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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 v. Ukraine

BLUF

- With the strategic advantage in the hands of the Ukrainian forces and the decline in moral for the Russian forces, Russia will soon have three choices to make on the strategic playbook:
  - Regroup, reassess, and reattack
  - Chemical warfare
  - Full withdrawal of forces

Analysis

Overview

- Russian forces are in a defensive posture.
- Russian forces are dealing with a lack of secure communications and failing synchronized operations.
- Russian use of chemical weapons could snowball into a kinetic NATO intervention.
- Belarus could be preparing to deploy troops into Ukraine.

High Impact Analysis

- High Impact, High Probability: Russian forces chemical warfare in Ukraine.
- High Impact, Low Probability: Russian ceasefire and full withdrawal from Ukraine.
- Low Impact, High Probability: Regroup, reassess, and reattack.
- Low Impact, Low Probability: Russian backed Belarussian forces joining the war.

Conclusion

- The strategic conflict forces by Russian Forces has not proceeded in the advantage of Russia. The strategic advantage has led to the Economic decline of many Russian cities and massive economic tariffs and ban on Russian imported goods. This combined with the lack of secure communications and synchronized military operations, have accumulated in the Russian forces taking a defensive posture and a current ceasefire for peace talks and an agreement. If these peace talks fail, Russia will be left with three options: regroup, reassess, and reattack; chemical warfare; and a full withdrawal of Russian forces.

Sources

1. Foreign Policy
2. Understanding War
3. Reuters
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Global Economics

BLUF

- Given that inflation was an issue being felt prior to the Russian invasion, the Russia-Ukraine situation has only exacerbated inflation and supply shortages and there is a bad economic forecast for the next year, and possibly longer.

Analysis

Overview

- Market-based long-term inflation will continue. There are fears of a global recession since the West has and is making moves to turn away from purchasing oil from Russia. Experts note that recession sin the last 50 years have all been preceded by a spike in oil prices. Recession risk is assessed at 1/3 chance within the next 12 months. Global recession would only add to an already unstable economic atmosphere.

Starbursting

- Who: Asian, European, and American markets.
- What: Inflation across the board with gas, food, living, and consumer durable goods (cars, furniture, appliances). Potential global shortage of wheat due to Russia-Ukraine situation, and a rising price of wheat leading to rising prices of many foods in general.
- When: Inflation hit global and regional markets after the economy started to open up towards the end of 2020. U.S. 2020 inflation rate was 1.4%, 2021 was 7%, and 2022 is projected at 4.3%. The Euro experiences record highs of headline and core inflation. Chinese inflation has recently lowered but is still sitting at a steep 8.8%.
- Where: Egypt imports 80% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine, now they are spending double on imports because the Black Sea blockade has limited exports.
- Why: Disrupted supply chains, shipping delays, rising shipping costs, labor shortages, high consumer demand, Russia invasion, COVID lockdowns in Asia.
- How: Russia mined and blockaded the Black Sea and had some Ukrainian port infrastructure destroyed which stopped the exports of goods from Ukraine. Sanctions on Russia have led to spikes in oil costs because of a lack of a gap-stop supplier. COVID spike in Asia has brought on more restrictions which has halted production of goods in some areas.

Conclusion

- Global inflation looks to continue onward as labor shortages, higher shipping costs, high consumer demand paired with low supply output, and the Russia-Ukraine situation continues to happen. The economic environment is ripe for a recession within the next year, and that will only add more turmoil to an already unsteady global economic environment. The U.S. could work to increase domestic energy production and look to other suppliers for oil, but in the short term, inflation with continue. The federal reserve rate will be increased to 1.9% by year's end to try to offset some of the inflation, but that raise will take time to be felt in the marketplace.

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8. CNBC

Mali SITREP

BLUF

- With French and E.U. troops transitioning out of Mali, groups like ISWAP and Boko Haram have an opportunity to take advantage of the currently disorganized and scattered Malian government forces and establish a presence in the Sahel region.

Analysis

Notable BLUFOR groups:

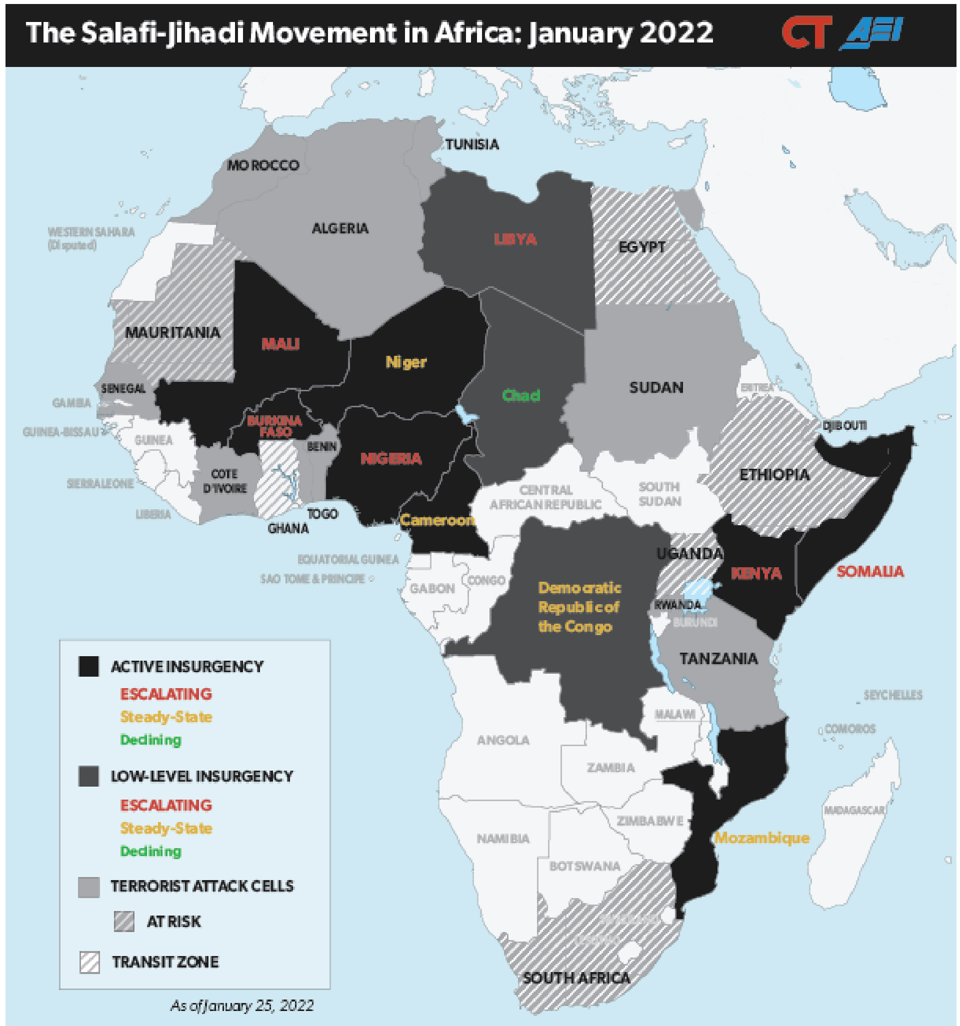
- In Mali:
  - Malian Armed Forces
  - MINUSMA – U.N. Mission
- Leaving Mali:
  - Task Force Takuba – E.U. S.F. Contingent
  - Operation Barkhane – French Military

High Impact Analysis

- High Impact, High Probability: The coup in Mali is the beginning of a series of populist coups in former French colonies. Coups have the potential to destabilize the region and allow terrorist organizations in.
- High Impact, Low Probability: Complete collapse of Malian government with Jihadist groups seizing control of the entire government. The Malian government is currently weak.
- Low Impact, High Probability: French and Task Force Takuba units are able to project power from neighboring Niger, Burkina Faso, and Cote D'Ivore, stemming ISWAP and Boko Haram. Mali has yet

to comment on allowing French OTH operations.

- Low Impact, Low Probability: ISWAP and Boko Haram diminish strength and become a negligent threat. Funding has been detected coming into the groups, making this unlikely.



Conclusion

- France has begun a total withdrawal from Mali, along the E.U. and U.K forces. The coup in Mali could be a part of a potential string of coups in former French colonial nations, with these countries turning away from the West and organized country blocks in favor of populist movements promoting nationalism. ISWAP is receiving funding while losing members and is in a unique position as an organized terror group to establish control in Mali's section of the Sahel region.

Sources

1. French 24 – Coverage on Malian Coup
2. Critical Threats
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India

BLUF

- The recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia is bringing to light some potential ties India has with Russia regarding buying gas, as well as their dealings with trying to stabilize their border from slow Chinese aggression.

Analysis

- Indian and Russian recent history of buying/selling gas
  - In October 2021, India purchased its first liquid natural gas (LNG) shipment from Russia which began a twenty-year contract.
  - Considering the sanctions being placed on Russia from other countries, their LNG prices have dropped by almost 30% making it an unrefusable offer for India.
  - India traditionally gets their gas from other countries such as Nigeria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, however, their prices are increasing making it a no-brainer to make deals with Russia for their heavily discounted gas.
  - In addition to the cheap gas prices, we are seeing some allegiance to Russia come out of the older India generations.
  - Ram Agarwal, a 74-year-old man from India, states that when he was growing up, India and the Soviet Union were close allies, and he considers Russia an "old friend".
- India and China continue to have talks regarding the military presence on their shared border.
  - In June 2020, there was a military altercation between India and China that left 20 India and 4 Chinese soldiers dead.
  - Both the Indian and the Chinese foreign ministers met in person to conduct talks regarding the future of the border between their countries.
  - India is demanding that the border be demilitarized.
  - In addition to extreme man force, Indian government reports confirm that there are Russian made MiG-21's on the shared border.
  - China is attempting to bring India to the table of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).
  - Neither India nor China have truly denounced Russia's recent actions against Ukraine which can hint towards more allied talks between said countries.

Conclusion

- India is becoming a key player in world relations very quickly. Their geographical location puts them in a prime spot to be crucial for both Russia and China. China is keen on getting them to resume relations with Beijing and Russia is becoming their primary LNG supplier.

Sources

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5. CNBC
6. Washington Post

China

BLUF

- China has been developing missiles capable of conducting conventional nuclear precision strikes against ground targets and naval targets. Three islands in the South China Sea are now fully militarized and contain anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems. China has also drafted a security agreement with the Solomon Islands that gives China the ability to base warships in the Pacific.

Analysis

Starbursting

- Who: China, Solomon Islands, U.S.
- What: Chinese development of threatening missile technology; upgrade of J-11B fighter jet to identify more targets, use more advanced weapons, and "enjoy a longer detection range." China's finalization of the security deal with Solomon Islands to base warships in the Pacific. Solomon Islands switched diplomatic ties from Taiwan to China in 2019. The possibility of the Chinese military moving in range of the Pacific is of particular concern to Australia as there is the potential for increased geopolitical tensions and competition in the region. U.S. Navy aircraft flew over Spratly islands and were warned by Chinese callers that they fly over was illegal due to their contested claim over the area.
- Where: South Pacific, Solomon Islands, Spratly Islands
- When: March 20 flyover of U.S. Navy over the Spratly Islands. March 24 China's security deal with the Solomon Islands.
- Why: Militarization of the Spratly Islands of China and destabilizes the region continuing the dispute of China's claim of sovereignty. The drafted agreement with the Solomon Islands increases the reach of China.

Conclusion

- China continues to expand its reach towards the Pacific. Its militarization of the Spratly Islands increases tensions in this region. China's drafted security agreement with the Solomon Islands would expand the reach of China in the direction of the Pacific.

Sources

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2. SGP
3. Global Times
4. The Guardian
5. The Guardian
6. Times of India

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

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