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Week 5

Analysis

Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Initiative Weekly Newsletter

Liberty University

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National Security Strategy

BLUF

- The recently released National Security Strategy outlines the future strategic goals of the United States under the Biden Administration. The 2022 plan emphasizes an awareness of China and Russia, as well as the importance of international collaboration against global issues (Covid-19, climate change). Modernization in technology, disease prevention, and environmental problems will also be key to security.

Analysis

Overview

- The National Security Council released the National Security Strategy (NSS) to explain the United States' security strategy to other nations, congress, and the bureaucracy.
- The Department of Defense forms its strategic plans from the goals outlined in the NSS.
- The Delay of the NSS was attributed to the Ukraine struggle and issues with the NSC. This delay upset congressmen as it affected the federal budget process.
- China and Russia
 - China is "the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and the growing capacity to do it."
 - China is a larger threat than Russia because of its capacity to grow and the way it seeks to form a new order.
 - Russia is posing a huge threat in its war with Ukraine and "threatens to drag us all back into the dark days of Soviet expansionism."
 - The strategy officially declares the post-cold war era in the past.
- Transnational challenges such as climate change and Covid-19 are named as security threats.
- The transnational challenges and competition require global cooperation as well as advancements in fighting disease and climate issues, as well as technology as a critical piece in foreign strategy.
- The United States must prioritize allies in the Indo-Pacific through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue partnership.
- The United States' best plan of action
 - Fund national strength
 - Magnify US influence using a coalition of nations
 - Collaborate with other nations on the "rules of the road" for the modern economy
 - Prepare and train United States Intelligence and Military for competition while concurrently neutralizing the threat of terrorism.

Conclusion

- The National Security Strategy places particular focus on China and Russia as well as calling attention to global problems such as Covid-19 and Climate Change. The strategy places importance on alliances and cooperation regardless of government ideology. The plan emphasizes the need for advancements to prevent further transnational problems and notes the importance of technology.

Sources

- [Defense News](#)
 - [Washington Post](#)
 - [Defense News](#)
 - [Brookings](#)
 - [White House](#)
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- [NY Times](#)

Iran Protests

BLUF

- Young women are leading protests in Iran over the death of Mash Amini.



An undated picture obtained from social media shows Mahsa Amini.
(photo credit: IRANWIRE/VIA REUTERS)

Analysis Overview

- Possibility of regime change
 - Gen Z women are leading the protests
 - Iranian government has lost their fear factor on protesters
 - Current protest strength
 - Particularly strong in Kurdish areas known for ethnic conflict which could continue spreading
 - Iran response was deployment of Basij militia and IRGC and tanks sent into Sanandaj, Kurdistan.
 - Unconfirmed number of protesters, but it has reached more than 50 cities with 20,000 detentions and 241 deaths
 - Although there are blackouts, protesters are using VPNs
 - Possible use of Elon Musk Starlink to keep protesters connected to the outside world
 - Outside support for the protesters, through the MEK is helping organize protests
 - National Iranian American Council predicts that the continuing protests will force the government to loosen some of its restrictions
- Possibility protests end with no regime change (more likely)
 - Protesters have no leader or political agenda
 - The regime has remained unified against protests, not budging an inch on demands
 - Ayatollah, the supreme leader, has secured his system to survive his death
 - His age and health have been a piece of hope that his death would bring about a regime change
 - He has recently *tightened* Islamic laws, knowing the controversy
 - Following graph shows indicators:

Indicators of protests leading towards toppling government						
		Negligible Concern	Low Concern	Moderate Concern	Substantial Concern	Strong Concern
<i>Social change</i>	Demonstrations					
	Ethnic discontent					
<i>Economic factors</i>	General deterioration					
	Inflation					
	Unpopular changes in economic policies					
	Food/energy shortages					
<i>Opposition activities</i>	Organizational capabilities					
	Sabotage					
	Public support					
	Insurgent armed attacks					
<i>Military attitudes/ activities</i>	Reports of coup planning					
	External support for government					
	External support for opposition					
	Discontent over government policies					
	Threat of military conflict with opposition					
<i>Regime actions/ capabilities</i>	Repression/brutality					
	Security capabilities					
	Political disunity					
	Loss of legitimacy					

Conclusion

- Protests have continued, but without a leader or united force, they will die down and the regime will remain

Sources

- [NCR](#)
- [Axios](#)
- [Carnegie Europe](#)
- [Time](#)

Russia's Dealings with India

BLUF

- Indian-Russian relations are under pressure as Russia's arms relationship is at risk.

Analysis

Overview

- Russia-India arms trades:
 - Russia's arsenal is growing weaker making it hard to supply their own military with sufficient weaponry along with its foreign clients who need new weaponry as well as patriots to fix the old weapons
 - India in specific, who gets 60% of its weapons from Russia is suffering, because it's not being supplied with the proper weapons and defense systems to defend against Chinese pressure.
 - Currently, India is hanging on to its partnership with Russia because it is pushing for a deal to get Russia's S-400 "Trumf" air and missile defense system
- Russia-India Oil Trade dealings:
 - U.S. Exxon Neftegas, a subsidiary of Exxon Mobil, has been extracted, by Russia, from its 30% stake in the Stakhalin gas project. This forced withdrawal has caused 4\$ billion worth of lost assets.
 - India is looking to take over the stakes that are now up for grabs in the Stakhalin project.
- Predictions
 - Russia will continue to try and cut out U.S. businesses from Russia as seen from Exxon' expulsion from Stakhalin
 - Although India' relationships are being tested in the failure of Russia in the arms trade the U.S. should continue to survey the India-Russia relationship in the oil trade, specifically Stakahlin and ONGC cooperation.
 - If India continues to push for Russia's S-400 defense system, the United States will most likely have to put sanctions on India.



SWOT Analysis from the US Perspective

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russian-India relations in the arms areas are strained • Russian equipment is staggering, and their forces are being exhausted due to the Ukraine war 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seizure of Exxon stakes in Russian business has led to \$4 billion worth of lost assets to the US • Loss of oil trade is leading to further openings in India- Russian relations • The US has been forced to threaten sanctions on India due to their push for Russia's S-400
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US can use Russia's lack of weapons and parts to trade to create opportunities for trade with India to further separate Indian- Russian Relation • Approving the sale of 96 THAAD U.S. missile defense systems can lead to further India cooperation when situations with China arise. 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interested in pushing a deal for the Russian S-400 "Triumph" air and missile defense system • The U.S. company Exxon has lost stakes in Stakhalin

Conclusion

- India continues to push for relations with Russia in arms and oil. Although this is bad for the United States, Russia's weakening state due to the Ukraine War can be advantageous to the U.S. Areas which Russia is clearly lacking in can be areas in which the United States step up, such as being India's weapon supply, specifically for the 96 THAAD.

Sources

- [WSJ](#)
 - [NS Energy Business](#)
 - [Forbes](#)
 - [Reuters](#)
-

China's 20th Party Congress

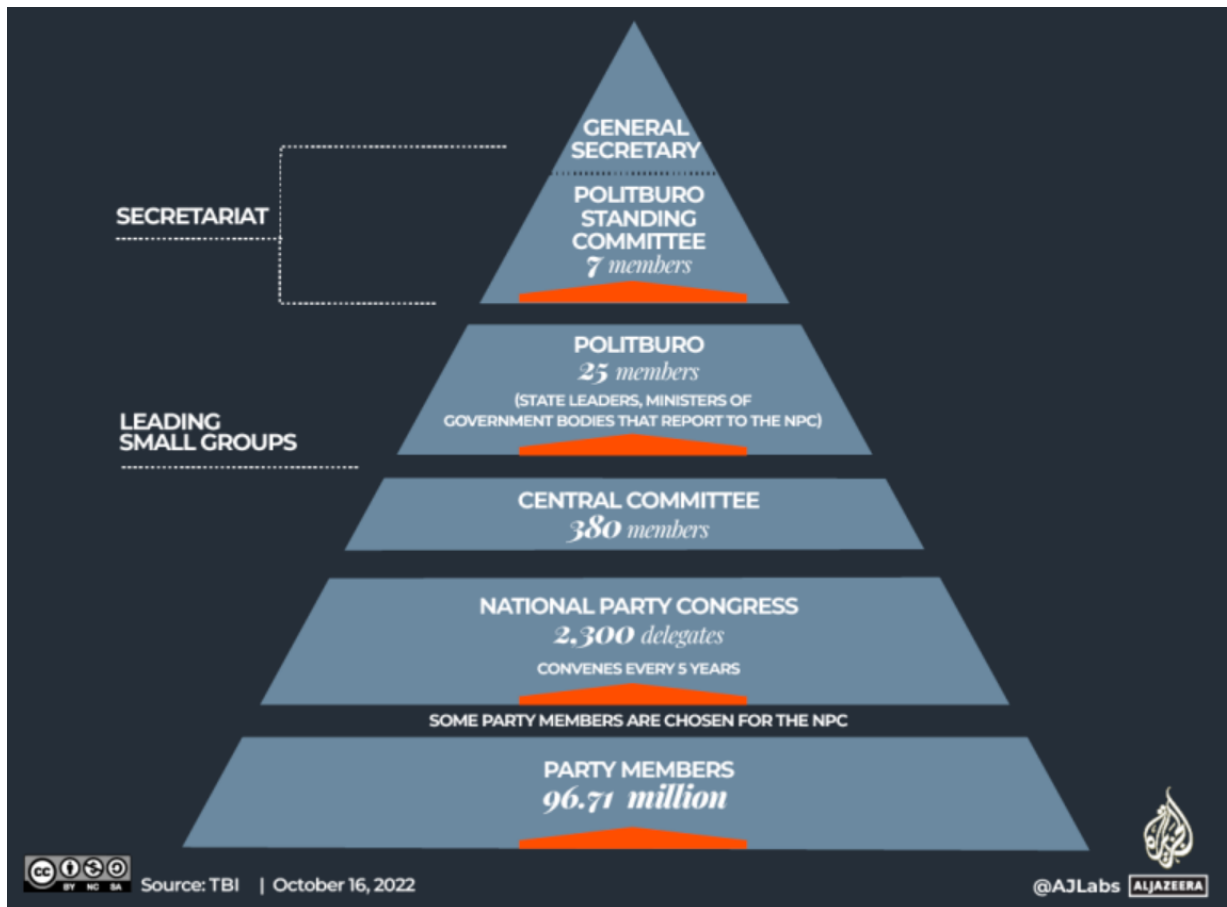
BLUF

- The Chinese Communist Party held its 20th congress on Oct. 16th through the 22nd. The congress passed amendments and outlined policies that the Chinese plan to pursue for the future. Furthermore, Xi Jinping was re-elected as General Secretary of the CCP by 2,300 delegates, which has not been done since Mao Zedong. In a move to centralize power to his position, Xi is pushing for dream of the “Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation” to be realized as he establishes his ideology as guiding principles of the CCP and China, establishes new leadership to be proponents of policies in favor of more state control, emphasizes national security and military expansion, and looks toward the reunification of Taiwan (peacefully or by force). The US is likely to see more aggression from China in the future as they seek to establish a new world order.

Analysis

Overview

- The Chinese Communist Party held China's 20th Party Congress this past week on Oct. 16th and closed session on Oct. 22nd. China holds its party congress once every 5 years - where 2,300 delegates come and vote on amendments, policies, and leadership to take effect for the next 5 years.



- CCP Party Structure
 - 2,300 handpicked delegates vote on Central Committee
 - Central Committee then votes on Politburo and then the Politburo Standing Committee (7 members, hold the most power after Xi Jinping (General Secretary) for the CCP)
 - The Chinese congress passed two amendments nicknames “The Two Establishes,”
 - The first cemented Xi Jinping in his position as General Secretary of the CCP (essentially the leader of the party).
 - This should be confused with the two other titles he holds as chairman (military power) or state-president.
 - Xi Jinping broke norms and upspoken protocols by not stepping down and instead being reelected for a third term - this has not happened since Mao Zedong was in power - in this move he is basically comparing himself to Mao Zedong as a leader.
 - the second cemented Xi’s ideology as the guiding principles of the future of the party and the Chinese government.
 - Ideology is going to be one of the biggest factors of how the CCP moves forward in “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”
 - Xi centralizing more power to himself as a unifying factor for Chinese citizens and the Chinese Communist Party. Xi breaking norms is drawing comparisons between Xi and Mao Zedong.
 - Additionally, New leadership established in the Politburo Standing Committee - made up of 7 active members of the CCP who hold the most power after Xi Jinping.
 - Those placed in these positions are allies of Xi and are going to be proponents of any policy being pushed by Xi (Economic, social, etc.).
 - The forced removal of former President Jintao - Xi essentially removing any leaders who do not agree with him on policies and drawing harsh distinctions in their leadership. His way of preventing people from gaining too much power and support to replace him.
 - Emphasis on national security, military expansion, and a focus on the reunification on Taiwan and China (whether that be diplomatically or by force).
 - Xi outlined in his 2-hour opening speech essentially that any outside actions will be unwelcomed and not tolerated.
 - Zero COVID policy - Xi did not show any indication that he will pause or stop the strict regulations even though they are stunting the economy.
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SWOT on China's 20th Congress



Conclusion

- The conclusion of the 20th Party Congress ended with an evaluation of the Chinese economy, which is still facing effects from anti-COVID policies. President Xi will face roadblocks in the growth of the economy if he continues to advocate for a state-run economy and manipulation of privately owned businesses.

Sources

- [News Week](#)
 - [AP News](#)
-

Iran Political Situation

BLUF

- The new Iraqi government is vulnerable with an unformed cabinet and the potential of protests to erupt from Supporters of defeated Shia Al-sadr. Threats to American Interests in the region include the loss of access to the Iraqi oil supply, Chinese companies entering the region with infrastructure deals, and Iranian-backed militias.

Analysis

SWOT from US Perspective

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rashid has a history fighting ISIS in Iraq. Past could influence approach to extremist groups (Ie, terror group crackdown) The protests in Iran could turn focus away from interest in Iraq to worry about domestic affairs 	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New president is Kurdish, could raise tensions further with the Turkish New administration Unbuilt cabinet with a 30-day deadline to form it. Hostilities may flare up between rival factions following the election.
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chance to improve relations between The American Government and the new Iraqi Government Common cause in Counterterrorism operations in Iraq. Possibility of partnerships to improve Human Rights issues in Iraq (Rashid was a minister for Human Rights) Opportunities to improve iran's infrastructure (\$87 billion oil revenue) 	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Iraqi prime minister comes from an Iranian backed political party. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If PM forms govt, new govt agenda would favor Iranian interests/relations Iranian backed militias/ Political parties China and Chinese companies building infrastructure (One Belt one road initiative) Loss of access to Iraqi oil supply for American companies Potential protests/riots from supporters of Radical Shia Al-Sadr

Conclusion

- Iraq's parliament has successfully elected a president and appointed a prime minister designate. This election ends a year of deadlock since last October.

Sources

- [AAWSAT](#)
- [Gulf News](#)
- [Republic World](#)
- [CSIS](#)
- [CGTN](#)
- [National Interest](#)
- [Rappler](#)
- [State](#)
- [Washington Post](#)
- [USIP](#)

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