

Prodigy Intelligence Threat Centre

07 Sept 2020

Prepared for: Paladin Security

INTSUM 001/2020

Executive Summary

- COVID-19 Case Update.
- Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Anti-Fascist (Antifa) groups have held protests and instigated violent riots in multiple cities across the United States. In Canada, BLM protests have occurred in every province, drawing out a few thousand people supporting provincial capitals.
- Tensions with China and the international community increased this week.
- The two Canadian Michaels' situation in China is likely to worsen as reports indicate PM Trudeau purposely delaying Huawei 5G decision.

Analysis

COVID-19 - Global Overview

Reports: Covid-19 has reportedly infected over 26 million people in 188 countries since the end of 2019. Killing over 867,000 people so far. While many countries have slowed infection rates, a few, notably the United States, Brasil, India, and Russia, struggle to contain new clusters from spreading. A lack of testing, contact tracing, uniform social policies, and contradictory government messaging appear to be some of the problems hindering efforts to control the virus in these countries.

Assessment: These countries will likely continue to see uncontrolled outbreaks in new regions without a strong reversal in one or more of these factors, even as infections in early hit regions begin to decline.

Reports: In the United States, Covid-19 has infected over 6 million and killed over 186,000 people, the highest of any country. After a recent spike in cases throughout the southern states in August, North and South Dakota, Iowa, and Alabama are now battling a resurgence of infections. One factor is the reopening of universities, colleges, and high schools. A controversial policy of students returning to classes instead of using digital alternatives has already seen cases increase in age groups previously less affected by the virus, causing some schools to reverse their decision to open.

Assessment: Any state that chooses to have students return in person will likely see similar spikes in younger cases and their overall infection numbers as children spread it to their families and teachers.

COVID-19 - Canada's Case Update

For national figures, you can find COVID-19 case updates [here](#).

For Alberta, you can find the COVID-19 case updates [here](#). On this page, scroll down to the data table for Alberta and information by health zone.

For British Columbia, you can find the COVID-19 case updates [here](#).

Reports: In Canada, COVID-19 has infected over 103,000 and killed over 8,500 people. Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia are seeing a significant increase in cases in the past week. Some schools have begun reopening across the country while others implement offset cohort strategies and others remain entirely online. Parent groups and provincial education boards are at odds with how to handle reopening in most districts.

Assessment: A spike in infections will likely be seen in any school that attempts to reopen. Should this occur, it is likely to cause at least a temporary quarantine shutdown. Despite official warnings regarding precautions heading into the Labour Day long weekend, it is expected an increase in infections will be seen in the 14-day incubation window following. Pandemic fatigued individuals are more likely to disregard advice to attend parties and leisure destinations before the summer's end.

Government of Canada's Weekly Response to COVID-19

Reports: Vaccine Partnerships and Research: On 31 Aug, the Prime Minister [announced](#) that agreements in principle had been reached with Johnson & Johnson and Novavax to procure millions of experimental COVID19 vaccines. These agreements add to those already reached with Pfizer and Moderna, made following the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force's recommendations. The Prime Minister also announced funding to establish a new biomanufacturing facility at the Human Health Therapeutics Research Centre in Montréal. The new building will enable the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) to increase vaccine manufacturing to up to two million doses per month by next year through a public-private partnership.

In Canada, the national Immunity Task Force has so far examined antibody levels from the blood of 35,000 Canadians across the country who donated blood or who had their blood drawn for medical tests in [British Columbia](#), [Alberta](#) and [Ontario](#). The task force found that the coronavirus antibodies in the population, or seroprevalence, barely registered.

Assessment: With so few people carrying antibodies, everyone in Canada remains at risk for infection. In turn, broad population susceptibility means that caution is required this fall as schools and worksites reopen. These results also underscore the continuing urgent need for safe and successful deployment of effective vaccines against COVID-19.

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

Reports: Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Anti-Fascist (Antifa) groups have held protests and instigated violent riots in multiple cities across the United States. The unrest began in response to the death of George Floyd on 25 May 2020, while being arrested by police in Minneapolis, Minnesota. BLM insists his death is the latest in several racially motivated killings of minorities by police, claiming police institutions secretly promote the targeting of African Americans. First, BLM protests turned to vandalism with the destruction of historical monuments they claimed symbolized black oppression and have now given way to violent riots. Thirty-three deaths are attributed to the violence so far, the most recent killing occurring 29 Aug, of Aaron Danielson by an unidentified BLM/Antifa rioter.

Ideological polarization and the influence of identity politics has played a role in the escalation of violence and hindered the government's response to the riots. Democratic leadership at all levels of government embraced the BLM movement in its early stages and are now hesitant to condemn the violence as this could dilute their messaging. President Trump and Republican leadership have been staunch critics of the protests once they started destroying property. Trump has offered federal aid to every city disturbed by the riots but has mostly been rejected. Tony Evers, Democratic Governor of Wisconsin, has permitted the national guard to help restore order in the city of Kenosha after the shooting of Jacob Blake on 23 Aug led to nightly riots.

There are calls for President Trump to enact the Insurrection act, giving him the authority to disregard States' autonomy in dealing with internal matters. So far, President Trump has respected the rule of Governors in affected states. It appears that this strategy is helping his campaign for re-election as his polling has jumped since the riots began. The BLM movement is losing support nationally as more people are harmed in the riots.

The BLM/Antifa movement has seen a degree of international support in the form of protests in some major cities outside the US. In Canada, BLM protests have occurred in every province, drawing out a few thousand people supporting provincial capitals. On 29 Aug, a statue of Sir John A. Macdonald was torn down by protesters in Montreal. That same weekend protests in Toronto and Ottawa called for defunding police to fund other social programs.

Assessment: The US BLM/Antifa will likely continue escalating the violence while diminishing their broader support as all but the most disenfranchised begin to reject its violent doctrine. Despite evidence that the unrest helps Trump gain support before his election, it is highly unlikely this will slow the BLM/Antifa momentum or cause them to change their messaging as they continue to radicalize. It is doubtful Trump will use the

insurrection act before his re-election as that move could be perceived as an overstep and would vindicate those who accuse him of being a fascist. While BLM/Antifa messaging resonates with a small segment of the population, it is unlikely protests will gain further support in Canada as the situation declines in the US.

China

Reports: China continues to increase its authority in the pacific region and globally, though China's opposition continues to grow. Of note has been the border tensions between China and India over the "green line" in Ladakh. This week Chinese and Indian defence officials met in Moscow to de-escalate the situation along the shared border. Few details emerged from India's Rajnath Singh and China's General Wei Fenghe though this was the first high-level talk since the violence began in June where 20 Indian soldiers were killed. Though few comments were made, the Chinese government said that "Not one inch of Chinese territory can be lost" and that responsibility for the conflict "lies solely with India."

India further banned several Chinese apps this week, totalling 52 apps restricted by India under national security auspices. President Trump is now looking at banning multiple Chinese apps under the pretense that these apps collect US citizens' data. This comes as the sale of TikTok to a US firm(s) stalls.

The nation of Palau requested this week a permanent US military presence and the construction of a US military base on the island nation to counter increased Chinese aggression in the region. This comes after US defence secretary Mark Esper visited the island nation last week as part of a Pacific tour, accusing Beijing of a "malign influence" and "ongoing destabilizing activities." Of note is that under a 1994 agreement, the US is responsible for Palau's defence though it currently does not have troops stationed on the island.

Taiwan was forced to state that it did not shoot down a Chinese military jet after speculation that it gathered attention on social media. An unverified video showed a SU-35 with smoke and flames coming from it as it makes an emergency landing and a motionless pilot being attended to.

US national security adviser, Robert O'Brien stated on Friday that he believes that China has taken the "most active role" in interfering in the upcoming US election and that this interference is more significant than Russia's interference in the previous election. He stated that "We've never seen anything like it." It was nothing like this in the cold war with the Soviets." This comes at a time of increased US-China tensions and an increase in counter-intelligence operations by the US looking at Chinese nations in the US.

It was reported this week that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is attempting to freeze out Huawei from Canada 5G network by stalling on any decision making in the Chinese firm's involvement with Canada's 5G network. This has led some Canadian Companies such as Rogers to begin 5G network development without Huawei.

Assessment: It is unlikely that the situation along the green line in Ladakh will de-escalate in the near term as both sides state and believe they have a right to the area's contested land. This is likely to lead to small conflicts in the long term, further destabilizing the region. It is unlikely that the US will ban Chinese apps before the US election, as this is likely a talking point to rally President Trump's base. Public statements that China is actively interfering in the US election by senior US officials will likely further deteriorate China and the US's already turbulent situation. This will be assisted by countries such as Australia, Palau and other Asian countries rebuffing China. Reports of Taiwanese military intervention against Chinese military assets are likely false and were likely developed by the Chinese regime as a precursor to increasing pressure on Taiwan to alienate it from its traditional allies further. Reporting that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is purposefully stalling on deciding on Huawei's involvement with the Canadian 5G network will likely have negative repercussions for the two Michaels held in China as the Meng Wanzhou trial continues.

Approved for Release by:

Eric West
Senior VP of Strategic Analysis, Prodigy Intelligence

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