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## Drexel GPS: Geopolitical Update

### Drone Strike Kills 3 U.S. Soldiers in Jordan

01/29/24



Overnight three United States Army Soldiers were killed and more than thirty were injured in a UAV drone attack on their base in Jordan.

#### Here is what we know:

- The unit hit was the 718<sup>th</sup> Engineer company, which is a reserve unit that calls Fort Moore, Ga home. There was also a Soldier from the 1-158<sup>th</sup> infantry who was injured in the attack, which is a National Guard unit from Arizona.
- The attack consisted of three total UAV's (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles ), two of which were shot down by U.S. air defense measures. The third made it through and hit Outpost 22. These units are there supporting the CJSOTF (Combined Special Operations Task Force) footprint in the area.
- The purpose of the U.S. military presence in the area is to not fully capitulate to Iranian and Russian influence over the area, which is interesting considering the United States and Iraq are scheduled to begin talks to discuss winding down the mission of the U.S.-led military coalition formed to fight the Islamic State group in Iraq.

Given the current state of affairs in the area, expect this to see an increased number of U.S. military personnel create a larger presence in other lesser-known bases in and around the area.

### **U.S. Base Outpost 22 Struck by Drone**



### **Drexel GPS Assessment:**

- As noted in our Jan 19<sup>th</sup> GPS, - Iran often likes to portray greater control/influence over its proxies in the Middle East region actions than they actually have when it suits them. However, there is low probability that Tehran had zero knowledge of this latest action prior to it being conducted.
- Tehran is now trying to backtrack, releasing a statement denying any involvement with the group that conducted the attack.
- U.S. election-year politics will likely contribute to the intensity and selection of targets for any military response.
- The current U.S. administration will attempt to fend off criticism linking that being soft on Iran to recent U.S. military casualties from this latest attack.
- Expect a strong but still relatively limited in scope-strike on an Iranian-linked target/targets.
- That sentiment is primarily due to the administration's hesitancy to engage in widespread military actions in the region, consistently citing its desire to avoid widespread regional escalation as its calculus.
- The Biden administration will face increasing pressure from GOP rivals who will frame this attack as an example of what they will frame as what has been a relatively "dovish" and inadequate approach towards using force as a deterrence to provide proactive protection for U.S. military personnel members safety in the region since the start of the Israel-Hamas War.

- Iran is widely believed to have a hand in encouraging and sponsoring the various militant groups responsible for the series of attacks on Red Sea shipping lanes along with the uptick of 150+ attacks on U.S. personnel since the start of the Israeli offensive in Gaza.

### U.S. Base in Jordan Attacked



Drexel GPS will continue to monitor these situations as they develop.

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