

The weekly briefing | 28 July 2014

Political and security risk updates

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Africa

Nigerian president renews pledge to fight Boko Haram as rebels regain ground

On 21 July, Boko Haram conducted a raid on a Nigerian armed forces base in the town of Damboa, the site of the militant group's headquarters prior to last year's Nigerian military offensive. The insurgent operation resulted in an estimated 45 casualties and caused the displacement of an additional 15,000 people, raising the total of displaced persons to approximately 250,000. The recent fighting in the Damboa area has also resulted in significant damage to critical infrastructure, leading to a sustained disruption of the electrical supply to Borno State's capital city, Maiduguri.

Boko Haram rebels fighting for an Islamic state in Nigeria continue to challenge the government, which is acting under a state of emergency mandate in affected regions. Following a military operation last year intended to disrupt the operational capacity of the group, Boko Haram now predominantly operate from the mountainous border regions near Cameroon. However, the recent withdrawal of government troops from the Damboa area of Borno State has generated a power vacuum, allowing insurgents to return freely to the town of Damboa and its six neighbouring villages, and the organisation are now in de facto control of approximately half of Borno State. These developments represent a notable step backwards in the campaign to mitigate the insurgent activities of Boko Haram.



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While the government appears to have temporarily lost ground in the northeastern region of Nigeria, official spokespeople for President Goodluck Jonathan continue to publicly deny the rebel advances. The Nigerian security services' shortcomings in addressing the threat from Boko Haram have caused Jonathan to seek \$1 billion in external loans to improve military capabilities, in conjunction with calls for international assistance to counter the insurgent group. However, the lack of tangible results produced by current security strategies is resulting in mounting public discontent towards the Nigerian government, and it appears increasingly likely that Boko Haram will continue to make progress towards destabilising Africa's largest economy should the current security policy remain unaltered.

Other developments

Air Algerie flight AH5017 crashed in Mali on 24 July en route from Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, to Algiers. Search teams found the wreckage of the plane, which was carrying 116 passengers, near to the Malian village of Boulikessi, around 50 kilometres from the border of Burkina Faso. France, which has been militarily engaged in Mali since 2013, dispatched a military unit to secure the site and conduct investigations. While scattered rebel groups in northern Mali continue their fight against the government in Bamako, French officials have so far stressed that it was unlikely that rebel fighters in Mali controlled weaponry capable of shooting down a commercial airliner, and that the crash is more likely to have occurred due to weather conditions.

Clashes intensified in Benghazi on 23 July, with dozens killed and wounded as government forces, utilising aircraft and ground troops, tried to oust militants in Libya's eastern port city. The situation in Tripoli has similarly intensified over the past week, with shelling on 24 July. The latest violence, which began 10 days ago, has already resulted in more than 50 deaths as post-revolution Libya continues to struggle with political fragmentation between a fledgling government and a multitude of militant organisations. Despite a recent deal to end the rebel blockade of the Brega oil port, no progress has been made on the reopening. The latest clashes have disrupted production at important oil fields, including El-Feel.

On 22 July, opposing sides in the conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR) signed a ceasefire to end months of sectarian fighting. Following increasing pressure from regional mediators, representatives of the majority Muslim Séléka rebels signed a ceasefire agreement with several Christian factions in Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of Congo. With the failure of previous ceasefire attempts, the coming days will be critical in assessing the credibility of the ceasefire agreement. With the transitional government currently tasked with arranging elections for next year, reconciliation will be a key component to the peace process. With a large part of the Muslim population having been driven out of the capital, Bangui, and the western region towards the Séléka-controlled east, the country is effectively in a state of partition.

On the radar

- **Heightened security and police cordons in Sabon Gari, Kano, Nigeria**, after an unidentified attacker launched an explosive device at a church on 27 July, killing at least five people and injuring at least eight more.
- **Negotiators from South Sudan remain in Ethiopia waiting for the rebel side's delegation** to start a new round of peace negotiations, which are currently stalling.
- **Cameroon is warning of an increased risk from Boko Haram raids spilling over from Nigeria** into its remote northern region.
- **The UN office in Burundi (BNUB) is due to present its report to the UN Security Council** on 31 July.
- **African delegations are preparing for the US-Africa summit, which begins in early August.**

Americas

United States to consider limited refugee programme in Central America amid immigration emergency

Following a meeting with the leaders of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador on 25 July, US President Barack Obama expressed his interest in the creation of a limited refugee programme in Central America. Migration between these countries is not new, and has long been a prominent issue on the multilateral agenda. However, the recent spike in the number of minors attempting to illegally cross the US border has prompted a major inquiry regarding recurring US immigration emergencies. It is estimated that 90,000 juvenile migrants will have crossed the US border by the end of the current fiscal year in October, with as many as 47,000 nationals from Mexico and Central America deported from the United States in 2013 alone. A refugee programme in Central America would enable foreign citizens to apply for US refugee status in their country of residency; until now, immigrants from Central America and Mexico had to cross the US border before being able to apply for asylum status. In the past, the United States has set up refugee programmes in Haiti, Vietnam and the former Soviet Union, but a programme in Central America would be the first of its kind for a country that is able to reach the United States by land. In addition, the Obama administration has requested a special budget of \$2 billion to address the crisis of juvenile migrants who are crossing the US border.

The inflow of juvenile illegal immigrants from Central America and Mexico to the United States has steadily increased over recent years. Strong media coverage of the recent immigration emergency has drawn the attention of the US president away from issues in Europe and the Middle East and back to Latin America. In contrast with the consistent inflow of adult migrants to the United States, child migrants represent a new trend that has emerged against the backdrop of rising levels of poverty and crime in Central America. In this regard, Honduras is the region's poorest country, and also the most dangerous. The development of drug cartels in the region over the past decade has greatly eroded public institutions and the rule of law, prompting large numbers of families and children to seek refuge in the United States.

Obama has referred to the latest immigration emergency as a 'humanitarian crisis' that requires a comprehensive solution encompassing political as well as economic measures. But the refugee programme faces strong criticism at home from the Republican Party, which fears more lax immigration restrictions and instead demands stronger border controls and more systemic deportations. The US administration is currently considering the establishment of a pilot project for refugee application in Honduras, which if established, could be expanded to Guatemala and El Salvador. In the meantime, over 45,000 children will be deported back to their respective countries. Furthermore, the government of Texas has committed 1,000 extra National Guard troops to its border with Mexico in order to curtail migration inflows.

Other developments

On 26 July, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was elected as the successor of Hugo Chávez to lead the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV). This was the first resolution to be adopted by the 537 PSUV delegates at the party's third national congress, the first of its kind in the Maduro era. In his inaugural speech to the congress, the Venezuelan president openly criticised the radical factions of the party for sowing dissent. The PSUV third national congress will end on 29 July.

In a public conference, Costa Rican President Luis Guillermo Solís welcomed the Chinese sponsored canal project in Nicaragua. The announcement came after the Costa Rican authorities requested an in-depth study of the environmental impact caused by the construction of the canal by its neighbour Nicaragua. Nicaragua plans to join the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea with a canal of over 273 miles. The project, which will be run by a Chinese company, includes two ports and an airport, among other infrastructure, with the total cost of construction estimated at \$40 billion.

Brazil is seeking to bolster regional solidarity by connecting Latin America's two largest trading blocs. The Brazilian government proposed a trade agreement between the Pacific Alliance and Mercosur days ahead of the next Mercosur summit, which is to be held on 29 July in Venezuela's capital, Caracas. Established in 2012, the Pacific Alliance, composed of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, represents a geopolitical alternative to the Mercosur grouping consisting of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. The establishment of a trade agreement between the two blocs could pave the way for further political and economic cooperation.

On the radar

- **Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos is to meet with his Venezuelan counterpart, Nicolás Maduro,** on 1 August.
- **Disruption to Argentina's shipping and cargo sectors should be anticipated on 29 July** due to a proposed 12-hour strike by workers affiliated to Fempinra over pay taxes.
- **Travellers flying to the United States should expect increased security measures to continue** following the government's warning of a credible terrorist threat to aviation.
- **Airport customs staff in Argentina are set to protest from 31 July to 1 August** in demand of increased wages.

Asia and Pacific

Joko Widodo officially declared winner of Indonesia's presidential election

On 22 July, the Indonesian General Elections Commission declared Joko Widodo the winner of the presidential election. Widodo gained 53% of the vote, representing 8.4 million more votes than his rival, Prabowo Subianto. Widodo and his running mate, Jusuf Kalla, are due to be sworn in on 20 October 2014. They will serve a five-year term. Prior to the release of the final results, both candidates had claimed victory in the election. The election was held on 9 July and followed parliamentary elections on 9 April 2014. Widodo is the former governor of Jakarta and from modest origins, while Subianto is from an elite background and is a former general associated with the Suharto administration.

Despite the release of the official results, Subianto has committed to challenging the commission's decision. Last week, he filed a legal challenge with the country's constitutional court, citing voting irregularities and possible fraud. Prior to the official release, he had urged the General Elections Commission to delay the release of the results until a full investigation had taken place. His concerns were raised as Indonesian authorities reported irregularities in East Java, West Java and from overseas in Malaysia. Ongoing investigations by the Indonesian Election Monitoring Body and local law enforcement led to the sacking of at least 10 election committee workers and the issue of more than 40 official warnings to those suspect of illegal vote tampering. Subianto claims to have submitted evidence of election fraud from over 52,000 polling stations across the country.

Nevertheless, given the large margin by which Widodo was elected, experts believe that it is unlikely that, even after a thorough investigation, the final results of the election will change. Following the announcement of the Widodo's victory, minority parties have begun indicating that they will likely move into coalition with Widodo's party. According to Indonesian electoral laws, a party must win at least 25% of the popular vote in legislative elections to nominate a presidential candidate. In last month's legislative polls, no party earned the requisite 25%, and thus two coalitions formed. Notably, the senior leadership of the Golkar party, which had formerly supported Subianto, expressed plans to change their party's direction towards support of the government. Nevertheless, in a country where political coalitions are commonly weak, Indonesia's new president will need to find a way to maintain political momentum over the coming five years.

Other developments

Vietnam has condemned China's dredging project in the South China Sea. On 25 July, Vietnamese foreign affairs ministry spokesperson Le Hai Binh claimed that China's activities near Drummond Island, part of the Paracel Islands, are illegal and invalid. Recently, China has begun dredging channels near the archipelago to improve access for supply boats and fishing vessels. The statement by the Vietnamese spokesman is not surprising, and follows several months of tense bilateral relations. In May 2014, anti-Chinese riots broke out in Vietnam, leading to the deaths of several Chinese nationals. The riots followed the placement of an oil rig in disputed waters in the South China Sea. Two weeks ago, China removed the rig from the disputed waters but indicated that the vessel's exploration activities were successful, and suggested that activities relating to natural resource are likely to continue in the area.

A car bomb that detonated in southern Thailand killed two and wounded more than 30 others. The incident occurred on 25 July in the southern region of Thailand in the Betong district of Yala. Yala is widely considered one of the safest cities in southern Thailand. The last major attack in Yala occurred in 2006 when insurgents bombed 22 banks at the same time. In addition to the attack on 25 July in Yala, two other attacks also occurred in Pattani and Narathiwat. In Narathiwat, alleged insurgents detonated a roadside bomb killing one army paramilitary ranger and wounding three others. The attack targeted a squad of twelve paramilitary rangers on foot patrol.

China's Supreme People's Procuratorate has begun establishing a task force to identify corruption among Chinese officials who have fled overseas. Xu Jinhui, director of the Supreme People's Procuratorate's anti-corruption department, announced on 25 July that the purpose of the committee would be to confiscate the illegal gains that corrupt officials have transferred overseas. The establishment of the task force follows the capture of more than 320 fugitives since January 2014. In his speech, Xu noted that the Chinese government intends to cooperate with the United States and Canada on intelligence sharing, investigation and extradition. Currently, China has signed more than 100 bilateral judicial cooperation agreements with 98 countries and regions. In addition, China has also begun strengthening security at border areas in Yunnan and Heilongjiang provinces. The creation of the task force is the latest development in a year-long anti-corruption push that has permeated all levels of Chinese politics.

On the radar

- **China's People's Liberation Army will conduct live-fire drills along the country's eastern coast** beginning on 29 July.
- **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe will visit Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia, Chile and Brazil** in an 11-day tour of Latin America this week.
- **Pope Francis will travel to South Korea** on 14-18 August, on the occasion of Asia Youth Day.
- **Employees of Biman Bangladesh Airlines threaten to strike on 6 August** over various grievances, including a demand for free medical benefits.
- **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to the United States on an official state visit** in September.

Europe

European Union scales up economic sanctions against Russia

On 22 July, European foreign ministers agreed that the European Commission and the bloc's external affairs arm should finalise work on tougher economic measures targeting specific sectors of the Russian economy. In a more immediate response to Russia's recent implication in events in eastern Ukraine, the European Union expanded its blacklist of individuals subject to sanction on 25 July, targeting an additional 15 individuals and 18 entities. These latest sanctions target the Russian intelligence service and the self-proclaimed independent Ukrainian republics and their leaders in eastern Ukraine. The new individuals added to the list include Mikhail Dradkov, director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR); Alexandr Bortnikov, director of the Federal Security Service (FSB); Ramzan Kadyrov, president of the Republic of Chechnya; and the leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. European ambassadors also agreed to sanction members of Russian President Vladimir Putin's closer circle of supporters at a meeting in Brussels on 24 July. These individuals will be formally identified on 28 July.

The hardening of sanctions is a reaction to the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 in eastern Ukraine – an area held by pro-Russian separatists. Before the downing of the airliner, EU members had struggled to achieve a cohesive position on Russia following the annexation of Crimea in March, amid the ongoing territorial struggle between pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian authorities in eastern Ukraine. However, in the aftermath of the MH17 crash, the European Union has become more cohesive in response to Russia's alleged role in arming pro-Russian separatists in the region, and for Russia's failure to facilitate a robust investigation into the crash. In this regard, pro-Russian rebels are believed to be involved in tampering with evidence, and the continued engagement of these groups has hindered the efforts of international teams to retrieve the bodies of crash victims. These sanctions by the European Union will complement sanctions that the United States announced two days before the downing of the aircraft. However, last week Russia reacted to the sanctions by toughening its economic measures against Ukraine by banning dairy imports. Analysts have also warned that these latest sanctions may be creating a rift between Russia and the West that could be hard to reverse.

This week, the European Union is expected to announce further economic sanctions should rebels in eastern Ukraine continue to obstruct an investigation into the crash of MH17, and further, should the Kremlin fail to stop the flow of arms to the separatists across the border. These sanctions would prevent Russian businesses from accessing EU capital markets, as well as defence and energy technologies. One suggested sanction is a prohibition on the raising of capital on European markets by Russian banks with more than 50% state ownership. In 2013, almost half the bonds issued by Russian public financial institutions were sold on European markets. These sanctions are widely expected to boost Russia's borrowing costs and undermine public finances. Another possible sanction is an arms trade embargo targeting Russia's entire defence sector; although France will continue to deliver one of two Mistral helicopter carriers for Russia under a contract agreement dated from 2001. It is highly likely that the increasing segregation of Russia from Western markets will generate deep long-term political divisions between the Russian Federation and the West, which are likely to impact a plethora of multilateral initiatives currently on the global political agenda.

Other developments

Arseniy Yatsenyuk resigned as the Ukrainian prime minister on 24 July. Yatsenyuk cited the dissolution of the parliamentary coalition and the blocking of government initiatives as the reasons for his resignation. Last week, several parties withdrew from the majority European Choice coalition, including the pro-European Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform (UDAR) party and the Fatherland Group. The parliamentary speaker, Oleksandr Turchynov, announced the formal dissolution of the coalition government, and President Petro Poroshenko now has the power to announce fresh parliamentary elections within the next month. On 25 July, the Ukrainian cabinet appointed Deputy Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman as acting prime minister.

On 22 July, Turkish prosecutors arrested 67 policemen and dozens of senior police officers on suspicion of espionage and illegal wire-tapping. Authorities accuse the officers of illegally eavesdropping on top officials, including Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, as well as forging official documents, fabricating evidence and violating the secrecy of an investigation. The public prosecutor's office announced that 115 arrest warrants had been issued for these offences. In an early morning operation, police detained officers in raids in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Diyarbakir. Those detained include Omer Kose and Yurt Atayun, the two former heads of Istanbul's anti-terror unit.

On 25 July, two anti-Putin activists, Sergei Udaltsov and Leonid Razvozhayev, were found guilty of coordinating protests, which later turned violent, on the eve of President Vladimir Putin's inauguration for his third presidential term on 7 May 2012. The Moscow court handed both Udaltsov and Razvozhayev 4.5-year prison sentences, though prosecutors had sought eight years. The individuals were prominent protest leaders during the parliamentary and presidential elections from 2011-12. The two activists deny the charges, and their lawyers announced that an appeal would be lodged at the European Court of Human Rights.

On the radar

- **Turkey to hold presidential elections** on 10 August.
- **Norway remains on high alert** over a threat of an imminent terrorist attack in the country.
- **On 6 August, Bulgarian President Rosen Plevneliev will dissolve the National Assembly,** after the Bulgarian parliament approved the resignation of the Bulgarian Socialist Party cabinet.
- **Further Pro-Palestine protests are likely in Paris, France,** and elsewhere this week.

Middle East

International efforts to secure ceasefire between Israel and Hamas continue as death toll tops 1,000

A 12-hour humanitarian truce between Israel and Hamas began on 08:00 local time on 26 July. The Israeli cabinet met on 26 July and accepted a UN request for a 24-hour extension; however, this collapsed in the early hours of 27 July. The humanitarian 'pause' of the conflict was aimed at the relief of Palestinian civilians, enabling them to return to their homes for supplies and to extract the bodies of those killed in shelling. Moreover, the truce enabled international journalists to safely enter some areas of Gaza for the first time since Operation Protective Edge began on 8 July. Many reports have highlighted the mass destruction of border towns, with many areas reduced to rubble.

US Secretary of State John Kerry led talks in Paris, France, on 26 July, which attempted to secure terms for a permanent ceasefire agreement. Israel, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority were absent from the talks, which included representatives from the United States, Turkey, Qatar and the EU. Each party is seeking resolution for the crises as the death toll continues to rise, reaching 1,034 Palestinian casualties, 43 members of the Israel Defence Force (IDF) and three Israeli civilians to date. French foreign minister Laurent Fabius stated in the meetings final press conference that the international community would continue to push for an obtainable ceasefire between the two parties, negotiating terms that would meet the security demands of Israel, while ensuring the socioeconomic development of Gaza.

However, difficulties are likely to remain in finding an acceptable resolution. Despite the agreed extension, the IDF implicitly stated they would continue to search for Hamas tunnels, and would react to any perceived aggression from Hamas during the truce. Hamas later rejected the terms of the truce extension, stating it failed to meet their demands of ending the siege on Gaza and removing IDF troops from Palestinian territories. As such, each side appears set to continue the deadlock, meaning that negotiations for anything beyond temporary ceasefires are likely to be difficult until either Israel decides Operation Protective Edge has served its purpose or international opinion becomes too hostile to make it worth continuing.

Other developments

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) destroyed a symbolic tomb in Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, on 24 July. The Nabi Yunus shrine, believed to be the burial site of the prophet Yunus or biblical Jonah, was rigged with explosives and destroyed in front of crowd of people. The shrine, a symbol of Christian and Shi'ite worship, was the latest of 45 cultural symbols to be destroyed by ISIS following territorial gains in the Iraq's northern provinces. Although no one was injured in the attack, it is likely to send a powerful message to Iraq's Christian and Shi'ite communities deemed to be in opposition to ISIS's Salafist interpretation of Sunni Islam. The 'Islamification' and imposition of absolutist ideology is likely to continue in ISIS-controlled territories in the following weeks.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) overran a military base in Raqqa, northern Syria, killing 50 people on 25 July. Although unconfirmed by Syrian authorities, reports indicate that at least 50 soldiers were killed in the attack, many of whom were beheaded. Northern Syria remains a stronghold for ISIS which now controls most of the province, and the Raqqa base, the largest in northeast Syria, is a notably strategic gain for the group. Violence has continued to escalate throughout the country following the re-election of President Bashar al-Assad on 16 July. The escalation of violence suggests a stark intensification of the country's civil war, with increasingly divisive internal factions struggling to compete for political support and territorial control.

Two security officials were killed in Egypt's Sinai province on 25 July. The officers were shot dead by unidentified assailants. The attack came after the arrest of 15 individuals and the death of two militants in Arish, northern Sinai, on 24 July. Sinai remains the foremost source of domestic insecurity within Egypt, with many jihadist groups using its desert regions to launch attacks against government security forces. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi faces significant challenges in containing the militant threat within Egypt, as well as a state of emergency along the Sudanese border, increased pressures from the Libyan western border areas and the Israeli-Palestinian crisis to the east.

On the radar

- **Eid Al-Fitr to be celebrated marking the end of Ramadan** on 28 July.
- **Re-trial of 269 Egyptian activists to begin on 4 August.** All defendants stand accused of attacking the central cabinet building and security forces in November 2011.
- **Iraqi parliament to meet on 5 August to discuss prime ministerial election.**
- **Clashes likely in the lead-up to Afghanistan's Independence Day** on 19 August

Polar Regions

EU energy commissioner warns of potential sanction on Russian Arctic developments

On 23 July, the EU energy commissioner Günther Oettinger stated that the European Union should not provide Russia with technical assistance to develop Arctic oil and gas fields should Moscow continue to prove reluctant to facilitate improvements in the current situation in eastern Ukraine. EU ministers last week raised the possibility of restricting Russia's access to oil and gas technologies and critical equipment for oil and gas operations. Such restrictions could be extended to include tight control of fracking technology and restrictions on EU financing for Russian energy projects in the region.

Oettinger's statement was given against the backdrop of an assertion by German Chancellor Angela Merkel that it was time for Europe to implement new sanctions against the Russian Federation. Previously, the EU had not expressed any specific intentions to target Russia's physical energy supplies; however, Oettinger's suggestions appear to affirm the position that the EU will have no reason to assist in the growth of Russia's Arctic energy infrastructure should a change in Russian foreign policy not be observed. Russia places great value on the potential for offshore oil and gas projects in the Arctic, but can only pursue the region's energy resources with the assistance provided by EU countries' more technologically-advanced oil and gas industries.

Such a sanction on Russia's Arctic oil and gas developments would undoubtedly have a notable negative impact on Novatek, Russia's largest independent natural gas producer and the main developer of liquefied natural gas export in the Arctic Yamal peninsula, which has already seen one of its shareholders hit by sanctions imposed by the United States amid Russia's annexation of Crimea. However, the proposed sanction will likely be difficult to impose due to the foreseeable impact upon EU member states that are heavily reliant on Russian gas supplies. To date, issues of Arctic development have remained comparatively cooperative; however, should Oettinger's proposed sanctions gain any traction, multilateral efforts to explore this increasingly valuable region are likely to be greatly impeded in service of more immediate geopolitical concerns.

Other developments

Canada will make further investments in Pangnirtung Harbour, Baffin Island, throughout 2014-2015.

The proposed government investment of \$106 million will be used for construction, maintenance, repair and dredging projects. The government has already invested over \$40 million in the construction of Pangnirtung's harbour on Baffin Island, located in the Canadian Territory, Nunavut, which took place between 2009 and 2013. The additional investment will address overcrowding within the harbour, whilst enabling further access for inshore commercial fishery and adding to Pangnirtung's maritime transportation links with other communities within the territory.

Russian government-owned oil company Rosneft has pulled out of purchasing part of the natural gas field in Point Thomson on Alaska's North Slope. The company decided against signing up to the project with Exxon Mobil, proposed in 2013 as part of an agreement to expand their collaboration in the Arctic. Rosneft is currently facing sanctions imposed by the United States that appear to be limiting the company's ability to conduct business outside of Russia. The Alaskan department of natural resources commissioner, Joe Balash, also suggested that Rosneft, despite its investor status, would have been subjected to an enhanced due diligence process, due to its position as a potential competitor, had it agreed to the joint venture.

On the radar

- **A meeting of high-level representatives of the Arctic states will take place 5-7 August** in Naryan-Mar, Russia.
- **Arctic Council Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group will hold a board meeting in Nunavut, Canada,** on 25-29 August.
- **The Alaska Arctic Policy Commission will hold its next meeting in Nome and Kotzebue, Alaska, United States,** on 26-27 August.
- **International Conference and Exhibition on Performance of Ships and Structures in Ice will be held in Banff, Canada,** between 28-31 July, and will address a number of topics, including naval architecture, icebreaking ships, marine operations safety, risk and environmental protection.

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