

THE GLOBAL INTELLIGENCE MONITORING CENTER



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

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NUMBER (187)
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1 November 2012
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SITUATION REPORTS

AFRICA

NIGERIA: Manages Flood Relief

On 30 October, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) announced it was expecting more donations to combat damage from floods that began in July. The floods affected 24 of Nigeria's 36 states, displaced over 100,000 people, and destroyed thousands of hectares of farmland. President Goodluck Jonathan has urged citizens to remain calm and trust the government to assist them in returning to their homes.

AMERICAS

EL SALVADOR: Expels Street Vendors

On 27 October, 30 blocks of San Salvador were cleared of street vendors by approximately 600,000 police officials by order of Mayor Norman Quijano, who is also a presidential candidate. Several civil society organizations condemned the move, stating thousands have lost their source of income without any negotiation. Many of the organizations have also used Quijano's decision to criticize his presidential campaign.

PARAGUAY: Objects to Election Observation

On 30 October, Foreign Minister Jose Felix Fernandez stated that Paraguay would not submit to Union of South American Nations (UNA-SUR) observation for the April 2013 elections. Paraguay was suspended from UNA-SUR following the removal of former president Fernando Lugo. The condition for readmission and the return of UNA-SUR ambassadors is free and fair democracy, which the organization argues should enable it to observe the elections.

EAST ASIA

JAPAN: Observes More Ships in Territorial Waters

On 28 October, four Chinese surveillance vessels were spotted entering the contiguous zone surrounding Japanese territorial waters, and tracked into territorial waters near the disputed Senkaku Islands. The vessels had been outside of both zones since 26 October. There are no plans for Japan and China to hold bilateral talks to reach an agreement regarding the islands.

EUROPE

RUSSIA: Upgrades Reconnaissance Aircraft

On 19 October, the Russian Defense Ministry announced plans to upgrade its remaining 20 MiG-25Rs, enabling the aircraft to remain in service through 2020. Upgrades include modern navigation suites, digital video equipment, and an array of technical reconnaissance equipment. The MiG-25R first entered service in 1972.

MIDDLE EAST

BAHRAIN: Bans All Gatherings

On 29 October, Manama banned all protests and gatherings in the interest of civil peace, according to Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah al-Khalifah. The ban has roots in al-Wefaq-led Shia protests beginning to turn violent. According to the announcement, civil action will be taken against anyone who violates the ban.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

MALAYSIA: Busts Major Drug Ring

On 23 October, Kuala Lumpur police busted a drug ring that operated in the same city block as a local police station. The police seized 61kg of heroin smuggled from Pakistan, worth approximately USD 834,000. This is one of four syndicates that have been discovered in the past few months that are believed to be related to prominent African drug rings.

MALAYSIA: Proton Signs Honda Pact

On 29 October, Proton Holdings Berhad, a Malaysian national automaker, signed a technology-and facilities-sharing agreement with Honda Motor Company. The deal will provide Proton increased opportunities to compete in global markets and will likely enable Honda to significantly increase its manufacturing and sales in Malaysia. DRB-HICOM, a predominant Malaysian holding company and Proton's parent company, filed the agreement in Bursa Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur's stock exchange.

BRIEFS

EAST ASIA

NORTH KOREA: Boosts Cyber Warfare Capability

Summary: North Korea's recently reported developments in its cyber warfare capabilities pose a threat that, although subtler than its missile tests, could still significantly damage US infrastructure.

Development: On 22 October, US Army General James Thurman, the commander of US forces in South Korea, stated during a speech in Washington that North Korea has significantly expanded its cyber warfare capabilities. He reported that along with an arsenal of cyber specialists, North Korea has the world's largest special operations force, composed of 60,000 personnel. General Thurman did not announce specific details of North Korea's cyber capabilities, but North Korea has reportedly tested GPS jamming technology and has emphasized creating an advanced cyber warfare culture.

Analysis: If Pyongyang decided to use its cyber capabilities to attack the US, such an attack would likely be difficult to prevent or detect. In addition, the potential damage caused by a cyber attack could affect a large number of military, educational, or government targets and could remain undetected for significant periods of time. Considering the increasing aggression that North Korea has shown toward the US in recent months, Pyongyang likely believes it could justify a US cyber attack. Given North Korea's strong desire to test other weapons and technological systems, Pyongyang may even consider a cyber attack on the US or its allies simply for testing purposes.
[Stefano Guidetti]

SOUTH KOREA: Cancels Rocket Launch for Third Time

Summary: South Korea cancelled its third attempt at launching a rocket a day after China successfully launched its own satellite, likely intensifying the regional space and arms race.

Development: On 26 October, South Korea cancelled the launch of its Naro rocket, which was intended to deliver a satellite into space. Officials detected a leak in one of the rocket's crucial injection systems, so they rescheduled the launch for late November. Prior to this attempt, South Korea failed to launch the rocket in 2010 and 2009. If the Naro rocket is unsuccessful in its third trial, Seoul intends to cancel the program and pursue a new generation of technology which would not be viable until 2021.

Analysis: South Korea's cancelled launch means that it will have to seek another clearance from global agencies that keep the maritime vessels and aircraft out of the path

of the rocket, increasing Korea's financial investment in the project. The US has voiced concern over the South Korean rocket program because Washington fears the project could escalate an arms race with North Korea. North Korea will almost certainly perceive a successful South Korean launch as an indication the South's space program is progressing rapidly, likely increase tensions between the nations. If this third launch attempt fails, Seoul will have to look into other technologies to get its space program working, and another failure will put its program further behind China, which announced a successful satellite launch on 25 October.

[Ben Brudnicki]

MIDDLE EAST

MOROCCO: Seeks Unified Front to Decrease Risk of Domestic Unrest

Summary: Arab monarchs receive Morocco's King Mohammed VI during his tour of the Middle East, likely indicating Morocco's growing leadership role in North Africa and the Arab world.

Development: On 27 October, King Mohammed VI ended his tour of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait, in which he reaffirmed his commitment to the monarchs of each country. His visit comes as feelings of economic inequality and high unemployment in many Middle Eastern and North African countries continue to propel the Arab Spring. During his visit, King Mohammed reaffirmed his support for Syrian refugees by visiting injured refugees at a Moroccan field hospital on Jordan's border with Syria. In addition, on 22 October, Yassir Zenagui, one of King Mohammed's advisors, announced that Rabat expects to receive a portion of a USD 2.5 billion aid package in early 2013 that was pledged by members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in December 2011. The GCC is comprised of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Morocco was invited to join the group in May 2011.

Analysis: King Mohammed's visit follows Rabat's recent aggressive economic reforms and a strategic dialogue with the US. Morocco is actively seeking emerging markets in which to invest in renewable energy, increased bi-lateral trade with Europe in the oil, energy, and aeronautics sectors, and favorable insourcing opportunities with the Arab region. The GCC's potential acceptance of Morocco would grant Rabat more access to oil, in addition to increased financial assistance. Although Morocco has not experienced popular protests on the scale of many other North African countries affected by the Arab Spring, its tourist-based economy has weakened, increasing the potential for unrest. It is likely that Morocco's recent push for investors and alliances has been at least partially spurred by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's leadership during the recent US-Morocco strategic dialogue. However, stronger ties between Morocco and the Arab world will likely be seen as a threat by Morocco's traditional rival in the region, Algeria.

[Abdullah Al-Mansour]

SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN: Attacks Continue to Threaten Peace Negotiations

Summary: The continued threat of attacks on coalition troops will likely hinder an effective transition and decrease chances for peace negotiations with the Taliban.

Development: On 26 October, a suicide bomber dressed in a police officer's uniform detonated explosives in Maymana, Faryab Province, in northwestern Afghanistan, killing approximately 45 and wounding 60 others. The attack occurred during the first day of Eid al-Adha, an Islamic religious holiday, and thirty members of the Afghan National Security Forces, including Civil Order Police Commanders, the chiefs from multiple police districts, and members of the Parliament of Faryab were killed. Provincial officials suspect members of the Taliban carried out the attacks as revenge for Afghan forces killing Maula Abdul Rahman, the Taliban's regional leader in Faryab. The Taliban has not claimed or denied responsibility for this incident, though in the past week, the Taliban claimed responsibility for killing two American soldiers, two British soldiers, and one Afghan police officer.

Analysis: These attacks not only highlight weaknesses in Afghan intelligence and security capabilities, but also the continued challenges of an asymmetrical war, such as combatants blending with local populations. These attacks may increase the speed with which international troops withdraw from Afghanistan, reducing the chance of a comprehensive and stable transition of military leadership. In addition, many Afghan citizens fear the Taliban will extend their areas of control against ill-prepared Afghan forces, especially considering Afghan and international negotiations with the Taliban have yet to produce a defined peace agreement.

[YiBo Guo]

PAKISTAN: Drone Strike Stirs Hostility against US

Summary: Despite growing hostility towards American drone strikes, the status quo between the United States and Pakistan will most likely remain the same.

Development: On 24 October, a US drone strike killed five people in the North Waziristan agency, which borders Afghanistan. It is unclear who was killed or why they were targeted. This attack is the most recent of 284 strikes since 2008 that have increasingly angered many Pakistanis. After the drone strike on 24 October, the Peshawar high court summoned former President Pervez Musharraf to testify on his role in allowing American drone strikes during his presidency. Additional resentment towards American drone strikes flared earlier in October when Imran Khan, the leader of the Tehreek-e-Insaf, led a convoy to Tank in protest of the attacks.

Analysis: The United States' use of drone strikes poses the greatest potential to impact the fragile relationship between the United States and Pakistan. The US asserts the strikes

effectively eliminate militants responsible for attacks in Afghanistan, but many Pakistanis claim the resulting collateral damage is too great to justify the drones' use. Recent protests against American drone activity may indicate increasingly hostile attitudes towards American intervention that could further strain relations between the US and Pakistan. However, although Islamabad has condemned American drone attacks before, it has never taken direct action to preclude future strikes. Most likely, no direct action will come from these protests, and the US will continue to carry out strikes in the border areas of Pakistan.

[Jake Suss]

SOUTHEAST ASIA

INDONESIA: Finds More Terrorism Evidence

Summary: Another discovery of bombs has led to the pursuit of a notorious militant, likely testing the effectiveness of newer counterterrorism units.

Development: On 29 October, another improvised explosive was found by police in Poso, Central Sulawesi. The 22-pound explosive was found on a neighborhood lawn and removed to be defused. Further investigation revealed the bomb was similar enough in construction previous bombs attributed to Santoso, a militant who has recently been accused of bombings and the 16 October murder of two police officers. The exact details of Santoso's previous operations and affiliations are still unclear, and while previously believed to be affiliated with Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT), it is unknown if he has founded his own group or resumed JAT activities.

Analysis: The recent increase in instability in Poso is likely a result of religious tension between Christians and Muslims, which has previously been a root of conflict in the region. While there is a formal peace agreement in place from previous conflicts, it has been poorly enforced. The increase in attacks is likely to cause displacement of the local population, complicating the government's counterterror efforts. Santoso also presents a problem to the government. If Poso's citizens perceive that the counterterrorism units have taken too long to capture the militant, the units will likely lose credibility, potentially hindering future operations in the area. If Santoso has formed his own group, it is unlikely to cause conflict with JAT leadership since JAT tolerates multiple loyalties. This would potentially increase Santoso's pool of recruits and make them harder to track due to the organization of JAT.

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