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JAPAN RE-ARMS: TAKAICHI SANAЕ USHERS IN A NEW MILITARY ERA

The newly elected first female Prime Minister in Japan's history, Takaichi Sanae, has already demonstrated the political goals she wishes to achieve. Following the steps of former Prime Minister and mentor, Abe Shinzō, Takaichi is in favor of expanding Japan's military capabilities, mostly by raising defense spending to 2 percent of GDP by fiscal year 2025 while eliminating constraints on the use of force. This stems from China's increasing presence and influence in Asia, as well as North Korea's enhancement of nuclear capabilities. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, on the other hand, has raised concerns among the Diet on how Japan should defend itself in the case of an escalation of conflict with its neighbors. However, with the country facing a stagnant economy, rising inflation, and a manpower shortage, it still remains unclear how Takaichi intends to revive Japan's military might.

By: Odysseas Megias

A NEW STRATEGIC AXIS: INSIDE THE U.S.-SAUDI RARE MINERALS DEAL

U.S. company MP materials, Saudi Arabia's Maaden Mining Company, and the U.S. Department of War have signed an agreement to construct a refinery in Saudi Arabia for critical and rare earth minerals (copper, uranium, etc). This deal comes in response to recent trade tensions with China and its restrictions on exports, escalating the volatility of the mineral global supply chain. Rare earth minerals are essential for the construction of defense technologies, electronics, AI data centers, medical equipment, and transportation. The deal also includes nuclear energy cooperation, strategic defense alliance, and assurances on advances on AI technologies. It also positions Saudi Arabia as a potentially strategic partner for future energy, technological, and economic cooperation. How does this development translate to the global trade arena? Is it simply a recalibration or a game changer for the rare earth mineral supply chain?

By: Haneen Elmahdi



A PEACE IN NAME ONLY ? VIOLENCE RESURFACES IN GAZA

The newly approved U.S.' peace plan for Gaza is starting to be implemented without mentioning Hamas' disarmament and the withdrawal of Israeli troops. The conflict persists as more than 300 Palestinians and 3 Israeli soldiers have been killed. According to multiple reports, Israeli forces have removed Palestinians from their homes and detained at least 22 in the northern West Bank as they accused them of trying to establish a militant base. Despite the end of the war and consequently the bloodshed, civilians continue to be targeted by military forces across the Gaza region.

By: Efthalia Orfani



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A NATION COLLAPSING: INSIDE SUDAN'S HUMANITARIAN NIGHTMARE

Sudan is currently facing one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises, with more than 8 million people being displaced as the conflict between the SAF (Sudanese Armed Forces) and RSF (Rapid Support Forces) further escalates. After the 2019 revolution and the failed power share negotiations, the people of Sudan have found themselves amid a brutal civil war. According to the UN OCHA, families are fleeing Darfur and heading to Chad due to multiple cases of ethnically targeted violence, reported by the Human Rights Watch. As for the families still in Sudan, many are nearing famine, as their access to aid continues to be blocked. Observers warn that the nation is experiencing severe instability with civilians bearing the greatest impact.

By: Lena Pantzos



MADURO UNDER PRESSURE: IS VENEZUELA FACING ITS BREAKING POINT?

The Venezuelan government faces growing international criticism and allegations of authoritarian practices under President, Nicolás Maduro with the United States even threatening to pursue regime change. Initially, the campaign was an attempt to stop drug transportation through the Caribbean but has escalated into increasing pressure on Maduro's regime. With diminishing support within Venezuela, Maduro has resorted to "intensifying paranoid repression" that leaves two likely outcomes: a crackdown on the drug trafficking issue within Venezuela or increasing military pressure from the United States. It remains to be seen if military action is going to take place in South America or it's just another case of the United States asserting its influence.

By: Brynn Murray



CAN THE UN'S NEW SECURITY MISSION RESTORE ORDER IN HAITI?

As gang violence continues to destabilize peace in the Caribbean country of Haiti, the United Nations Security Council approved the creation and deployment of a new Gang Suppression Force (GSF). The GSF will assume operations from the Kenyan-led Multinational Security (MSS) mission. The force of 5,550 personnel will be led by the U.S. and supported by other regional nations such as the Bahamas, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Jamaica. The mission represents a renewed international effort to restore order and support the Haitian government in reestablishing security and public trust.

By: Kosmas Maximos Souris



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PEACE OR PRESSURE? GREAT POWERS CLASH OVER UKRAINE'S FUTURE

Amidst contention from all parties, the U.S. proposal for achieving a ceasefire in Ukraine has hit certain hurdles, as both Russia and Ukraine still find themselves dissatisfied with the terms. Diplomats from EU member states have attempted to reassert European "centrality" in the process by forwarding their own amended draft, while Ukraine has produced its own revised, consolidated rendition. Questions concerning territorial integrity, reconstruction, and the future of frozen Russian assets remain matters of debate. Most importantly this 28-point peace plan contains several unclear clauses. Clauses 2, 21, 22, and 26 create ambiguities as to the status of Ukrainian territorial integrity. Clauses 12 and 14 concern frozen Russian assets. Clauses 5 and 10 relate to the security guarantees Ukraine may receive. As Ukraine enters a new era, it remains to be seen how great powers will shape the country's future.

By: George Piperigos Grammatikas



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Issue !**



Sincerely
The IGA Editorial Team