Feb 8, 2023 Week 1 Analysis

# Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Initiative

# Weekly Newsletter

Liberty University

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## Iran Protests

#### **BLUF**

• Iranian Protesters are under attack by the Iranian government, leading to mass deaths, executions, and major human rights violations.

#### **Analysis**

#### Overview

- Beginning on 16 September 2022 with the murder of Mahsa Amini and continuing with dozens of incarcerated individuals, awaiting execution.
- The people of Iran continue to protest the current economic crisis, lack of basic freedoms, and women's rights. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the Iranian Special Police Unit (FARAJA) are currently the ones "dealing" with the peaceful protesters. They are being shot down, imprisoned, tortured, beaten, sexually violated and victims of major human rights violations. This "crackdown" from the IRGC and FARAJA has been continuing for 4 months.
- On 8 January 2023 three men were imprisoned for protesting, they have allegedly been tortured and are awaiting execution in Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj. Publicly, the men have all been tried by the revolutionary courts for inciting violence and arson. They were tried for, "dancing, clapping, chanting or burning headscarves". Executions will continue because of "evidence" which the revolutionary courts have obtained (videos with the men dancing and cheering). Three men specifically facing execution after weeks of torture: Javad Rouhi, Mehdi Mohammadifard and Arshia Takdastan The following are injuries they have acquired from being tortured:
  - o Javad Rouhi rotator cuff injuries, urinary incontinence, digestive complications and mobility and speech impairment
  - o Arshia Takdastan a broken toe and experienced memory loss
  - o Mehdi Mohammadifard a broken nose and rectal bleeding because of rape

#### Analysis Technique

• SWOT from U.S. Perspective

Strengths  - This "crackdown" from the IRGC and FARAJA has been continuing for 4 months	Weaknesses - Conflict could create a major space of instability in the region
Opportunities  - International criticism can be used to weaken Iran	<ul> <li>Threats</li> <li>Iran is publicly breaking international law by giving the people the death penalty</li> <li>Compliance from the Center of Human Rights of Iran to the government to cover up Human Rights violations show how deep Iranian corruption is</li> </ul>

#### Sources

- NPR
- State
- Amnesty
- BBC
- Death Penalty Info

# South China Sea Disputes

#### **BLUF**

• The U.S. is conducting a series of multilateral initiatives enhancing force posture in the Indo-Pacific to send a strong signal to China.

## **Analysis**

#### Overview



#### Analysis Technique

#### Military

O2 Feb. 2023, the US expands military partnership with the Philippines in agreement to invest in defense measures. The counties are working together to establish four new strategic military bases where the US will rotate troops and build facilities. This initiative gives the US a new foothold in a key critical strategic region—just a few hundred miles from Taiwan. This deal comes after persistent Chinese harassment of Filipino economic activities along its maritime EEZ and will likely anger China.

- On 11 Jan. 2023 the US announced the redesignation of the 12th Marine Regiment in Okinawa,
   Japan to the 12th Marine Littoral Regiment. This redesignation will strengthen combat readiness
   and capabilities creating a more lethal, agile, and powerful force—specifically, the new design
  - integrates the use of SAM anti-ship missiles. Recently, Japan has faced provocation from China who launched rockets into Japan's maritime EEZ in August. In response to China's grand scheme aggression in the South China Sea, the United States and Japan have made moves to bolster deterrence and defense. This transition in operational concepts furthering the enduring partnership between the US and Japan is a part of the United States' force posture fortification surrounding China.
- On 25 Jan. 2023 Camp Blaz, the Marine base on the US territory island of Guam in the Pacific. Originally opened in 2020, Camp Blaz is the first new installment in 70 years. The move

#### US to invest in more Philippines bases CHINA **TAIWAN** SOUTH **KOREA** JAPAN 200km CHINA Cagayan 200 miles TAIWAN Zambales Scarborough Shoal **PHILIPPINES** Spratly Islands Q Palawan **AUSTRALIA** Google Source: Armed Forces of the Philippines в в с

comes amid the greater US strategy to strengthen forces in the region due to escalation of tensions with China. This installment is likely to serve as a strategic hub for the US in light of the new defense strategy and Guam's proximity to the Indo-Pacific. This estimate is in line with the defense strategy's priorities of "defending the homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the PRC" and "deterring strategic attacks against the United States, allies, and partners" and "deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary, prioritizing". The installation boasts 4,000 acres and aims to host 5,000 Marines by 2025.

- Information
  - o Many new bases aren't force power houses but intel centers- reconnaissance advantage
  - o China has 20 outposts in Paracel Islands and 7 in the Spratlys
- Diplomatic
  - o Long-standing relationship with Papua New Guinea
  - Embassy opening in Solomon Islands
  - o Modernize long-standing, strengthen emerging, forge innovative

#### Sources

- ABC.au
- The Guardian
- CNN <u>1</u>, <u>2</u>, <u>3</u>
- BBC 1, 2
- Dyrad Global
- The White House  $\underline{1}, \underline{2}, \underline{3}$
- Department of Defense 1, 2
- Bloomberg
- USMC
- AP

## Israel and Palestine Conflict

#### BLUF

• Violence between Palestinians and Israelis continues to increase and there is continued unrest due to both sides believing they must take up arms to protect and fight for their rights and land.

#### **Analysis**

#### Overview

- Jan. 26: Israeli commandos raided an apartment building and the surrounding area of the Jenin refugee camp in occupied West Bank, they killed 9 Palestinians and wounded 20. Israeli forces obstructed the movement of ambulances with gunfire. Israel says the location housed a member of the Islamic Jihad terrorist group. Witnesses reported Israeli air strikes hit Gaza overnight on Thursday, hours after the military said it intercepted a rocket fired from the strip.
- Jan. 27: Israeli military reported that Palestinian militants fired three rockets from Gaza toward Israel and Israeli jets attacked an underground Hamas bomb-making facility. A Palestinian gunman shot 10, killing 7 Israelis outside a synagogue in East Jerusalem, conducting an act of terrorism according to Israel, little is known of his motives, but no militant Palestinian group has claimed credit. Most lethal attack in the city since 2008.
- More than one Palestinian has been killed a day on average in the first month of 2023, on track to double the tragic rate of lethal violence in the occupied West Bank last year which was already the <u>highest on record</u> since the United Nations began collecting this data, and double that of 2021.
- Palestinian gunman committed the shootout in front of a synagogue in East Jerusalem. The rockets shot by Israeli defense in retaliation for the shootout, were targeting Gaza and more specifically, an underground Hamas bomb-making facility. Israeli commandos who raided the refugee camp and killed multiple people, carried out the raid in Jenin, located in the occupied West Bank.
- An extreme right Israeli government, under Netanyahu, that took power not too long ago, is committed to continue dispossession of Palestinians and expansion of settlements. No international intervention, taking proactive steps.
- Armed Palestinian resistance groups have been expanding in the occupied territories, because of the fractured nature of Palestinian leadership, lack of opportunities for Palestinians, and the long-stalled negotiations that could lead to a sovereign state of Palestine. Over the past year, Israeli forces have responded to these new groups, notably the Lion's Den, with intensive raids with high numbers of civilian deaths. The Israeli government stated a range of security measures to be introduced, including increasing the armed presence in Jerusalem and the West Bank, and an easing of gun licensing rules for civilians. Punitive steps revoking the benefits of terrorists' families and strengthening settlement in the West Bank, which most of the international community deems illegal. Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gir promised more gun permits for Israelis and said he instructed police to destroy Palestinian houses built without permits in East Jerusalem, occupied by Israel in a 1967 war.

#### Analysis Technique

- Key Assumptions
  - o The United States continues to affirm Israel's right to respond to terrorism from the Palestinians.
  - Israeli forces are responding to violence by going after terrorist cells or responding to rocket attacks proportionally

• SWOT from Israel Perspective

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Iron dome	- International Political Sympathy
- Strong military	toward Palestine
- Successful proportional force usage	- Regional aggression towards Israel
Opportunities	Threats
- Normalizing relations with United Arab	<ul> <li>Continued scaling of Palestinian</li> </ul>
Emirates, Bahrain, and Sudan	aggression
- New government headed by Netanyahu	

### **Sources**

- FT <u>1</u>, <u>2</u>
- Defense
- State <u>1</u>, <u>2</u>
- Reuters
- Vox
- Economist

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