

The weekly briefing | 28 April 2014

Political and security risk updates

Africa: South Sudan releases rebel leaders in attempt to end civil war.

Americas: Return of Bogotá's mayor threatens Colombian president's re-election bid.

Asia and Pacific: US president sheds light on strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific during regional tour.

Europe: G7 to issue further sanctions against Russia following continued aggression in Ukraine.

Middle East: Peace talks between Israel and Palestinian Authority come to halt following reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas.

Polar regions: Russian president holds special meeting on Arctic policy.

Africa

South Sudan releases rebel leaders in attempt to end civil war

In a bid to move towards negotiations with rebel forces, the South Sudanese government has freed four former senior politicians and rebel leaders who were accused of attempting a coup on 15 December 2013. The alleged coup triggered South Sudan's civil war, which has claimed the lives of thousands of civilians. A court order, issued on 25 April, stated that the charges were being dropped in a bid to promote peace and reconciliation following four months of fighting within the country. The four detainees were ex-secretary general of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), Pagan Amum; former defence minister Majak D'Agoot; former ambassador to the United States Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth and ex-national security minister Oyai Deng Ajak. The charges against former vice president and principal rebel leader Riek Machar remain in place.

With previous attempts at peace talks having failed, this latest move is seen as government willingness to make compromises in order to pave the way for future negotiations to end the violence between militia loyal to Machar and President Salva Kiir's troops. The imprisonment had been a major obstacle in the way of peace talks, while Machar, who fled South Sudan's capital, Juba, in December, continues to lead the rebellion against forces loyal to the president. The willingness to move towards negotiations can be linked by the threat of UN sanctions and an expression of anger in the wake of the killing of hundreds in Bentiu and an attack on a UN base in Bor last week.



open briefing
the civil society intelligence agency

Open Briefing
27 Old Gloucester Street
Bloomsbury
London WC1N 3AX

t 020 7193 9805
info@openbriefing.org
www.openbriefing.org

While rebel fighters have been blamed for the Bentiu violence in which hundreds are reported to have been massacred, both sides in conflict face international criticism for the worsening security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan. International observers have reported war crimes and atrocities, as ethnic loyalties entangled in a political conflict further complicate the situation. With thousands killed and more than a million civilians displaced, the UN is increasingly warnings of the risk of famine. Most recently, fighting is intensifying in the north of the country, with rebels advancing towards strategic oil fields.

Other developments

187 Nigerian schoolgirls remain missing at the hands of Boko Haram after being abducted from a remote boarding school in Chibok, Borno State, on 16 April. Although over 40 of the kidnapped students have since escaped from their captors, Nigerian security services and independent search efforts by groups of relatives in the densely-forested area have been unable to locate any of those who remain in captive or any sign of rebels. The security forces' failure has been particularly embarrassing to the government in the context of its continued efforts to stem the Boko Haram-led uprising, and criticism is mounting over the extended state of emergency in three states in the northeast yielding few results.

General Amadou Sanogo, the leader of the 2012 coup in Mali, could face the death penalty after the Malian authorities changed the charge from that of involvement in the kidnapping of dozens of paratroopers to the charge of conspiracy to murder. The change comes after the discovery of mass graves containing around three dozen bodies of soldiers loyal to overthrown President Amadou Toumani Toure close to the former military government headquarters near Kati, north of Bamako. Sanogo has been under arrest since November, but is now charged with complicity to assassination. Following Sanogo's coup, northern Mali fell to radical groups, triggering a French-led intervention in its former colony. A trial of Sanogo and other leading military figures is part of Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's strategy to improve civilian control over the army, which is accused of excessive violence and torture in the aftermath of the coup.

Fighting between French forces in the Central African Republic (CAR) and a Christian militia has claimed the lives of several unarmed civilians after violence erupted last week between the militia and Muslim rebels, prompting French soldiers to intervene. Most Muslims have fled CAR's capital, Bangui, since the Séléka rebels lost control of it in January. International agencies have since warned of a cleansing of Muslim's from western CAR, with increasing violence between the two communities. Earlier in April, the UN Security Council authorised a peacekeeping mission of 12,000 troops to be deployed from September this year, responding to the failed French and African attempts to stabilise the situation. Meanwhile, the Séléka have turned to calling for secession.

On the radar

- **Spain is to increase its security measures at the border between Morocco and its Ceuta and Melilla territories** in order to combat illegal immigration.
- **The UN Security Council is expected to renew sanctions against Cote d'Ivoire**, with the Group of Experts' mission ending on 30 April.
- **US Secretary of State John Kerry will travel to Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola** to discuss the US partnership with the African Union for peace and stabilisation missions across the region.

Americas

Return of Bogotá's mayor threatens Colombian president's re-election bid

On 23 April, Colombia's centre-right president, Juan Manuel Santos, signed a decree to reinstate the deposed left-wing mayor of Bogotá, Gustavo Petro. Santos initially removed the mayor from office on 18 March following a local court ruling. The ruling followed a judicial suit filed against Petro last December by inspector-General Alejandro Ordóñez over the alleged mismanagement of the capital's rubbish-collection service in 2012. Consequently, Petro was sanctioned with a 15-year ban from holding any public office, resulting in his removal from Bogotá's mayorship. Many criticised the harsh court ruling, and marches were held throughout the country calling for Petro's return. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), a binding regional court, ordered the suspension of sanctions against Petro. On 22 April, the Superior Tribunal of Bogotá ruled that the government had violated the country's laws by disregarding the IACHR judgement, and as such, Santos was obliged to reinstate Petro to his previously-held position.

Santos's removal of Petro has been depicted as a political manoeuvre ahead of the first round of presidential elections on 25 May. By ousting Petro from Bogotá's mayorship and appointing Rafael Pardo, the current labour minister and loyal ally of the president, as interim mayor, Santos had dramatically increased his hold on power – bolstering his election campaign, and gaining control over the country's greatest metropolitan district. However, the recent ruling has put his plans in jeopardy. In fact, Petro has emerged as a leading figure among the country's left-wing, and is entering into direct competition with Santos by drawing the sympathy of the centre-left electorate. Santos's struggle to consolidate his political base has been further exacerbated by his bitter rivalry with the former president, Álvaro Uribe. In the aftermath of the March legislative elections, Uribe has taken the lead of a right-wing opposition coalition that notably opposes the ongoing peace process with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), launched by the Santos' administration at the end of 2012.

Santos's reversal in the case of Petro is likely to play into the hands of his centre-left and right-wing adversaries. In that sense, centre-left candidate Enrique Peñalosa and Uribe's right-wing chosen contender, Óscar Ivan Zuluaga, are in a position to benefit from the latest twist in Colombia's national political drama. Meanwhile, Petro's fate remains ambiguous, as the tribunal's ruling only concerns the recognition of the IACHR's binding nature and does not overturn the inspector-general's sanctions. As such, Ordóñez has expressed his intention to appeal the tribunal's ruling at the Supreme Court. Furthermore, if Petro is to remain in office, he will still have to face popular plebiscite through an arranged referendum.

Other developments

The Bolivian ministry of defence dismissed over 700 soldiers over charges of sedition. Since 3 April, discontent against what is perceived as unfair discrimination of indigenous Bolivians has risen within the ranks of Bolivia's national army. On 22 April, a protest involving 500 soldiers was staged in the capital, La Paz; with a second demonstration involving 1,000 soldiers following on 25 April. In a subsequent statement, Bolivian President Evo Morales, himself an Aymara, called for greater discipline within the Bolivian military.

On 22 April, a 26 year old dancer was killed during a shoot-out between Brazilian police and suspected criminals in a favela near the touristic district of Copacabana in Río de Janeiro after the police mistook him for a drug trafficker. On the same evening, violence broke out between criminal gangs and security forces in the surrounding areas. The death sparked violent clashes between demonstrators and police on 24 April. During late March, violent clashes also occurred after an innocent woman was shot under similar circumstances. These recent events highlight the excessive force employed by police during operations and put the local security forces under further scrutiny ahead of the FIFA World Cup in June.

On 25 April, over 2,000 soldiers were dispatched to Mérida, the home of Venezuela's largest public university. Over the past two months, the country has experienced a surge in violent student protests against the government. On 10 April the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) launched a series of meetings aimed at addressing the ongoing crisis; however disagreement remains between the opposition parties and the administration of Nicolás Maduro.

On the radar

- **The first round of Colombia's presidential elections is scheduled for 25 May.**
- **Protestors have taken over part of the Pluspetrol Oil Block in northern Peru.**
- **Presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in Panama on 3 May.**
- **Increased security and disruption to be expected in Venezuela's capital, Caracas, on Labour Day (1 May) during rallies by pro-government groups.**
- **Protesters plan to congregate outside the National Congress building in Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires, on 29 April.**

Asia and Pacific

US president sheds light on strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific during regional tour

US President Barack Obama landed in Tokyo, Japan, on 23 April to begin a tour of four key allies in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to Japan, Obama visited South Korea and Malaysia, and concludes in the Philippines on 28 April. Several key developments emerged from Obama's high-level meetings. First, in Japan, Obama declared that the US defence treaty covers the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and that the United States remains committed to the security of Japan. Second, on 25 April, Obama arrived in Seoul, South Korea, and threatened new sanctions against North Korea. In addition, Obama expressed his openness to once again delaying the transfer of command of South Korean forces during wartime to Seoul. Obama arrived in Malaysia on 26 April with a message of increasing commitment to the security and development of the region. Obama also sought to reduce concerns surrounding Malaysia's participation in the free trade Trans-Pacific Partnership. As Obama concludes this trip with an overnight stop in Manila, he is expected to discuss the importance of security cooperation in the region and the Philippines's strategic role in regional security.

This diplomatic tour is Obama's most comprehensive trip to the Asia-Pacific region. While Obama has visited South Korea several times during his presidency, this is the first time in nearly 50 years that a US president has visited Malaysia, and the first time since 1996 that a US president has conducted a full state visit to Japan. Obama had cancelled a similar tour of Asian allies in October 2013 amid a government shutdown in Washington. The cancellation of that visit raised doubts over Obama's commitment to the Asia-Pacific region. Early in his tenure as president, Obama indicated a strategic pivot in US foreign policy towards the Asia-Pacific.

Obama's declaration that the US-Japan defence treaty covers the disputed islands is significant because it marks a clear commitment to the United States' traditional allies in the region. While signalling a greater commitment to the region's stability and growth, the Obama administration is likely communicating a strong message to China. In terms of military clout, Obama is indicating that the US presence in Asia, especially via Japan and South Korea, is a significant counterweight to Chinese naval expansion. At the same time, reiterating the major international issues surrounding North Korean aggression represents a call to leaders in Beijing to take greater responsibility in the international community. Although Obama did not include China on this tour, he has highlighted that the United States expects China to be a responsible stakeholder in the region.

Other developments

On 22 April, three crew members of an oil tanker were abducted by pirates in the Straits of Malacca in a raid that stole five million litres of fuel. The strait is one of most important shipping routes for energy supplies in the world, and its security is considered of vital strategic interest to many countries in Asia and North America. Crew members on board during the raid included nationals of Thailand, India, Indonesia and Myanmar. Although security forces from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore have increased patrols in the Straits, piracy remains a significant concern.

A Key naval summit held in Qingdao, China, has led to an agreement on maritime conduct as more than 20 countries with an active naval presence and interest in the Western Pacific ocean concluded a symposium on 23 April. Representatives from China, the United States, Japan and 18 other countries attended the Western Pacific Naval Symposium hosted by China. The key result of this meeting was an accord on naval communication, which developed a code of conduct for naval vessels that unexpectedly encounter each other in the vital sea lines of communication in the Asia-Pacific region. While the agreement is not legally binding, it does reduce the likelihood of a miscommunication developing into a confrontation. Despite the agreement, Xu Hongmeng, leader of China's naval branch of the People's Liberation Army, indicated that the new code of conduct will not influence territorial issues in the South and East China Seas.

Activity at a North Korean nuclear facility increased as US President Barack Obama visited South Korean officials on 25 April. Intelligence from South Korean satellites indicates that activity at North Korea's main nuclear test site in Punggye-ri has increased. Reports from South Korea suggest that North Korea has taken the final steps in preparing to test a new underground uranium bomb, including sealing the tunnel that leads to the underground test site. Experts have reported that this action gives North Korea 11 days to either conduct the test or cancel the detonation. If North Korea was to go ahead, it would be the country's fourth such nuclear test.

On the radar

- **The Bangladesh Nationalist Party has called for nationwide demonstrations on 28 April.**
- **19 May marks the anniversary of the 2010 National United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) clashes in Thailand**, which claimed the lives of over 80 civilians and soldiers.
- **The final three stages of the Indian general elections are scheduled for 30 April, 7 May and 12 May**, with results expected to be announced around 16 May.
- **Heightened security and overnight curfews are in place in Rakhine, Myanmar**, amid low-level unrest during the nationwide census.

Europe

G7 to issue further sanctions against Russia following continued aggression in Ukraine

In a joint statement on 25 April, the G7 leaders announced they were issuing further sanctions against Russia in response to the country's increasingly aggressive actions towards Ukraine. The sanctions will be imposed as early as 28 April and will not be limited to economic, trade and finance sanctions. German Chancellor Angela Merkel also reported that European leaders would be meeting shortly to discuss an appropriate response from EU members. Earlier in the week, during a visit to Ukraine, US Vice President Joe Biden warned Russia that it would face isolation if its aggression continues. On 22 April, Washington also announced the deployment of 600 troops to Poland and surrounding Baltic states. However, Russia warned on 23 April that it would respond to Ukrainian military action in Eastern Ukraine should its interests be attacked. On 25 April, the Pentagon reported that Russian warplanes had violated Ukrainian airspace and that Russian troops had recommenced military exercises on Ukraine's eastern borders.

The worsening relations between the West and Russia following the Easter truce have been exacerbated by the kidnap of eight Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) observers by pro-Russian armed separatists. The de-facto mayor of Slovyansk, Vyacheslav Ponomaryov, accused one of the monitors of being a NATO spy. On 25 April, the international observers, who were travelling by bus with five Ukrainian armed forces personnel, were seized at a separatist checkpoint in Slovyansk in Eastern Ukraine. One of the observers, a Swede, was released on medical grounds on 27 April. The 12 remaining individuals are currently being held in Slovyansk's state security agency building, which has been occupied by pro-Russian activists. The Kiev government is attempting to negotiate their release. News of the abductions was released on the same day as Ukraine's Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk accused Russia of trying to trigger a 'third world war'.

On 24 April, Ukraine mounted a military offensive to regain control of Slovyansk and special forces seized control of the town hall in Mariupol, a southeastern port city. Five rebels were killed during the attack. The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, warned Ukraine that it would face consequences following Ukraine's decision to deploy military forces in Eastern Ukraine. On 25 April, the Kiev government launched the second phase of an operation to regain control of Slovyansk. However, a rocket-propelled grenade downed a Ukrainian helicopter during take-off at a base near the town of Kramatorsk in Eastern Ukraine. Ukraine faces further difficulties this week following Gazprom's warning on 25 April that Ukraine will be forced to pay in advance for Russian gas, should the Kiev government fail to remunerate the company for the gas it has already provided.

Other developments

A Moscow court has extended the house arrest of Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny, with an additional six months being added to the original sentence following claims that Navalny had violated the conditions set for his house arrest. Navalny is accused of accessing social media platform Twitter in order to libel a Moscow district councillor, and was also fined 300,000 roubles. Under the terms of the original sentence, the opposition activist, who denies writing the tweet, was banned from engaging in any outside communication and from receiving visitors. Navalny and his brother, Oleg, are currently on trial charged with defrauding 31 million roubles from two clients through a freight-transportation service. Navalny's team now claim that one of the clients, the French cosmetics company Yves Rocher, have withdrawn their claim and deny that they suffered damage. The activist claims that he is being persecuted by the administration for his criticism of the Russian president. His supporters are concerned that the court is seeking to jail Navalny.

On 24 April, Georgian foreign minister Maia Panjikidze announced that the Georgia will sign an association agreement with the European Union in late June 2014. The news came during a visit to Georgia last week by the German foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and the French foreign minister, Laurent Fabius. At a meeting in Prague, Czech Republic, Štefan Füle, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, later assured the Georgian president, Giorgi Margvelashvili, that an association agreement with Georgia was a top priority for the European Union. Georgia is also expected to sign the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) agreement in June. Steinmeier announced that the EU is willing to engage in an official association with Georgia following the significant steps that have been taken to tackle corruption and reinvigorate the Georgian political spectrum, and that Russia is aware of these plans.

On 24 April, the German government halted arms exports to Russia in reaction to Russia's involvement in Ukraine's political crisis. The German economic cooperation ministry will not give German companies permission to export arms, halting nearly 70% of applications (worth approximately €5.2 million). The ministry is currently reviewing a potential course of action for permits already granted, and, following scrutiny from the Green Party, also revealed that in critical cases the government would act to stop previously authorised exports being carried out.

On the radar

- **National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) members are expected to strike from the evening of 28 April until 1 May**, disrupting tube services in London, United Kingdom.
- **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will visit the European Union on 7 May to meet with the president of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, and President of European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso.**
- **Activists plan to stage demonstrations in Germany's capital, Berlin, on 30 April and 1 May.**
- **President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso will visit the United States on 30 April to 4 May.**

Middle East

Peace talks between Israel and Palestinian Authority come to halt following reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas

On 23 April, the rival Palestinian factions of Fatah and Hamas announced a reconciliation deal and that an interim unity government headed by current President Mohammed Abbas would be formed within five weeks. Moreover, parliamentary elections will be held within six months. In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Israel would not continue negotiations with Abbas, the leader of Fatah, while any agreement with Hamas is in place. Hamas is considered a terrorist organisation by Israel, the United States and the European Union.

In early 2007, Fatah and Hamas agreed to form a coalition in a bid to end factional violence following Hamas's unrecognised victory in legislative elections in 2006. However, later that year Hamas seized the Gaza Strip, setting up a rival government. Hamas has become increasingly isolated in Gaza since Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, a key ally, was pushed underground and border restrictions were imposed by both Israel and Egypt. Abbas's Fatah movement controls the Palestinian Authority and the West Bank. Abbas said that the deal with Hamas does not contradict the peace talks with Israel and that an independent state living peacefully alongside Israel remains his goal. However, Netanyahu argued that Abbas could have peace with Hamas or with peace with Israel, but not both.

Several reconciliation attempts involving Fatah and Hamas have failed in recent years. It is unclear at this point whether the latest attempt will result in any changes on the ground. Furthermore, any future government involving Hamas will likely have an impact on Palestinian aid from the United States and the European Union and all but kills off any hopes of renewing the stuttering peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Washington is hoping to extend negotiations beyond their expiry on 29 April, but this seems highly unlikely for now.

Other developments

An Afghan security guard opened fire inside a hospital on 24 April. The former policemen shot dead three US citizens and wounded two others at the Christian Cure International Hospital in western Kabul. The gunman was wounded and detained by police. This is the latest in a series of attacks on foreigners and soft targets within the country following attacks on two foreign journalists earlier in the month. Further attacks on symbols of foreign occupation are likely.

A Syrian government airstrike on the rebel-held town of Atareb, north of Aleppo, killed more than 20 people and injured dozens more on 24 April. The strike targeted a busy vegetable market during the morning hours, killing innocent civilians. The Syrian civil war has now claimed some 15,000 lives since the outbreak of violence three years ago. The Syrian government announced plans to hold presidential elections on 3 June, and it is likely that President Bashar al-Assad will secure a third seven-year term in office. The fractured electorate will greatly reduce any legitimate representation.

A series of bomb blasts at a large gathering in Iraq killed at least 37 people. On 25 April, up to 100,000 Shia Muslims had gathered at the Industrial Stadium in eastern Baghdad in support of the militant group Asaib Ahl al-Haq. A car bomb, a suicide bomb and a roadside bomb were detonated in the car park as people began to leave the rally, killing 37 and wounding many others. The Shi'ite militant group held the rally to announce its candidates ahead of elections on 30 April. Asaib Ahl al-Haq has carried out attacks on US troops in the past and freely admits to sending fighters to Syria. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack but it was likely carried out by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or affiliated Sunni groups from Anbar province. Similar attacks are very likely in the run up to elections on 30 April.

On the radar

- **Egypt's foreign minister, Nabil Fahmy, will meet US Secretary of State John Kerry in Washington on 29 April** to discuss the release of additional military aid.
- **Qatar's new Hamad International Airport is scheduled to open on 30 April.** The long-delayed project is part of a huge investment in infrastructure ahead of the 2022 World Cup.
- **A second round of parliamentary sessions on 30 April will select a candidate to succeed Lebanese President Michael Suleiman** when his term expires on 24 May.

Polar regions

Russian president holds special meeting on Arctic policy

On 22 April, Russian President Vladimir Putin held an expanded meeting of the National Security Council to discuss the government's track record and future plans in the realisation of Russian Arctic policy. The president called the Arctic 'a sphere of our special interest', with vital military, political, economic, technological and environmental dimensions. In his opening speech to the special meeting of the Russia's highest-level institution for the development of national security policy, Putin focused primarily on developing economic interests in the region, such as off shore oil and gas extraction and the Northern Shipping Route, and protecting the region from perceived international and terrorist threats.

It is possible that one of the instances the Russian president had in mind when making such an assertion was the Greenpeace action in September 2013 to scale Russia's controversial Prirazlomnaya oil rig in the Pechora Sea. Putin suggested at the time that foreign powers might be behind the action and it fits his state-centric view of international affairs, which finds it difficult to accommodate the existence of independent NGOs. As such, on 22 April Putin also signed a law allowing oil and gas corporations to defend infrastructure. According to the new legislation, Russian oil and gas companies will be entitled to establish their own protection units. A Russian newspaper believes the companies will end up hiring 'thousands of well-armed people, equipped with automatic weapons, vehicles, vessels and aircrafts'. Most of the new employees are likely to be former military personnel, police officers and special forces operators. The law is intended to protect vital infrastructure against the threats posed by supposed terrorists, either imagined, such as the peaceful Greenpeace activists, or real, such as Dmitry Yarosh, the leader of the Ukrainian far-right organisation Right Sector, who have track record of violence and threatened to blow up pipe lines transiting Russian gas to Europe last month.

A more genuinely state-centred collision of interest has been the ongoing competition between Canada, Denmark and Russia over claims to the Arctic continental shelf, with all three countries claiming economic sovereignty (based on their rights to an exclusive economic zone – EEZ) over an overlapping section of the Arctic Ocean, which includes the North Pole. These claims are based on the thus far poorly-mapped Lomonosov Ridge, an underwater ridge of continental crust that all three countries claim to be an extension of their own seabed. The most recent spat over the ridge occurred in December 2013 when Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper made an ill-advised claim to the North Pole, which contradicted the geological survey data collected by Canada’s own scientists. If collisions of interest grow in frequency over the coming years, the responsibility will lie largely with the Russian president and his security advisers, who have misread the significance of occasional populist outbursts by politicians with limited mandates, such as the Canadian prime minister, as justifications for a declared policy of military expansion into the region. There have been many signs over the last year that Russia is serious about such a military build-up, which includes the re-opening of Soviet-era military and air bases in the region, the refitting of naval and military units and the execution of increasingly sophisticated military drills.

Other developments

The ability of US federal agencies to respond to an oil spill in the Arctic has been criticised as ‘sorely lacking’ in a report published on 23 April by the US National Research Council and the National Academy of Engineering. The report highlighted a wide range of deficiencies in the public and private spheres of information about natural resources, ice conditions, weather patterns and even basic geography in the region. It criticised the lack of infrastructure in the Arctic as a significant liability in the event of a large oil spill. The report said, ‘It is unlikely that responders could quickly react to an oil spill unless there were improved port and air access, stronger supply chains, and increased capacity to handle equipment, supplies, and personnel.’ The report also argued that a major scientific effort is needed to gather more information on the region before considering the development of oil and gas fields and close cooperation with Canadian and Russian coastguards will be essential.

Global energy company Gazprom is considering the development of up to 20 offshore fields in the Arctic Kara Sea, as well as the construction of a new liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in the Yamal Peninsula. The Yamal Peninsula in Russia’s far north has seen a boom in ongoing or planned extractive projects in recent months, including the ongoing development of the Novatek/Total/CNPC LNG project. Rosneft’s CEO, Igor Sechin, recently announced that his company is also considering LNG production in the peninsula. According to tender documentation seen by Russian media, Gazprom is looking for contractors to help develop up to 20 perspective fields in the oil and gas-rich Arctic waters. Among the fields that are to be developed are the Leningradskoye and Rusanovskoye fields, each estimated to contain at least three trillion cubic meters of gas.

On the radar

- **The Company of Master Mariners of Canada will hold a seminar in Halifax, Canada, on 29 April** to investigate the progress of development in the Canadian Arctic.
- **French energy corporation Total are reportedly bracing for a consumer boycott**, after Greenpeace published claims on 27 April that the company has bought the first-ever consignment of offshore Arctic oil.
- **The super strength icebreaking Russian oil tanker Mikhail Ulyanov is reportedly now heading for Rotterdam, the Netherlands, with the world's first-ever shipment of offshore Arctic oil.**

*Published with intelligence support from
Bradburys Global Risk Partners | www.bradburys.co.uk*

Bradburys
Global risk partners

Open Briefing is the world's first civil society intelligence agency.

We produce actionable and predictive intelligence on defence, security and foreign policy matters. We tell you what has happened and what is likely to happen next. Most importantly, we tell you why.

We do this so that better informed citizens can more effectively engage in peace and security debates and civil society organisations can make the right advocacy choices. Together, we can influence positive policy decisions by our governments.

Open Briefing is a bold and ambitious not-for-profit social enterprise. We are a unique collaboration of intelligence, military, law enforcement and government professionals from around the world.

Challenge the status quo. Take intelligence into your own hands.

www.openbriefing.org

Analysts: Chris Abbott, Matthew Couillard, Derek Crystal, Tancrède Feuillade, Laura Hartmann, Patrick Sewell, Daniel Taylor and Claudia Wagner.