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SITUATION REPORTS

EAST ASIA

JAPAN: Forms New Political Party

On 12 September, seven members of the Diet submitted resignations to their respective political parties to join Nippon Ishin No Kai. The party, which has roots in an Osaka-based restoration group, is still forming, but some of its preliminary goals include promoting free trade, reviewing the constitution, and reducing the centralized authority of the government.

EUROPE

RUSSIA: Eases Visa Regulations

On 9 September, Moscow began enforcing the regulations stipulated in a simplified visa arrangement with the United States initially signed in 2011. Tourists and businessmen are now able to obtain three-year, multi-entry visas, while government officials can now apply for a one-year, multi-entry visa. Moscow expects an increase in tourism and foreign investment as a result of the new regulations.

MIDDLE EAST

EGYPT: Announces Constitution Draft Timetable

On 10 September, the Constituent Assembly Spokesman, Wahid Abdel Meguid, announced plans for a draft constitution to be completed within 45 days. Several Assembly representatives have walked out during the process, stating their views were not being respected in the drafting process. Meguid stated the freedom chapters, particularly those for women, were in need of work.

EGYPT: Morsi Authorizes Forced Retirement of Generals

On 2 September, President Morsi's new Defense Minister retired 70 Generals from the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and removed six other members of the SCAF. Some have interpreted this as President Morsi consolidating power and attempting to minimize the military in the role of government. Others see Morsi's actions as autocratic and purposefully leaving a vacuum for his Freedom and Justice Party to fill.

TURKEY: Suffers Suicide Bomb Attack

On 11 September, a suicide bomber attacked a police station in the Sultangazi neighborhood of Istanbul, a predominantly Alevi area, killing one policeman and wounding seven policemen and civilians. The bomber was identified as a member of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front.

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: Launches 100th Space Mission

On 9 September, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle rocket carrying two foreign satellites, a French remote sensing satellite and a Japanese microsatellite. The mission brings ISRO's total number of launches to 100. ISRO frequently launches items for other countries, including Canada, Japan, Israel, and South Korea.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

THAILAND: Discusses Malaysian Border Security

On 8 September, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra met Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Vladivostok. The ministers agreed to boost technological border monitoring efforts in response to several recent border security incidents. A secondary focus of the discussions was the falling price of rubber, a major export in both countries. Further discussions pertaining to these and other matters will take place at the October meeting of the Thailand-Malaysia Joint Commission.

BRIEFS

AMERICAS

COLOMBIA: FARC Peace Treaty Increases Potential for Criminal Groups

Summary: Bogotá and FARC demobilization and peace negotiations could lead to increased destabilization due to growth in a new breed of criminal organizations.

Development: On 4 September, President Santos confirmed leaked reports that Bogotá was engaged in peace talks with FARC. Rodrigo Londoño, aka "Timochenko," the

supreme leader of FARC, confirmed the agreement in a video released on 3 September. The two parties agreed to send representative first to Oslo, Norway, and then to Havana, Cuba. Though the peace process is beginning, Santos stated military pressure upon FARC would not decrease. Another guerilla group, ELN, has indicated it might also enter negotiations with the Colombian government. In 1998, the Colombian government and FARC engaged in peace negotiations, which resulted in the secession of an area the size of Switzerland to FARC control. FARC used the area and the negotiations to rebuild and rearm.

Analysis: The peace process has a precedent in 2006 demobilization and reintegration negotiations between the Colombian government and AUC, another paramilitary group. This, however, led to the creation of a new breed of criminal organizations called BACRIM. These BACRIM filled the vacuum left by the powerful paramilitary groups under constant attack from the Colombian military. The BACRIM had the weapons, training, and money to continue to move drugs and attack the government and civilians. Even if the negotiations with FARC and ELN are successful, the middle and lower echelons of both organizations could follow a path to AUC and migrate to the BACRIM with all of their arms and training. Due to the decentralization of the BACRIM, it will almost certainly be more difficult for the Colombian military to pursue. If the BACRIM ranks swell due to a potential infusion of trained fighters, Colombia could become destabilized again, driving away the foreign investment the country is only now beginning to feel.

[Cody Wiebe]

MEXICO: Cartel Boss Prosecution May Spark Violence

Summary: The extradition of Eduardo Arellano Felix to the US may cause his Cartel to lash out violently against the Sinaloa Cartel or American authorities.

Development: On 4 September, Eduardo Arellano Felix, a suspected leader of the notorious Tijuana Cartel, pleaded “not guilty” in the US District Court in San Diego. He faces charges of racketeering, money-laundering and drug-trafficking. Arellano Felix was captured by Mexican Special Forces in 2008 and extradited to the US on 31 August 2012. The cartel, also known as the Arellano Felix Organization (AFO), was considered one of the most notorious multi-national drug cartels, smuggling hundreds of millions of dollars of marijuana and cocaine across the US-Mexico border between Tijuana and Mexicali. However, the cartel has been dealt major blows in the last decade with the arrest of two other Arellano Felix brothers and the death of a third.

Analysis: Since Felix’s arrest in 2008, the AFO has steadily lost territory to the neighboring Sinaloa cartel, whose northern boundary now spans along the US-Mexico border from Tijuana to east of Ciudad Juarez. When one cartel takes over another’s territory, it typically absorbs some of its members, and the Tijuana market, worth USD 100 million, is likely lucrative enough to make most former AFO personnel want to transfer to the Sinaloas. So far no one has stepped up to claim leadership of the AFO, but

if the cartel is not revived soon it will not likely stand a chance against the Sinaloa, which is considered the most powerful drug cartel in the world. However, Felix's trial in San Diego could provide a valuable opportunity for his cartel to lash out at the US, and, of more strategic importance, make a statement to the Sinaloa that it is still formidable and very much alive.

[Joe Harris]

VENEZUELA: Withdraws from OAS Human Rights Groups

Summary: Venezuela has announced its withdrawal from two regional human rights groups, creating another issue the Venezuelan opposition will likely raise against Chavez as presidential elections approach.

Development: Caracas has formally notified the Organization of American States Secretary-General, Jose Miguel Insulza, of its withdrawal from the American Convention on Human Rights, which will take effect one year from now. Venezuela will still be held accountable to its commitments to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which is based in Washington, D.C., and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, based in Costa Rica, in the interim period. President Hugo Chavez has previously accused the Commission of being a puppet of the US government and anti-Chavez in its rulings.

Analysis: Tensions have risen between Chavez and human rights groups in the past, particularly over the case of Raul Diaz, who was sentenced to prison for terrorism in Venezuela but granted asylum in the United States after the Inter-American Court ruled in his favor. The withdrawal comes a month before the Venezuelan presidential election in October, which may adversely affect Chavez's ability to win presidential reelection. In particular, the opposition has cited the withdrawal as unconstitutional and will likely reference this point frequently in the final weeks of campaigning.

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EUROPE

GERMANY: Reviews Egypt Submarine Deal

Summary: Berlin's decision to honor or cancel a previous deal will likely indicate its foreign policy priorities in the Middle East.

Development: On 11 September, German press reported the German Federal Security Council has decided, following objections by Israeli officials, to review a deal to sell submarines to Egypt. On 31 August, Egyptian Naval Commander Rear Admiral Osama Ahmed el-Gindi stated Berlin had agreed to sell two Type 209 diesel-electric attack submarines to the Egyptian navy. Berlin confirmed the report, and the submarines were

set to be delivered by 2016. Egypt's current naval fleet holds four aging, Chinese-built Project 433 submarines.

Analysis: The progress on the submarine deal has caused Jerusalem to question Berlin's commitment to Israeli security. Egypt is redefining the long-standing power structure in the Middle East, and if other Egyptian military advances are made, Jerusalem will likely find itself locked in a security dilemma. Although Jerusalem's fleet is more capable than its Egyptian counterpart, the relative advancement of the Egyptian navy's offensive capabilities will likely make Jerusalem wary of Cairo's intentions. In addition, the Federal Security Council's review of the deal will very likely indicate Germany's current foreign policy priorities in the Middle East, as Berlin almost certainly recognizes its decision will be negatively received by Jerusalem if it honors the deal and by Cairo if it cancels the shipment.

[Kevin Moss and Scott Small, kevin.moss@eagleeyeintel.com]

RUSSIA: To Deliver 52 Mi-171E Helicopters to China

Summary: Moscow and Beijing strengthen their relationship by signing the helicopter contract, which will likely lead to further cooperation and a convergence in attitudes toward the West.

Development: On 6 September, Russian defense agency, Rosoboronexport, and Chinese defense manufacturing company, Poly Technologies, signed a contract for the delivery of 52 Mi-171E transport helicopters to China. The Mi-171E is a modified version of the Mi-8 medium-sized, multirole helicopter. The helicopters will be outfitted with search-and-rescue and special operations equipment. The contract results from an agreement between the two defense organizations that was initially signed in July. Russian Helicopters' Ulan Ude factory will produce and deliver all 52 helicopters over a period beginning from late 2012 and concluding in to 2014. The contract is estimated to be worth USD 600 million.

Analysis: The helicopter contract is further evidence of strengthening ties between Moscow and Beijing. President Putin's approval of the helicopter deal may be an attempt to bolster his administration and his own position of power by further advancing Russian relations with an ascending China. Putin's recent reelection was met with an unusually high level of scrutiny from the Russian public, with a portion of its citizens growing tired of Putin's tenure in the Kremlin. By allying with China, Putin would likely gain the support needed to resist foreign intervention into Russia's domestic affairs. The helicopter contract will benefit the Chinese by providing much-needed vertical takeoff aircraft, while simultaneously allowing for future arms sales between the two states. While the versatile Mi-171E helicopter will, at this time, be outfitted with search-and-rescue and special operations equipment, Beijing's purported use of the helicopters remains unclear. Prior to this announcement, delegates from Russia and China consistently vetoed all United Nations resolutions on intervening in the Syrian conflict, demonstrating a growing number of similarities in the two states' views of the West. The helicopter deal is another example of Russian-Chinese cooperation in what is likely

Moscow's and Beijing's increasing tendency toward a strategy of passive resistance against the United States.

[Christopher Tomas; chris.tomas@eagleeyeintel.com]

SOUTHEAST ASIA

INDONESIA: Investigates Individual's Connections to Terrorist Group

Summary: Although Muhammad Thorik's surrender has provided some information about a planned suicide attack, the possibility remains high for another attack by a group with which he also may be associated.

Development: On 8 September, a bomb detonated in a building fronting as an orphanage in Beji, Depok, very close to Jakarta. The blast injured six people, while another two fled. Police found guns with silencers, ammunition, bomb-making materials, and completed bombs in the building. Police believe the building was being used as a bomb-making training facility. On 10 September, Muhammad Thorik, one of the men believed to have run from the explosion, turned himself in to police and explained the details of his planned suicide bombing on one of four targets: tactical police headquarters, the anti-terrorist unit Detachment 88, a police station or the Buddhist community headquarters, all located in Jakarta proper. Thorik did not indicate allegiance to a specific group.

Analysis: The circumstances of Thorik's surrender likely point towards a larger attack to come. Thorik's decision to surrender and give details of his planned attack could be an attempt to attract public attention for a future attack. If he is a member of an organized group, that group is likely to wait a few days and attempt another attack. If he is working as an individual with connections, the possible targets and style of such an attack are virtually endless unless Thorik discloses additional information.

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