

Weekly Intelligence Brief

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Ocean-2024: Joint Military Drills Between Russia and China largest in 30 years

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Russian and Chinese militaries participated in Ocean-2024 in the Pacific, from 10 SEPT through 16 SEPT, ending in the Sea of Japan. Ocean-2024 was a series of joint naval drills and a part of Russian President Vladimir Putin's plan to continue to project Russia's naval power to the world. This exercise included over 90,000 troops and 500 types of aircraft and ships. Putin stated

that this joint military exercise will be observed by 15 friendly countries. The Russian president then gave special permission for China to participate in these drills alongside Russia.

Putin described this naval exercise as war games, being the first of its size in the last 30 years. Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping recently agreed to grow their countries' alliances as China assists Russia in its effort to become a Pacific power again. Chinese state media reported that China participated in

these exercises to deepen cooperation between the two countries and to develop comprehensive defense efforts against emerging security threats. Chinese state media confirmed that these joint naval drills will continue later in the month of September in the Sea of Okhotsk.

We can assess with high confidence that military relations between Russia and China will continue to strengthen and pose a continuing challenge to opposing nations.

Al-Qaeda affiliates target military centers in Mali's capital

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Africa Desk

On 17 SEPT, Al Qaeda affiliate, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) perpetrated an attack in Bamako, the capital of Mali, and targeted a military training school, a military police school, and a military airport. JNIM claims it managed to inflict heavy personnel and infrastructure losses. The attack in Bamako is one of the first insurgency attacks to make it to the capital, as most attacks happen in the country's northeastern region where separatists

and militants continue to fight the Malian government.

The attack started in the early morning hours with two explosions followed by gunfights. Oumar Diarra, the army Chief of Staff claimed on state television that the government had foiled the plan of the terrorists, and the streets were safe to continue regular activity. The Malian army stated that this attack was cowardly and caused 70 deaths. The Malian government apprehended 15 suspected terrorists and displayed them on state television blindfolded and with their wrists tied.

We can assess with moderate confidence that it is likely that insurgency groups will continue to attack major Malian cities as unrest continues to grow. We can also assess with low confidence that it is unlikely that this insurgent attack could lead to a military coup.



Potential delay in South Sudan presidential election

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Africa Desk

On 13 SEP 2024, the government of South Sudan decided to have an emergency cabinet meeting just hours after the government announced that their national elections would be postponed by an additional two years. The government says it needs more time to complete a census, as well as draft a permanent constitution and register political parties.

South Sudan has not had national elections since their independence in 2011, and President Salva Kiir has been

in office since then. The Traditional Constitution of South Sudan states that presidential terms are to last only four years. However, in 2018 a peace deal that ended a civil war allowed President Kiir to remain in charge of the government.

Meanwhile, the population of South Sudan is experiencing deteriorating living standards and frustrations with the current government are regularly expressed. The country is currently dealing with several major economic challenges. Due to South Sudanese oil exports being heavily affected by a damaged pipeline, civil servants have gone unpaid for almost a year. In response to this and other major internal challenges, President Kiir has

stated that the government needs additional time to complete essential tasks before elections can be held.

We can assess with moderate confidence that it is likely that the elections set for December 2026 will be delayed again.



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