**(U) Over the last 24 months**

(U) Over the last 24 months, undeniable intelligence shows a slow but steady redeployment of Arianian ground combat power, both in conventional and unconventional forces, to the Caucasus, primarily along Ariana?s northern border shared with Atropia. Despite Arianian claims of a defensive build-up designed to protect Arianian interests from Western attack, other intelligence indicates Arianian hostile intent toward Atropia. Arianian military and government assets?including oil survey and coastal defense ships, civil and military aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles, and other military assets?continue to actively and aggressively reconnoiter Atropian hydrocarbon and defense interests. Ariana has also moved its air and missile strike assets into range of Atropia. Additionally, Arianian-based information warfare capabilities have been probing Atropian government networks (including those for oil/gas production) and using the Internet, including social media, to carry out an aggressive perception management operation against the Atropian population. Much of this content focuses on the repressive nature of the Atropian government and its close links to the US. The Arianian military has also made preparations for the mass expulsion of ethnic Atropians from the north of Ariana as well as preparations for advance northward.

**(U) Politically, the Arianians view Atropia?s Western orientation as part of an encirclement of Ariana by the West**

(U) Politically, the Arianians view Atropia?s Western orientation as part of an encirclement of Ariana by the West and nations viewed as Western proxies. The Arianians also fear secularized and independent Atropia?s growing power to encourage ethnic Atropians within Ariana to join their ethnic homeland. Over the last two years, Arianian political and religious figures have described the Atropian government in progressively more hostile terms. Combined with increasing military maneuvers and other display-of-force actions, the tone between Atropia and Ariana has chilled considerably. In perception management operations over the last 12 months, Arianians have portrayed the large Atropian minority population within Ariana as well-treated and integrated, as compared to the majority of Atropians within Atropia, whom the Arianian government claims are exploited by the Atropian ruling family. Additionally? the Arianians have claimed in revised textbooks and official maps that Atropia is an ?historical part? of Ariana. The Atropian government has attempted to diplomatically extinguish such rhetoric, while quietly beginning preparations for potential conflict with Ariana.

**(U) Within the last year, the US President issued a Presidential National Security Directive (PNSD)**

(U) Within the last year, the US President issued a Presidential National Security Directive (PNSD) that identifies respect for current Caucasus international boundaries and continued unfettered export of Caucasus oil and gas supplies as vital US national security interests. The PNSD also directed the Department of Defense to create and deploy a Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) to the Caucasus to demonstrate US resolve and to deter potential aggression. Should shaping and deterrence fail, the CJTF must be prepared to conduct decisive operations.

**(U) The US has publicly responded to growing Arianian propaganda**

(U) The US has publicly responded to growing Arianian propaganda by demanding respect for all Caucasus state boundaries. The US approached multilateral organizations, but few other countries seem willing to risk the backlash of an Arianian-sponsored oil embargo. In the last six months, border skirmishes between Arianian and Atropian border guards, overflight of Atropian terrain by Arianian air assets, and official Arianian naval vessel incursions into the Caspian Sea?home of the bulk of Atropian oil and gas fields?have increased. Six weeks ago, an Arianian military patrol ?strayed? six miles into Atropian territory before being chased back into Ariana.

**(U) Last week, Atropia responded by mobilizing a portion of its Reserves**

(U) Last week, Atropia responded by mobilizing a portion of its Reserves to increase its border security. Citing an ?imminent attack,? Ariana initiated artillery fire and air strikes on Atropian military structures, though clearly sparing oil fields and production facilities. Ariana then demanded that Atropia ?demilitarize? its border with Ariana and stop all oil exports. Ariana also demanded a ?free and fair election? in Atropia, to be administered by Arianian-affiliated organizations. Ariana threatened the world community, and specifically the US, against intervention. Ariana warned of dire consequences if the West?most clearly the US?threatened the ?political development of Atropia with aggressive military action to prop up an anti-Islamic puppet state.? Atropia refused to accede to the Arianian demands. The day after Atropia?s refusal, Arianian forces commenced a conventional assault on Atropia, and the US announced deployment of combat forces within the CJTF to roll back Arianian aggression.