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October

Editing Team:

Ryan Mapes

Elizabeth Krajc

Zachary Renner

Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Initiative Newsletter

Liberty University

Helms School of Government Students



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Ukrainian Counteroffensive into Kursk Oblast, Russia

BLUF

- The Ukrainian incursion into the Kursk Oblast was a strategic success, however it is likely to pressure Russia into further reprisals to mitigate the bad image of its failure.

Analysis

Overview

- On August 6, 2024, Ukrainian forces pushed through the Russian border into Kursk, occupying over 400 miles in the Kursk Oblast. Within two weeks, Ukraine had destroyed three bridges crossing the Seym River, isolating Russian troops in the region. These events forced Russia to deploy around 40,000 soldiers to Kursk at a time when Russia is trying to advance further into eastern Ukraine. Having established a foothold within Russia, Ukrainian forces continue to advance into Kursk and are requesting more military aid to support their advance.

Conclusion

- Since Ukrainian forces occupying Russian territory hurts morale and sets a bad image, it is likely that Russian forces will launch a counter attack in the Kursk Oblast. This future counterattack will draw Russian soldiers away from other frontlines in Ukraine. As a result the Russian government will be forced to choose between increasing conscription efforts or allowing those other frontlines to remain unsupported. It's also likely when a Russian counterattack commences, Ukrainian forces will launch their own reprisal attacks.

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Israel/Hezbollah Conflict (9/24)

BLUF

- The Israeli pager/walkie-talkie attacks has instigated a new phase of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

Analysis

Overview

- On September 17, 2024, pagers owned by Hezbollah operatives and officials in Lebanon and Syria remotely forced to explode while in use. After the pager attack, Hezbollah began using radios, which were destroyed the next day in a similar manner the next day. Combined, the attacks killed thirty-seven people and injured at least three thousand more. Among the injured was the Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani.
- On September 20, Hezbollah responded by launching over one hundred rockets into northern Israel. Later the same day, Israeli airstrikes destroyed Hezbollah strongholds in Lebanon and Syria. Among those killed in the airstrikes was one of Hezbollah’s founding leaders Ibrahim Aqil. Following Israel’s airstrike, Hezbollah launched a major rocket and missile strike on Northern Lebanon, although most were intercepted by Israeli air defense systems. Since then, Israel and Hezbollah have launched numerous tit-for-tat strikes between northern Israel and southern Lebanon resulting in the deaths of an unknown number of Hezbollah operatives and at least twenty-two Lebanese civilians.

Analysis Technique

ACH on fighting between Israel and Hezbollah	Israel launched a ground invasion of Lebanon	Both sides continue tit-for-tat strikes	Hezbollah dessicated and stops fighting.
Hezbollah's immediate rocket retaliation	1	3	2
Israeli retaliatory airstrikes	2	3	2
Death of nearly all high level Hezbollah commanders	2	2	3
No ceasefire in Gaza	3	3	1
Israeli Hezbollah tit-for-tat strikes	3	2	2
Israeli defensive zeal	3	2	3
	13	15	13

Conclusion

- Considering Hezbollah’s previous response to Israeli attacks, our analysis suggests a continuation of retaliatory attacks between Israel and Hezbollah will be almost certain.

- Fighting will likely continue to take place in a “gray area” of the war until one of the two parties makes a larger move, such as a push into one another's territory. We assess that continuing Israeli strikes against Hezbollah targets will foster increased resentment amongst Muslim nations, increasing the likelihood of terrorist attacks directed towards Israel.

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U.S. Passes a Series of Bills to Counter China

BLUF

- U.S bills countering China address military, ideological, technological and economic threats of the CCP yet will likely cause escalation in diplomatic relations with China.

Analysis

Overview

- Mike Johnson, in conjunction with the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, met to discuss legislation to counter Chinese influence and involvement in U.S. assets and industries. As a result of this meeting, several Bills were passed on September 9th to emulate the urgency surrounding the issues of the U.S. relationship with China. These bills pinpoint the threats that the CCP poses in the realms of; military economics, trade interdependence, infiltration of the CCP ideology into American institutions, technology, and more. The United States is trying to move forward, countering China's initiative to compromise U.S. national security and steal technology and information. These actions may escalate the already tense relations between the U.S. and China; these issues may increase already present issues, such as territorial disputes over Taiwan or increased Chinese aggression in the South Pacific. The main aspects of the bills include targeting Beijing Biotech, Banning Chinese drones, protecting intellectual property, and restricting farm sales.
 - The passage of these bills proves to be a significant step in protecting Americans from Chinese invasion of their privacy and trying to infiltrate American lead institutions and
-

businesses. These bills provide greater protection for American citizens against China's calculated and adversarial actions. However, there is still concern since China is a nuclear power that these bills could cause further escalation that has the potential to be nuclear.

Analysis Technique

DIME

Diplomacy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• USA unlikely to escalate• RUS threatening to escalate in effort to deter• RUS & Iran likely traded intel for missiles highlighting closer ties between the two• UKR petitioning for aid to strategically strike RUS	Information <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putin threatened escalation in response to possible loosening of ROE• UK authorized use of Storm Shadow missile for UKR• USA unwilling to loosen up ROE and provide more material support for UKR
Military <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UKR if given long-range capabilities will target RUS military infrastructure and industry in effort to impose strategic cost and disrupt advance• RUS likely to retake Kursk without western aid to UKR• RUS very likely to continue to strike military infrastructure with no UKR deterrent	Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• USA sanctions Iran• UKR if given the ability likely to inflict heavy losses on Russian industry & infrastructure• RUS very likely to conduct more strikes on economic infrastructure without UKR deterrent

Conclusion

- The passage of these 25 bills in Congress will serve to further protect U.S. citizens from the CCP infringing on their personal data, intellectual property and help mitigate the threat that China poses to the United States.

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Iran's Presidential Visit to Iraq

BLUF

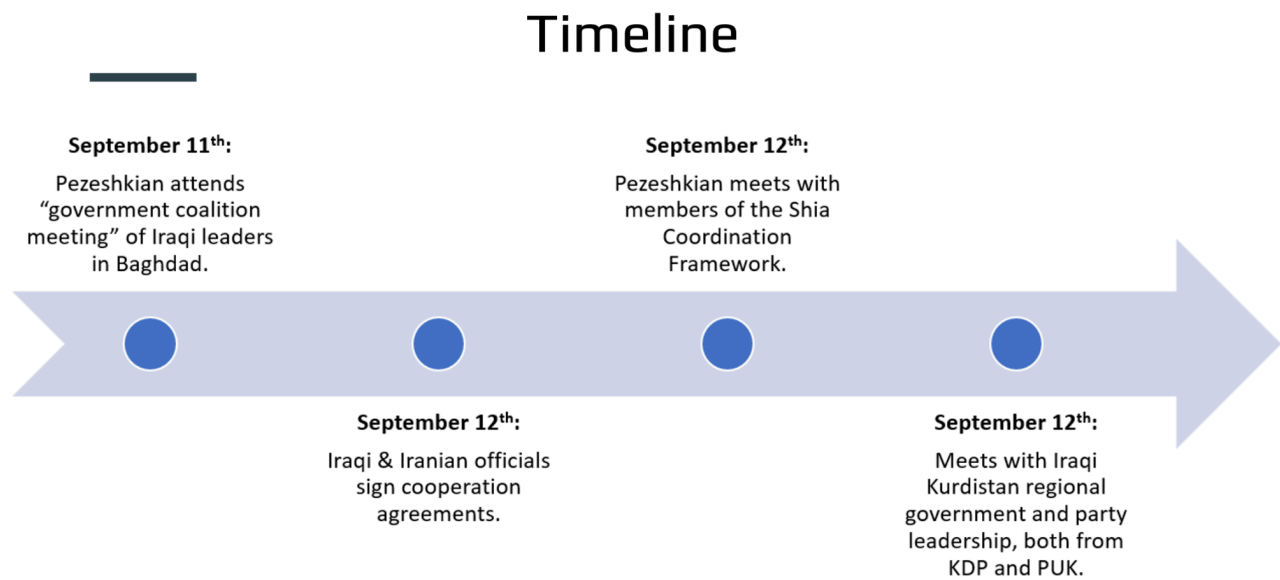
- Through President Pezeshkian’s visit, Iran seeks to strengthen relations with political and military factions within Iraq, expand its options for evading U.S sanctions, and further alleviate security concerns regarding its Kurdish population.

Analysis

Overview

- From September 11th to September 13th, Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkhan was in Iraq to strengthen ties with favorable government and political institutions within Iraq. During the meeting, it was discussed how to assist an end to the war between Israel and Palestine and how to mitigate the result of Western sanctions and consequent international isolation. There was also discussion of the new sanctions placed on Iran by the US, France, Germany, and the U.K. to reprimand Iran for supplying Russia with Missiles. Ultimately, 14 cooperation memoranda were signed between Iran and Iraq in areas such as energy, the economy, trade and infrastructure, among others
- This will impact the U.S. because of the threat that the Iranian regime could continue to disregard sanctions and continue to provide resources to terrorist groups. This would likely result in more attacks against U.S. troops in the Middle East.

Analysis Technique



Conclusion

- Iran's recent presidential visit to Iraq to discuss future cooperation threatens to turn one of the U.S. most valuable strategic partners in the Middle East against the U.S. The signed cooperation memoranda lay the foundation for an a potential increase in future partnerships between Iran and Iraq

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BLUF

- The formation of greater economic and military ties between Bolivia and Russia and the PRC is a threat to U.S. hegemony in Latin America.

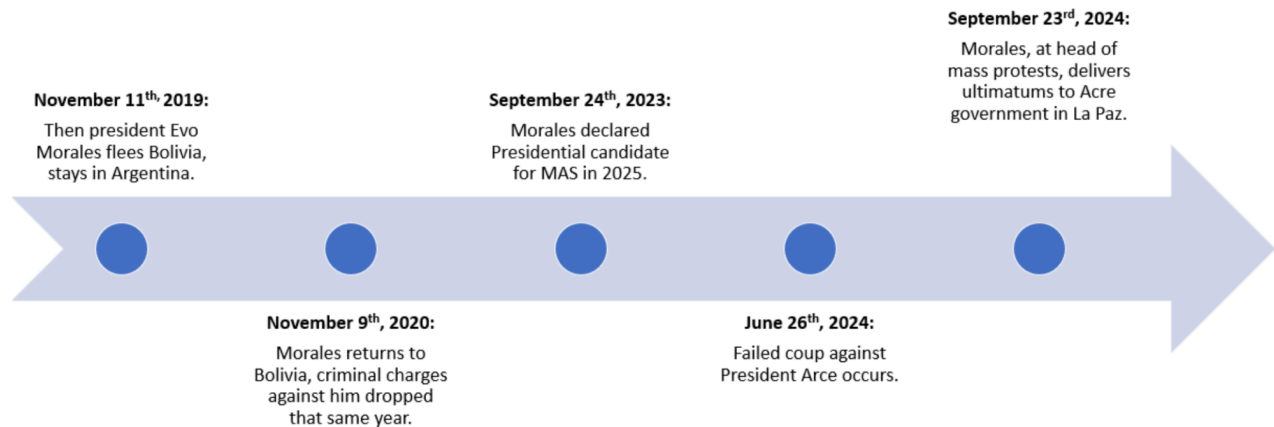
Analysis

Overview

- Protests held in Bolivia, led by the former President, Evo Morales, is a revolt against the new president; however, there are more profound implications behind this revolt. both Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin favor Evo Morales. In 2015, the PRC loaned Bolivia, under Morales's rule, \$7.5 Billion. When Morales was forced to resign as President, Xi openly expressed his concern for his friend. Currently, Bolivia is working with Russia to advance its artillery, and recent discussions on military cooperation at the International Military-Technical Forum ARMY-2023 in Moscow highlighted this cooperation. Bolivia has also integrated a new type of drone, the Yuneec H520E drone, manufactured by Chinese Yuneec International. Evo Morales has excellent support from two of the United States' most significant adversaries, which should raise concern for the U.S.

Analysis Technique

Diplomatic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bolivia and the United States belong to several of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, Organization of American States, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. - With Bolivia becoming more dependent on China this could affect the US diplomatic relations. 	Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bolivia is run by members of the socialist party. - Observers say this political tension has hampered the government's efforts to tackle an ongoing economic crisis.
Military: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bolivia is actively enhancing its military and scientific capabilities through significant international collaborations with Russia and China. - Bolivian Army has integrated advanced Yuneec H520E drones, manufactured by China's Yuneec International. - Recent discussions on military cooperation at the International Military-Technical Forum ARMY-2023 in Moscow highlighted this aspect. 	Economic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bolivia's foreign currency reserves are dwindling and its natural gas exports are plummeting causing them to depend of their growing relations with China.



Conclusion

- The partnership of Bolivia with both the PRC and Russia should raise concern for the US. Bolivia's partnership with China and Russia could affect the United States' diplomatic and trade relations. It may provoke a militaristic response from Bolivia as Bolivia is working economically, scientifically, and militarily with Russia and China.

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Arrest of Pavel Durov and its effect on The War in Ukraine (9/24)

BLUF

- Pavel Durov's arrest will send a major political message to other technology companies and may impact the information war related to the war in Ukraine

Analysis

Overview

- On August 24, French authorities arrested Pavel Durov, the CEO of Telegram, a social networking site. Due to its popularity and Durov's refusal to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, Telegram became a gathering place for various criminal networks. In 2016, the French government passed regulations mandating social networking sites restrict criminal activity on their sites, as well as provide a backdoor into to any encrypted messaging service within a social networking app.

- Telegram gained notoriety for its use during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Various Ukrainian towns created telegram channels to warn people about incoming Russian missile strikes. While the Russian government has created similar channels, the Russians also use Telegram to recruit soldiers, raise funds, and gather support for cyber operations. Russian commanders also use Telegram's encrypted messaging service to send information about military operations.

Analysis Technique

ACH of Durov's arrest outcome	Jail	Plea Deal	Wins in Court
Telegram's refusal to work with Police	5	2	1
Previously unused French law	5	3	3
Durov out on bail	1	4	3
Unlikely to follow encryption law either way	1	5	2
Encryption law never previously used	1	1	4
Pavel doesn't want to go to jail	3	5	3
Court case is unlikely to be fair	5	4	1
Arrest is politically motivated	4	5	1
General French anti-terror rhetoric	4	5	1
Overall trust of the French Government	3	5	1
Suspiciously long interrogation	2	5	1
	34	44	21

Conclusion

- It is unlikely Pavel will hand over encryption keys to French Authorities, but he may grant them full access to unencrypted Telegram group channels. Despite any resolution, it is highly likely Pavel's arrest is meant as a warning to other social media sites to clamp down on criminal activity and increase censorship. It is also likely that any information gathered by France relating to the Ukraine War will be handed over to the Ukrainian government.

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