

2-28-22

Liberty Crossing Analysis

Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Initiative Weekly Newsletter

Liberty University

Helms School of Government Students



Table of Contents

Weekly Newsletter.....1

.....1

Russian Cyber Attacks.....3

 BLUF3

 Analysis.....3

 Sources4

U.S. Border and Immigration.....4

 BLUF4

 Analysis.....4

 Sources5

Economic Response to Russo-Ukrainian War 20225

 BLUF5

 Analysis.....5

 Sources6

Iranian Navy.....6

 BLUF6

 Analysis.....7

 Sources8

Contact Us

Chief of Staff

Courtney Messer

cdmesser@liberty.edu

Dagger Complex Director

James Cantwell

jlcantwell@liberty.edu

Liberty Crossing Director

Hannah Velarde

hvelarde@liberty.edu

Russian Cyber Attacks

BLUF

- US critical infrastructure is unlikely to be targeted by Russian cyber actors in direct relations to the ongoing Ukraine crisis. CISA warnings likely issued out of abundance of caution.
- Ukrainian critical infrastructure is almost certain to be continually targeted in the near term.
- Cyberattacks targeting Ukraine are likely to escalate in severity & complexity.
- Severity will almost certainly increase in direct correlation with the scope and objective of Russian military activity in Ukraine.

Analysis

- Most of the cyberattacks seen in and around Ukraine don't rise above the level of meddling.
 - See— bank/financial hacking, defacing of government websites, etc.
- Despite major Russian offensive currently occurring, no major/destructive cyberattack precluded it.
- However, there were two significant incidents which are cause for concern—
 - A coordinated DDoS attack on Ukraine's Defense Ministry and Army websites, as well as the interfaces of two large Ukrainian banks.
 - Evidence of ransomware-without-recovery in multiple unnamed Ukrainian organizations' systems.
- Thought Bubble—
 - The DDoS attacks was probably less about crippling Ukraine's critical systems, and more about intimidation and psychological statements. It shows the capability of Russian cyber actors to strike at Ukrainian targets at will, with great capacity.
 - The ransomware-without-recovery is more concerning— this malware is very likely evidence of impact-stage planning which would almost certainly preclude major military action. If the Russians are looking so far in advance as to already plant this on Ukrainian systems, they are at least entertaining the need to use it.
- Looking forward— the US has warned that Russia has

probably already penetrated Ukrainian critical infrastructure with the capacity to produce a crippling cyberattack. Given the current offensive, it is possible Russia is holding such a cyber weapon in reserve.

- This is the sort of cyberattack which US analysts should be looking out for and concerned with mitigating as much as possible.

Sources

1. [Harvard Business Review](#)
2. [National Law Review](#)
3. [CRS](#)
4. [RAND](#)
5. [CFR](#)
6. [Washington Post](#)
7. [Microsoft Security](#)

U.S. Border and Immigration

BLUF

- While illegal immigration and Canadian protest boarder blockages continue to present challenges to the United States, positive progress has been observed.

Analysis

- The Del Rio sector of US border patrol has reported a sharp rise in the level of unaccompanied migrant children with numbers doubling those of the previous year.
 - 2,280 unaccompanied minors between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 2021 (up from 1,305 over the same time frame the year before)
- However, while border apprehensions remain at record levels, an investigation by the Office of Inspector General noted that significant progress has been made toward detention center improvement recommendations made in 2019
- The Biden administration also left in place many Trump-era immigration policies leading immigration advocates to call him out on the administration's lack of action to:
 - [Repeal Title 42](#) (allows immigrant expulsions on public health grounds)
 - [Repeal the “Remain in Mexico”](#) policy (requires that would be asylum seekers wait in Mexico for their

- court hearings)
 - Enforce reforms made for prosecutorial discretion requests
- On the US's northern border with Canada both the Coutts, Alberta and the Windsor, Ontario border crossings have been cleared of Canadian protesters
 - Nearly 25% of all cross-border commerce between the US and Canada flows through the Windsor Ontario crossing, leading to significant trade disruptions while the protests were taking place

Sources

1. [Pew Research Center](#)
2. [Homeland Security Today](#)
3. [NPR](#)
4. [Homeland Security Today](#)
5. [U.S. News](#)
6. [Homeland Security Today](#)

Economic Response to Russo-Ukrainian War 2022

BLUF

- The Russo-Ukrainian War of 2022 will cripple Russia's economy, and isolate it from international markets, for years to come.

Analysis

- World Oil prices have risen from \$92 per barrel to \$105 and is expected to continue to rise.
- Russia supplies about 35% of Europe's Oil
 - Russia exports around 4-5 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude and another 2-3 million bpd of refined products. China, the European Union, South Korea, India, and Japan are its main buyers.
- Russia banned from SWIFT
- Russian Ruble marked down 40%
 - 1 Ruble is currently worth 0.012 USD
 - 1 USD is worth 119 Rubles
- High inflation is expected to emerge in response
- "The outlook for the Russian economy is dire"
- The Central Bank of Russia has frozen all foreign assets in

an attempt to slow the damage to the Russian markets.

- Assets frozen include stocks and currency exchanges
- SWIFT Sanctions make imports and exports nearly impossible
- SWOT

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian economy diminishing, leading the EU to be more economically independent from hostile powers 	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil is more expensive for the short term • The world markets are going to take a hit from Russia practically shut out of the economic markets of the world
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US oil imports become more competitive in EU markets 	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A temporary oil 'shortage' may happen in the near future while the markets adjust

Sources

1. [Reuters](#)
2. [The Economist](#)
3. [Project Syndicate](#)
4. [The Washington Post](#)
5. [The Guardian](#)
6. [The Guardian](#)
7. [Trading Economics](#)

Iranian Navy

BLUF

- The US is deploying a fleet of 100 sailing and submersible drone ships to patrol volatile waters in the Middle East so that it can deter Iranian naval incursions and limit its expanding influence in the region.

Analysis

- Cone of Plausibility
 - The fleet is likely to be fully operational by summer 2023 and is highly likely to successfully deter Iranian naval incursions
 - It is unlikely that Iran has fully operable supercavitating torpedoes that will moot the deterrence capabilities of the fleet
- SWOT

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fleet will increase US Navy surveillance capabilities, specifically on waters vital to the global oil supply and maritime flows • The fleet will deter aggressive Iranian actors, specifically in the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait 	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Admiral Brad Cooper of the 5th fleet believes that it will not be fully operational until the summer of 2023 • The capabilities have not yet fully been tested • Naval trade has been increasingly targeted after the Iranian nuclear deal fell through
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US is attempting to strengthen its regional alliances to mitigate the threat of Iranian attacks and bolster joint deterrence • Iranian military ships are currently escorting trade vessels and oil tankers in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to protect against attacks 	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are rising tensions between the US and Iran over maritime trade routes • Iran is the largest regional threat due to its ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, UAV components, and proxy forces (in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen) • Iran may be developing

	supercavitating torpedoes that can reach record-breaking speeds underwater and are capable of destroying the largest vessels
--	--

Sources

1. [Eurasian Times](#)
2. [Eurasia Review](#)
3. [Al Jazeera](#)
4. [19FortyFive](#)

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