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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

Overview

- Russian troops have been concentrating in key areas along the Ukraine-Russian border. These locations are specifically related to Ukrainian highways, major cities, Russian demographic areas, and points of interest for a potential Russian invasion.
- 70% of Russia's BTGs now deployed near Ukraine border/Belorussian training areas. Key noted troops include Russian TBMs (Tactical Ballistic Missiles), Russian armored concentrations, and critical infrastructure required for a ground invasion
- NATO characterized these Exercises of 30,000 Russian Troops as "Moscow's Biggest deployment of Russian troops to Belarus since the cold war".
- Belarus is on the doorstep of Ukraine. Gomel, Belarus is 133 miles from Kyiv, Ukraine. Gomel is the closest Belarussian City with over 500,000 people.
- The influx of Russian Troops are located at Belarus's southern border at Zhabrovka airfield. Zhabrovka airfield is located 15 miles from the Ukrainian Border.
- Zhabrovka airfield is 10 miles southeast of Gomel, Belarus. 123 miles from Kyiv.
- Russia has used man-made temporary Pontoon bridges to cross the Pripyat River within Belarus, to expand its attack possibility, against Ukraine
- Mud Season is coming. With that, Russian tracked vehicles will be more prone to maintenance failures and slow progression if land invasion occurs. It is advantageous for Russia to invade Ukraine, take the desired territory, and then dig into defensive positions as the Ukraine Army's counterattack begins.
- No NATO ships are currently operating inside of the Black Sea. This is due in part to the Russian naval incidents with British & Dutch warships earlier. NATO is frightened to lose seamen and is currently evaluating future naval presence in the Black Sea.
- Heavy Black Sea warship concentrations point towards more than naval exercises and power projection. Russia now has the fleet capability to maintain naval superiority in the Black Sea. Specifically with Amphibious Landing Ships entering the Black Sea recently.

Analysis

ACH Regarding potential attack times:

| Evidence | When | | | |
|------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|-------|
| | 2/13-19 | 2/20-2/26 | 2/27-3/5 | Never |
| Russia-Belarus Exercise 2/20 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| NATO Intel - 2/16 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Rasputitsa распу́тца | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Deployment Cost | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Beijing Olympics | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Totals | 19 | 17 | 10 | 13 |

Timeline:

- Nov. 1st, 2021 - Satellite photos show Russia building up military troops on the border of Ukraine
- Feb. 1st, 2022 - Putin denies plans to invade Ukraine
- Feb. 5th, 2022 - Russia reaches 70% of the military build-up needed for a full-scale invasion of Ukraine
- Feb. 8th, 2022 - Six Russian warships head towards the Black Sea for naval drills
- Feb. 10th, 2022 - Belarus and Russia start joint military exercises
- Feb. 11th, 2022 - State Department issues a Level 4 Travel Advisory
- Feb. 11th, 2022 - The Pentagon is sending 3,000 reinforcement troops to Poland
- Feb. 12th, 2022 - President Biden and President Putin held talks over video conference
 - President Biden emphasized invasion would lead to “widespread human suffering”
 - President Putin cited that the US failed to respond to Russia’s demands
- Feb. 13th, 2022 - U.S. Embassy in Kyiv has been fully evacuated and closed down
 - Consulate services suspended
 - A small core of diplomats remains in Lviv
- Feb. 15th, 2022 - Ukraine suffers cyberattacks
 - The attacks shut down government and military websites and disrupted the services of two state-owned banks
- Feb. 16th, 2022 - NATO stated that Russia is continuing its troop buildup on the border

Sources

1. [Axios](#)
2. [Youtube](#)
3. [The Daily Beast](#)
4. [The Daily Beast](#)
5. [New York Times](#)
6. [Ice Trends](#)
7. [Politico](#)
8. [Naval News](#)

Taiwan-China

Overview

- While Taiwan holds no firm military alliances, they do have a variety of diplomatic allies who have bilateral relations with Taiwan. These allies could be helpful in economic aid to Taiwan if need arises.
- Not all of Taiwan's allies are in a position for bilateral economic aid. The countries of Palau, Tuvalu, and Swaziland do not have the financial stability to assist Taiwan if economic aid was needed.
- Taiwan's allies in the Pacific include: The Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, and the Solomon Islands. These countries are all insignificant in terms of landmass, military capability, and economic base. None of Taiwan's allies in the Pacific can truly aid Taiwan in a Chinese conflict.
- The \$100 million contract to boost missile defenses is a way for the US to uphold the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act which legally binds the US by law to equip Taiwan with weapons to defend itself. The US has an economic interest in defending Taiwan since Taiwan is the US's 9th largest goods trading partner, which makes it significant to US economic interests. The US provided the loan to aid in Taiwan being able to get out in front of a potential Chinese invasion.
- From an official standpoint, the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) said that defending Taiwan promotes US interests by "supporting the recipient's continuing efforts to modernize its armed forces and to maintain a credible defensive capability."
- Taiwan is closely monitoring the Ukraine situation because it is the main way for Taiwan to predict how the US will handle a potential Chinese invasion of Taiwan. President Biden has been vague and ambiguous in his threats to Russia if Russia invades Ukraine, and sanctions may be the US's main tactic for a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.
- After the unsuccessful withdrawal from Afghanistan, US foreign policy looks weak on the world stage, and the American people are not interested in going to war to defend Ukraine. If the US does not militarily defend Ukraine, then Taiwan has reason to believe that the US will not militarily defend Taiwan.
- In the final analysis, if the West does not defend Ukraine, China will be emboldened to act against Taiwan. Lai I-Chung, president of the Prospect Foundation in Taipei, said, "If the Western powers fail to respond to Russia, they embolden the Chinese thinking regarding action on Taiwan."
- Lithuania has been steadily growing closer to Taiwan as both a trading partner and as allies. The PRC is closely watching this and has roped Lithuania into its hybrid war with Taiwan. Taiwan is curbing the effects of China's aggression by importing food and

drink from Lithuania. While this will work in the short term, it sends a clear and distinct message to Europe from the PRC: if you interfere in our internal affairs you can expect to be punished

- Lithuania's GDP has been steadily increasing over the past few years, if China is to cut exports to Lithuania, the country may be forced to go to a different seller for their Chinese goods, increasing spending and import costs
- China is demanding that the U.S. rescind all future arms deals with Taiwan and the U.S. is able to solidify their foreign policy and potentially save Taiwan for the future. China is not currently in a position militarily to take on AUKUS, Taiwan, and in addition, our INDOPACOM allies. By arming Taiwan, we are sending a message to the PRC cementing our presence in the pacific. Taiwan is crucial to the U.S. economy, especially to meet the demands of the Paris Climate Agreement and President Biden's plans for Build Back Better.

Sources

1. [Aljazeera](#)
2. [Stratfor](#)
3. [Aljazeera](#)
4. [AIT](#)
5. [USTR](#)
6. [NY Times](#)
7. [WV Gazette Mail](#)
8. [The Hill](#)
9. [Aljazeera](#)
10. [OEC](#)
11. [Newsweek](#)
12. [IBTimes](#)
13. [Asia Times](#)

Mexican Cartel Tactics & Jihadi Involvement

Overview

- The Jalisco New Generation Cartel (the CJNG) has begun utilizing Al-Qaeda and Taliban style terror tactics to battle rivals and gain control over territories. In working with Middle Eastern Jihadi 'technical advisors' the cartel has advanced their guerrilla tactics to 'wipe out' competitors. These tactics include drones dropping bombs, decapitations, and land mines. The increased violence and advanced tactics have left thousands of people displaced and impacted the government's ability to counter the CJNG.
- The Jalisco Cartel has left thousands displaced and therefore has

increased the number of immigrants coming to the US border seeking asylum

- Iran seeks to spread its influence in Latin American countries. Hezbollah is suspected to be partnering with three major Mexican Cartels and it is believed that Hezbollah aided the Sinaloa cartel in building tunnels under the U.S. and Mexican border to aid in drug trafficking. Hezbollah has made connections to the Maduro regime which has “become the central hub for the convergence of transnational organized crime and international terrorism in the Western Hemisphere.”
- Iran’s influence continues to undermine US national security at the border and has aided Mexican cartels in their methods of drug-trafficking. Their goal is to ultimately spread the imperialist Shi’ite vision worldwide through its deep-rooted influence in Latin America so that they may lower the United States’ influence within the western hemisphere.

Sources

1. [New York Post](#)
2. [ABC News](#)
3. [El Universal](#)
4. [USA Today](#)
5. [Milenio](#)
6. [Milenio](#)
7. [Ifmat](#)
8. [Times of Israel](#)
9. [Military](#)

Vaccine Requirement for Trucking Employees

Overview

- Canadian truckers swarmed to Ottawa and other border points between the US and Canada to shut down trade routes to pressure the government to drop the vaccine mandate
- This movement, titled the Freedom Convoy, has spread throughout the globe with threats of truckers gathering in US cities, Paris, Brussels, and more.
- The Ambassador Bridge which is responsible for twenty-five percent of trade between the US and Canada was blocked for a period but was finally cleared late on February 13, after arrests were made and vehicles were removed.
- The Freedom Convoy movement has been praised by US Senator Ted Cruz and former President Donald Trump.
- An order to vacate that was made to those occupying the

Ambassador Bridge was met with defiance and more supporters who came bringing Canadian flags and chanting 'Freedom!'

- Ambassador Bridge, which is a crucial trade route for Canada and the US, has been blocked, which is causing major disruptions.
- The US Government is fearful that a similar convoy could emerge within the US and President Biden has encouraged Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to administer federal powers to stop the convoy.
- Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer called for the Canadian government to resolve the issues causing the convoy in order to resume use of the trade routes.
- On the twentieth day of protesters occupying Ottawa the police issued warnings, in both English and French, that anyone blocking the streets was at risk of being arrested.
- There has been very little direct response from Canadian authorities which has depleted the public's confidence in their leadership.

Sources

1. [Aljazeera](#)
2. [USA Today](#)
3. [AP News](#)
4. [MSN](#)
5. [Politico](#)

Iran

Overview

- Iran Unveils a new long-range missile as talks in Vienna continue
- The missile has a range of 1450 km, giving it range for most US Middle Eastern Bases in the gulf and all of Iraq, as well as most if not all of Israel as well from within Iran.
- It is based off the Fateh-110, which is a SRBM. It likely has a very light warhead but is also likely to be available in numbers already, seems to be precise, this means it will likely be used as a PGM against HVTs more so than anything else. It is important to remember that these are SRBMs, meaning they have a predictable parabolic flight path until separation, at which point the RV is maneuverable.

Sources

1. [Reuters](#)
2. [Janes](#)
3. [CSIS](#)
4. [IISS](#)

5. [The Washington Post](#)
6. [The Jerusalem Post](#)

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