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The IGA journal is the product of the students' hard work and dedication to furthering the knowledge they have acquired through their studies to people outside the classroom walls. I can only commend the writers for their academic rigor and quality of research. This journal is meant to inform and inspire members of the ACG community and paves the way for other disciplines, with much knowledge to offer, to follow suit. I hope the readers of this publication will find it as interesting and insightful as the people involved in the process did.

Jo Pierri, Editor

American and Chinese Hard-Power developments in the Indo-Pacific

By Christos Simosis and Filippo N. Valasakis

The Indo-Pacific has been subject to heavy militarization. China has caused the ire of its southern neighbors by constructing dozens of man-made isles in the South China Sea (SCS) and claimed the surrounding waters as their own exclusive economic zone, oftentimes infringing on existing other already established territorial claims (Mastro, 2021). Said islands have been weaponized and according to some scholars, correspond to an Anti-Access/Area Denial(A2/AD) strategy by the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) to disallow foreign intervention into the SCS for any matter of purposes (Meraner, 2023). Whether this is to shield against a trade blockade or to obstruct Taiwan's allies from coming to their aid in case of an invasion, China will understandably continue to expand its sphere of influence across the Indo-Pacific, as its maritime periphery is primarily occupied by countries favorable to the US (Paul, 2022). This article will attempt to give a rundown of some of the military technologies that will play a role in the power dynamics of the region.

The rivalry between China and the United States over Taiwanese sovereignty and Asia-Pacific control has led to the question of what role will each side's air force play. The analysis does not include the many other fighters fielded by both sides, instead focusing on the latest and greatest. The Chinese J-20 and the US-made F-35, represent the bleeding edge of fighter-craft. The naval factor of the Indo-Pacific military theatre forces the United States to prioritize maritime military operations. The Indo-Pacific is China's home turf, and the US will have to rely on its regional allies for refueling and repairing. The US is consolidating relations with its regional allies (Australia, South Korea, Japan), which all have F-35s in their arsenals, allowing them to manage a more organized joint response (Lehrfeld, 2023), (Hadley, 2023). This month,

the U.S gained military access to bases closer to the region by way of the Philippines (Lendon, 2023). Due to its autocratic nature, China's military is confidential, meaning information surrounding the J-20 is deduced from open-source intelligence and educated assumptions regarding its overall characteristics ("Does China's J-20 Rival Other Stealth Fighters?", 2020). It is likely that the J-20 is not meant to directly compete against the F-35, due to its much larger size sacrificing stealth. Thus, the F-35 might never directly face a J-20, especially since it was designed as a multirole fighter to begin with. Perhaps we might see the US F-22 being used again, the last US air superiority fighter. It has been officially decommissioned but it is still being maintained and could prove very dangerous to Chinese Air targets. If the F-35 can outmaneuver a J-20 and the PLA knows this, they will be smart to shift its purpose to be a long-range weapons platform and electronic warfare suite instead.

The US has the unique advantage of having a Short-takeoff-vertical landing (STOVL) capable fighter(F-35b) that can essentially land anywhere and can take-off from a runway nearly 3 to 4 times less than a conventional jet fighter ("The F-35B: First Descent", 2018), ("F-35B Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter STOVL Variant", 2012). The J-20 also cannot be launched from an aircraft carrier, but this isn't a major issue since mainland China is not that far away (Garthwaite, 2022), but this could limit quick response capabilities. The PLA (Peoples Liberation Army) has built a network of air-to-ground missile arrays that discourages any aerial threat that encroaches PLA airspace, and this includes the man-made SCS islands (Maestro, 2021). The Japanese have fielded the STOVL version of the F-35 for use on their aircraft carrier, the Australian Navy does not have a current active aircraft carrier, with their longest floating aerial platform being a landing helicopter dock, which limits the land-anywhere advantage of the STOVL version. Since neither the J-20 nor two of the three F-35 variants sport integrated

autocannons, neither side would ever risk hundreds of millions by putting them in any close-range dogfight (“Does China’s J-20 Rival Other Stealth Fighters?”, 2020). We conclude that as it stands in the current state of events, none of the involved nations would be eager to send these planes out for sustained single-domain activities, and we will see them being used more when “loyal wingmen” autonomous planes see widespread adoption. These are unmanned aircraft that offer additive performance to existing manned aerial platforms, by acting as cheaper, more disposable aircraft that can be directed by the human pilot to fulfill offensive and defensive tasks, elevating the role of the pilot into that of a battle manager. Boeing Australia has developed such a vehicle and is currently being tested in the US (Neumann, 2023). This is likely something that the West has a significant advantage in, as the US Department of Defense essentially pioneered this technology (Air Combat Evolution, n.d.). However, we will most certainly see this equipment fielded after the mid to late 2020s. This tech will most likely redefine all preexisting notions of air-based warfare.

Hypersonic warheads are an emerging frontier that will accelerate the speed of modern combat. These are warheads that, when launched, drop in and out of orbit to thwart any countermeasure. Combine that with max speeds that are theorized to be over 25 times the speed of sound, they are very hard to stop once launched (Watts et al., 2020). The US cancelled its own Air-to-Ground version in March 2023, citing cost overruns (Grady, 2023). It is currently developing a ground-based launcher, as well as experimenting with other versions of these missiles (Trevithick, 2021). China has successfully fielded its own version of its ground-based hypersonic launcher system, and it is operational (Rogin, 2023). Currently, there is no way to thwart these weapons, besides the eventual development of laser energy weapons or spaceplanes that can destroy them before collision (Cole, 2020). Much of the Chinese analyses on hypersonic

development are based on existing US publications, and there is evidence to suggest Chinese cooperation with Russia on these warheads, due to the proximity of when the development tests were held (Magome, 2023). These warheads are fast enough to neutralize most ground-based air defense systems and other hard targets, paving the way for one side to establish air superiority (Watts et al, 2020). Such a tool would prove invaluable due to its very long range and speed.

The AUKUS collaboration between Australia, the UK and US signals a potential breakthrough in the US's ability to undermine PLA A2/AD in the region. While the AUKUS deal provides Australia the know-how on using nuclear powered submarines, that can remain submerged for very long periods (Prime Minister, Minister for Defense, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Women, 2021), they are much louder than conventional diesel-electric submarines, and while they are of the utmost importance to Western efforts to manage Chinese territorial Claims in the SCS, they are not nimble, and some form of tactical undersea vehicle will likely be made to operate espionage operations much closer to Chinese controlled areas (White, 2021). This is a clause of the AUKUS deal called AUKUS Undersea Robotics Autonomous Systems (AURAS), which is the development of unmanned underwater vehicles (The White House, 2022). Little is known about this AUKUS tenet, but it could use anti-sonar technology to provide early warning and reconnaissance on PLA naval units. Another pillar of Chinese early warning capabilities in the region by the Chinese is the extensive network of sonar arrays around the SCS, that can detect a sea-based movement from very far away, A ship or submarine leaving a harbor in Guam can be detected, which is over 3000km away (Kuhn, 2018).

In their war game, CSIS shows how U.S bombers can deal considerable damage to Chinese army and naval units; with Chinese bombers (Xian H-6) launching supersonic missiles against U.S naval assets; threatening US naval capabilities. China's missiles would not be able to

effectively counter US bombers, especially if Japanese aerial bases are used by fighters to escort bombers (Cancian et al., 2023). As noted by the war game conducted by CSIS, the need for Japan to enter a war would be crucial to US successes in the region so that U.S fighter/aircraft are able to conduct effective operations. Development of bomber technology is of great importance to both air-forces, considering the larger operational radius, elevation, and payload they can carry.

The technologies outlined above is a small sample of the military-industrial complex of each side, and the challenges each must navigate to discourage the other side from becoming overzealous and risking escalation are colossal. While we personally do not share the opinion of some of the popular and scholarly consensus that a conflict in the region is going to happen anytime soon, the need to provide hard deterrence is required.

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Earthquake Diplomacy: How have the earthquakes in Türkiye affected Greek-Turkish relations?

By Melina Giannakouli and Alexander Cameron

Despite the historical grievances between Greece and Türkiye, that have proven very difficult to overcome, the 1999 earthquakes that devastated the two Eastern European Mediterranean states, brought these neighbors to the same side of the coin. The two conflicting states were forced into “disaster diplomacy” because of the catastrophic event¹. Struck first on August 27, 1999, Türkiye was devastated with 17,000 people dead². Not even two weeks later, on September 7, Greece’s capital, Athens, experienced what is the “most important earthquake event in the modern history of Greece”³. The earthquake was the first to be near the city-center and caused mass destruction within the capital, with 70,000 damaged buildings, more than 2,000 injured, and 143 deceased^{4 5}. The devastation led to economic insecurity and psychological problems within society. The year 1999 became a watershed moment for the relationship between these historic foes, as it encouraged them to increase negotiations and collaboration.

¹ Mavrogenis, Stavros and Ilan Kelman. “Perceptions of Greece-Turkey Disaster diplomacy: Europeanization and the Underdog Culture.” *Balkanistica*, 26 (2013): 75-105, <https://www.disasterdiplomacy.org/pb/mavrogenisetal.2013.pdf>.

² Ibid

³ Papadopoulos, G. A., Drakatos, G., Papanastassiou, D., Kalogeras, I. and G. Stavrakakis. “Preliminary Results about the Catastrophic Earthquake of 7 September 1999 in Athens, Greece.” *Seismological Research Letters*, vol. 71, no. 3 (2000): 318-329, <https://members.noa.gr/i.kalog/en/pdf/03-08.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Greek City Times Team. “September 7, 1999 Athens hit by devastating Earthquake.” *Greek Culture, History, Greek City Times*, 7 Sept. 2016, <https://greekcitytimes.com/2016/09/07/september-9-1999-athens-hit-by-devastating-earthquake/>

Experienced within Greek and Turkish societies alike, problems of adaptability, a sense of safety and security, changes in behavior, and high levels of stress plagued both communities.^{6 7} Within Greece, over 60% of the affected were unable to adapt to the post-earthquake environment, and felt unsafe, distressed, and insecure with the new environment⁸. To elaborate, their inability to adapt ultimately led to an increase in stress and a decrease of safety and security, which induced criminal behavior theft, drug-use, and various forms of destructive behavior⁹. In addition to the psychological repercussions dealt by the earthquakes, Greece's and Türkiye's economies received a devastating blow causing national economic insecurity. Within Türkiye alone, employment dropped from 40%, before the event, to an estimated 36% ad hoc.¹⁰ Moreover, personal assets, homes, and public infrastructure were destroyed leaving many homeless and empty handed, which negatively affected the public's perception toward their governments, social bonds, and religious beliefs.¹¹ Despite the neighboring states being severely crippled by the natural disaster, the two states delivered support and aid, fostering diplomatic relations in a time of crisis, setting, as it seems, their deeply rooted historical differences aside.

At the time of the crisis, the international community witnessed the two neighbors support one another in a time of need with sincerity and a genuine sense of commitment of helping the other overcome the devastations of the earthquakes. This behavior came as a surprise given the dispute that erupted not long before between the two countries over the Imia/Kardak Rocks in the

⁶ Öcal, Adem. "Natural Disasters in Turkey: Social and Economic Perspective." *International Journal of Disaster Risk Management*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2018): 51-61, <http://doi.fil.bg.ac.rs/pdf/journals/ijdrm/2019-1/ijdrm-2019-1-1-3.pdf>.

⁷ Varela, Emily, Koustouki, Vasiliki, Davos, Constantinos H. and Kiriakidou Eleni. "Psychological consequences among adults following the 1999 earthquake in Athens, Greece." *Disasters*, vol. 32, no. 2 (2008): 280-291, <https://web-s-ebSCOhost-com.acg.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=b2fb16d3-ba1c-4eca-8ea0-8105d5c66f9d%40redis>

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Öcal, Adem. "Natural Disasters in Turkey: Social and Economic Perspective." *International Journal of Disaster Risk Management*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2018): 51-61, <http://doi.fil.bg.ac.rs/pdf/journals/ijdrm/2019-1/ijdrm-2019-1-1-3.pdf>.

¹¹ Ibid

Aegean Sea.¹² During the crisis, both countries claimed violations of international law regarding territorial waters, continental shelf rights, airspace jurisdiction, acknowledging the symbolic value of the area.¹³ The Imia crisis brought both countries close to an armed conflict. However, a new phase began between the Greek-Turkish relations after the 1999 earthquakes. Following the August 27th earthquake, Greece sent EMAK, the country's search-and-rescue team, along with other forms of support to aid the Turks, as did Türkiye following the September 7 earthquake, who sent their AKUT search-and-rescue team.¹⁴ The operations of both rescue teams resulted in substantial media coverage, illustrating the sincerity of their support and a possible friendship blooming within the states' bilateral relations, causing the public's solidarity towards their neighbors to influence the governments behavior towards one another.¹⁵ With various rounds of talks throughout their diplomatic relations during the post-earthquake period regarding political, economic, and social topics, their bilateral relations legitimized and inspired Greece to support the possible induction of Türkiye into the European Union during the 1999 EU Summit in Finland, Helsinki.¹⁶

¹² Konstandaras, Nikos. "Will 'earthquake diplomacy' in 2023 be different to 1999?" ekathimerini, 16 Feb. 2023, <https://www.ekathimerini.com/opinion/1204657/will-earthquake-diplomacy-in-2023-be-different-to-1999/>.

¹³ Pratt, Martin and Clive Schofield. "The Imia/Kardak Rocks Dispute in the Aegean Sea." IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin (1996): 62-69, https://www.durham.ac.uk/media/durham-university/research-/research-centres/ibru-centre-for-borders-research/maps-and-databases/publications-database/boundary-amp-security-bulletins/bsb4-1_pratt.pdf.

¹⁴ Mavrogenis, Stavros and Ilan Kelman. "Perceptions of Greece-Turkey Disaster diplomacy: Europeanization and the Underdog Culture." *Balkanistica*, 26 (2013): 75-105, <https://www.disasterdiplomacy.org/pb/mavrogenisetal.2013.pdf>.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

Rapprochement between the countries was the result of the leadership of both countries, and more specifically between Foreign Ministers George Papandreou and Ismael Cem. Greece stated that it would put its differences aside and help Türkiye “as it needed, for as long as it needed”, while Papandreou set up a commission to coordinate the aid.¹⁷ Papandreou also quoted that Greece was “ready to do whatever is necessary to increase the opportunities towards a permanent solution”¹⁸. Despite the long-lasting tensions, both sides invested in bilateral negotiations. Indeed, joint practices and talks became very common, but received less media coverage.¹⁹ Earthquake diplomacy resulted in the conclusion of 9 bilateral agreements, focusing on economic, cultural and military confidence building measures.²⁰ It is important to note, that there was a Papandreou-Cem dialogue at works prior to the earthquakes. However, the 1999 earthquakes shifted the perception of “the threatening neighbor” and prompted a new wave of public support for reconciliation²¹.

In the recent years, tensions have become stronger between Greece and Türkiye, ranging from air space violations, sovereignty issues, territorial waters, demilitarization of Greek islands, and minority/refugee issues. Despite the continuous contingencies between these neighbors, once again, Greece was willing to assist Türkiye with the earthquake it recently experienced. Due to the continuous rivalry, the assistance that was provided from the earthquake diplomacy from both

¹⁷ Gillan , Audrey, and Helena Smith . “World Goes to the Rescue.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 18 Aug. 1999, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/aug/18/turkeyquakes.turkey3>.

¹⁸ *Greece/Turkey Disaster Diplomacy*, <https://www.disasterdiplomacy.org/greeceturkey.html>.

¹⁹ Ganapati, N. Emel, et al. “Analysing Greek–Turkish Disaster Related Cooperation: A Disaster Diplomacy Perspective.” *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2010, pp. 162–85. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45084601>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2023.

²⁰ Siegl, Erik. “Greek-Turkish Relations—Continuity or Change?” *Perspectives*, no. 18, 2002, pp. 40–52. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23615826>.

²¹ *Ibid*

parties, shocked the international world both in 1999 and again in 2023. As mentioned previously, earlier in the year, Türkiye experienced another disastrous earthquake reaching a magnitude of 7.8. Greece's aid to Türkiye included C-130 transport aircraft, along with 21 fire services special disaster management unit, rescue dogs and vehicles and medics²². Greece reacted almost immediately and sent aid collected by some of the public including tents, beds and blankets to help the hundreds of people who lost their homes²³. As the Greek Civil Protection Minister Christos Stylianides said, "it's time we all show our feelings of humanism", as he went on to say that Greece tried to "relieve a bit of the pain of the quake afflicted people"²⁴. Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis also called Türkiye's President, Tayyip Erdogan, to offer his condolences²⁵. It was also stated by Greece that it would be at the forefront of a European initiative to host a donor conference in Brussels²⁶.

The positive attitude shown by both countries, that put their everlasting differences aside is evident. Stability in this region is of vital importance for the whole world. The earthquakes, despite being disastrous, have proven, even now, to encourage both sides to engage in bilateral relations and have resulted in a calmer setting, that is until tensions arise again. The inability to address the "Aegean Issue" has made rapprochement limited and unreliable. It is unfortunate that

²² Gridneff, Matina Stevis, et al. "Governments around the World Send Rescue Teams after Quake." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 6 Feb. 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/06/world/europe/earthquake-turkey-international-aid.html>.

²³ Koutantou, Angeliki, and Deborah Kyvrikosaios. "Greece Sends Earthquake Aid to Turkey, Putting aside Rivalry." Edited by Frances Kerry, *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 9 Feb. 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/greece-sends-earthquake-aid-turkey-putting-aside-rivalry-2023-02-09/>.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

humanitarian crisis following natural disasters is what brings these countries together. Earthquake diplomacy has stepped over disaster diplomacy as both countries have aided each other in other times of crisis (i.e., wildfire), yet the magnitude of support following the earthquakes has been highlighted more. However, rivalry in the Eastern Mediterranean does not seem to be nearing its end.

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Migration Congestion in Italy

By *Marina Drougka*

Eight months have passed since the Italian elections were held on September 25th, 2022, when the 26% of the Italian voters sent a clear message of trust to the leader of the far-right political party, Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy), Georgia Meloni. Italy's first female leader has been accused of xenophobia as a part of her Party's agenda is targeting immigrants when tens of thousands of immigrants enter Italy every year, with the record number of arrivals reaching 181,436 in 2016 (Balmer, 2023)²⁷. Reports from UNHCR point out the real number of yearly sea arrivals starting from 2017 to 2023. The influx of migrants that Italy has been facing is significant with most of them coming from "Tunisia (23%), followed by Egypt (13%), Bangladesh (12%), the Islamic Republic of Iran (6%), Côte d'Ivoire (6%), Iraq (4%), Guinea (4%), Eritrea (4%), the Syrian Arab Republic (3%) and Morocco (3%)." (UNHCR 2021)²⁸. The country has become a major destination for migrants seeking a better life in Europe, and many of them enter Italy through its southern coasts. This phenomenon has led to various challenges, including overcrowding in reception centers, lack of resources to provide necessities such as food, water, and medical care, and social tension with local communities, a part of which supports Meloni's far-right party. But let's take a closer look at why Italy adopted a state of emergency status over immigrants in early April 2023.

On Tuesday 11th, 2023, the Italian State decided to declare a state of emergency for six months due to the sharp rise in the numbers of arrivals, according to international media, demonstrating the migration congestion that the country had been facing since 2015. According to

²⁷ Balmer, C. *Factbox: Migrant arrivals in Italy on the rise, despite high danger*, Reuters. 2023

²⁸ *ITALY Sea arrivals dashboard*. The UN Refugee Agency. 2021

estimations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, around 30.695 immigrants arrived in Italy as of January 2023 (UNHCR 2023)²⁹. To put it succinctly, this Italian measure is interpreted as an emergency solution to offer 5 million euros to the southern regions of Italy for building new reception centers for migrants and for accelerating the procedure of repatriations when needed³⁰. Civil Protection and Sea Policies Minister, Nello Musumeci, stated that “Let’s be clear, this doesn’t resolve the problem, whose solution is tied to a mindful and responsible intervention of the European Union”³¹. Italy contends that they are not receiving the necessary help from the EU. The three Mediterranean states that have received the most refugees, Greece, Malta, and Italy, suggest that the European Union should amend the Dublin Regulation since they find it unfair to accept most of the immigrants while they suggest a revision to achieve equal distribution of refugees³².

²⁹ *Most common nationalities of Mediterranean sea and land arrivals from January 2021*. UNHCR, 2023

³⁰ “Italy declares state of emergency over ‘migration congestion,’” *Al Jazeera*, 2023

³¹ “Italy declares state of emergency as migrant numbers surge.,” *El Pais*, 2023

³² Paravicini, G. and Herszenhorn, D. “Southern rim rebels against EU migration proposal,” *Politico*. 2018

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Generative pre-trained transformers

By Atheena Gouviotis

In 1996, Artificial Intelligence beat the then grand master of chess³³. Since then, AI has progressed beyond a game of chess. Machine learning and natural language processing, both components of Artificial Intelligence, have created some key breakthroughs, with the most recent being Chat GPT.

Chat GPT, created by OpenAI, is a software that allows users to ask questions or “enter a chat” with AI Algorithms. Users can ask ChatGPT any series of questions and it will answer. From “why is the sky blue” to “summarize Plato’s philosophy” to “write a poem in the style of Shakespeare” ChatGPT will have an answer. Not all answers produced by the platform are accurate, but a great majority are making it a very effective tool for research with academics already starting to utilize it ³⁴.

For all the opportunities though there are some very real issues that have been brought on by the new and exciting resource: academic integrity, and privacy. Educational institutions have been struggling with plagiarism for decades and have adopted tools like Turnitin to minimize it ³⁵. ChatGPT though, compiles far more information from a larger data pool that to many instructors sounds like human generated content. Many institutions which utilize individual research assignments now have another battle, ensuring students are turning in genuine assignments and not AI created texts. This makes academic integrity an uphill battle.

³³ Siripurapu, Abhi. “AI Beats Grandmasters in Chess - the Startup - Medium.” Medium, 31 Dec. 2021, <https://medium.com/swlh/ai-beats-grandmasters-in-chess-cacb0a06bb5b>

³⁴ “Ai Makes Plagiarism Harder to Detect, Argue Academics – in Paper Written by Chatbot.” The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 19 Mar. 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/mar/19/ai-makes-plagiarism-harder-to-detect-argue-academics-in-paper-written-by-chatbot>

³⁵ “‘Turnitin’ Now Turns to College Applications.” University World News, www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20120203174523395.

Another issue that comes up is a matter of privacy. Recently, Italy banned the use of ChatGPT on the basis that it collects very large amounts of data about users. ChatGPT allows users to view the title of chats other users create ³⁶. Not all responses are created equal though. China, a country with very strict regulations on what and how citizens access information also see the potential of the software. While Chinese nationals do not have access to ChatGPT, Chinese companies are creating alternatives that are in line with state regulations, including the recent one disallowing deepfake works ³⁷. Chat GPT has grown beyond an academic issue and has become a political one as well.

Another concern that may prompt political response is the lack of efficient age restrictions for users. While users are not allowed to be under 18, ChatGPT does not require age verifications meaning children can access potentially explicit material. In many cases that may mean content that does not fit with national regulation standards that might exist in movies and TV ³⁸.

Despite all the potential negative impacts of ChatGPT, AI generative text platforms offer a very promising glimpse into the future automations. Thus far automation had been able to overcome the limitations of human physicality. AI generative text platforms have could replace the human element of language.

³⁶ Browne, Ryan. "Italy Became the First Western Country to Ban CHATGPT. Here's What Other Countries Are Doing." CNBC, CNBC, 4 Apr. 2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/04/04/italy-has-banned-chatgpt-heres-what-other-countries-are-doing.html>

³⁷ Browne, Ryan. "Italy Became the First Western Country to Ban CHATGPT. Here's What Other Countries Are Doing." CNBC, CNBC, 4 Apr. 2023, <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/04/04/italy-has-banned-chatgpt-heres-what-other-countries-are-doing.html>

³⁸ "Guide to CHATGPT for Parents and Caregivers." Common Sense Media, <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/guide-to-chatgpt-for-parents-and-caregivers>

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Iran and Saudi Arabia Deal - A new world order in the Middle East?

by *Kleio Argyropoulou*

After years of hostilities, Iran and Saudi Arabia have agreed to re-establish diplomatic and economic relations, as well as to re-open respective embassies within the next weeks in Riyadh and Tehran. The agreement, mediated by China and signed in Beijing last March, offers a new chapter of hope for stability and safety in the Persian Gulf, and especially for peace in Yemen, where proxy wars are present with the Iranian-backed Houthis fighting against the Saudi coalition³⁹.

Since 2016, when ties were cut officially, Iran has sunk in isolation, with the two states combating over influence in Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, while Iran's support for Russia's war in Ukraine, pushes it closer to Moscow and Beijing⁴⁰. For years, China as a top oil importer, has ensured a safe passage for oil and goods in the Gulf. Hence, for the Chinese to broker the pact was perceived as a diplomatic victory⁴¹. Through the agreement, Ebrahim Raisi aims to settle social unrest with less derogatory news coverage from Saudi Arabia, while Mohammed bin Salman is concentrating on a positive agenda, where Iran is included in the de-escalation of conflicts and the increase of regional cooperation and economic prosperity for both, imagining its country as a regional or even global superpower⁴². However, Iran's commitment to the United Nations to stop arming the Houthis and therefore end the war in Yemen was not included in the joint statement.⁴³

³⁹ Gokar S. and Aarabi K., "The Real Motivation Behind Iran's Deal With Saudi Arabia", *Foreign Policy*, 2023.

⁴⁰ Gallagher A., Hamasaeed S., Nada G. "What You Need to Know About China's Saudi Iran Deal", *United States Institute of Peace*, 2023.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Keynoush B. "How Tehran views the Iranian- Saudi agreement", *Middle East Institute*, 2023

⁴³ Farouk Y., "Riyadh's Motivations Behind the Saudi-Iran Deal", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2023.

The United States have welcomed the agreement with a doubt on Iran's commitment. Moreover, in a region where it has served as a traditional ally for Saudi Arabia, China seems to be gaining an increasing influence in soft and economic power. If this implies the creation of a new world order is yet to be known.

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Israeli Judicial Reform Protests

By *Henry McGlaughlin*

Since the start of the year, Israel has been wracked by successive protests, each gaining in size and fervor over the state of democracy in the country. Demonstrators are seeking an immediate halt to the plans of judicial reform enacted by the ruling conservative coalition government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu.

Currently under investigation for bribery, breach of trust, and fraud, Prime Minister Netanyahu has been accused of plotting judicial overhauls to obfuscate the criminal proceedings into his alleged crimes⁴⁴. The planned revamp of the judiciary would include many provisions that critics say would weaken separation of powers between branches of government, specifically handing over more authority to the Knesset, Israel's parliament. These moves are seen by domestic and international observers as democratic backsliding, with US President Joseph Biden saying he was "very concerned" and condemning the political maneuver⁴⁵. Protests crescendoed after Sunday, the 26th of March when Netanyahu fired his defense minister Yaov Gallant, who had recently criticized the planned reform of the judiciary by calling the plans for reform "a clear, immediate, and tangible threat to the security of the state"⁴⁶. Estimates put the size of protesting crowds in Tel Aviv, the financial heart of Israel at close to 150,000, and roughly 450,000 around the country⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ Joseph, Yonette, and Patrick Kingsley. "Netanyahu Will Return With Corruption Charges Unresolved. Here's Where the Case Stands." *The New York Times*, 2022.

⁴⁵ Estrin, Daniel. "A Non-Invite, a Mind-Your-Own-Business Response — Biden and Netanyahu Tensions Rise." *NPR*, 2023.

⁴⁶ Fabian, Emanuel, and Alexander Fulbright. *Gallant Calls to Pause Judicial Overhaul, Citing 'Tangible Danger' to State Security*, Times of Israel, 2023

⁴⁷ *Israelis Continue Protests over Judicial Overhaul Plans*. *Aljazeera*, 2023

Bowing to international condemnation and huge domestic pressure, Netanyahu halted the judicial reform plans immediately on the 27th of March, with the striking of hundreds of thousands of workers forcing his hand. Such a large, general strike involving most sectors of the economy is unprecedented in Israel, and ground activity to a halt across the nation⁴⁸. In the days following the announcement, Netanyahu additionally agreed to reverse his decision to fire defense minister Gallant. While the situation appears to have stabilized for the moment, protests remain, and Netanyahu has yet to abandon his controversial reform plans.

⁴⁸ Smith, Patrick, et al. "Netanyahu Agrees to Pause Judicial Overhaul Following Widespread Unrest." *NBC*, 2023

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The Willow Project

By *Faidra Chrysostali*

On March 13, the Biden administration approved a major oil-drilling project in Alaska's petroleum-rich North Slope, called the *Willow Project*⁴⁹. Today, Alaska's North Slope is one of the most promising regions in the United States for new oil⁵⁰, and it is estimated to produce 160,000 barrels of oil per day for the next 30 years⁵¹. According to Villevieille, the US Policy Institute Center for American Progress has calculated that the burning of the oil produced by the *Willow Project* will generate 260 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, surpassing the emissions avoided through the Biden administration's promises to produce renewable energy by 2030⁵². Nevertheless, the Biden administration approved the project, in the knowledge that it would be extremely controversial, and it would generate strong public opposition⁵³.

Environmental organizations such as Greenpeace have characterized the project as a "betrayal" and "climate catastrophe", urging people to act against the issue. More than 5 million people have signed online petitions demanding Biden to stop the project from happening and keep his previous promises regarding climate change⁵⁴. Moreover, the administration is now being sued by Earthjustice due to concerns that the project will harm local animal populations that are key to the community and may become species under threat of extinction⁵⁵. President Biden has responded to these complaints by saying that "he is prepared to satisfy the pressures of Big Oil

⁴⁹ Puko, T. *What Is Willow? How an Alaska Oil Project Could Impact the Environment*. Washington Post, 2023

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *New US oil project will produce emissions of 66 coal plants*. Euronews, 2023

⁵² Villevieille, M. *The Willow Project: The Beginning of the End?* The Organization for World Peace, 2023

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Bowe, R. *The Willow Project Has Been Approved. Now What?* Earthjustice, 2023

rather than the needs of the people” and that he is confident that they are on the right track⁵⁶. In conclusion, the *Willow Project* is one of those initiatives that we cannot afford to let continue, because it will threaten our existence.

⁵⁶ Villeveille, 2023

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