

8 December 2023

An Analytic Intelligence
Wire Prepared by The
Students of Embry-Riddle
Aeronautical University

Issue 442

Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

Authors

Alexis Creager
Morgan Finch
Steven Esparza
Isabella Rekemeyer
Michelle Malan



Getty Images

8 December 2023

Issue 442

Of Eagle Eye Intelligence

In This Issue

ISRAEL-IRAN: Tehran Will Likely Resume Using Hamas as Proxy Toward 1	1
Jerusalem	
RUSSIA: Censorship of Information Will Most Likely Hinder its Credibility 4	4
RUSSIA: Reconnaissance Aircraft Will Likely Bolster Militaries Intelligence 7	7
Capabilities	
MEXICO: Head of Security Arrest Likely to Impact Cartel Operations 11	11
ISRAEL: The Growing Rate of Hostages Indicates Likelihood of Truce Violation 14	14

ISRAEL-IRAN: Tehran Will Likely Resume Using Hamas as Proxy Toward Jerusalem

Summary: Tehran will likely continue using proxies for its dirty work to avoid the consequences of its actions. A recent ceasefire in the war likely resulted from background actors trying to plan for short- and long-term intentions.

Background: On 7 October, Iran-backed Hamas struck Israel with rockets starting war between the two. Hamas' motivation to launch the attack came largely as the result of long-simmering resentment over Israeli policies, particularly the treatment of Palestinians and the growth of Israeli settlements, as well as recent violent outbursts at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque. Although, the start of the war possibly came from the hands of Tehran puppeteering. Tehran continues to largely support Hamas and Hezbollah, the two biggest contributors to the Israel-Hamas war. Tehran used proxies in the past and continues to use them currently, specifically the Israel-Hamas war. It shows its hatred for Israel through messages and proxies acting on behalf of Tehran. The ongoing war between Jerusalem and Hamas seems to have no end in sight as both actors refuse to give up. On 24 November, Israel and Hamas declared a ceasefire.

Release of Hostages: Tehran probably told Hamas to agree to a ceasefire so that it could get its prisoners back and rejuvenate its army. The ceasefire centered on Jerusalem's intention to exchange its Palestinian inmates for Israeli hostages captured during the war. Jerusalem and Hamas enacted a four-day ceasefire, later extended to six days, to exchange Palestinian prisoners for Israeli captives. The proposal and later extension of the ceasefire likely came as a result of Jerusalem wanting to develop a solution of a permanent truce with Hamas rather than a temporary one. Thus far, Hamas released over 80 of the approximately 240 hostages taken during Hamas' first attack on Israel. In exchange, Jerusalem released 180 Palestinian inmates. Almost all the 61 Israelis freed so far consisted of women or minors. Furthermore, in a separate agreement, Hamas released foreign laborers, primarily Thais. 160 captives remain in the hands of Hamas. Approximately 100 of those captives consist of Israeli civilians. The remainder include soldiers Hamas took prisoner during an Israeli military base raid.



Figure 1: Statistics from the Israel-Hamas Conflict

Strengthening of Actors: The recent ceasefire probably resulted from a need to strengthen the involved actors, seen and unseen. Tehran possibly told Hamas to agree to the ceasefire. This armistice will probably help Tehran, Hamas, and other Iranian-backed organizations to communicate better with less interruptions. Hamas likely agreed to the ceasefire to strengthen and replenish its army to better fight against the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) if the war continues. The ceasefire would also help Hamas take time to strategize and come up with better ways to defeat the IDF. Likewise, the truce helps Jerusalem to also communicate clearly with others, strengthen and replenish its forces, and strategize with no interruptions to defeat Hamas and other actors involved. Tehran states that it does not want to join the war to help Hamas, though the ceasefire will likely help it to strategize as well. The lack of cooperation from Hamas during this ceasefire will likely prevent more from happening in the future.

Outlook and Implications: The current ceasefire of the Israel-Hamas war will likely help Tehran in the short term to not get pulled into war. Tehran's use of proxies shows that it will likely not start a direct war with Israel itself and will also probably not join the war due to Israel's relations with the U.S. The ceasefire will likely help Tehran strategize a better way to eliminate Israel since the current war likely does not favor Hamas to win. Tehran may urge Hamas to pull out of the war and come to a truce with Israel to better preserve its resources. As for the long-term, Tehran may start using proxies more, and possibly even declare war on Israel. Tehran likely wants to continue building its arsenal and allies so it can truly defeat one of the world's strongest armies. Tehran will probably wait to strike Israel so that it has full power and so it strikes when Jerusalem least expects it.

[Alexis Creager]

RUSSIA: Censorship of Information Will Most Likely Hinder its Credibility

Summary: Moscow will almost certainly continue to censor information within the country and expand its censorship to surrounding nations as well to instill false hope among the citizens. This plan will most likely fail due to repeated accusations and findings by prominent figures, tarnishing Moscow's credibility.

Background: On 20 October, the International Criminal Court (ICC) classified the September Russian cyberattack as an act of espionage. The ICC faces the challenge of having "a difficult relationship with the world's great powers, such as Russia," leading to tension between the court and the country, according to the *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*. The ICC houses highly secretive information involving prosecutions, victims, and evidence. While Moscow attempted to gain this information, another Russian court attempted to retain the information from powerhouse web browsers and news outlets. On 14 November, Moscow's Tagnasky district court fined Google roughly \$164,200 after the company repeatedly refused to store personal data on Russian citizens inside the country, according to AP News. The same fine occurred previously in August 2021 and June 2022.

Continued Accusations Outside of War: Moscow will most likely continue to deny any claims of it interfering with other countries or entities outside of the war yet continue to retaliate in defense. After the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin on suspicion of illegally deporting children from Ukraine, Moscow retaliated by issuing arrest warrants for the ICC's president, their deputy, the chief prosecutor and one of the presiding judges, according to U.S. News and TechCrunch. By accusing the ICC and issuing warrants for its leadership, Moscow probably hopes to increase its influence and to gain the support of potential followers. By retaliating with its own arrest warrants, Moscow shows its desperation to appear reliable to its global audience. The ICC experienced daily attempts to disrupt its system through cyberattacks, according to U.S. News. While these cyberattacks remain unconfirmed, the ICC anticipates it will face disinformation campaigns to delegitimize its activities, according to TechCrunch. Most likely causing these disruptions, the ICC might ruin Moscow's reputation. Continuing to present false claims about the ICC and attacking it through cyberspace may cause Moscow to appear in the public's favor. Although Moscow does not affiliate itself with these

acts, almost all signs point to its responsibility for these attacks to protect itself from incrimination.



Privacy Within Russia: Moscow will most likely continue to threaten browsers and news outlets to invade user's privacy and keep data localized within Russia. On 24 November, Tagansky City Court of Russia fined Google \$45,300, for failing to delete what the court called “fake information” about the course of the war in Ukraine, according to Aljazeera. Within data localization, Moscow uses data mirroring, the process of physically storing databases within Russian borders, with the ability to transfer and process outside of its borders. By mandating data mirroring, Moscow's ability to monitor foreign companies that have Russian website domain names, use the Russian language on their website, or conduct business in Russia and deliver goods for payment in rubles, allow full control over what goes in and out of the country, according to the Center for Strategic & International Studies. Keeping this information within Russia allows Moscow control over not only what Russian citizens see, but what the rest of the world sees. While this may provide good views of what occurs in Russia, this warped perspective only makes Moscow more susceptible to appearing unbelievable and suspicious of what occurs within its borders.

Outlook and Implications: By Moscow censoring the war as much as possible, most likely in the hopes of spreading the perception of having an advantage, Russian citizens' morale appears high but the opinions on the war remain unknown. Disregarding external perceptions and truths seems the likely goal of Moscow to instill hope in its people and get support from outside nations. While this could evolve to a positive outcome, taking away vital views and realities of these ongoing events will most likely hinder the citizens in decision making. This strategy of censorship will most likely damage Moscow as it will appear defensive, guilty, and unbelievable.

[Morgan Finch]

RUSSIA: Reconnaissance Aircraft Will Likely Bolster Militaries Intelligence Capabilities

Summary: Moscow will likely re-implement the Myasishchev M-55 (M-55) high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft to enhance the military's intelligence and targeting abilities. The M-55 will almost certainly provide troops on the ground with accurate and timely intelligence on Ukrainian positions. Moscow seeks to obtain more battlefield intelligence for its frontline forces by manufacturing more M-55s and strategically operating them to maximize potential benefits of the aircraft.

Background: On 19 November, the M-55 carried a military reconnaissance pod under its wing, according to Defense Express. These pods contain sensors and optical equipment capable of identifying enemy positions and relaying relevant data back to ground command. The M-55, first developed in the 1950s, did not fly until 1988. The aircraft was purposely built to fly at 70,000 feet, collect intelligence, and counter American made spy balloons. However, the M-55 was assigned to conduct scientific research roles instead, after the need for a high-altitude spy plane vanished following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense estimates the M-55 will conduct intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR), missions against Kyiv, according to AeroTime Hub. Moscow's drone fleet and ground reconnaissance assets are the only ISTAR tools they possess.

Factors for the M-55's Success and Survival: Continuous reconnaissance missions will likely provide the military with superior intelligence that will help assets target with increased efficiency. The high altitudes of the M-55 make it possible for it to operate at a considerable stand-off range, according to Business Insider. The M-55's substantial stand-off range mitigates the chances of detection by Kyiv's air defenses; its range also effectively eliminates the threat of shoulder fired anti-air weapons as they simply do not have the range to destroy the M-55. Operating the M-55 from the relative safety of Russian airspace will maximize the amount of intelligence available for military decision makers, according to *Ukrinform*. Only the most advanced, long-range Western anti-air weapons threaten the M-55 when flying in Russian airspace. Flying over Russian airspace offers additional protection for the M-55 because Moscow's air defenses can intercept incoming missiles attempting to shoot it down.



Figure 2: M-55 reconnaissance plane, equipped with the UKR-RL pod.

M-55's Intelligence Benefits to Russian Ground Forces: If Moscow is able to put the M-55 back into service, they will almost certainly gather enough intelligence that will enable Russian military forces to effectively target enemy positions with more precision and lethality. The return of the M-55 will probably bolster Moscow's limited intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance capabilities, according to Aviation Week. Although Moscow possesses assets like drones capable of performing ISTAR missions, its limited flight time and stand-off range leave them vulnerable to enemy countermeasures. The UKR-RL pod seen on the M-55 can exploit radio frequencies to help detect active air defense radars, communication nodes, electronic warfare systems, and other transmitters, according to The Warzone. The UKR-RL pod, also known as the M-55's signals intelligence (SIGINT) loadout, can actively intercept radio waves from enemy communications and send data back to ground command for further decision making. The highly versatile M-55 allows Moscow to identify, track, and surveil enemy military assets on land, sea, and air, according to Interesting Engineering. The ubiquity of the M-55 quickly puts it ahead of other assets like drones that simply do not have the flight endurance to

operate overseas for long periods of time, which puts Moscow at risk of missing key intelligence information.



Figure 3: A Ukrainian drone causes an explosion at the Smolensk Aviation Plant.

Building More M-55s Will Almost Certainly Improve Current Intelligence Abilities: If Moscow can manufacture more M-55s, they will almost certainly provide large quantities of intelligence for the military to use against Kyiv. Moscow operates as little as five airworthy reconnaissance aircraft available for operation, according to the Kyiv Post. Moscow's Parliament approved that the 2024 budget will increase spending by 25 percent, with a record amount going towards defense. The current conflict between Moscow and Kyiv calls for an abundant amount of intelligence, reliably supplied by large numbers of reconnaissance planes. Currently, Western intelligence aircraft such as American made RQ-4 Global Hawk and E-3 Sentry provide Kyiv with the upper hand in ISTAR capabilities. Kyiv launched a drone attack against a Russian aircraft factory, according to The Telegraph. Attacks on Moscow's aircraft industry mean they will have a difficult time producing aircraft, specifically the M-55. Western sanctions also weaken the production capacity of Moscow's aviation industry by restricting the supply of critical components and raw materials.

Outlook and Implications: If Moscow can successfully implement the M-55 and overcome the obstacles facing the production of additional aircraft, then it will almost certainly expand the military's intelligence capabilities. A greater amount of intelligence means Moscow will likely

create a more potent and effective military. The M-55's ability to relay information to ground command will all but certainly offer troops enhanced situational awareness on the battlefield, providing them with an advantage in combat. Aviation plants will highly likely benefit from increased defense spending, which will bring upgrades to the range, endurance, and technologies inside the M-55.

Moscow will almost certainly capitalize on the large stand-off range the M-55 offers, which will increase the survival rate of airframes and maximize the amount of intelligence that can be extracted from enemy positions. Due to the limited size of the M-55 fleet, Moscow will likely cautiously deploy the aircraft to conserve as many aircraft as possible, which will prolong the number of times it can fly missions. In addition to increased airtime, Moscow will almost certainly strengthen air defenses within its border to secure the airspace the M-55 will operate in, as well as the airspace around aviation factories to avoid production delays.

[Steven Esparza]

MEXICO: Head of Security Arrest Likely to Impact Cartel Operations

Summary: Mexico's National Guard officers arrested Pérez Salas, the alleged security chief for the "Chapitos" wing of the Sinaloa cartel. Pérez Salas's arrest will likely disrupt the cartel's operations and reduce its power and influence within the region.

Background: On 24 November, Mexico's National Guard officers arrested the extremely violent, alleged security chief for the "Chapitos" wing of the Sinaloa drug cartel. Pérez Salas, also known as "El Nini," allegedly protected the sons of imprisoned drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán and a key player in the Sinaloa Cartel drug operations. Authorities arrested Pérez Salas around 2030 GMT Wednesday at a walled property in the Sinaloa state capital of Culiacan. Mexico actively pursued El Nini for nearly three years, placing him among its most wanted criminals for his roles in violence and illicit fentanyl trafficking. The authorities accuse Salas of participating in the murder of a federal police officer in 2017. Pérez Salas maintains connections with the Sinaloa Cartel, one of Mexico's most formidable criminal organizations. He currently faces the possibility of extradition after the initial arrest. His arrest comes soon after Mexico captured and extradited another Chapitos leader, Ovidio Guzmán López, earlier this year.

A Hit to The Heart: Mexico will likely persist in actively reducing the corruption and violence of cartels. The arrest of Pérez Salas embodies Mexico's dedication to combating drug-related crime, potentially compelling the Sinaloa Cartel to revise its strategies. In the past year, the Sinaloa cartel suffered significant setbacks to its leadership. The apparent disruption of its power structure manifests as authorities apprehended and indicted two other high-ranking members in the last six months. This pattern of arrests signifies a concerted effort by Mexican law enforcement to dismantle the cartel's leadership and disrupt its operations. It also reflects a strategic shift in Mexico's approach to organized crime, possibly involving enhanced intelligence gathering, international collaboration, and targeted operations against critical figures. This proactive stance may temporarily destabilize the cartel's activities, forcing it to reorganize and adapt to the increased pressure. Moreover, these developments might encourage other law

enforcement agencies to intensify their efforts against similar criminal organizations, indicating a broader crackdown on cartel activities in the region.



Figure 4: Pérez Salas Captured

The Disruptions to The Cartel: Pérez Salas's reputation for highly violent crimes indicates that his absence could initially cause a slight reduction in cartel violence. However, this decline might be short-lived as the cartel will likely swiftly replace him. Moreover, the cartel will actively modify the distribution of its primary drugs, fentanyl and methamphetamine. This temporary disruption could advantage other cartels, as the Sinaloa cartel's operational setback presents them with enhanced opportunities to gain ground. In response to these changes, rival cartels might quickly adapt and expand their operations, potentially filling the void left by the Sinaloa cartel's momentary weakness. This situation could reshuffle power dynamics among competing cartels as each seeks to capitalize on the temporary disruption in the Sinaloa cartel's activities.

Outlook and Implications: Despite recent significant setbacks, the Sinaloa cartel probably will not cease its operations entirely. The arrest of Perez Salas most likely impacted the cartel's security and distribution networks. This arrest disrupts their organizational structure, potentially leading to a temporary reduction in their operational capabilities. However, given the

adaptability and resourcefulness of such cartels, they may quickly reorganize and find ways to compensate for this loss. The arrest likely forces the cartel to reassess and restructure its security strategies and distribution methods, possibly leading to new approaches to conducting illicit activities. Furthermore, this development might prompt the cartel to accelerate the grooming of new leaders and operatives to fill the void left by Pérez Salas arrest, indicating an active and immediate response to maintain their criminal operations.

[Isabella Rekemeyer]

ISRAEL: The Growing Rate of Hostages Indicates Likelihood of Truce Violation

Summary: The temporary ceasefire indicates the likelihood of a truce extension while leaders negotiate a hostage release. Jerusalem will likely engage in conflict while Palestinians urge for a permanent ceasefire.

Background: On 27 November, The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Hamas extended the temporary ceasefire for two days, according to *AP News*. The agreement consists of slowly releasing hostages from both sides, starting with women and children. For every 10 extra hostages released from Hamas, Jerusalem will extend the truce, according to *AP News*. Hamas requested additional humanitarian aid and fuel to enter Gaza as a part of their deal. On 28 November, the IDF released 30 Palestinians, and Hamas released 12 hostages, making it the fifth group released, according to *CBS News*.

West Bank Violence Worsens: The increase of IDF operations targeting terrorist groups indicates the likelihood of a larger war incorporating the West Bank. On 28 November, the IDF conducted a raid on Jenin Refugee Camp, surrounding three hospitals, according to *CNN*. IDF vehicles in front of hospitals prevent Palestinians from receiving aid. West Bank violence surges as officials focus on the violence in Gaza. Since 7 October, West Bank Settler attacks and Israeli raids increased, leading to the deaths of about 242 Palestinians, according to *Al-Jazeera*. The Settler movement in the West Bank contributes to the loss of electricity, fleeing Palestinians, and damage of homes, according to *The Los Angeles Times*.

Qatar's Influence on Negotiations: Middle Eastern countries contributing to temporary ceasefire negotiations will likely lead to a larger exchange of violence between IDF and Hamas when the truce ends. Doha worked quietly with the other nations to manage the hostage release. Hamas's political office and leader based in Qatar gave Doha an advantage over others in negotiating terms, according to *The Times of Israel*. Of all nations involved with negotiations Doha has the most impact due to its ties with Hamas. The extension of a two-day truce negotiated by Doha and Egypt contributes to the additional humanitarian aid entering Gaza, the release of captured civilians by Hamas, and the release of prisoners by IDF.

Objectives of IDF and Hamas: Fighting will likely resume in Gaza due to extensive tensions. Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu believes freeing all hostages, getting rid of Hamas,

and eliminating Gaza as a threat will constitute the end of fighting, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Hamas currently seeks humanitarian aid and the release of Palestinian prisoners while their long-term goal remains the creation of an independent state. Both sides accuse the other of violating the temporary ceasefire. While Hamas claims IDF did not allow enough humanitarian aid into Gaza, IDF claims Hamas detonated explosives near military troops, according to *CNBC*.

ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

Israel and Hamas agree to four-day truce

The agreement, mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the United States, is the biggest breakthrough in 47 days of fighting in Gaza.

Terms of the deal	
HAMAS	ISRAEL
To release 50 women and children held in the Gaza Strip	To release 150 women and children held in Israeli prisons
STARTING TIME	7am local time (05:00 GMT) on Friday, November 24
DURATION	Will last for four days, subject to extension
FIGHTING	Will be paused for an additional day for every further 10 captives freed from Gaza
MOVEMENT	Israel will stop military vehicle movement and allow people to travel from north to south along Salah al-Din Road
HUMANITARIAN AID	More humanitarian convoys and relief aid, including fuel, will be let into Gaza during this time
NOT END TO WAR	Israeli PM Netanyahu says this is not an end to the war and that his military will press on after the pause

Source: Al Jazeera | November 23, 2023

@AJLabs ALJAZEERA

Figure 5: Temporary Ceasefire and Hostage Release in the Gaza Strip.

Outlook and Implications: The temporary ceasefire will likely extend while nations negotiate, but it will probably not be permanent. IDF will likely airstrike Gaza if all hostages do not get released in a timely manner. Prevention of ambulances and humanitarian aid from getting to Gaza will likely cause Hamas to react and violate the temporary ceasefire. The Gaza conflict will likely incorporate the West Bank due to increasing tensions, settler violence, and raids.

[Michelle Malan]

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.

EE does not cite sources in the final publication; however, we log every source we use in our research and are happy to share them upon request. The official EE Source Database is available on our website's resources page for a general overview of our sourcing methods.

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



© 2020 by Eagle Eye Intelligence. All rights reserved.

Eagle Eye Intelligence
3700 Willow Creek Rd.
Prescott, AZ 86301 eagleeyeintel.com