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Week Four

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Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Initiative

Weekly Newsletter

Liberty University

Helms School of Government Students



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International News

Eastern Europe

[Ukraine using Turkish Drones in Self Defense](#)

- Summary: Russian officials accused Ukraine of destabilizing the situation after the Ukrainian military used a Turkish drone to Airstrike a position held by Russian supported Separatists this week. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy claimed the usage of drones is for defensive purposes and does not violate any set agreements. Ukrainian armed forces General staff claims the drone destroyed a separatist artillery unit with a guided bomb to force a ceasefire.
- Analysis: October 29, Ukraine faces accusations of “destabilizing the situation” from Russia after military forces conducted airstrikes on Russian supported separatists via a Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 drone. General Staff of Ukraine’s armed forces claimed that the drone strike was targeted at a separatist artillery unit in an effort to force a cease fire. President Zelenskiy purported that the strike was a defensive move that does not violate any agreements, saying, “When the Ukrainian army feels the need to defend its land, it does so.”

[Russia ‘Weaponizing’ Gas Supply over Moldova Dispute](#)

- Summary: One of the European Union’s top diplomats has accused the Russian Federation of using the issue of gas to bully Moldova. Moldova has declared a state of emergency after the Russian gas company Gazprom increased their prices on natural gas. Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, is struggling to pay the price for natural gas
- Analysis: After talks for a renewed natural gas deal fell through between Moldova and Russian majority state-owned energy corporation Gazprom implemented higher prices. Josep Borrell, the top EU diplomat, commented that Moscow is using its position of sole supplier of natural gas to Moldova to bully the former bloc nation. However, the Kremlin has denied these claims of trying to gain political influence in Moldova with Gazprom calling for the country’s \$709 million debt be settled before negotiating a new deal.

[Ukraine has Legal Right to Crimean Artifacts](#)

- Summary: An appeals court in the Netherlands ruled that the Ukrainians have legal control over a collection of artifacts on loan to a Dutch museum during the Russian occupation of Crimea in 2005.

Russian officials have a history of seeking cultural artifacts. The Ukrainian government labeled it as a victory for the nation.

- Analysis: Russia's annexation of Crimea drew Western sanctions, with Western countries and most of the rest of the world acknowledging the Black Sea peninsula as Ukrainian. Kyiv wants to see the territory returned to its rule.

[Russian, Chinese warships Conduct first ever Joint Patrol in Western Pacific](#)

- Summary: Russian and Chinese warships conducted the first ever joint patrol in the western part of the Pacific Ocean on October 17-23, Russia's Defense Ministry reported. The Russian Navy was represented in the joint naval taskforce of ten warships by the Pacific Fleet's forces.
- Analysis: The Russian Defense Ministry reported that Chinese and Russian warships conducted the first ever joint patrol in the western Pacific throughout the 17-23 of October. In their statement, they claim the tasks for the joint patrolling were to "maintain peace and sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region and also protect facilities of both countries' maritime economic activities." The Russian Navy participated with ten warships including anti-submarine ships from the Pacific Fleet while the Chinese navy was represented with two destroyers, two corvettes, and one supply ship. Throughout the patrolling, both naval groups practiced joint tactical maneuvering and a series of drills in the Sea of Japan and the Tsugaru Strait.

[Poland Plans to Bolster Military Amid Threats from Belarus, Russia](#)

- Summary: Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Jaroslaw Kaczynski and Polish Defense Minister Mariusz Blaszczak jointly presented the defense proposal. Troop numbers would more than double from the current number of 110,000 to 250,000 soldiers, along with 50,000 reserve troops.
- Analysis: Last Tuesday, the Polish military received a massive boost after the government unveiled a homeland defense bill which would see an impressive increase to 250,000 soldiers from 110,000 with an additional 50,000 in reserve. However, officials have stated that these increases will not coincide with a renewed compulsory national service policy. With this increase in soldiers comes an increase in military equipment which will be purchased from the EU and US, but the bill is still waiting to be signed into law by the nation's parliament and president.

Central Asia

India moves thousands of Kashmir migrants to secure locations following deadly attacks

- Summary: Though Kashmir has been the home of an insurgency against New Delhi for decades, Kashmir is claimed in full by India and Pakistan but ruled in parts by both and this has heavy impacts on the people of Kashmir politically and physically. Militants have reportedly killed at least 11 civilians in Kashmir since early October despite a security crackdown in the heavily militarized region of Kashmir.
- Analysis: This move by India could signal that the government is gearing up for further escalation with regional militants and by extension Pakistan. With the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and its very strong peacekeeping presence significantly reduced, India faces the dilemma of sharing a border with a resurgent Islamic state alongside its long-term rival and bitter enemy in Pakistan that was the main force behind the Taliban's resurgence in the first place. The security implication for the U.S. and its foreign policy is that an extremely volatile situation between traditional and relatively new U.S. allies in Pakistan and India respectively is currently at a high risk of escalating with an ever-present Chinese threat on the sidelines looking to exploit its neighbors.

Conflict between India and Pakistan

- Summary: Threats of Terrorist activity by Pakistan-Based Groups grow as relations between India and Pakistan remain strained threatening a military confrontation. Thousands of people detained in Indian administered Kashmir as the region remains under strict Lockdown.
- Analysis: India blames Pakistan for inciting chaos by encouraging separatists' militants in Kashmir. Within Kashmir, thoughts about the territory's rightful allegiance are various and strongly held. Many do not want it to be controlled by India, favoring either independence or union with Pakistan instead. Religion is a factor: Jammu and Kashmir are more than 60% Muslim, making it the only state within India where Muslims are in the majority. Putting the blame on India for terrorism in Pakistan is something the country continually does, though not always in as direct a manner as in 2020. Beyond connecting the recent ISIS-K attack with India, Pakistan also connected the Baluch Liberation Army's June 2020 strike on the Karachi Stock Exchange with its eastern neighbor (Pakistan has longed insisted India supports the Baluch insurgency).

Pakistan releases hundreds of TLP activists as protest continues

- Summary: TLP activists are demanding the Release of their chief Saad Rizvi. The group has had many protests in the past that have been successful with this one already getting the release of 350 TLP activists from prison.
- Analysis: The rise in political activity in recent by this far-right political party that draws most of its following by supporting Pakistan's blasphemy laws seems to be indicative of the general trend of resurgent Islamism in the nation. In years past the TLP has held protests that have paralyzed the nation and the government has freely utilized its anti-terror laws to arrest TLP members, and yet today the government appears increasingly weak on such radical sentiments by giving into the TLP's populous demands. The implication for U.S. national security and foreign policy interests is that Pakistan and its government cannot be addressed separate of its clearly Islamist tendencies. If these are not first addressed, then any other attempts to heal divides or counter terrorism will ultimately be undermined by a compromised "ally."

China Vows to Help Taliban 'Rebuild' Afghanistan in Doha Meeting

- Summary: China is striving to create a strong relationship with the Taliban for its strategic and economic value, while also calling on the United States to lift sanctions on the Nation. China could use a relationship with the Taliban to crack down on the East Turkestan Islamic Movement that threaten Chinese security.
- Analysis: Stepping into the vacuum left by the U.S. withdrawal, China appears eager to extend its sphere of influence over the nascent Islamic state in Afghanistan to control/leverage its now undisputed Taliban leadership to China's advantage. The implication for U.S. national security and foreign policy is an ever increasingly influential Chinese Communist state that is filling the voids the U.S. has left around the globe contributing to its own power and prestige. With insurances of Chinese support the Taliban will not have to worry overmuch about U.S. sanctions strangling its Islamic state as it has a very potent lifeline. If the U.S. hopes to counter such regional and global developments, it should seek to strengthen its strategic and security partnership with India.

The Taliban are beginning for Afghanistan's frozen money to be released as the country's economy spirals into crisis

- Summary: Afghanistan is desperately requesting the US to unfreeze the Afghanistan Government's assets. Over 10 billion dollars in Assets are currently frozen. This request comes as Afghanistan enters a massive Humanitarian Crisis with half of the country estimated to be food in-secure in the coming months.
- Analysis: The Taliban's economic crisis directly involves the US, who has currently frozen Afghanistan's monetary assets. Though the U.S. largely focuses on humanitarian aid to countries, the fear of the Taliban's government acquiring 10 billion dollars and using such assets for acts other than economic aid, such as terrorism, looms large. Likewise, the Taliban has promised to grant rights and education to women in Afghanistan in return for the money. However, the Taliban has made such claims upon their rise to power after the U.S. pull-out in Afghanistan but proceeded to relinquish many rights for women. Thus, trust concerning such requests from the Taliban

Africa

[Sudan democracy march: two protestors killed as security forces open fire](#)

- Summary: Sudanese forces opened fire on demonstrations against the military coup in Khartoum, Omdurman, and Nyala, using live ammunition and teargas. Fatalities occurred when protestors approached the parliament building, and security forces broke down protest barricades and conducted random searches of people and cars. Social media images show new barbed wire barriers created to block some of the city's main highways, and authorities are restricting internet and phone signals.
- Analysis: these protests were "a test of the military's intentions" and the violent response to protest is an indicator that democracy and human rights are not high on their list of priorities, especially since the initial dispute between the civilian government and the military started with the pace of the democratic transition. The population seems resilient as multiple activists state they are optimistic. Public support for civilian leadership is significantly greater than that of the military, signaling a popular commitment to democracy. Tensions seem to be escalating and the U.S. secretary of state has expressed support for the protestors, but it is unknown as to if the U.S. would provide more financial aid or operational support. This is significant to the U.S. as they have provided great amounts of aid money; furthermore, the CFR [indicates a trend of democratic backsliding in Africa](#) in the last year making popular support for democracy such as in this scenario extremely important. Having a democratic ally in this

region may become important to the U.S. as terror activities grow in north and west Africa, potentially spreading to the east. Instability in Sudan could become a breeding ground for violent activity, thus the U.S. should keep an eye on this issue.

[Nigerian Army Says Islamic West Africa's New Leader Killed in Military Operations](#)

- Summary: Nigeria's army killed the new leader of ISWAP (Malam Bako) in a military operation this month. The army's spokesperson stated that 38 terrorist elements were neutralized. This announcement came two weeks after announcing the death of the group's former head Abu Musab al-Barnawi. There has been no confirmation of Bako's death from ISWAP or independent sources, but if it is confirmed Bako would be the fourth leader of West African insurgent groups to die this year.
- Analysis: The trend in west Africa as a result of these actions is increasing defense against terrorist operations and could significantly reduce the morale of groups. For example, fighters for Boko Haram in Nigeria surrendered to Nigerian military forces after the death of Abubakar Shekau in May. Such is important to the U.S. because the strengthening of terror groups in west Africa could encourage terror groups elsewhere, but it is beneficial to the U.S. that Nigerian forces have been effective at tracking down leaders. One caution is that killing leaders can be like cutting off the head of the Hydra and may not be an effective counterterrorism strategy in the long term. The U.S. may provide financial support, but for now it seems that dialogue and allowing local forces to work is the strategy.

[Tigrayan forces claim to capture new town of Kombolcha](#)

- Summary: Tigrayan forces announced seizure of Kombolcha and its airport on Sunday. Kombolcha is located on the highway linking Ethiopia's capital to Djibouti and is the furthest south that TPLF has reached since July (Kombolcha is around 235 miles away from the capital, Addis Ababa). Less than a day after this seizure, the Ethiopian government claimed [TPLF fighters executed more than 100 "youth residents" in the city](#). With most of northern Ethiopia under communications blackouts and restricted journalism, there is no outside source confirmation of this event; however, locals report continuous gunfire and fighting in Kombolcha.
- Analysis: The Tigrayan forces taking Kombolcha is significant because it's the furthest south that these forces have pushed south, and the author of this article indicates that this may signify their desire to take the capital. Residents have been encouraged to stay home to avoid

the fighting and many are attempting to flee. It seems as though the citizens are not actively involved in the conflict other than the Tigrayan fighters themselves, despite the government saying that “Every Ethiopian Citizen able to fight should mobilize”. This is an escalation in response to recent air strikes by the Ethiopian government in this region. The U.S. is supporting the Ethiopian government insofar as advocating that the Tigray forces stop their advances and not use artillery in cities. The U.S. has stated that there is no military solution to the conflict. This is quickly turning into a humanitarian crisis and intense conflict in one of Africa’s most populous countries. There’s strategic importance to the Horn of Africa’s geographic location, demographics, politics, and security, notably in the red sea. Ethiopia has long been an exporter of stability in the region and has been a longstanding partner to the United States, and the U.S. had hopes of a better relationship with Eritrea through Ethiopia. The U.S. also condemns the actions of the Ethiopian government, starving those in the Tigray region and not allowing humanitarian aid in. The U.S. needs to balance its response to condemn both violence and humanitarian crimes, it is unlikely the U.S. will respond militarily. The U.S. has clearly outlined its goals [here](#), but this conflict could create instability leading to greater violence in a turbulent region.

Myanmar

[U.S. concerned over Myanmar army operations in Chin state, town ablaze](#)

- Summary: More than 100 homes and churches have been destroyed in increased military operations in the Chin state of Myanmar. Since the February coup, thousands of Burmese citizens have fled to India. There are reports of Burmese buildup of heavy weapons and troops, indicating an imminent attack by the military. Anti-junta militias report that the junta fired into the town then set fires to houses and churches. The junta has not commented, but the army has discredited the militias as “terrorists intent on destroying the country”.
- Analysis: U.S. interests in Myanmar stretch back through the decades and have always been aimed at assistance and peace within the country. As Myanmar has experienced brutality in the past, particularly concerning the Rohingya genocide, the United States understands the potential for violent escalation within the country is a credible concern. With the U.S. bent on sustaining peace with Myanmar and the country’s government establishing a military build-up, decisions must be made concerning the U.S. involvement in the situation, whether that be direct military involvement to squash the

military buildup or political persuasion to halt all brutality. Likewise, the thousands of refugees now relocated to India increase the need for U.S. humanitarian aid.

Myanmar military uses systematic torture across country

- Summary: The Associated Press released first-accounts of the Myanmar military's use of torture and humiliation tactics against detainees. Since February, the Tatmadaw has killed more than 1,218 people (131 through torture) and held more than 9,000. Torture typically targeted ethnic groups in the past but now is used across the country at levels of continuously increasing severity, with the AAPA saying torture is at the worst scale and severity has ever been.
- Analysis: The United Nations' top specialist on human rights in Myanmar also called for intense international pressure on the military. And lawmakers in Washington strongly requested Congress to act in the wake of AP's investigation, which was based on interviews with 28 people, including children and women, imprisoned, and released since the military took authority of the government in February. While the U.S., UK and EU have already established sanctions on high-ranking Myanmar military members and state-owned enterprises, they have yet to sanction American and French oil and gas companies working in Myanmar. That has let the military to maintain its single-largest source of foreign currency revenue, which the Tatmadaw uses, in part, to purchase weapons. The administration is considering sanctions that could impact Myanmar's oil and gas industry but has yet to make a decision, according to officials familiar with the process. These officials say privately that there is great internal argument among the National Security Council, the State Department and Treasury about how best to make certain that any sanctions imposed do not negatively to the citizens of Myanmar.

Updates from Last Week

Social Media Reports of Turkish shelling in Tal Rifaat

- Summary: (Tweets [here](#) & [here](#), Updates [here](#)), From Kurdish account so could be inaccurate, Shellings could be precursor to larger military action. It appears they're shelling highways and strongholds
- Analysis: Following the alleged Kurdish terror attack on Turkish security forces in Northwestern Syria, there has been a significant uptick in reports of Turkish shelling by Kurdish sources in the region. Considering the recent expulsion of the U.S. ambassador to Turkey this

could be a signal of an impending invasion by Turkish forces of Kurdish held territories in Northern Syria. Of particular concern is the isolated Kurdish enclave based around the town of Tal Rifaat as the bulk of Turkish shelling seems to be focused there. Turkey has an established history of invading Kurdish held in Syria under the premise of securing its borders. The Kurdish SDF/YPG units enjoy U.S. support and any Turkish military actions against such units could threaten U.S. forces in region as well.

[YPG/PKK Aims to create chaos, disorder in Syria](#)

- Summary: Good overview of why YPG is taking aggressive actions in region. Written by Ankara think tank, so take it with a grain of salt. Asserts the goal of YPG is threefold, but most important is to prevent return of Syrians to Syria so the Kurds can try and establish a Kurdish state.
- Analysis” this report states that the YPG/PKK have three main goals, 1. "to force the governing body to implement harsher security measures and drive the people away from governance." 2. "to prevent the return of Syrians to Syria in order to preserve their prospect of a Marxist Kurdish statelet in northern Syria reaching from Iraq to the Mediterranean." 3. "to portray their areas as relatively more secure than the areas held by the Syrian interim government." This take is interesting as it interprets the YPG as an offensive group pushing toward anarchy or “anti-government” whereas in other articles its to only [protect](#) Kurds in Syria, or as an [ambiguous “group of fighters”](#) who have a democratic socialist organizational structure. This report is from a think tank in Ankara which is a good indicator that they would not favor the Kurds and would want to pain them in a negative light, but the history of the use of suicide bombing clarifies the irregularity of this tactic and the frequency of car bombings. This report is relevant to the U.S. considering YPG attacks on Turkey last week, and how Ankara is reacting to that situation. The trend is that the Kurds are not backing down, and that Ankara is continuing to raise the heat so to speak, as this article reveals it’s been a slow escalation for a long period of time. Such is relevant to the U.S. because Turkey is a NATO ally who considers the YPG terrorists, but the U.S. has worked with them in the past for counterterrorism measures that may become important again given the recent events in Afghanistan.

[China’s Claim That Its Fractional Orbital Bombardment System was a Spaceplane Test Doesn’t Add Up \(Updated\)](#)

- Summary: “reusable spaceplane” is what china claimed to have tested, not a weapon according to Chinese officials. This comment was on a launch in July whereas the original report from *Financial times* said it was tested in August. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian denied this allegation of weapons testing at a press conference

on October 18, 2021. “As I just said, it’s not [a] missile, but a space vehicle,” Zhao continued, so we can confirm that china indeed tested a space vehicle test. China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) also confirmed through public announcement that it was a successful reusable spaceplane test in July. China is developing hypersonic glide vehicle weapons.

- Analysis: Important to remember for nuclear based threats HGVs are not significant because of their speed but rather maneuverability and unpredictability. ICBMs go much faster than HGVs but are predictable, it is the unpredictability that results in having a “spaceplane” that makes it dangerous. This events coverup, could be a thinly veiled insult at the X-37 spaceplane that the US claims to use for completely non-offensive purposes. Having weapons that ignore the status quo early warning and missile defense systems can accelerate a rapidly increasing strategic arms race, something that the USSR and US did much to abate from the 80s onward.

[China’s Carrier-Capable Naval Stealth Fighter Has Flown](#)

- Summary: Naval version; Shenyang FC-31 on the Peoples Liberation Army Air Force (PLAN) carrier force. Not confirmed by China but many photos depict the teal-colored stealth fighter plane. Expected to reside on the Type 003 carriers.
- Analysis: This is more significant than would otherwise appear. With China’s regional ambitions requiring more power projection, certainly to combat the USN, more is needed in the way of projected oomph and this may get it there. Before and still currently, the PLAN was and is limited to J-15s which is a copied Su-33 Flanker-D, which while competent is not going to be able to challenge the United States for sea control. Getting a land-based aircraft carrier capable is no mean feat, and they seem to have done it, though no orders are in as of yet.

[China Will Pay to Build A New Military Base on Tajikistan’s Border With Afghanistan](#)

- Summary: Tajikistan to build new security base in the village of Vakhon with Chinese funding, signed on October 27, 2021. This area lies between the north end of Afghanistan in the Wakhan Corridor which is between Tajikistan, China, and Afghanistan. \$10 million will be spent to build the base but unclear how much will be paid by China. Tajik authorities said it will not be operated by Chinese troops. The specific purpose of the base has not been identified outside of border security, but things motioned to be there are Interpol information’s

systems from China as well as focusing on combatting organized crime.

- Analysis: China and the U.S. have long been global rivals, and this new development in Tajikistan heightens the tensions between the two countries. Specifically, Tajikistan is immediately adjacent to Afghanistan, which the United States just removed itself from and left as a magnet for terrorism to flourish in once again. The Chinese base in Tajikistan would send a message of dominance and military strength to the world, demonstrating China's intentions to secure global power, especially when one remembers that China's greatest fear is to lose face and appear weak to other countries. This new base could also pose problems for future U.S. over-the-horizon attacks into Afghanistan, as China could prohibit the United States from stationing in Tajikistan.

Tailless Fighter-Like Airframe Spotted at Chinese Jet Manufacturer's Test Airfield

- Summary: From the satellite picture, the tailless fighter looks extremely similar to the U.S. X-44 Manta, has a diamond shaped delta platform. Not confirmed what the fighter is by China, but it's clearly not their J-10 and J-20 fighter plane designs. China is known for exploring more unmanned and manned teaming aircrafts, this appears to be the latest in that design goal.
- Analysis: Too little is known open source to indicate anything beyond this being a mockup, whether manned or unmanned, a mockup, a decoy, or a brand new fighter aircraft are all possibilities. One indication between this tailless concept and the multiplicity of tailless US mockups present is that the future of next generation fighter aircraft is likely to trend tailless at least for a while, until maneuverability takes precedent over radar cross section again. One thing to always be aware of though is that the enemy rarely reveals the best hand that he has, and that China could be much more advanced than anticipated in this field. Like the analysis beforehand, the United States has a tendency to underestimate Chinese technological ability to dangerous levels.

"The question shouldn't be what we ought to do, but what we can do" – Rory Stewart

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Domestic News

U.S. Port Crisis

[Here's the truth behind the 24/7 port operations pledge](#)

- As Biden announces a 24/7 port operation, many are skeptical of the abilities of ports to alleviate the supply chain shortage. While this is a step in the right direction, issues of efficiency and trucking persist. The Port of LA states that they will not be able to implement this initiative immediately as there is still a need to synchronize other parts of the supply chain. Since warehouses still do not take deliveries on the weekends, there will be little improvement to the backlog. Transportation workers will not be able to fulfill their role if the cargo has nowhere to go. This 24/7 port operation is unlikely to alleviate the supply chain crisis without adjustments to the other partners. Nearly certain that the port congestion will not be alleviated in the next few weeks unless there are more measures taken soon. The extension for 24/7 port operation will not alleviate the supply chain issues until the other links in the chain also adjust. Without being able to move these products, there is likely to be continuous shortages for consumers which could lead to increased prices

[U.S. port's supply chain fix challenge: selling 24/7 shifts](#)

- White House announces 24/7 operations to use more overnight workers to ease the congestion at the Port of LA/Long Beach. This is expected to account for 3,500 additional containers being moved at night of the 120,000 already moving each week. There are 62 ships waiting to unload w/500,000 containers, 25 more expected in 3 days. While the increased hours will move the cargo at a faster pace, the LA warehouses are logged at a 1% vacancy rate. This lack of storage capacity makes it unlikely that this 24/7 port operation will result in a significant change to the current situation. If there is an increase in port processing, then more storage space will be needed as the cargo continues down the supply chain. In China, most ports operate 24/7 with more automation and experience rare labor slowdowns. As the U.S. continues to struggle to keep up moving goods through the ports, it presents an opportunity for China to continue as a rising power with its significant domestic and international port control. The lack of warehouse space presents a problem for easing the port congestion which will continue to upset the US economy as products are still delayed on the way to the shelves.

[Biden's 24/7 port operations aren't working because truckers aren't showing up to collect cargo](#)

- Biden's order for 24/7 operations at California ports does not holistically address the supply chain crisis. Roughly half of the 2,000 available appointments for trucks were unused on Friday. This is cited as a result of not having enough chassis to hold the cargo or a shortage of warehouse space. Without transportation, the ports will continue to be backed up. This crisis will continue as long as the cargo is not transported from the ports. With the Christmas season approaching, the shortages will be realized as consumers begin their Christmas shopping. The shortages due to the delay of products will likely drive the prices up in the market.

[Sale of Long Beach Container Terminal finalized by port commission](#)

- The Terminal was sold from OOL to Australian company Macquarie Infrastructure In 2018. The China Ocean Shipping Co. (COSCO) had bought Orient but the US govt required COSCO to sell its rights to the Container Terminal. COSCO also has a stake in the port of LA. The significant control of China over the trade is not favorable to US interests. Shipping ports are vital to the distribution of goods to the nation and the control of China in this way poses a threat to this process. A shortage of products on the shelves will drive the prices up and increase the probability of unrest as consumers panic over the shortages. This has the potential to destabilize the economy which would weaken the US while giving more power to the Chinese Communist Party since they already have sizable control over trade ports around the world.

Terror Threats from ISIS and Al-Qaida

[Timeline for Potential Attacks by Islamic State, Al-Qaida Getting Shorter](#)

- As of October 26th, ISIS-K has been regenerating after the withdrawal out of Afghanistan and it is believed that Al-Qaeda is attempting to regain power and control. It is believed that ISIS-K will start external operations within the next 6 to 12 months and Al-Qaeda will be able to conduct and carry out operations within the next 1 to 2 years. It is highly likely that the US will be a target of terrorism. The question officials are posing is not when but whether terrorists will have the intent to carry out attacks on the US within this timeline. As of right now in Afghanistan most of these groups are trying to grasp power and they are likely going to fight each other before. It is likely that these groups may focus first on the homeland so that they may

maintain or gain power and wipe out other groups in the country. Another possibility is that these groups may grow before seeking to attack the west – as the US withdrawal greatly benefited these groups as supporters were released from prison. on.

Police Identify Potential ISIS-Linked Threat to Virginia Shoppers; increase presence in shopping malls

- On Saturday, October 30th news was released of a threat to Northern Virginia malls. Just days before the gubernatorial election, at the rise of the holiday shopping season, a day before Halloween, and as the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan, this threat was posed at a critical time for Virginians. In response, local police presence was increased. Though credibility of the threat is still being determined, analysts have found a possible link to ISIS. This threat comes as a shocking reminder of the threats posed to America as just days before, Pentagon officials theorized the possibility of an ISIS-K attack on America within the next six months. This threat serves as an indicator of further threats and attacks. As terror organizations view the state of American politics and the withdrawal from Afghanistan, some may take it as an opportunity to threaten the weakened west.

US Domestic Terrorism Caseload ‘Exploding’

- The threat of domestic terrorism has increased by 170% in the past year. The reason for this potential violence stems from the political unrest in U.S. Citizens. FBI Director Christopher Wray uses the example of the Capitol Hill riot to demonstrate that some are willing to use violence against the government to advance their political and social goals. This means as fewer and fewer citizens feel that their needs are being met by the government, they may resort to violence. There is a high likelihood that this may happen, as political dissatisfaction and confidence in the US government are growing due to the economic state of the country.

Are Afghan Refugees Behind the Virginia ISIS Threat?

- Over the Halloween weekend, a terrorism threat was reported in Fairfax County, VA. The threat was said to come from ISIS and perhaps related to 3 Afghans who forced their way off of a bus earlier in October. CBS news has said that ISIS has been more active since the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. The DHS chief said that there is a sharp increase in online activity associated with the Islamic State and al Qaeda elements. Representative Darrell Issa has disclosed that 12,000 Afghans were brought into the US though they had no I.D. at all. Reports also say that at least 700 Afghans departed from US military bases without authority to do so. It is highly likely that a portion of these Afghans are connected to terrorist groups and have

the will to threaten the security of US citizens. This growing danger of terrorist attacks due to Afghan refugees could also spur anti-immigrant sentiments and attacks against middle easterners.

Border Crisis at the Southern Border

[Record-Breaking Mexican Border Arrests, Caravan En Route, Panama Warns 65K More](#)

- There was a spike in migrants during 2021, creating a national border and humanitarian crisis. The number of apprehended was 1,643,679, breaking the previous record high of 2000. The crisis at the border was credited to the disastrous open border policies implemented by the Biden Administration. The majority of arrested illegal aliens are from Mexico, totaling 608,000 arrests, and are followed by Honduras (309,000), Guatemala (279,000), and El Salvador (96,000). The numbers of illegal immigrants coming through the southern border will only increase, as more than 65,000 Haitian illegals are ready to travel north to the border through Latin America. It is highly likely that if the border crisis is not alleviated, crime and instability will increase in the southern border states.

[Americans know who's to blame for the border crisis: Devine](#)

- In late September, there were 15,000 Haitians living under a bridge in Del Rio, TX. 2/3 of the refugees were removed by local authorities, not the federal government. Despite the Biden administration claiming to be sending them back to Haiti to prevent the spread of Covid19, reporters say that most of the refugees were secretly released into the community. Though the Haitians were warned to appear at an immigration office, there were no reported consequences if this warning wasn't abided by. This influx of illegal immigrants with no vetting process and no restraint will strain the American taxpayer to provide education, jobs, and healthcare to the immigrants. There is high confidence this will upset the American citizen and legal American immigrants. This will bring instability and hostility to illegal immigrants within the communities that are hit hardest with illegal immigration.

“An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge” – Proverbs 18:15
