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SITUATION REPORTS

AFRICA

KENYA: To Build Prison for Terrorists

On 17 February, the Kenyan government announced plans to build a prison solely for terrorists and terrorist sympathizers. The announcement comes as the Kenyan government continuously works to defeat al-Shabaab, an Islamic terrorist organization known for operating in East Africa. Given the human rights record in the region and the Kenyan government's recent rights violations, this prison is likely going to face opposition from the international community.
[Kellyn Wagner, kellyn.wagner.ee@gmail.com]

SUDAN: Rejects US Conditions for Lifting Sanctions

On 16 February, the Sudanese Foreign Ministry again rejected the conditions set by the United States to end economic sanctions and remove it from the state sponsors of terrorism list. The United States will not end sanctions or change Sudan's status on the terror list until the conflicts in the Darfur region, Blue Nile state, and South Kordofan states end. Sudan was labeled a state sponsor of terrorism in 1993 during the Mogadishu conflict, but economic sanctions were not levied until 1997.
[Kellyn Wagner, kellyn.wagner.ee@gmail.com]

UGANDA: Violence Amid Upcoming Elections

On 15 February, Kizza Besigye, one of the leading opposition candidates in Uganda's upcoming presidential election, was detained by police for a short time in Kampala. His supporters clashed with police, leaving several wounded and one dead. Ugandans will head to the polls on 18 February to vote for one of eight candidates. The incumbent president Yoweri Museveni has been in power for 30 years.
[Kylin Andreotti]

AMERICAS

NICARAGUA: Volcanic Eruptions Result in Emergency Procedures

On 15 February, Nicaraguan authorities initiated emergency procedures following explosions at the Momotombo and Telica volcanoes. The volcanoes both had several eruptions throughout the weekend, endangering citizens in the area. There were no injuries reported, however Civil Defense and municipal authorities are implementing emergency procedures and evacuation

routes in the event of continued eruptions. Authorities have also announced the Masaya volcano has shown increased seismic activity recently.

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CENTRAL ASIA

[TAJIKISTAN: To Receive U.S. Counterterrorism Funding](#)

The Pentagon has announced its new Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF) budget, and Tajikistan is set to receive funding. Central Asia was left out of the 2014 budget, but has now been added. The region as a whole will be given \$50 million over the next two years, with a large percentage expected to go toward Tajikistan's border security. The budget proposal has not yet been approved by Congress.

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EUROPE

[FRANCE: Potential Paris Attackers Stopped by EU](#)

On 14 February, it became known that two men traveling with fake passports were stopped in Greece by the European Union (EU) late last year. They are suspected to have been trying to travel to Paris in order to take part in the 13 November terrorist attacks. They entered Europe posing as refugees but ultimately were stopped by the EU and were held up in Greece. They were eventually allowed to continue to Paris, but it was too late to partake in the terrorist attack. On 10 December, the men were detained by Austrian police who said they were being held on suspicion of links to the Paris attackers and ISIS.

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MIDDLE EAST

[UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Prostitution Ring Investigated](#)

On 12 February, 22 people, among them 17 women and 5 men, went on trial on charges of prostitution. The men involved in running the brothels were from Syria, Uzbekistan, and Asia, and were accused of trafficking the women from their home countries to the UAE. All five men denied trafficking women and running the brothel. A number of the women accepted the charges of prostitution, while others said they were forced into it by the brothel keepers. The trial has been adjourned until 29 February.

[Marquette Davis]

EAST ASIA

CHINA: First Trains Arrive in Iran

On 15 Feb, China successfully sent its first cargo train to Iran, completing an initial step in the establishment of the New Silk Road Initiative. The completed initiative should feature tracks eventually reaching from China to Europe. According to Xinhua News, the cargo trip has effectively been shortened by 30 days when compared to sea trade. President Xi initiated the New Silk Road Initiative in 2013.

[Eagle Eye editors]

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: Economics Key to Improved Ties with Pakistan

Indian High Commissioner Gautam Bambewale has said that the only route to improve Pakistan-India relations is through trade. India responded by creating multiple-entry visas for Pakistani businessmen, which were limited in the past.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

THAILAND: Suspected Bombers Plead Innocence

Bilal Mohammad, aka Adem Karadag, 31, and Mieraili Yusufu, 27, have been charged with bombing a Thai landmark last year in Bangkok. Twenty people, including 14 foreign tourists, were killed in the blast. The suspects are both of the Uighur minority from Urumqi in China's Xinjiang region. Furthermore, they have been in detention since their arrest last year claiming that they were tortured for confessions by unmarked police. They have recently announced their plea as the government did not acquire a translator until recently.

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VIETNAM: Action Requested on Raid of Vietnamese in Odessa

On 16 February, the Vietnamese ambassador to the Ukraine met with representatives of the Ukrainian Security Service to discuss action taken against legally residing Vietnamese in Odessa, many of whom had money seized in raids that occurred in January of this year. Ambassador Nguyen Minh Tri addressed the Ukrainian raids, requesting that some corrective action be taken to reconcile the relationship between the two countries. Tri pointed out that Vietnamese have long been sent for education and work in the Ukraine, and the situation must be properly addressed to maintain the traditional friendly relationship between the two countries. [Rachel Parrent]

BRIEFS

AFRICA

GHANA: Iran to Help Combat Terrorism

Summary: Iran agreed to help Ghana combat terrorism, but is unlikely to make great progress in the region because of the different nature of terrorism in West Africa.

Development: On 14 February, the Iranian Secretary of Supreme Security Council, Ali Shamkani, met with Ghana's National Security Coordinator, Yaw Donkor, to collaborate in the fight against terrorism. Iran pledged to support Ghana as it works to prevent domestic terrorist attacks. Ghana became concerned that it would be the next terrorist target following the 14 January Ouagadougou attack in Burkina Faso. The meeting took place during a series of bilateral talks between the two Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) nations, in which they worked to improve trade and security relations.

Analysis: While additional foreign support in the fight against terrorism in West Africa is important, it is of little utility. Terrorism in Africa consistently follows a different model than terrorism elsewhere, with criminal, profit-generating behavior more closely linked to terrorism. Most of the terrorists operating in western and central Africa rely on historical criminal networks to travel and gain funds. Nigeria is especially known for this, with Boko Haram operating along historical human trafficking and drug smuggling routes. Therefore, any successful efforts to combat terrorism in West Africa must be accompanied by strong efforts to combat crime. Iran does not have much experience in this arena, meaning its efforts, while helpful, will likely not be incredibly useful.

Iran's participation in the fight against African terrorism is also important for the US. Since Nigerian President Buhari's election nearly a year ago, the US has received criticism for not offering greater participation in the fight against terrorism in West Africa. With Iran stepping in to help with terrorism and trade, and China helping with development and trade, the US is rapidly losing operating space within the region.

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AMERICAS

[CUBA: Allows Daily Scheduled Flights from the U.S.](#)

Summary: The resumption of scheduled flights between the United States and Cuba will lead to further US business investments in the island nation.

Development: As of 16 February, U.S. Airline companies will be sending up to 110 flights a day to Cuba. The goal is to encourage and allow more tourists to visit the country. Each flight must be submitted to the Cuban government for approval, but the government has shown positive steps towards allowing even more flights from the U.S. to Cuba. Havana will also be allowing the first American company to build and operate a factory in the country. The company will be building tractors that are marketed primarily to small farmers.

Analysis: As of right now, Americans are still not allowed to travel to Cuba as tourists. However, they can go for religious, cultural, educational, or scientific reasons. Previously, both countries were hesitant about allowing scheduled flights because of fear that the planes would be seized due to failed negotiations over ending the U.S. trade boycott and resolving claims on both sides. These negotiations are still taking place, but they are much more civil. The fact that flights are being allowed in again on a scheduled basis is a very positive sign that Cuba is willing to work with the United States again. The increase of flights into the country may also lead to United States to allow tourism and the financial windfall tourist dollars would bring to the island nation. The tractor company's appearance will greatly benefit not only the people that will be employed by it, but also all the small time farmers. If this company is successful, it is highly likely that many more American companies will follow suit and open factories or expand their businesses to Cuba.

[Kelsi-Ann Gould]

CENTRAL ASIA

[KAZAKHSTAN: Plans to Establish Trade Office in Iran](#)

Summary: Kazakhstan is taking advantage of new access to Iranian markets, but may also find itself in political complications if Iran backs out of its nuclear deal with the US and five other parties.

Development: The Office of the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan announced on 12 February plans to establish a trade office in Iran. A forum was held between the two countries from 6 February to 8 February, during which specific trade deals were discussed. Kazakhstan plans to export \$2 million worth of transformers to Iran, as well as shipments of meat and oil equipment. In return, Iran will provide Kazakhstan with textiles, building materials, appliances, and food. The trade agreements coincide with the first successful shipment of goods along the China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway. The new rail route is estimated to be significantly faster than the previous method of sea transport, but still takes around two weeks to traverse.

Analysis: Kazakhstan's announcement of its trade mission to Iran fits the trend of nations lining up to benefit from the lifting of Iranian sanctions. While Kazakhstan and Iran have traded in the past, the new deals could be a welcome relief for the Kazakh economy that is struggling because of Russia's economic decline. If nothing else, the trade agreements indicate Kazakhstan's willingness to trade with whomever it can, regardless of political affiliation or ethnic differences. While good for the economy, there may be political ramifications in the future, particularly if Iran defies the nuclear agreement it signed with the West. Kazakhstan is leading the charge against nuclear nonproliferation which may further complicate matters should Tehran return to its previous behavior. For the time being, the trade deals will likely benefit both Iran and Kazakhstan. Other Central Asian nations could soon follow Kazakhstan's example and also expand trade to Iran.

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EAST ASIA

[JAPAN: Abe Advocates Equal Pay Legislation](#)

Summary: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's plan to remedy a pay gap between regular and non-regular workers will face challenges in implementation.

Development: On 17 February Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a question and answer session that he advocates future legislation to settle the wage gap between regular and non-regular workers. Abe stated that he hopes this policy will begin to solve various economic and social issues in Japan. More details on this initiative will continue on May.

Analysis: The underlying social and economic issues that are discussed with the equal pay initiative essentially encompass Japanese society as a whole. For example, major concerns with Japan's corporate culture and declining birth rate could potentially be alleviated through the application of equal pay for equal work. According to Abe, the concept of equal pay would allow Japanese non-regular workers more time to marry and raise kids, as well as more money to spend which would boost the Japanese economy. However, Japan's corporate culture may mean that any legislation faces implementation difficulties due to an unwillingness by businesses. However, without any concrete legislation outlining how people will be equally paid it will be hard to determine its effectiveness.

[Chris Zbojniewicz]

EUROPE

[RUSSIA: Rejects Blame for Airstrikes on Syrian Hospitals](#)

Summary: Russia denies it conducted an airstrike on Syrian hospitals that sparked international outrage and may lead to increased international involvement in Syria.

Development: It is estimated that five Syrian hospitals and two schools were hit during airstrikes on 15 February. The bombings killed around 50 people. Two of the hospitals were backed by UNICEF. The German chancellor called for a no-fly zone to be imposed and the UN secretary general described the attacks as “blatant violations of international law.” The attacks came in the wake of a Russian promoted ceasefire deal announced last week, which was widely mocked among opposition groups. Russia has adamantly denied that the Russian Air Force has anything to do with the bombings, stating that there was no evidence to support the claim.

Analysis: These recent attacks and bombings (believed to be by Russia) are creating even more tension in the Middle East. People are not happy and are ready to retaliate. At the same time, many countries are accusing Russia of terrorism. If proven, Russia’s actions could be considered a violation of international law. This could lead to more countries getting involved in the Syrian conflict. Russia’s increased involvement and potential civilian bombings are not helping to improve relations with western nations.

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MIDDLE EAST

[QATAR: Oil Ministers Discuss Production Cuts](#)

Summary: Ministers from various oil exporting nations met to discuss cutting crude oil production, but because Iran reentered the oil market, agreements will probably be stalled until later this year.

Development: On 16 February ministers from Russia, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, and Nigeria met in Doha, Qatar to discuss cutting crude oil production to raise prices. The market has been over saturated since last year, but now that Iran can export oil there is an even bigger surplus of crude oil. According to the International Energy Agency, the surplus of crude oil is currently around 1.5 million barrels per day. At the end of January, Saudi Arabia discussed cutting oil production, but only if other major producers such as Russia, and now Iran, do the same. Although it has been discussed multiple times, no action has been taken to decrease production, and the Nigerian oil minister believes none will be taken until the OPEC statutory meeting in June.

Analysis: Low oil prices have been harming many economies throughout the world, and Saudi Arabia and others were prepared to cut production. However, with sanctions recently raised from Iran, more oil is flooding the market. Saudi Arabia must now convince both Russia and Iran to cut production, neither of which are on good terms with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia will likely hesitate to cut production without first seeing that its competitors will as well, especially given

Iran and Russia's track record when it comes to following through on deals. Although multiple OPEC and non-OPEC nations have voiced concern over low oil prices and pushed for production cuts, because Iran has reentered the market, agreements and their implementation will most likely not occur until the second half of 2016. This means prices will not start to increase significantly until the beginning of 2017.

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SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: Student Protests Spread

Summary: After student demonstrators were arrested on 12 February in Delhi, protests spread across the country accusing the Modi government of intolerance and calling for a change of government.

Development: As of 15 February, thousands of students joined protests, effectively halting all operations at well-known Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi. The protests started after Kanhaiah Kumar was arrested on Friday following a demonstration that authorities have called anti-Indian. JNU's student president, Delhi University lecturer S.A.R. Geelani, and 12 other students have been imprisoned under Sections 124 A (sedition), 120 B (*criminal conspiracy*) and unlawful assembly. Those under arrest criticized the 2013 secret hanging of a Kashmiri separatist condemned of targeting India's Parliament. Other universities, including Jadavpur University in Calcutta, have continued demonstrations on behalf of the detained JNU protestors. This uproar once again ignited allegations that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party are intolerant and are cracking down on political dissent in the name of patriotism. The common phrase being shouted by dissenters was, "When dictatorship is a fact, revolution becomes a right."

Analysis: If the students' claims are correct, then the Modi government will continue to harshly crack down on Indian academics, as well as detain without trial any detractors to Modi's rule. This would show that the government is concerned with the information being spread and wants to quickly stamp out any possible re-election. With several protesting factions desiring a change in government, it is possible that if Modi does not personally address the issue then it could create enough momentum to result in drastic change in government. Also, if the students do not persuade the government to release those arrested, then the situation could devolve further, causing more clashes between demonstrators, activists, and anti-government rioters. That may cause government security and intelligence forces to overstretch resources and attention, thus leaving the country vulnerable to adversaries. It is possible that if the government did release the arrested protestors then it could mostly diffuse the situation. Successfully resolving the brewing protest crisis could solidify Modi's power and earn him newfound respect.

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

SINGAPORE: Will Adopt Satellite Surveillance for Airspace

Summary: Singapore's Civil Aviation Authority will adopt a space-based surveillance system for improved aviation efficiency, but the system may trigger repercussions from the community regarding a fear of satellite observation.

Development: On 18 February the Civil Aviation Authority (CAAS) of Singapore signed an agreement to partner with Aireon LLC to use space-based Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast in the Singapore flight region. This agreement is a 12-year commitment to use Aireon's technology. The service will not be implemented until 2018. This technology will allow, as a supplement to other surveillance systems, the total space-based surveillance coverage of the airspace in Singapore. The CAAS director stated that the goal of implementing this system is to keep the country up to date with aviation management techniques and "safely improve the efficiency and capacity" for air travel in the region.

Analysis: With Singapore's CAAS accepting the new surveillance system to be used for aviation management, it could pick up other information in its observation of the airspace as well. The space-based surveillance technology will most likely be more detailed and accurate than current technology and will likely provide observation of more than just the airspace. There could be community dissent over feelings of invaded privacy, or positive results of better security. The country could be looking at reforming aviation management once any problems have been pointed out through more detailed scrutiny. The international community may be interested in improved surveillance of the region's airspace, especially regarding international travel and/or military flights through the area. Singapore's improvement of aviation management technology could signal further upgrades in technology and security techniques in the country.

[Rachel Parrent]

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