Nuer groups and other ethnic and political minorities.

[Christina Muchow]

## **RUSSIA: Moscow Likely to Crack Down on Internet Activity**

**Summary:** Moscow continues to expand state control over the digital space, targeting online platforms and expanding state controls. These measures likely signal a long-term strategy to monitor, deter, and penalize online dissent.

**Background:** On February 24, Chair of the Russian Duma Committee on Information Policy, Information Technology, and Communications Andrei Spitsov shared that the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) may propose recognizing Telegram, a popular messaging app, as a “terrorist accomplice.” The accusation states that Telegram has not provided sufficient security against possible criminal or terroristic activity being planned on the app. This comes in tandem with a \$288,000 fine aimed at Google for allowing the download of virtual private network (VPN) services on the Google Play app store. While Moscow has not yet criminalized VPNs, it recently made the use of VPN an “aggravating circumstance” in criminal charges. Furthermore, Moscow has made the sharing of “extremist” content online a crime. It remains unclear how Moscow will define “extremist” content or enforce the law. Moscow has also given the FSB the power to force internet providers to shut off their services with no questions asked.

**Analysis:** Moscow’s recent legal and regulatory actions likely signal a deliberate expansion of state authority over the digital environment. Moscow is likely pursuing a more controlled information space by pressuring major platforms and tightening legal definitions that govern online behavior. Moscow’s accusation that Telegram serves as a “terrorist accomplice” likely indicates that it intends to justify increased monitoring and potential restrictions on the platform by framing the issue around national security concerns rather than political control. These developments also indicate that Moscow is likely further positioning itself to exert long-term, systematic influence over its domestic information ecosystem. The measures very likely create conditions favorable to a more restrictive environment in which Moscow can more easily surveil, deter, or penalize political opposition. As digital platforms continue to serve as spaces for civic organization and criticism, Moscow’s evolving strategy likely indicates that it seeks not only to manage isolated security threats but also to constrain emerging avenues of public dissent.

[Riley Callan]

## COLOMBIA: Rebel Group Ceasefire Likely to Affect Election Outcome

**Summary:** The National Liberation Army (ELN) declared a unilateral ceasefire prior to high-stakes congressional elections, claiming solidarity with citizens' right to vote, likely reducing violence surrounding the upcoming elections.

**Development:** On 23 February, the ELN, Colombia's largest rebel group, stated that it would cease attacks against the military and electoral candidates, according to CityNews. The ELN did not state when the ceasefire would begin, only adding that this decision comes from a standpoint of solidarity with Colombia's citizens. Multiple opponents previously accused the rebel group of targeting candidates against its interests. The ELN rejected these statements, alleging they do not aim to win elections like drug trafficking groups, according to WINK News. Bogotá previously broke off peace talks with the ELN because of a targeted attack, forcing more than 50,000 people to flee from their homes, according to CityNews. The congressional election takes place on 8 March, filling more than 300 seats.

**Analysis:** The ELN's decision to protect the citizens' democratic rights will likely sway votes in its favor. The safety brought to the region following the ELN's decision will likely lead to Colombia's citizens voting in favor of the ELN for peaceful conditions to persist. While the ELN has denied connection to drug trafficking, its motives likely remain tied to drugs in the region. Bogotá will likely encourage ceasefires for a safe election, especially one of this size. Regarding the history between the ELN and Bogotá, the ceasefire will likely serve as a welcome gesture for not only Bogotá, but also its citizens.

[Lola McEwen]

## **SOUTH KOREA: Court Ruling on Martial Law Attempt Likely Increases Political Tension**

**Summary:** The conviction of former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol for his martial law attempt will likely reinforce leadership accountability, while increasing political tensions.

**Development:** On 19 February, the Seoul Central District Court sentenced former South Korean President Yoon to life imprisonment after finding him guilty of leading an insurrection. The judge decided that Yoon intended to stop the legislature and violate on the authority of the National Assembly, which undermined the core value of South Korea's democracy. On 3 December 2024, Yoon declared an emergency martial law and deployed troops to surround the National Assembly. Armed soldiers tried to storm the chamber where lawmakers gathered, but the lawmakers and staff quickly barricade the entrance. Yoon later claimed that he considered the measures necessary to protect the country from North Korean communist forces, according to CSIS. South Korea's National Assembly impeached Yoon 11 days after his attempt at the marital law, with his arrest occurring in January 2025 and his full removal from office in April 2025. Many citizens showed anger at the sentence because they felt the death penalty held a more serious sentence for Yoon's actions, although South Korea has not charged someone with the death penalty since 1997.

**Analysis:** Yoon's conviction will likely escalate political division throughout South Korean society, as citizens who preferred the death penalty may protest for harsher punishment from the court. Yoon's imposition of marital law likely brought fear among South Korean citizens and have started debates over how to hold leaders accountable. The court's ruling likely shows citizens that the law applies to everyone including people in power. Additionally, the conviction likely indicates that the South Korean government is taking accountability. Overall, Yoon's conviction likely demonstrates the government's enforcement of accountability can strengthen South Korea's democracy, although it may cause political division. This also likely contributes to globally shared democratic values surrounding leadership accountability.

[McKenzie Koliba]

## CHINA: Beijing Posturing in the Strait of Hormuz Likely Due to Taiwan Plans

**Summary:** Beijing plans to send naval assets for the Maritime Security Belt exercise in the Strait of Hormuz. Beijing likely plans to capitalize off regional tensions and protect its oil trade.

**Development:** On 17 February, Beijing dispatched naval vessels to participate in the 2026 Maritime Security Belt in a key trading passage, the Strait of Hormuz. Originating in 2019, the Maritime Security Belt consists of Moscow, Tehran, and Beijing's naval assets to promote security in the region, according to *The War Zone*. Before Chinese President Xi Jinping dispatched naval assets, Xi released statements denouncing the act of intervening in foreign affairs with military force, according to *The Diplomat*. Beijing imports Iranian crude oil, according to Reuters.

**Analysis:** Xi likely expressed concerns of foreign intervention hoping Beijing's reliance on Tehran's oil would remain concealed. Xi's repeated emphasis on foreign nations' self-determination could partially express legitimate concerns. However, Beijing's history of quietly interfering in foreign affairs likely suggests ulterior motives. Xi's most likely interested in the defense of Tehran so that oil supplies for Beijing's Taiwan plan are secured. And Xi likely refrained from addressing the Maritime Security Belt and the situation in Tehran to avoid international judgement. Additionally, Beijing's dispatch of naval assets to the Strait of Hormuz may impact Beijing's approach to invading Taiwan by forcing Beijing to divide its political and military resources to defend the oil trade with Tehran.

[Chris Tran]

## 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](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 492, a publication created by students at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona.



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