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Dagger Complex Analysis

Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Initiative Weekly Newsletter

Liberty University

Helms School of Government Students



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Russia-Ukraine Border Crisis

BLUF

Russia continues to press the border of Ukraine, maintaining stagnant tension between itself and NATO. The U.S. has continued to send troops into the NATO members of eastern Europe to deter the growing Russian aggression as well as weapons and supplies to its NATO allies and Ukraine.

Analysis

- Low Probability/High Impact: Ukraine joins NATO
 - NATO would not only support and back Ukraine, but would also offer the same benefits that other NATO countries have privilege to, specifically using its membership to deter Russian aggression
 - It would be highly unlikely that all the current NATO members would unanimously approve of Ukraine’s membership anytime soon, especially with Russia’s encroachment upon the Ukrainian border. This would also further Russian aggression and military involvement on both political sides with a high probability of war occurring.
- Medium-High Probability/High Impact: Russia invades Ukraine
 - High probability of war between Russia and Ukraine with NATO involvement
 - Russia’s sphere of influence would expand, giving Russia a militarily strategic advantage. Russia would gain ease of access to the warm water port on the Black Sea, which would encourage trade.
- High Probability/Medium-High Impact: The U.S. deploying more troops
 - Having troops deployed in the eastern European NATO states would give Ukraine a more successful outcome concerning their state sovereignty and territorial integrity.
 - Given that 8500 troops were deployed in the past two weeks, and an additional 3000 were deployed last week, there is a high probability that the U.S. will continue to do so if escalation on the border continues.
- DIME: U.S. Perspective on Ukraine and Russia

| Diplomatic: | Military: |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- U.S. and NATO backing Ukraine (Ukraine still not being a member)- Redline: Russia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- President Biden deploys 3000 troops in Poland, Romania, and Germany to move further into Eastern Europe |

| | |
|--|--|
| invading Ukraine | |
| Informational: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Nord Stream Pipeline- Russian world class intelligence and cyber skills | Economic: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sanctions<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Financialo Political- Nord Stream Pipeline<ul style="list-style-type: none">o U.S. NATO allies |

Conclusion

Given the timing, continuous growth of Russian military, and increasing aggression, it is assessed with medium confidence that Russia is preparing itself for and invasion of Ukraine. To counter this, NATO has become more involved by adding more troops. Due to the rising-slope trend of the U.S. decisions to continue supporting NATO allies that are supporting Ukraine, the U.S. will continue to deploy troops and supplies to its allies.

Sources

- [CNN](#)
- [Republic World](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [EconoTimes](#)

North Korean Weapons Testing

BLUF

North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile programs have slowly but surely continued to grow throughout the 2010s, despite heavy sanctioning and pushback from the international community. North Korea has demonstrated its nuclear and ICBM capabilities in the past and has increased its weapons testing in the last three years since the breakdown of the second North Korea-United States Summit in 2019.

Analysis

North Korea has been building up their nuclear and ballistic weapons capabilities because they see it as an opportunity to gain influence over the global superpowers – despite making diplomatic claims and agreements that they would cease their testing in exchange for aid, they have regularly broken these stipulations in both overt and covert ways. As a nation that is already brutally sanctioned, it does not fear additional economic restrictions. The only nation with economic leverage against North Korea is China, with 96% of their imports originating from this powerful ally. Additionally, while North Korea or an American ally due to overwhelmingly assured destruction, the United States and international community must not underestimate the

capabilities that North Korea has accumulated. North Korea possesses short range, intermediate range, and intercontinental range ballistic missiles, has conducted six nuclear detonations since 2006, and potentially possesses miniaturized nuclear warheads and hydrogen bomb capabilities. As North Korea's diplomatic interactions suggest, even agreements vastly favorable to North Korea have not significantly deterred their testing.

Conclusion

It is assessed with moderately high confidence that North Korea will continue to proliferate and test ballistic missiles with the intent of garnering international attention and favorable negotiations. It is also assessed with moderately high confidence that North Korea, despite its expressed willingness to denuclearize in exchange for the removal of sanctioning, will not cooperate with the deals to which they agree. North Korea is quietly building its arsenal without significant resistance in the midst of a world that is preoccupied with COVID-19 and the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.

Sources

- [Reuters](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [Homeland Security Today](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [Dept of Treasury](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [KCNA Watch](#)

Russian-Norwegian Activity

BLUF

Undersea cables were cut in Norway, impacting remote archipelagos (specifically research laboratories in Svalbard and the Norwegian Continental Shelf). These cables are hard to move and cut, indicating the disruption was intentional. Additionally, the presence of Russian "research" ships on the west coast of Ireland and in the English Channel fuels suspicions that Russia is growing more interested in undersea cable routes.

Analysis

- April 2021: IMR station on Norwegian Continental Shelf lost communications with offshore node (e.g. Node 3). Research sub found that the node was drug out of position with its cable cut.
 - Between April 3, 2021 to present, 9.5 tons of subsea cable has gone missing from Norway.

- Aug 2021: Russia “research” ships spotted off of the Irish west coast.
- Sept. 30, 2021: IRM station’s Node 2 also moved out of position, with connection box torn off and cable missing.
- Jan. 7, 2022: Outage of subsea communications cable between Svalbard and mainland Norway. No official statement on cause or suspects, but there is increased shipping activity in the area.
- High Impact/Medium-Low Probability: Russia cuts Kerch Strait Cable
 - Cutting off Ukrainian communications and making it dark to the West. This action would impact internet communications in Crimea; however, if tensions increase in Ukraine it could be done to disrupt internet communications, cause general panic, and block other states’ ability to get live reports from Ukraine. Most Ukrainian internet traffic is carried over land-based cables rather than sea cables.
- High Impact/Low Probability: Russia cuts submarine cables linking Europe to the global community.
 - Russia was seen patrolling West Ireland in August 2021 with the Yantar, which is known as a reconnaissance and intelligence vessel with the Main Directorate of Underwater Research. Ireland has several major submarine cables linked to its coast. By cutting these cables, Russia would impact global internet traffic and potentially distract other nations from Ukrainian incursion. However, this scenario would result in extreme escalations with the West, which would impact the Kremlin’s goal of getting Ukraine with limited collateral damage.
- Medium Impact/High Probability: Russia hacks Svalbard subsea cabled to gain intelligence.
 - Svalbard is used as a space research facility (Svalbard Satellite Station) in a joint venture between the Norwegian Space Center and Kongsberg Defense & Aerospace. It also provides ground service to more satellites than any other station, making it a major asset for space intelligence. Russia has accused Norway in the past of using Svalbard as a reconnaissance and surveillance post for Norwegian forces. Russia is also capable of tapping submarine cables with GUGI innovations and ROADM equipment (information on hacking methods and cyberthreats to cables.) If these cables were tapped, Russia could gain credible intel on global satellite operations.

Conclusion

With moderate-high confidence, it is assessed that Russia is the one cutting Norwegian subsea cables. With prior evidence of Russian surveillance vessels on the Irish West coast and English Channel, and its recent naval exercises off the Irish coast, it is theorized that Russia is following undersea cable routes. This increased interest in submarine cables, it is determined with moderate confidence that Russia intends to use these cables in intelligence collection by tapping their information lines.

Sources

- [National Post](#)
- [Data Center Dynamics](#)
- [Daily Mail](#)
- [Irish Times](#)
- [UK Defense Journal](#)
- [Atlas Obscura](#)

U.S. Crime

BLUF

2020 saw a 30% uptick in violent crime, specifically in homicide rates. 2021 saw an additional general increase by 5%. This trend is seen in areas with higher population density and lower GDP including Philadelphia, Columbus, Chicago, and Los Angeles. This indicates a correlation between economic insecurity and increased violent crime.

Analysis

COVID-19 response remains an important indicator on US social cohesion and economics. With the introduction of new variants, it is predicted that major cities will increase countermeasures to combat these variants, including mandatory vaccination and testing and upkeep of quarantine protocols. This is already seen in major metropolitan hubs like New York City, Boston, and Washington DC.

Based on current economic trends, it is predicted that the US GDP will begin to slow in the first quarter of 2022. However, given recent hiring spikes after the “Great Resignation,” unemployment is predicted with moderate confidence to continue to gradually decrease from Dec. 2021’s 3.9%. This will positively impact the national GDP, creating more economic stability in lower-income areas which, by correlation, will decrease murder rates. However, this decrease is dependent on responses to COVID-19 protocols, as city vaccine mandates may result in either group immunity through compliance or in accelerated unemployment rates.

Conclusion

It is assessed with moderate confidence that U.S. crime rates, specifically homicide rates, will gradually increase as the U.S. economy continues to navigate COVID-19.

Sources

- [Arab News](#)
- [The Hill](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [The Wrap](#)
- [The Hill](#)
- [The Balance](#)
- [FBI Crime Data Explorer](#)

Texas Synagogue Attack

BLUF

Anti-Semitic incidents have dramatically increased since 2013 in the United States. Alongside this rise, anti-Semitic groups and individuals have felt emboldened and have begun to either organize and spread out into the public, or act on their own.

Analysis

- High Impact, (very) Low Probability:
 - A type of “rainbow coalition” is formed among the many anti-Semitic groups from across the political spectrum in order to combat “international Jewry”, with motivations ranging from neo-Nazi ideology to Palestinian liberation. This group organizes in online chatrooms, such as Telegram and 8chan, and communicates, using coded messages and phrases to plan a “day of the rope”, or a day of reckoning for those of the Jewish faith and the United States, which is seen as a country overtaken by Jews and “degeneracy”. Coordinated attacks, such as shootings and bombings, from multiple anti-Semitic groups strike synagogues and Jewish communities across the country, resulting in the deaths of hundreds. An attack on the Beaver Valley Nuclear Power Station, a nuclear power plant targeted due to its close proximity (within 27 miles) of Pittsburgh, is foiled by law enforcement after code is discovered in the plant’s system that would have flooded the pressurized water reactors and sent radiation into the surrounding areas.

- Medium Impact, high Probability:
 - Attacks on the Jewish community stay largely isolated in individual incidents; however, attacks continue to be seen at higher levels than in years prior. Jewish communities and places of worship heighten security in the wake of new attacks. Anti-Semitic groups keep their activities largely online, spreading propaganda and trying to recruit new members, while sometimes gathering in small numbers to participate in demonstrations, or infiltrating the demonstrations of larger groups.

• DIME: Anti-Semitic Incident Perpetrators SWOT:

| | |
|--|--|
| Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Initial anonymity (until incident)- Social media use to recruit, radicalize, organize- Nationwide memberships (multiple groups, multiple areas)- Decentralized/small membership in organizations allows them to slip through the cracks | Opportunity: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Places of worship are soft targets- Utilizing social media algorithms to spread propaganda and recruitment- Declining economy, COVID, and general anger in populations create recruitment and radicalization opportunities- Certain politicians giving a blind eye to or engaging in Anti-Semitic activity and rhetoric- Overlap with political opinions that aren't anti-Semitic- Live in a society where it is a right to own weapons |
| Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Relatively fractured, no unified front- In-fighting- Lack of popular support from population- Popular social media platforms shutting down extremist content | Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Renewed interest from governments- Heightened security of targeted locations- Enhanced sentencing for hate crimes- Rise in public knowledge |

Conclusion

- It is assessed with high confidence that anti-Semitic groups and individuals continue to feel emboldened to commit acts of intimidation and violence and will continue to do so in the very near future. Acts of violence remain perpetrated by lone individuals, while larger groups remain focused on propaganda and trying to coop their rhetoric into larger movements.

Sources

- [US News](#)
- [US News](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [The Guardian](#)
- [Homeland Security Today](#)

“The question shouldn’t be what we ought to do, but what we can do” – Rory Stewart

