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SITUATION REPORTS

EAST ASIA

PHILLIPINES: Busts Chinese Drug Dealers

On 15 September, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) arrested Andy Ong and Asy Lee, both of whom are suspected to be members of the Chua-Li drug trafficking group. PDEA had both under surveillance for their activities, and made the arrests in Mandaluyong City. Both Ong and Lee are Chinese nationals, and are charged with the sale of dangerous drugs.

SOUTH KOREA: Navy Fires on North Korean Fishing Boats

According to the South Korean Defense Ministry, South Korean naval vessels fired warning shots at six fishing boats from North Korea that entered waters claimed by the South. The South Koreans twice fired machine gun rounds near the fishing vessels, none of which was hit. The fishing boats turned around and left the area. No North Korean naval units were involved.

SOUTH KOREA: Signs Peruvian Defense Expansion Agreement

On 11 September, South Korea officially signed an agreement with Peru to assure the quality of military-grade goods between the two countries. The agreement covers both physical equipment and services quality. The nations also enjoy a regular bilateral trade agreement.

EUROPE

BELGIUM: Experiences Anti-Islam Film Riots

On 16 September, Belgian police arrested over 230 violent protestors demonstrating against the anti-Islam film, "Innocence of Muslims." The riots occurred in the northern city of Antwerp, with various reports from the Belgian media indicating the radical Islamic group, Sharia4Belgium, is responsible for the protests.

RUSSIA: Forgives 90 Percent of DPRK Debt

On 18 September, Russian Deputy Finance Minister Sergei Storchak announced Moscow will write-off 90 percent of the USD 11 billion Cold War-era debt owed by the

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). According to RIA Novosti, Moscow will invest the remaining 10 percent into DPRK infrastructure, including education, health, and energy projects.

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL: Clash on Negev Border

Two Israeli soldiers were injured and three infiltrators were killed in a clash on Thursday near Mount Harif, about halfway down Israel's border with the Sinai Peninsula. The Salafi-jihadist militants were heading for a construction crew working on the border fence, when they were intercepted by Israeli troops inside Israeli territory. The militants were found to be heavily armed and with explosive vests and are assumed to be members of an Al-Qa'ida linked group operating with dissident Bedouin clans in the Sinai.

LEBANON: Call for Protests

On 16 September, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah called for a week of protests in response to the film that has produced uprisings all over the Middle East. Nasrallah called for protests in primarily Shia areas of Lebanon, a new area each day. This announcement came just hours after Pope Benedict XVI left Lebanon following a three-day visit to pray for peace.

OMAN: Minesweeping Exercise

The US Navy is undertaking an unprecedented minesweeping exercise in the Straits of Hormuz. Although seen as a necessary training exercise, the large-scale effort is seen as a warning to Iran.

TURKEY: Plans to Continue Operations Against PKK

On 17 September, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced Turkey will continue to conduct offensive military operations against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Kurdish terrorist organization, unless the group lays down its weapons. Prime Minister Erdogan also announced recent Turkish military operations have killed over 500 PKK members. According to Hurriyet Daily News, Prime Minister Erdogan stated "[Turkey] will both prosper and fearlessly fight against the terrorist organization without stepping back."

SOUTH ASIA

PAKISTAN: Movie Protests Continue

Violent demonstrations against the low-budget anti-Islam movie spread today, Friday, from Islamabad to other major cities, including Peshawar, where one person was reported killed, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi. The continuing demonstrations followed the government's declaration of Friday as a holiday and "special day of love for the Prophet Muhammad". After a dangerous confrontation between the police and mobs at the US Embassy in Islamabad yesterday, the government and media are asking for protests to be peaceful.

BRIEFS

AMERICAS

BRAZIL: Increases Military Presence to Counter Terror and Drug Activity

Summary: The United States' strategy to reinforce Brazil's borders with a stronger and more advanced defense network is likely a response to the increased terrorist activity and trafficking in nearby countries.

Development: Operation Agata is the process by which Brazil is countering crime and trafficking over its borders. The most recent step in the plan has been the deployment of troops and vehicles to some of the hotspot states. With terrorist funding growing in neighboring countries, Brazil is taking necessary precautions and beginning a new counterterrorist dialogue with Washington. Terrorist funding has reached the third highest exchange rate in the world with Chinese counterfeiters and Islamic terrorists participating in financial activity with FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). The Ciudad del Este, center of transnational organized crime, forms the Tri-Border Area (bound by Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil) and is located below the southernmost tip of Brazil. In an effort to stop crime-terror pipelines, Brazil has budgeted \$6.3 billion to secure its borders.

Analysis: al-Qa'ida and Hizballah are active in the funding networks of Ciudad del Este and are suspected to have undercover terror branches residing there. Moreover, Brazil has a No-Terrorist Policy that will not allow the government to label citizens or groups, such as al-Qa'ida and Hizballah, terrorists. The US not only needs to keep an eye on these potential threats, but also uphold their promises that were made in the US-Brazil Defense Cooperation. A transfer of technology between these two nations must be sustained to build up Brazil's cyberwarfare capabilities and defense network. Brazilian firms have already started third-party partnerships with Boeing and Northrop Grumman to enhance

border control. The US-Brazil partnership is vital to protect a country that once housed many terrorist organizations and ensure it prevents terrorist activity for future world events like the World Cup and Olympics.

[Kameron Saranto-Mercado]

EAST ASIA

SOUTH KOREA: Economy Upgraded

Summary: South Korea's credit ratings were raised by three companies, likely signaling that economic growth, foreign investment, and domestic manufacturing capabilities put this country in the same category as the US and Japan.

Development: On 14 September, Standard & Poor (S&P) upgraded South Korea's credit rating to A+, which was preceded by Moody's Investment Services and Fitch Ratings' upgrade of South Korea's credit rating to Aa3 and AA-. All three companies cited a strong fiscal system backed by competitive exports, which was further established by South Korea's domestic stimulus package announced on 13 September.

Analysis: South Korea's credit ratings have gone up following the regime change in North Korea. This stabilization allows South Korea to focus on exports, increasing electronics imports to the US and foreign investment. South Korea's economy is now rated equal to Japan's and is likely to grow if its stimulus package is successful. If the stimulus package is unsuccessful the economy will likely remain stagnant until the upcoming election, where reunification is a central issue. Reunification poses a threat to the South Korean economy because of North Korea's reliance on foreign aid to feed its population. Even though Japan and South Korea have a long history of territorial disputes, economic growth gives both strong mutual interests.

[Ben Brudnicki]

MIDDLE EAST

MOROCCO: Welcomes US Secretary of State

Summary: Cooperation between Rabat and Washington is likely to increase as instability shakes the region.

Development: On 13 September, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed the United States' desire for bilateral trade, jobs for Moroccan youth, and the civic duty of Moroccans to stand against government corruption. In an interview on 14 September, Deputy Foreign Minister Amrani rebuked the violence unfolding at American embassies and consulates around the world, reaffirming the beneficiary relationship between the two countries.

Analysis: In addition to expanding trade routes and increasing accessibility to Morocco's abundant natural mining resources, estimated to house 6.9 million tons of unearthen uranium by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the recent boost in US-Morocco dialogue is likely intended to strengthen the military relationship between the two countries in order to counter terrorist activity in the area. An increase in joint security partnerships is especially likely considering the late August delivery by Lockheed Martin of 24 F-16 fighter jet aircraft to Morocco. Joint military exercises are foreseeable, as well as increased cooperation and communication between Rabat and Washington.
[Abdullah Al-Mansour]

SOUTH ASIA

PAKISTAN: Girl Released on Bail in Book-Burning Case

Summary: A girl is released on bail after evidence of evidence-tampering is revealed, which could lead to a more limited judiciary involvement.

Development: On 31 August, Imam Muhammad Khalid Chishti accused Rimsha Masih, a fourteen-year-old Christian girl, of burning several pages of the Noorani Qaide, a book used to teach the Koran to children. The incident took place in the slum of Mehr Abadi, where a small number of Christians live amongst a Muslim majority. Rimsha, who is thought to be simple-minded, was jailed until 8 September, when a judge allowed her to go free on bail of USD 10,500. The court allowed Rimsha to post bail after finding evidence that Chishti tampered with the girl's bag and placed two pages of the Koran on top of the burned pages of the Noorani Qaide. The court has charged Imam Khalid Chishti with blasphemy, and Rimsha's lawyers are now lobbying the court for a dismissal of the charges.

Analysis: Pakistani blasphemy laws have existed since what is now Pakistan was part of British India. Then, the law was used to tamp down religious conflicts between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. More recently, the laws are often used to settle personal scores. Imam Khalid Chishti allegedly told his deputy that he placed the Koran pages in Ms. Masih's bag in order to rid the area of the Christians. Although this exemplifies tensions between the small Christian and large Muslim populations in Pakistan, the court's decision to allow Rimsha bail was widely supported in the country. Indeed, for the first time, some influential Muslim religious leaders have denounced Chishti for bringing Islam into disrepute and called for his punishment, as well as the dismissal of all charges against Rimsha Masih.
[Jake Suss]

SOUTHEAST ASIA

THAILAND: Manages Annual Flooding

Summary: Management of the current flooding demonstrates the stability of the Thai government and economy.

Development: On 18 September, Plodprasop Suraswadi, Chairman of the Water and Flood Management Committee (WFMC) stated that Bangkok is likely to be spared flood damage similar to that of last year. Suraswadi cited lower rain levels and increased efficiency of the capital's drainage system. Floodwaters are causing problems in areas like Sukhothai, where the Yom river has overflowed embankments for the past week. Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra has encouraged all agencies to assist in stop-gap measures and clean-up of the flooding.

Analysis: Flooding in Thailand is a recurring problem, and one to which solutions appear to be scarce. Since Shinawatra's government is still new, the management of the floods is likely to be symptomatic of how her government is holding together. For now, flood management appears to be effective and should enhance the stability of her government. This in turn points towards the possibility of growth in the Thai economy, since a stable government is likely to promote trade and attract foreign investment. Also, if Bangkok is spared extensive flooding, it would prevent setbacks similar to those experienced in the commercial sector last year, also leading to economic growth. Since the US imports rubber and agricultural products from Thailand, posting gains in these sectors would be mutually beneficial.

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