



Risk Mitigation Consulting Inc.

Intelligence and Analysis Division

OPEN SOURCE UPDATE

July 2022

INTENT

This open source periodical is designed to provide an overview of relevant, publicly available information on threat and hazard events and analysis of potential impacts to the interests of the United States, both at home and abroad. This product is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of all threat and hazard news and inclusion in this product does not constitute a confirmation of credibility nor precedence by RMC.



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Threats

Increase in Anti-LGBTQ Activity During Pride Month – *Civil Disturbance*

Summary: Over the weekend of 11-12 June 2022, the ADL Center on Extremism (COE) monitored seven in-person extremist activities targeting the LGBTQ community. Most notably, 31 members of the Texas-based white supremacist group Patriot Front were arrested on 11 June on misdemeanor criminal conspiracy charges after police stopped their U-Haul truck near a “Pride in the Park” event in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Among those arrested were the group’s leader, Thomas Rousseau.

While the targeting of LGBTQ events is not new, recent event have been fueled in part by the claim that members of the LGBTQ community are pedophiles who are “grooming” children. “Grooming” refers to actions taken by abusers to sexualize, manipulate and coerce minors. Incidents fueled by the anti-LGBTQ “groomer” narrative have not been limited to Pride month. Last month, several white supremacist groups staged similar protests across the country. On 14 May, eight individuals associated with White Lives Matter Florida and the Proud Boys demonstrated outside of Disney World, referencing the company’s response to Florida’s “Parental Rights in Education” (referred to by some as the “Don’t Say Gay” bill) legislation.

Analyst Comment: Pride Month is observed in June to honor the anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, which is a touchstone event in LGBTQ history. The influx of anti-LGBTQ activity during June likely coincides in some part with the large number of Pride-focused events planned and hosted over the month. Though, again, it is important to note the targeting of LGBTQ events has a long history of occurrences not limited to the month of June.

The targeting of LGBTQ events is notable as a source of civil disturbance activity, with the potential to develop into violent or property crime incidents. In many of the events noted in June, violent threats were made. Bomb threats, mass shooting threats, and gun-related death threats were also made, leading to the cancelation of some events. Locations that have been targeted span a wide array, including private, adults-only events, large corporations, and public children’s events. Some of the anti-LGBTQ activity was planned by nationally known hate groups that broadly fall under far right, neo-fascist, neo-Nazi, and/or white nationalist banners. Anti-LGBTQ activity was not limited to members of these organizations. Both small local groups and lone actors were frequently noted.

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Pro-Abortion Group Jane's Revenge Attacks Crisis Pregnancy Centers Throughout the U.S. – *Civil Disturbance*

Summary: Jane's Revenge is a pro-abortion rights group that has claimed responsibility for several acts of civil disturbance, including vandalism and arson, targeting various crisis pregnancy centers and Catholic places of worship in the U.S. The attacks began after the May 2022 leak of the Supreme Court decision for *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which overturned *Roe v. Wade* on 24 June. Throughout the months of June and July, attacks by Jane's Revenge have increased, including an arson attack at a pro-life group in Madison, Wisconsin, vandalism at an office building in Michigan that was shared by a pro-life group, and vandalism of a Christian faith-based pregnancy in Nashville, North Carolina, among others. The group has broken windows and sprayed graffiti reading "Jane's Revenge" on buildings. Additionally, Jane's Revenge has threatened to target any anti-abortion group that is still operational, promising to "never stop, back down, slow down, or retreat."

Analyst Comment: Acts of violence and disorder such as riots and unlawful obstructions and assemblies are often done in the name of political and social movements, foreign policy, and climate change, among other causes. Many of these movements are rooted in the defense of the perceived rights of the individual pertaining to religion, race, gender, and sexuality. Political and social movements have been closely monitored over the past five years, as these movements have been one of the leading causes of unrest. The pro-choice extremist group Jane's Revenge has claimed responsibility for 13 incidents targeting pro-life pregnancy centers, Catholic places of worship, and congressional offices. Furthermore, the group has been blamed for six1 additional incidents. It is likely that the group will continue to attack crisis pregnancy centers and may seek to direct acts of civil disturbance towards elected officials. Furthermore, counter-protestors from the anti-abortion and pro-life movements may respond to the attacks by Jane's Revenge.

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Use of TikTok by Service Members Continues to be National Security Concern for U.S. Lawmakers – *Cyber*

Summary: National security concerns have arisen over servicemembers and their family's usage of the TikTok app, according to a U.S. regulator. The message to lawmakers came during a hearing held to explore financial fraud targeting service members and veterans. Threats to active duty and



veterans come from a variety of sources, but many of the frauds seen on other online platforms are also perpetrated on TikTok. The app has been identified in the past as a sophisticated surveillance tool capable of harvesting extensive amounts of sensitive data from search and browsing history, keystroke patterns, location data, and biometrics including face prints and voice prints. U.S. lawmakers continue to propose that the military should proactively urge servicemembers to not use the app. The Treasury and Commerce Departments are currently conducting a national security review of TikTok, which should conclude shortly. In a 05 July 2022 letter, senior U.S. lawmakers called on the Federal Trade Commission to initiate an investigation into TikTok.

Analyst Comment: TikTok is a social media app that hosts a variety of short-term user videos featuring comedy, dance, music, and entertainment. TikTok has been subject to criticism over psychological effects on its users, including addiction, as well as controversies over censorship and user privacy. Investigations into TikTok still continue for these reasons, to include complaints from U.S. lawmakers. President Joe Biden ordered the Secretary of Commerce to investigate the app to determine if it poses a threat to U.S. national security. Though TikTok was popular among U.S. service members, the app has been banned from government devices by the Department of Defense. The controversy over privacy will likely continue, as TikTok is a Chinese-owned firm and could engage in malicious activity on behalf of the government.

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“Incel” Terrorism is a Growing Domestic Threat – *Terrorism*

Summary: “Involuntary celibates,” or “incels,” have been deemed a growing domestic terror threat according to the United States Secret Service. The incel label was coined in the late 1990s by a Canadian woman who sought to create a positive internet forum for people unable to find a sexual partner. However, by the early 2000s, the incel community became dominated by young heterosexual men with aggressive views toward women. Though misogynistic violence is not a new trend, since 2014, men who identify as incels have committed violent attacks across the U.S., Canada, and Europe, often citing their inability to develop relationships with women as a primary motivation. A 2022 U.S. Secret Service report identifies the ideology as a terrorist threat and provides analysis of a variety of red-flag indicators of potential incel violence.



Analyst Comment: Due to the numerous active forums online, incels are often referred to as members of a global movement. The online community motivates individuals through the planning and execution phases of violent attacks and claims responsibility for the acts after they are committed. The incel movement is not an established terror organization, but rather a shared ideology. Though incels are often grouped in online chat rooms and forums, these groups usually lack leadership, structure, and/or an established agenda. They serve as a communication platform for members to express their frustrations with women. Incel attackers may use a variety of techniques to carry out acts of violence. For example, the first major incel-attributed attack occurred in 2014 in Isla Vista, California, when 22-year-old Elliot Rodger killed six and injured 14 others in a spree that included stabbings, a vehicle ramming attack, and a shooting outside of a sorority house. Rodger died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound after the attack. Prior to the spree, he was an active social media user who often posted about his struggles in dating, his hatred for women and interracial couples, as well as his plans for revenge. He penned a manifesto entitled “My Twisted World.” Since the attack, Rodgers, has been adopted by the incel community as a face of the movement. Other recent attacks that have cited incel inspiration include the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, a 2018 vehicle ramming attack on Yonge Street in Toronto, Canada, and a 2021 mass shooting in Devon, England.

There is no established history of incel terrorists targeting DoD personnel or assets. However, as the ideology is easily accessible online, the greatest threat to DoD personnel is self-radicalization followed by violence. As with other extremist ideologies and organizations, self-identified incels may join the military with the goal of accessing equipment and training for a future attack, as was the case with a U.S. Army basic trainee in 2021. The trainee was arrested for attempting to commit a hate crime and illegally possessing a machine gun three months after being discharged from the military. According to his manifesto, he joined the Army with the intention to train for a planned mass shooting of women at an Ohio university.

The National Threat Assessment Center research has shown that there is no standard profile of an individual who plans or carries out an act of targeted violence like those committed by self-described incels, and there are no indications to suggest that DoD personnel are more or less likely to engage in incel terrorism than the general public. However, as the DoD examines extremism within the military, incel violence may be a threat that continues to draw attention in the future.

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Chinese Company Purchases Farmland Near Grand Forks Air Force Base – Foreign Intelligence Entities (FIE)

Summary: A Chinese company has purchased 300 acres of farmland in North Dakota, just a 20-minute drive from Grand Forks Air Force Base. The installation is believed to contain some of the U.S. military’s most sensitive drone technology. While Fufeng Group, which develops flavor enhancers and sugar substitutes, says that they will use the land to construct a \$700 million corn milling plant, U.S. military officials are concerned that this could enable China’s government to engage in espionage. In April, Senior Air Force officers asserted in a memo that the Chinese company’s presence there was a national security threat, indicating that “some of the most sensitive elements of Grand Forks exist with the digital uplinks and downlinks inherent with unmanned air systems and their interaction with space-based assets.” Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle also have raised the alarm about Fufeng Group’s proximity to sensitive data and the growing counterintelligence threat posed by China’s government.

Analyst Comment: Fufeng Group’s purchase of farmland near Grand Forks Air Force Base is not the first time a Chinese company’s location near an installation has raised concerns. Over five years, Chinese billionaire Sun Guangxin bought 140,000 acres close to Laughlin Air Force Base in Val Verde, TX, to develop a wind farm. However, once Sun's ties to the Chinese Communist Party came to light, there were concerns that the wind farm’s proximity to the Air Force Base would make Texas’s independently run electrical grid vulnerable to hacking. As a result, the Lone Star Infrastructure Protection Act was signed in June 2021. The act prohibits Texas businesses and governments from contracting with entities owned or controlled by individuals from “hostile nations” if the contracting relates to critical infrastructure in Texas. In 2012, President Obama issued an order that blocked Ralls Corp., a China-based company, from developing wind turbines in view of restricted air space at a naval weapons systems training facility in Oregon. The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) investigated and submitted recommendations during the Ralls Corp case. CFIUS is an interagency committee with the authority to review the U.S. national security impacts of specific foreign investment and real estate deals by foreign nationals. CFIUS also could play a significant role in determining the threat level associated with Fufeng Group in Grand Forks, ND. The fears surrounding Fufeng Group’s purchase and the history of Chinese companies seeking land near U.S. military sites highlight the threat of espionage against DoD facilities.

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Hazards

Earthquake in Afghanistan – Geological Hazards

Summary: Search and rescue operations were underway in eastern Afghanistan on 22 June 2022 following an earthquake that killed more than 1,000 people. The earthquake occurred while the country was and is facing an economic and humanitarian crisis.

The magnitude 6.1 quake struck in the morning near the city of Khost by the Pakistan border. At least 1,500 people have been reported injured. Officials warned that the toll would likely to rise as many families were already sleeping in unstable housing structures when the quake hit. Many homes in the area are made of mud, wood and other materials vulnerable to weather damage. The quake also coincided with heavy monsoon rains, adding to the danger of collapse. About 2,000 homes are thought to have been destroyed, according to the United Nations. Some people spent the night sleeping in makeshift outdoor shelters while rescuers searched for survivors.

Medics and emergency staff from around the country are converging on the site, with assistance from some international agencies such as the World Health Organization. However, help may be limited as many organizations pulled out of the aid-dependent country after the Taliban seized power last August.

Analyst Comment: Death estimates now exceed 1,150 people as aftershocks continued. This was the deadliest earthquake to occur in the country since a 6.1 earthquake hit in 1998, killing 4,500.

A massive natural disaster will always be challenging to respond to and recover from. However, this situation has a unique series of complications that will likely hinder response and recovery efforts. First, COVID-19 is still active throughout the country. Afghanistan has recorded 183,268 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 7,728 deaths since February 2020 and more than 6.4 million vaccine doses have been administered so far in the country. The population of the county is estimated to exceed 40 million, putting the vaccination rate at about 13%.

An additional unique consideration is the ongoing political changes. Since the Taliban retook power nearly 10 months ago, millions have faced hunger and poverty. Following the takeover, the international community ceased sending billions in development aid. Relief funds will be more challenging to obtain, though international organizations such as UNICEF still operate in the area.

In May it was estimated that 1.1 million children under the age of five will likely face the most severe form of malnutrition this year. Furthermore, the country faces an ongoing drought. The topography of the region has also hindered response efforts. The earthquake impacted a remote, mountainous region of Afghanistan. Poor roads further damaged by the earthquake have made the immediate response more difficult.



The cumulative impact of these nationwide issues will likely lead to even slower recovery and response efforts, leaving residents vulnerable to extreme heat, droughts, landslides, and/or flash floods. Aid workers have reported heavy monsoon rains following the quake, triggering concerns that landslides may occur.

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Chain of Command Issues Worsened Bonhomme Richard Fire – *Maritime Mishap*

Summary: In October 2021, the Navy released two reports regarding the July 2020 fire of the USS Bonhomme Richard. The ship was in homeport at Naval Base San Diego for maintenance. The fire burned for four days, resulting in approximately 63 injured sailors and civilians. The ship was decommissioned in April 2021. A junior sailor was charged with arson and is awaiting trial. The October 2021 reports detailed four main issues that elevated risk and undercut firefighting efforts, including the condition of the ship, the training and readiness of the crew, the integration between responsible firefighting organizations, and a lack of oversight and accountability by leadership. The report described “a lack of familiarity with requirements and procedural noncompliance at multiple levels of command.”

Open-source reporting has detailed the disorganization and bureaucratic obstacles that likely allowed the Bonhomme Richard to burn, even while there was a window of time to save it. A retired Vice Admiral has explained the issues to the media. The Vice Admiral served as the commander of Naval Surface Forces/Naval Surface Force U.S. Pacific Fleet during the fire. He stated that he lacked the authority to issue orders, but that he pleaded with the ship’s CO to return aboard and fight the fire. The CO and his crew were waiting on the pier while the Bonhomme Richard burned. According to regulations, the CO should have formed the incident command team with the NB San Diego Federal Fire Department and the Southwest Regional Maintenance Center. The Vice Admiral stated that there was friction between the civilian and military commands, leading to an uncoordinated and delayed effort.



Analyst Comment: The Vice Admiral stated that he established an ad-hoc chain of command to fight the fire. He received assistance from the Rear Admiral in command of Expeditionary Strike Group 3, who was placed in charge of the ad-hoc command center in the Vice Admiral's office. He then called the Vice Admiral in charge of the U.S. 3rd Fleet, who reportedly denied any responsibility while the ship was in maintenance. The U.S. Navy Chief of Information later said that two policies (OPNAVINST 3440.18 and the NAVSEA 8010 manual) "were not fully consistent, but they placed command and control responsibility on the administrative chain of command for a ship in this configuration. Third Fleet was the operational commander two echelons above the Bonhomme Richard."

Confusion over the chain of command structure for the USS Bonhomme Richard allowed the ship to burn. There was a crucial window when the ship might have been saved, but a lack of clarity regarding administrative versus operational control delayed the response, which was itself marred by several issues outlined in the October 2021 reports. This lack of clarity regarding command and control of a shipboard fire in maintenance status creates an environment where potential gaps or risk to mission may not be fully realized until the occurrence of this or a similar hazard event. While a particularly rare occurrence at this scale, this type of hazard, without effective mitigation or response procedures implemented, has the potential to cause immediate and possibly lasting impacts to the Navy's mission. On 15 July, the Navy announced that it had disciplined more than two dozen service members for their roles in the fire that destroyed the Bonhomme Richard.

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Monkeypox Virus Outbreak Spreads Throughout the U.S. – *Biological Hazards*

Summary: As of 14 July 2022, the monkeypox virus has been reported in 42 states across the U.S. with a total of 1,469 confirmed cases being reported. Monkeypox is a viral zoonotic disease (a virus transmitted to humans from animals) that occurs primarily in tropical rainforest areas of central and west Africa. This particular virus has symptoms that are similar to those seen in smallpox patients, despite monkeypox symptoms being less severe. Additionally, monkeypox is generally spread through close or intimate contact, with symptoms that include fever, headaches, muscle and backaches, chills, exhaustion, and rashes. Although the monkeypox virus is less transmissible than fast-spreading respiratory diseases such as COVID-19, the virus is spreading both in the U.S. and globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) has assessed that the global



risk level is currently moderate, as this is the first time that monkeypox cases and clusters have been reported in five WHO Regions.

Analyst Comment: The atypical nature of monkeypox cases and its transmission is something the WHO is monitoring. It is important to note that, although this virus is unlikely to reach pandemic levels of transmission and severity, the public health impact could become high if it spreads to individuals that are immunosuppressed. However, the current probability of Americans, including DoD personnel, being directly impacted by the virus appears to be low. In order to combat a potential pandemic, the U.S. has issued a statement indicating that 132,000 monkeypox vaccine (known as the “Jynneos vaccine”) doses will be arriving from Europe to the U.S. to mitigate the spread

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Marine Corps Conducts Safety Stand Down After Six Aircraft Mishaps – *Aircraft Mishap*

Summary: The Marine Corps has had six Class-A mishaps since January 2022, resulting in nine fatalities and the destruction of four aircraft. The most recent mishap occurred on 08 June, when a MV-22B Osprey crashed in Imperial County, California resulting in five Marines killed. Another MV-22B mishap occurred on 18 March during a NATO training exercise in Norway, resulting in the death of four Marines. Other incidents involving the destruction of aircraft included one on 03 March, when a F/A-18D Hornet crashed in Beaufort, South Carolina, and another on 06 January, at Joint Base McGuire, New Jersey when an AH-1Z Viper helicopter crashed on a final approach. Neither of these mishaps resulted in fatalities. On 13 June, a MARADMIN was issued to conduct a one-day Safety Stand Down between 21 June and 01 July to address the series of aircraft mishaps.

Analyst Comment: A Safety Stand Down is a practice that is directed to units in order to review best practices and focus on areas where improvements would be made to ensure, in this case, that aviation units remain capable, safe, and ready. According to the Marine Corps’s Aviation Mishap



Classification and Reporting Requirements, a “Class-A” mishap is one that results in \$2.5 million in property damage and/or causes fatalities or injuries that are equal to permanent total disability. The Stand Downs are expected to reinforce proper procedures, provide information, and gather feedback from all involved units. Investigations into these crashes are ongoing. According to the 2018 Annual Safety Report by the Navy, naval fixed wing aircraft experienced mishaps as a result of human error, material failure/malfunction, and special causes (anything relating to weather or bird impact that didn’t fall within the human error or material failure definition). By far human error outweighed the other two in every way. The mishap causal factor statistics for rotary-wing craft are very similar to fixed wing in that human factors were the overwhelming majority cause.

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Extreme Heat Across the Southern United States – *Meteorological Hazards*

Summary: Sixteen states across the southern United States are under heat alerts for the week of 07 July 2022 as the third heat wave of the summer brings the “feels-like” temperatures upwards of 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Several cities, including Birmingham, Atlanta, Raleigh, Memphis, Little Rock, Dallas, and St. Louis, will experience three-digit temperatures over the next week, and some cities are expected to experience overnight low temperatures over 80 degrees. Heat is the number-one cause of weather-related deaths in the U.S.. There have been at least 17 heat deaths during military training over the past decade and a 60% increase in heat-related injuries over the same period.



Analyst Comment: A 2019 Union of Concerned Scientists' threat report indicated that by 2050, U.S. military installations will experience an average of five times as many days with a heat index above 100 degrees Fahrenheit compared to the 1971-2000 average. Extreme heat like the wave currently impacting the U.S. South accounts for tens of thousands of lost duty days over the last 10 due to black-flag conditions, under which physical training and strenuous exercise is suspended or modified to include 50 minutes of rest for every 10 minutes of strenuous labor. Historically, just nine major military installations annually experience 30 or more days with a heat index over 100 degrees. By 2050, that number could rise to 100 installations, including Homestead Air Reserve Base, FL, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, LA, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, SC, and Lackland Air Force Base, TX. Heat related illnesses have been increasing since 2014 across every branch of service. While 1,751 heat illnesses were reported in 2014, by 2018 the sum increased to 2,792 instances of heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Over 40% of heat illness cases from 2014-2019 occurred on five U.S. military installations. These included Fort Polk, LA, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune/Cherry Point, NC, Fort Campbell, KY, Fort Bragg, NC, and Fort Benning, GA, all of which are located in the American South. Heat illnesses are also costly to the Department of Defense. According to a 2018 study on direct and indirect costs of heat injuries among Active Duty and National Guard/Reserve soldiers, the total direct care cost to the Army was \$7.3 million. Indirect costs due to lost duty days were estimated at \$36 million.

In addition to presenting health and training readiness issues, extreme heat in areas with high concentrations of military installations poses a threat to physical infrastructure onboard bases. On 11 July, flights were suspended after high temperatures melted the tarmac at Royal Air Force Cranwell in the UK, and in 2016, over 43 commercial flights with service to and from the American Southwest were canceled due to a heat wave bringing temperatures upwards up 120 degrees Fahrenheit to California, Nevada, and Arizona.

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Climate Change Impacts the U.S. Electric Grid – *Meteorological Hazards*

Summary: The rise of extreme heat incidents during the summer months in some regions of the U.S. has experts warning that states facing exceptionally high temperatures could endure more power outages. According to energy experts, many power grid operators evaluate historical weather trends instead of more extreme projections that consider climate change's impact. As a result, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) and other officials are warning that there may not be enough power in certain states over the 2022 summer months due to extreme climate conditions. For example, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) asked Texans to conserve power after six power plants were knocked offline in May. In July, after the National Weather Service issued an excessive heat warning in many parts of Texas, ERCOT again called for voluntary energy conservation as energy emergency alerts warned of potential rolling blackouts. Other states, such as California, also have observed that the demand increase for energy during extreme climate conditions has contributed to power supply uncertainties.

Analyst Comment: The increasing trend of extreme heat causing energy consumption constraints has pushed some military installations to analyze the resilience of their power sources. A loss of continuous power could impact the ability of bases to offer emergency services and support critical operations. Concerns about installations' reliance on external infrastructure have influenced some to develop resilience initiatives. Some installations have committed to testing the effectiveness of "microgrids" to offer backup energy and decrease carbon footprint. Furthermore, the DoD has examined the possibility of nuclear options for energy on installations, such as partnering with private energy firms to design small nuclear reactors for use on bases. In its FY2023 budget request, the DoD looks to address climate change's impact on its facilities, asking for \$2 billion to fund installation resiliency measures. According to the request, the DoD would "[adapt] military facilities to withstand increasingly challenging conditions and [deploy] advanced technologies to strengthen the ability to rapidly recover from disruptions to public infrastructure from climate." Proposals of long-term solutions within the DoD, such as the climate strategies released by the Departments of the Army and Navy in 2022, highlight more extensive efforts to combat the rise of extreme heat incidents and other impacts from climate change.

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On the Radar

- A third straight La Nina may occur over the fall and winter. These conditions will likely impact several ongoing meteorological seasons. Hurricane activity will be enhanced in the Atlantic basin. Additionally, drier weather across the south increases the risk of drought and wildfires.
- Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Valerii Zaluzhnyi recently stated that Western weapons have allowed them to “stabilize the situation.” He also stated that Ukraine needs additional arms from Western countries in order to repel Russian forces. Long-range artillery provided to Ukraine’s military have resulted in nearly 20 strikes behind Russian lines in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions. While the arms provided by the West may have bolstered Ukraine’s efforts, the war continues with no immediate end in sight. A former NATO supreme allied commander for Europe predicted that the conflict may end in “four to six months,” with a “frozen conflict” ending similar to the Korean War, whereby a demilitarized zone divides two territories.
- In wake of the overturn of the Roe v. Wade court Supreme Court decision, a transnational network based in Mexico has been reportedly sending abortion drugs to women in America. This network transports an average of 100 doses of abortion-inducing pills across the U.S.-Mexico border each day. As access to abortion becomes restricted in many states across the U.S., the transportation of abortion-inducing drugs to women in states where abortion is restricted or banned may become a legal issue.