

Weekly Intelligence Brief

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Brazil monitoring Chinese investments in Peru's maritime trade

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On 14 MAR, the Brazilian Planning Minister Simone Tebet visited the Chancay Port in Peru and met with Peruvian Economy Minister Jose Arista to discuss a deal relating to using the Chancay port as Brazil's export route to Asia. If this deal is agreed upon, Brazil's import and export prices would decrease, and shipping time would be reduced.

The Chancay Port is a deep-water port that currently has four terminals which

could be expanded to 15 with construction expected to be completed in late 2024. The Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) invested \$1.3 billion into the port with a 60% ownership stake. This port establishes a direct connection between China and Latin America. Mario De las Casas, the Institutional Affairs Manager for COSCO, says the deep-water port will be able to hold the world's largest cargo ships. In addition, the port will provide a more direct route to Asia, decreasing shipping time out of Peru by ten days. Brazilian companies would have the option to truck exports to Peru, cutting transit time by two weeks. This is an

alternative route to the Panama Canal, which has seen delays in shipping in recent times.

We can assess with low confidence that, if completed, it is likely that this deal would strain US-Brazilian relations, as Brazil is one of the largest non-Belt and Road countries in Latin America. In addition, we can also assess with moderate confidence it is likely that, if the deal is completed, there will be a strain on Brazilian-Panamanian relations because Brazil would no longer need to use the Panama Canal for cross-Pacific shipping.

Biden administration warns states of cyber-attacks against water supply infrastructure

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On 19 MAR, the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan sent a letter to all US Governors warning of cyber-attacks on states' water supplies that could be carried out by China and Iran. Iran could carry this out due to tensions in the Middle East and the war in Gaza, and China could do resort to similar actions, potentially leading up to an invasion of Taiwan.

The letter warned that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps carried out attacks recently on a number of facilities, which have not been revealed to the public, as well as an attack in NOV 2023 on a Pennsylvania water facility. Water supply systems are prone to cyber-attacks because they are highly critical, and many are not adequately protected. This could disrupt clean drinking water for communities and could weaken the economy. The US government has stated that it assesses with a high degree of confidence that Volt Typhoon, the name used for a Chinese state-sponsored hacker group, has already positioned itself for cyber-

attacks if tensions increase between the United States and China.

We can assess with high confidence it is likely that Iran and China are preparing for, and could carry out, a cyber-attack on US water supplies.



Russian intelligence director claims France is sending troops to Ukraine

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On 19 MAR, Director of Russian Foreign Intelligence Sergei Naryshkin claimed France is preparing to send out 2,000 troops to Ukraine and added that French troops would become a possible target for Russian Armed Forces if found on Ukrainian or Russian territory. France's defense ministry called Naryshkin's remarks disinformation and irresponsible. French President Emmanuel Macron warned Western powers against showing any signs of weakness to Russia as he reiterated his position that sending Western troops

to Ukraine should not be ruled out, though the current situation does not require it. Macron has not specified what would trigger an activation of French troops, saying only that it would depend on Moscow's actions in the war.

General Pierre Schill, France's ground forces' chief, announced that France could mobilize 20,000 troops within 30 days in support for Ukraine, and that French troops are ready for the toughest engagements. The United States, Germany, and other European countries, have said they will not send troops to Ukraine but will continue sending aid and packages that Ukraine needs and asks for.

We can assess with moderate confidence that it is unlikely France will send troops to Ukraine after Russia announced it would make French troops a priority target on the battlefield because it could cause further escalation in the war.



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