

Monthly Insights

May 2015



During the month of May, Wikistrat ran several simulation and forums exploring ongoing global trends and events. The following insights were gathered during those activities.



Exploring Turkey's Upcoming General Elections

- **The most likely outcome is that the ruling AKP will win a majority and continue to govern, though without the ability to change the constitution unilaterally.**
 - Bargaining with other parties to take the country to a constitutional referendum.
 - All other parties prioritize checking the AKP's power above all else.
- **If the Kurdish HDP clears the 10 percent threshold, Kurdish priorities will have a significant impact on Turkish policy in the next four years.**
 - Predominantly Kurdish areas will push for greater autonomy from Ankara, with autonomous Kurdish police and paramilitary institutions.
- **Turkey's return to a pro-NATO, pro-EU foreign policy is more likely than a continued emphasis on the Middle East.**
 - Hinges on the EU's and NATO's approach to Turkey in return.
 - Ankara will remain lukewarm to uncertain U.S. policies in Iraq and Syria.
- **The military could make a comeback if the elections leave a power vacuum.**
 - If the AKP enters a coalition, the army will get more involved in security policy – especially regarding a move back to NATO.



Russia and the West: Reset, Retrograde, Rebound?

- **Ukraine remains a deal-breaker for geopolitical cooperation between Russia and the West for the foreseeable future.**
 - Only a disastrous common threat is likely to bring this cooperation about.
- **The emergence of a common security threat represents the most compelling reason for a renewal or reestablishment of cooperation in the next three years.**
 - Western actors (e.g., the U.S.) and Russia must utilize their combined powers.
 - Cooperation arose from the inability of any one actor to succeed on its own.
- **A significant political shift in Russia during the next three years is unlikely.**
 - Elections in major Western actors (e.g., the U.S. or U.K.) are unlikely to prompt re-evaluations of existing priorities and policies towards Russia.
- **Russia will benefit regardless of whether the West pursues a confrontational or cooperative approach to Russian activities in the High North.**
 - Only cooperative measures bear a chance of success for Western endeavors.



Impacts of a Nicaraguan Canal

- **Chinese support for the Nicaragua Interoceanic Grand Canal does not appear to signify a fundamentally new pattern of Chinese engagement with Latin America.**
 - Rather, it is in keeping with a longstanding Chinese effort to strengthen its trade and investment ties in the region by building infrastructure.
- **It seems premature to assume China will make the canal a routine thoroughfare for PLA Navy vessels, assuming it's even completed.**
 - Vying for maritime influence in its own neighborhood, the Asia-Pacific, is one matter; risking a showdown in waters far away from home, in an area the U.S. has long considered its backyard, is a far more fraught proposition.
- In the end, however, **there is little question that Chinese jurisdiction over a completed transcontinental canal would further challenge America's strategic position in Latin America.**