

THE GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE MONITORING CENTER



***AN ANALYTICAL INTELLIGENCE WIRE PREPARED BY THE
STUDENTS OF EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY IN
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA.***

NUMBER (199)

19 April 2013

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SITUATION REPORTS

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SUDAN: Frees Military Officers

On 17 April, President Omer Hassan al-Bashir allowed amnesty announced earlier this month for political prisoners to apply to seven military officers who had been convicted of attempting a coup on 7 April. The seven officers were part of an original 11, most of whom have been freed in the last few days. The officers were convicted of involvement in November 2012 and will be forbidden to return to military service.

AUSTRAL AND PACIFIC REALM

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Evacuates Volcanic Island

On 18 April, Volcanological Observatory Geohazards released a report detailing the increased volcanic activity on Manam Island. A stage three alert has been recommended, which includes voluntary evacuations and disaster management team deployment. Ash emissions, rumbling, and lava emissions have been observed in the crater thus far.

EAST ASIA

CHINA: Restricts Media

On 18 April, press freedom groups began vocalizing dissent over a government ruling which forbids the use of international quotes and articles without prior permission. Reporters Without Borders claimed that this was another step to total censorship. The groups also pointed out that the ruling prohibits relations with world news leaders.

JAPAN: Watches Volcano

On 17 April, an unknown number of earthquakes occurred near the Miyage Island Volcano, which last erupted in 2000. Most of the quakes were small in magnitude, however there were 6.2 and 5.8 magnitudes recorded as well. No tsunami warning was issued and scientists have increased monitoring on the island.

EUROPE

DENMARK: Arrests 15 Year Old

On 15 April, authorities arrested a 15 year old male and seized his computer in connection with a cyber-attack launched on government sites. The boy allegedly confessed to using software worth less than USD ten to shut down the website with the help of an accomplice. The company providing the software has stated it was not ready for this and other previous attacks this week, and will be examining its security for future vulnerabilities.

MIDDLE EAST

IRAN: Struck By Earthquake

On 16 April, a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck southeast Iran killing over 70 and causing an unknown number of casualties. The quake was also destructive in Pakistan, and authorities in both countries were surprised. The earthquake was felt through the Gulf region, prompting evacuations of buildings from Dubai to Kuwait. The nuclear plant at Bushehr has been reported safe.

ISRAEL: Reacts to Rockets

On 17 April, two Grad rockets originating from the Sinai Peninsula landed in Eilat with no casualties reported. The Israeli Defense Force recently located an Iron Dome missile defense system near the city, which failed to detect the rockets. A Salafi group, Mujahedeen Shura Council, is claiming responsibility.

QATAR: Receives London Mayor

On 18 April, London Mayor Boris Johnson arrived in Doha leading a trade delegation aimed at attracting investment from the Gulf region. Johnson will also meet members of government and other authorities on this trip. Johnson stated that he aims to prove that London remains a dynamic business investment environment with strong ties to the Gulf.

SOUTH AMERICA

HONDURAS: Moves to Declare Epidemic

On 17 April, The Medical College of Honduras recommended a state of emergency be declared regarding dengue fever outbreaks. In a year to year comparison, the College

stated that there was an average 200 percent increase over last year. Other countries in Central America have already declared the disease an epidemic and began planning measures to control it, including targeting the mosquitos that spread it.

BRIEFS

AFRICA

MOROCCO: Preparations for Military Exercise

Summary: The US and Morocco are preparing for a multi-lateral military exercise that will likely strengthen the US-Moroccan relationship and could alienate neighboring countries.

Development: On 10 April, the US Navy Ship Dahl delivered over 250 tons of equipment to the Moroccan port of Agadir. This delivery was made in preparation for the US-Moroccan joint multi-lateral exercise referred to as Exercise African Lion-13 which will be held later in April. Over 1400 military service members will be joining about 900 Moroccan soldiers for this training exercise, and military representatives from almost 20 countries will be observing the exercise. The goal of African Lion-13 is to improve interoperability and to have a shared understanding of US and Moroccan military tactics and methods.

Analysis: This exercise hosted by Morocco and the US is made possible because of the good relationship between these two countries, and if successful, it could strengthen the relationship. This exercise could end up being an example for other countries of a friendly alliance between an Arab and Western nation. The cooperation between the US and Morocco could promote further cooperation in the region. Although the outcome of this exercise will most likely be positive for the US-Moroccan relationship, a US military presence in an Arab nation might upset other countries in the region. Depending on how other nations and people perceive this exercise, it could be seen as an effort to increase cooperation or it could be seen as threatening.

[Victoria Laugalis]

UGANDA: Implements Risky Economic Expansion

Summary: Uganda begins the implementation of an aggressive and risky future market development plan, which could lead to proxy conflict between the West and China.

Development: On 18 April, the Ugandan government will officially begin implementation of Vision 2040, a strategic economic development plan. Ugandan policy makers reviewed the flawed Vision 2025, and incorporated the lessons learned into the

new economic vision. Vision 2040 plans to exponentially increase tourism through aggressive marketing, modernize the country's agriculture, develop energy production infrastructure, increase oil production, and modernize Ugandan cities. The Vision calls for increased exports and borrowing from foreign governments to subsidize the growth. A signed agreement between Uganda and a Chinese energy company to build an oil refinery to allow the export of refined oil, exemplifies the future of the Vision. The Ugandan shilling provides a stable foundation to implement the Vision, as the shilling has maintained stability even during periods of economic instability.

Analysis: Lack of foreign investment and rampant corruption has delayed development and industrialization of the country. The Ugandan shilling has remained highly competitive with strong currencies, such as the U.S. dollar, for a significant time. Furthermore, the recent exponential appreciation of the shilling seems more than capable of providing Uganda with necessary foreign investment. Should Uganda succeed in expanding its power grid, decreasing poverty levels, and growing its cities, a new African powerhouse could emerge. Uganda has recently been announcing its intention to improve African-Chinese relations. Thirsty for wealth and development, there seems to be a high probability that Uganda might seek advice from communist China. As an aggressively expanding economy, Uganda could become a battleground between the Western nations and China, as France and Great Britain also remain heavily involved in Ugandan affairs. However, corruption is a significant roadblock Vision 2040 must overcome, as industrialization in conjunction with a notoriously corrupted oligarchic regime, lays the foundation for future conflicts
[Annabel Virella]

EUROPE

RUSSIA: Magnitsky Blacklist Revealed

Summary: The Obama administration and Moscow have published tit-for-tat blacklists, creating increased strain in the relationship between the two countries.

Development: The U.S. Magnitsky Act was developed after lawyer Sergei Magnitsky was beaten to death in a Russian prison after investigating a massive fraud relating to tax officials. Following this major human rights violation, the United States created a blacklist of 18 Russian officials involved in his death, barring them from entering the US. The Act allows the White House to keep certain names on the list classified for national security reasons. Alexei Pushkov, head of the State Duma's International Affairs Committee in Russia stated that Russia would also publish its own blacklist of 18 American officials barred from entering Russia, which it has now done. President Putin's spokesman acknowledged the list and stated that these blacklists would further strain relations between the two countries.

Analysis: The US Magnitsky Act and Moscow's response have had a negative effect on US-Russian relations, but neither side thinks the effect will be long-lasting.

The exchange of blacklists put a shadow over US National Security Advisor Tom Donilon's visit to Moscow on Monday, April 15th. The visit, however, does not seem to have turned on the Magnitsky issue. Donilon discussed North Korea, Iran and other issues of interest to both countries.

[Taylor Stipe]

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: Agrees to Strategic Partnership with Maldives

Summary: India and Maldives have agreed to further security cooperation, which will likely benefit regional ties in the U.S. and help to keep Chinese influence in check.

Development: On the 15 April, India's Defense Minister met with an official of Maldives and agreed to continue and enhance their cooperative defense and security partnership. They agreed to training, exercises, infrastructure, and capacity building to increase regional stability. India also expects to set up a network of ground radars, assist in military training, hydrography, maritime patrol, and surveillance. Since August, 2009, India has been assisting the Maldives with maritime patrol with warships and reconnaissance aircraft. However, over the last decade, Maldives has also forged ties with China. Tension between India and Maldives began when the former Maldivian President took refuge in the Indian high commission building after fear of arrest during a coup.

Analysis: Because this agreement comes just months after political strife engendered by the coup, it seems that the agreement has diffused any lasting disagreements. The agreement also indicates that India is seeking strategic partnerships in the area to combat the growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean with Maldives and other countries recently. Maldives has good relations with many neighboring countries as well as the U.S. and is a strategic ally due to its geographical location. The developments will likely benefit U.S. strategic ties in the region and could assist in keeping Chinese influence in check.

[Kasmer Kosciolk]

NEPAL: Election Atmosphere Begins

Summary: Despite the upcoming November election, the only party preparing is the Nepali Congress, which may give them an advantage once the elections do take place.

Development: On 12 April, current leader of the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal announced that the final date for elections will be announced in the next couple of days. Elections had originally been planned for the summer, but due to technical issues, the timeframe had to be changed. This change leaves more time for paralysis in the government to continue. Leaders of the

Nepali Congress (NC) have encouraged members to begin campaigning early, to ensure their success in the elections. The NC has also had meetings which previously had not been held since 2009. In their bid to be ready for the November elections, the NC has also started to reach out to the members of the Madhesi Mahasamiti (MM). The MM is a group that represents the interests of the ethnic Mahesi people, who live in the lowlands along the border with India.

Analysis: It seems as though there is going to be a real fight surrounding elections in Nepal. However, it also seems as though the only political entity that is gearing up for the elections is the Nepali Congress. Although it is the longest established and one of the larger political entities, the NC does not represent the interests of the entire nation. The main question is where the other political parties, such as the UCPN Maoists, are. Perhaps the latter are confident that their revolutionary credentials will translate to a strong electoral showing. The NC may have advantage in organizing early, but it could also benefit from popular discontent with the ruling UCPN and the general fragmentation of party politics in the country.

[Chelsea McNally]

SOUTHEAST ASIA

CAMBODIA: Threatens Border Agreement

Summary: Legal teams from both Cambodia and Thailand begun presenting cases on the border definitions surrounding a disputed temple, potentially leading to a full-fledged border war.

Development: On 15 April, legal teams from Cambodia and Thailand began presentations to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over ownership of land surrounding the Preah Vihear temple. The temple is located along the border in Cambodia; however, Thai lawyers contend that the maps used to establish the Cambodian claim at an ICJ proceeding in 1962 were falsified and a border was never formally established, giving Thailand a claim to the land. Cambodia has since claimed that Thailand is not respecting the agreement made in 1962 by not giving up the land surrounding the temple and continuing to keep armed forces nearby. Arguments are expected to close on 19 April, and the ICJ will deliver a verdict at an unknown future date.

Analysis: Preah Vihear temple has been a conflicted site since it was built, with the most recent casualties happening in 2011. Both sides claim that the land and temple were historically theirs, so any choice the ICJ makes is likely to cause further conflict. Previous conflicts show that conflict may affect the temple negatively in terms of preservation. Though there is no direct security threat, the UN may get involved to protect the site, therefore likely involving the US in a balancing game between international obligation and political interests. The US does not seem inclined to use its own resources in this conflict and may be able to remain neutral.

[Coleen Parker, coleen.parker@eagleeyeintel.com]

PHILIPPINES: Support Reaffirmed for US Action

Summary: The Philippines has expressed support for the US regarding North Korea, potentially guaranteeing the US a base of operations within the region.

Development: On 6 April, the Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario pledged support for the US in the event of a North Korean strike. The statement was announced as the U.S. and Philippines began joint military exercises involving 8,000 troops, ships, and a squadron of F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets. The military exercise and Rosario's statements reaffirm the Philippines' obligation to the U.S. the Mutual Defense Treaty signed in 1951. The military exercises were planned a year in advance and reportedly have nothing to do with the recent threats by North Korea.

Analysis: The military exercise and the reaffirmation of U.S. support is a symbol of the long-standing security relationship between the two countries. The statements and military exercises could increase risks to Filipino nationals working in South Korea. The statements made by Albert del Rosario pledging support against North Korea are likely meant to ensure U.S. support for the Philippines against Chinese aggression in the South China Sea. In the event that North Korea actually attacks the U.S., the U.S. will likely have the Philippine government's full cooperation and support by allowing U.S. ships to stage and resupply in Philippine ports.

[Gianna Punzalan]

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KYLE PARENT, kyle.parent@eagleeyeintel.com
CODY WIEBE, cody.wiebe@eagleeyeintel.com
COLEEN PARKER, coleen.parker@eagleeyeintel.com
JOE HARRIS, joe.harris@eagleeyeintel.com