

This Week's Developments

August 29 – September 4, 2021

- Emboldened Iran to hold war drills with Russia & China
- A Deadly Political Divide
- Syria: Israeli air strikes target areas near Damascus
- Russia looks to fill Afghan power vacuum as US exits
- Nothing will stop US sailing in S.China Sea, US warns
- Melting ice fuels Putin's dream of Arctic trade route
- *Additional & Supporting Articles*

Emboldened Iran to hold war drills with Russia & China

Washington Free Beacon, August 29, 2021



EVENT

Iran is set to hold a series of war drills with Russia and China, as the hardline regime celebrates the United States' bungled evacuation in Afghanistan and boosts its enrichment of nuclear weapons-grade uranium to historically high levels. Iranian and Russian leaders announced on Monday that their countries, along with China, will hold joint maritime war exercises in the Persian Gulf later this year or early in 2022, according to Iran's state-controlled media. The countries said they will focus on "shipping security and combating piracy" as the United States reduces its military footprint in the region following its marred withdrawal from Afghanistan. Iran's new hardline president, Ebrahim Raisi, celebrated what he called America's "military failure" in Afghanistan last week, saying the Biden administration's "military defeat and its withdrawal must become an opportunity to restore life, security, and durable peace in Afghanistan." Iranian officials also have sought to increase ties with the Taliban, historically a regional enemy, as it expands its footprint in the region.

COMMENT

America's enemies are taking advantage of the botched withdrawal from Afghanistan. Iran, Russia and China are coming together with war games in the Persian Gulf. This is significant from a prophecy point of view. The Persian Gulf is mentioned in Isaiah 21 - it speaks of Elam and Media (areas of modern Iran) rising up and besieging. It also mentions the sea. The sea next to Elam is the Persian Gulf. We therefore expect to see great trouble in this area at some point. Also, Ezekiel 38 says that Russia will act as a guard (protector) of Iran. The proposed war games are part of this. All this comes as Iran increases uranium enrichment and talks over Iran's nuclear deal stall....

BIBLE QUOTE

The burden of the desert of the sea.]Persian Gulf] As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land. A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease. (Isaiah 21:1-2)

A Deadly Political Divide

US News & World Report, July 23, 2021



EVENT

Listen in on a late 20th century conversation about politics, and the banter might be about ...trickle-down economics ... or .. the federal government .. welfare ..

Fast-forward ... decades, and ... Today, the political divide has become more drastic, and more dire, with implications for life-vs.-death and democracy-vs.-autocracy. America, recovering from a deadly pandemic ...is increasingly divided into two starkly different camps.

Pollsters...are now posing questions they never imagined they'd ask – or have to ask. ... as it happens, 9% agreed and another 16% only "mostly" disagreed that "the COVID-19 vaccine contains a surveillance microchip that is the sign of the beast in biblical prophecy."

15% of Democrats and 23% of Republicans believe that government, the financial community and the media are "controlled by Satan-worshipping pedophiles who run a global child sex-trafficking operation." Nearly a third (32%) of Republicans believe the vaccine is a tool for the government to implant microchips, compared to 14% of Democrats and 18% of independents. About two-thirds of Democrats and less than a third of Republicans believe the theory is "definitely false."

"COVID "is the honey badger of political issues. It doesn't care about your religion, political affiliation, or ethnicity – COVID doesn't care. Yet it's regarded as a partisan football because now everything is regarded as a partisan football," ...

COMMENT

Covid-19 is termed a "pandemic" influencing politics, religion and finance throughout the world. The origin of this word is interesting. It has linkage to "plague" and "pestilence", including the terrible Black Death plague that affected "all" (gr "Pan") people (Gr "demic"). "Pan" goes back further than that, being the name for the god of "all" ("Pan") gods. The Jews and Greeks alike in Jesus' day deemed the god "Pan" to be Satan and the Devil and called it the "god of the underworld". His abode, or one of them, was at the site of the transfiguration at the base of Mt Hermon and the source of the Jordan. He brought about "pan-demonium" and influenced political disruption and caused pestilence and the plague or "pandemic". Not only did Jesus, at his Olivet prophecy, predict that pestilences or pandemics would be a sign preceding his coming, but at the event of Peter's confession at Mt Hermon he assured his disciples that Pan had no power whatsoever over the ecclesia he would establish on the basis of that confession

BIBLE QUOTE

...and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences [pan-demics]; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be - Luke 21:11

"...thou art Peter, and upon this rock [Peter's confession] I will build my church [assembly]; and the gates of hell [Pan] shall not prevail against it." - Matt 16:18

Syria says Israeli air strikes target areas near Damascus

Reuters, September 3, 2021



EVENT

Israel carried out air strikes on targets near Damascus early on Friday, triggering Syrian air defences but causing no casualties, Syrian state media reported, the second such attack in just over two weeks. The Israeli military declined to comment on the report. A Syrian military source quoted by state media said Syrian air defences shot down most of the Israeli missiles and only material damage was done in the attack launched at 1:26 a.m. Syrian TV showed footage of the air defences being fired. The Israeli army said a **surface-to-air missile launched from Syrian territory towards Israeli air space had exploded over the Mediterranean Sea** and residents in central Israel had located several fragments of the projectile on the ground. Many residents of central Israel reported hearing a large explosion at the time Syria reported the strike. Blasts were also heard in Lebanon, from whose air space the attack was launched.

COMMENT

Israel has been attacking Iranian positions in Syria for several years. **The attack on Friday was supposed to be (from Israel's point of view) a routine operation. However it wasn't.** Multiple blasts were heard in a wide range of towns from Netanyahu in the north, through Herzliya, Rosh Ha'Ayin, Ramat Gan, Givatayim, Tel Aviv and Rishon Letzion. Reports from Israel intelligence agencies say two missiles were fired towards Israel from Syria. One was a Syria anti-air missile that **exploded north of Tel Aviv**. The second one was a surface-to-surface Russian-made Scud. Both were intercepted by Israel. Syria appears to be raising the stakes and responding directly to Israel's strikes. **Assad would have got approval from Russia to do this.** Isaiah 17 is getting closer....

BIBLE QUOTE

The burden of Damascus. Behold, **Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim [northern Israel]**, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.

(Isaiah 17:1+3)

Russia looks to fill Afghan power vacuum as US exits

DW, September 1, 2021



EVENT

Although the US and Russia are both interested in keeping Afghanistan from falling into civil war, Moscow is unlikely to overtly support any continued NATO presence in the country. Johnny Walsh, a senior expert on Afghanistan at the United States Institute of Peace, told DW that **Moscow would like to keep the Afghan state afloat and prevent instability that could lead to a refugee crisis.** For Russia, this means working with regional powers to ensure stability in the region and to keep the US at bay. Experts say this may result in a **strong Russian influence in Afghanistan after the US departure.** "This is fundamentally a conflict among Afghans, and Afghans must decide how to end it. But the regional powers are influential. Russia doesn't care much about human rights issues, and **that makes Russia an attractive partner for the Taliban,**" Walsh pointed out.

COMMENT

As the Taliban takes over in Afghanistan, **Russia has appointed itself as a mediator in the war-torn country.** This underlines its position as a **key stakeholder.** Russia can hardly hide its desire to expand its influence in the region to fill the power vacuum left by the retreating U.S. military. President Putin's special envoy to Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, said Moscow has been working to establish "contacts with the Taliban movement for the last seven years. Just as Putin intervened in the Syrian civil war, **Putin's aim is to have a major footprint in the region.** This is all part of his ambitions to restore Russian geopolitical influence and **counteract the West - especially the US and UK.** This support from Russia will give the Taliban the lifeline it needs to stay in power. This in turn could lead to the nation once more becoming a breeding ground for terrorists. It must be part of the events that herald the time of trouble such as never was

BIBLE QUOTE

And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and **he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many:** *these verse are speaking about Gog* *(Daniel 8:24-25)*

Nothing will stop US sailing in South China Sea, US warns China

The Times, September 9, 2021



EVENT

The United States insisted that “nothing will deter” it from sending its navy through the strategic waterways of the South China Sea after China reacted angrily to the presence of a warship close to one of its island military bases. The USS Benfold, a guided-missile destroyer, sailed on Wednesday within 12 nautical miles of Mischief Reef, one of a growing number of rocks and islets to have been claimed by China and converted into stationary aircraft carriers with long runways, radar and the capacity to host missiles. It was the latest in a series of what the US calls “freedom of navigation operations” intended to demonstrate the US’s rejection of Chinese sovereignty over the South China Sea, parts of which are also claimed by Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. It was the first such exercise since China put into force a law that requires foreign vessels to get permission to sail through what it insists are its sovereign waters.

COMMENT

One-third of the world's maritime shipping passes through the South China Sea, carrying over \$3 trillion in trade each year. Beijing has spent years turning islands and reefs in the South China Sea into military bases and airstrips. These man-made artificial islands are heavily fortified with missiles, runways and weapons systems -- this has prompted America to sail past some of them with warships. These islands are thousands of miles from China and difficult for them to defend. However they will bank on the fact that any attack would be seen as tantamount to an act of war against a vast nuclear power. The time of trouble such as never was could well involve this as well.

BIBLE QUOTE

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. The time of trouble will include total financial collapse (Daniel 12:1)

Melting ice fuels Vladimir Putin's dream of Arctic trade route

The Times, August 27, 2021



EVENT For Russia, the rapidly melting ice sheets signal new opportunities for lucrative commercial shipping along the Northern Sea Route, a passageway from northern Europe to Asia that the Kremlin is touting as a faster alternative to the Suez Canal. The route, which stretches for thousands of miles along Russia's Arctic coastline, can cut almost two weeks off a journey from Hamburg to Tokyo via the canal. The project received a boost in March when the Egyptian canal was blocked for six days by a huge container ship. The Northern Sea Route is a key element in Russia's broader bid to develop the Arctic. The receding ice means that voyages that once seemed like the stuff of science fiction are now a reality. In 2017 a Russian-owned tanker, became the first ship to travel the Northern Sea Route without the help of icebreaking vessels.

COMMENT Putin is obsessed by oil and gas. Energy is the one area that Russia makes money. Russia's economy is entirely dependent on it. The Northern Sea Route transports cargo from Russia to China and beyond. Much of the cargo consists of oil, liquefied natural gas and other fuels. Cargo volumes on the route have already increased tenfold over the past decade, reaching 32 million tonnes last year. President Putin wants that figure to almost triple by 2024. Climate change is helping him do this. We see here several elements of Bible prophecy. The Bible calls Russia the "king of the north". We see Russia dominating the far reaches of the north. The Bible also says that Russia comes south into Israel to take a spoil. Putin wants Russia to be a superpower again and he needs wealth to do this – and one day he will take it by force....

BIBLE QUOTE You [Gog] will say, "I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars. I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the centre of the land [of Israel]. (Ezekiel 38:11-12 NIV)

ADDITIONAL AND SUPPORTING ARTICLES

DebkaFile Review (world events through the bi-focals of Israeli military intelligence)

2021-09-16 Israel Silent After Airstrike on Iran-Backed Militia; U.S. Denies Involvement 8:00 min

2021-09-12 Why China is building islands in the South China Sea (2017) – Vox 7:20 min

2021-09-03 Israeli Airstrike on Iran Weapons Factory Near Damascus; Syrian Missile Response – YouTube 8:34 min

2021-08-25 Israel WARNS Iran Close to a Nuclear Bomb & Afghanistan Crisis Update - YouTube

2021-08-17 Timeline of U.S. Withdrawal from Afghanistan

2021-08-13 Israeli Archaeologists Find Evidence of Ancient Biblical Earthquake in Jerusalem – YouTube 8:20 min

2021-08-07 Israel's Iron Dome BLOCKS Hezbollah's Rocket "Response" to Israeli Airstrikes – YouTube 11:46 min

2021-08-06 Israel Ready to STRIKE Iran, Defense Minister Confirms; Raisi Takes Presidency - YouTube 12:18 min

2021-08-05 Rockets Launched at Israel as Tensions with Iran Reach Boiling Point - YouTube 13:41 min

2021-08-04 Israel WARNS Iran Over Attacks and Slams EU Appeasement - YouTube 11:15 min

2021-08-03 Israel Vows Response to Iran Drone Attack as U.S. & UK Pledge Support - YouTube 10:32 min

2021-07-31 Israeli Airstrikes in Syria Escalate Tension w- Russia; Prophetic Implications- - Watchman Newscast

2021-07-25 Iran 2.11 Water crisis spurs violence in Khuzestan, anti-govt protests rage - Oneindia News - YouTube

2021-07-25 Iran 3.24 Violence escalates in water-shortage protests in Iran's Khuzestan - Drought - YouTube

Territorial Disputes South China Sea



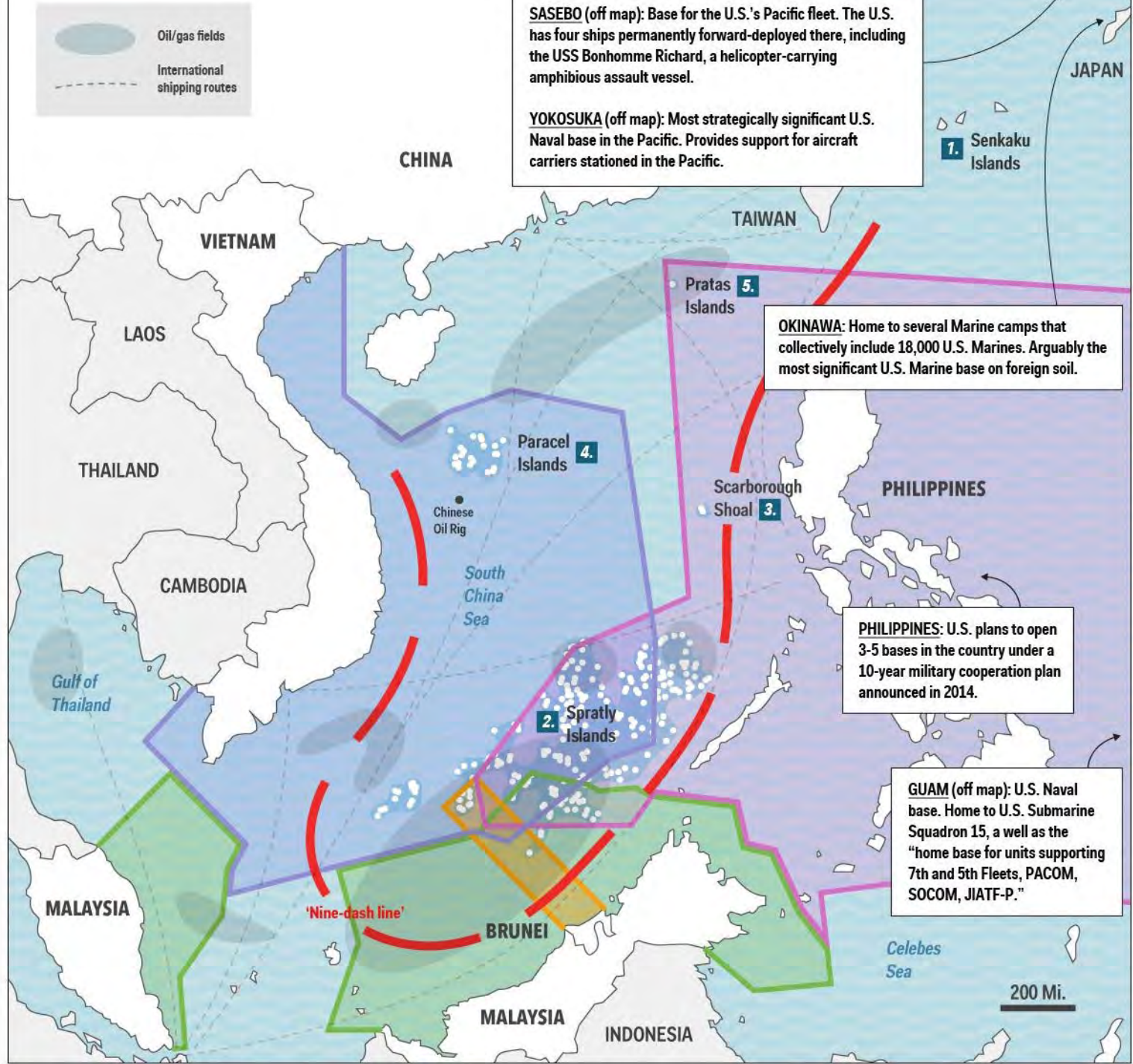
Mischief Reef

Oil/gas fields
International shipping routes

SASEBO (off map): Base for the U.S.'s Pacific fleet. The U.S. has four ships permanently forward-deployed there, including the USS Bonhomme Richard, a helicopter-carrying amphibious assault vessel.

YOKOSUKA (off map): Most strategically significant U.S. Naval base in the Pacific. Provides support for aircraft carriers stationed in the Pacific.

1. Senkaku Islands



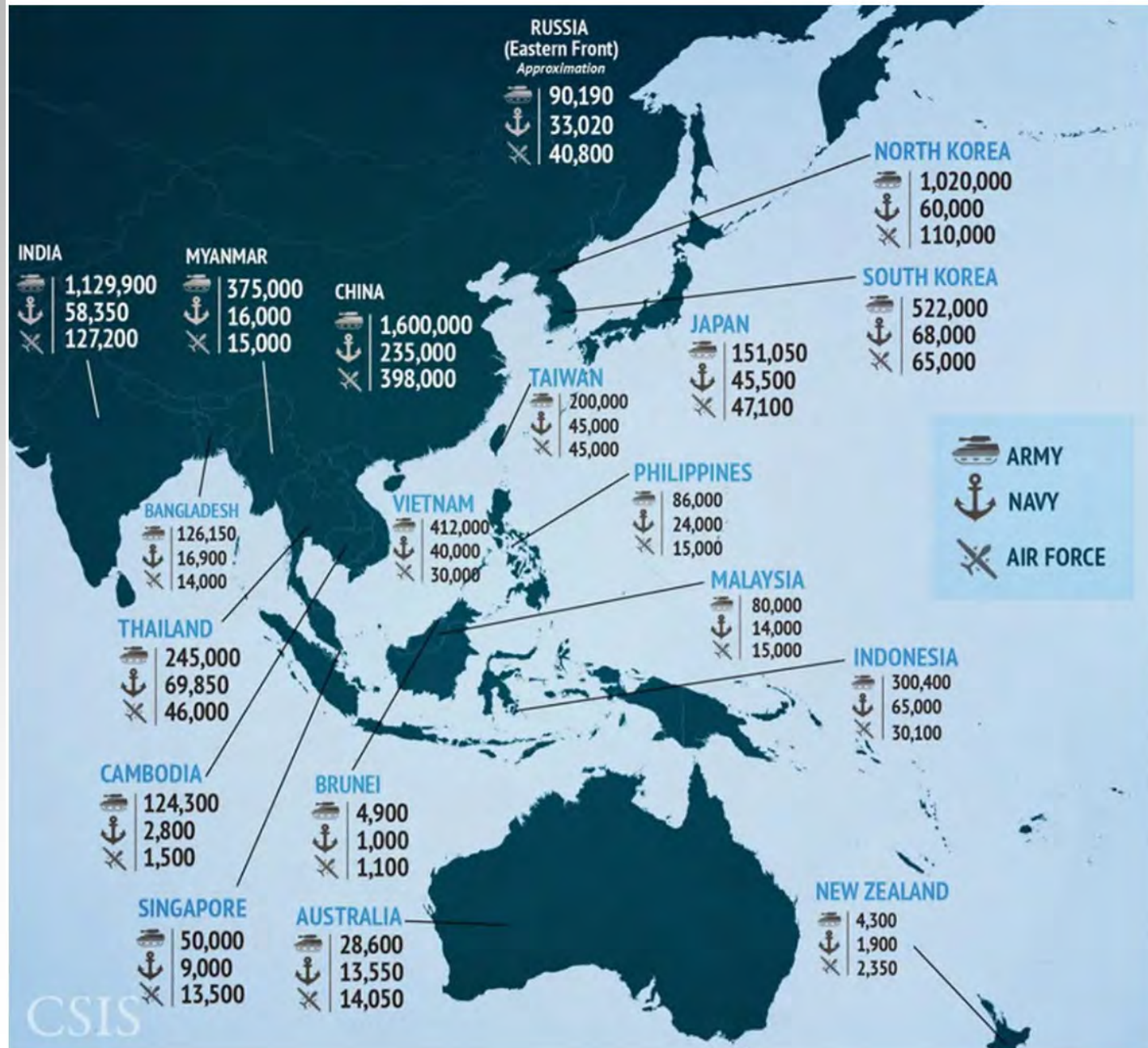
OKINAWA: Home to several Marine camps that collectively include 18,000 U.S. Marines. Arguably the most significant U.S. Marine base on foreign soil.

PHILIPPINES: U.S. plans to open 3-5 bases in the country under a 10-year military cooperation plan announced in 2014.

GUAM (off map): U.S. Naval base. Home to U.S. Submarine Squadron 15, a well as the "home base for units supporting 7th and 5th Fleets, PACOM, SOCOM, JIATF-P."

200 Mi.

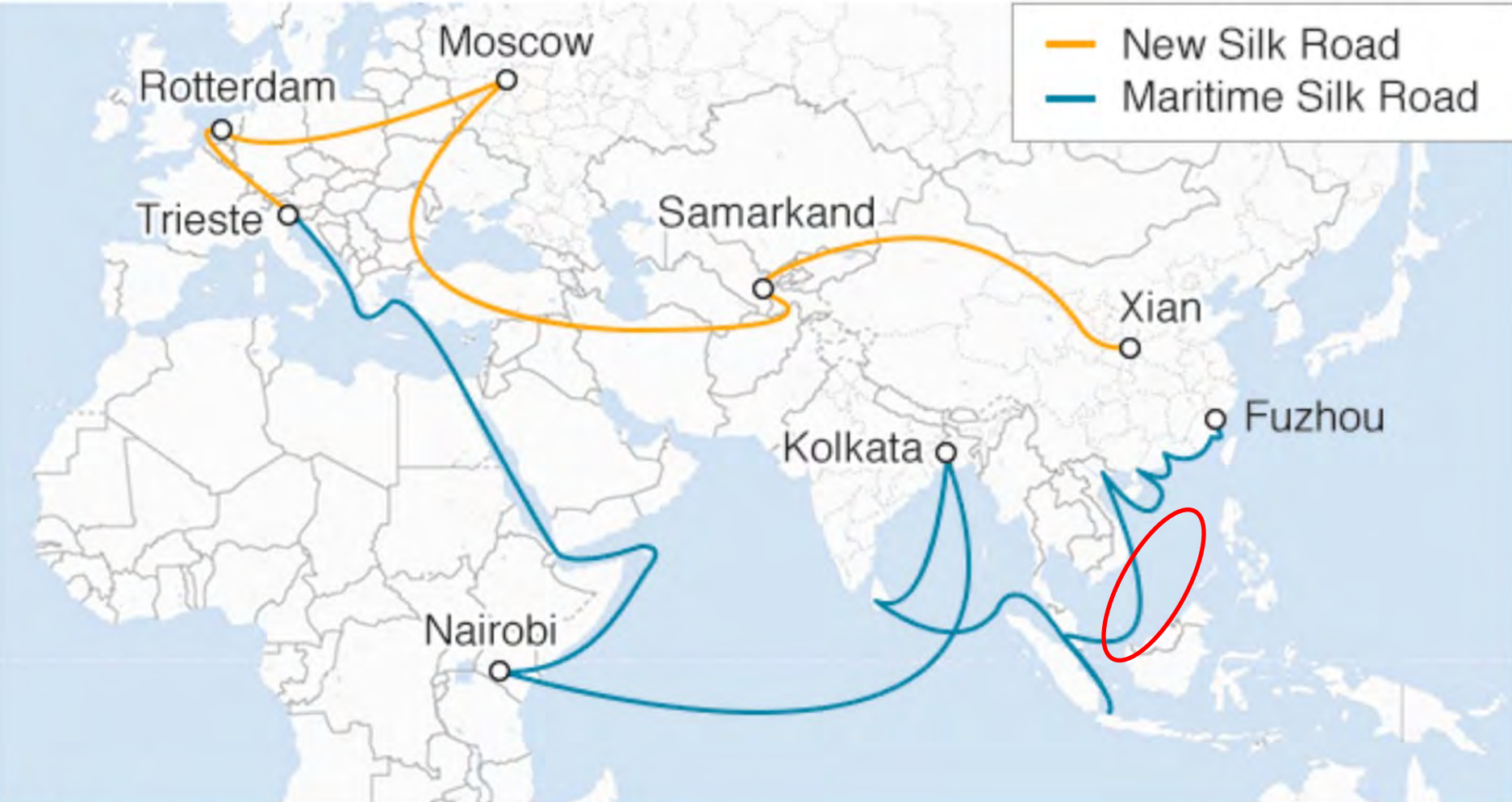
16. Asian Military Personnel



17. US Military Personnel in East Asia



China's New Silk Road



Source: Chinese government



Advantages of the Northern Sea Route

Rotterdam to Yokohama	-3,840NM	9.0 days
to Shanghai	-2,361NM	5.5 days

