



AN ANALYTICAL INTELLIGENCE WIRE PREPARED BY THE STUDENTS  
OF EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY IN PRESCOTT,  
ARIZONA

**Eagle Eye 330 | March 29, 2019**

In This Issue

WESTERN EUROPE: Nationalism Generally Rises Ahead of Key Upcoming Elections	2
CHINA-ITALY: Partnership Likely to Expand Chinese Influence in Western Europe	8
LATIN AMERICA: New Political Alliance Attempts to Encourage Regional Change	9
MALI: Gunmen Kill 130 in Raid on Fulani Village	10
NORTH KOREA: Pyongyang Attempting to Hold its Ground During Worsening Situation	11

## **WESTERN EUROPE: Nationalism Generally Rises Ahead of Key Upcoming Elections**

### **Summary:**

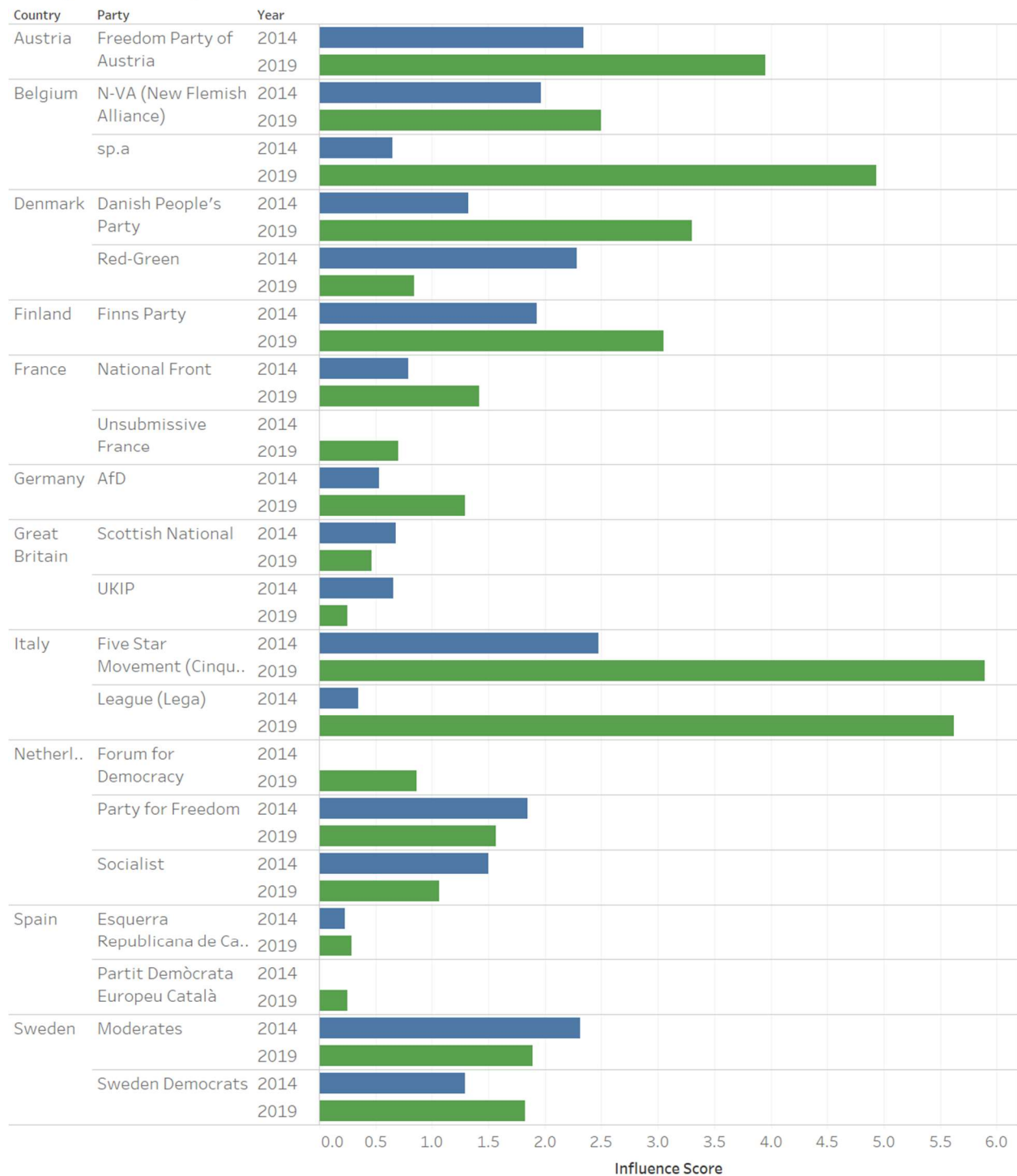
Over the last five years, nationalism as a political force increased across Western Europe. Nationalism rose particularly prolifically in Belgium and Italy, while making more modest gains in France and Germany. It will likely continue to gain prominence as an ideology due to several key upcoming national elections and the European Parliamentary elections but may lose momentum if the public pushes back on nationalist policies as happened with Brexit in Great Britain.

### **Methodological Note:**

To concisely communicate and measure the relative influence a nationalist party has on their country's national government, this assessment uses an influence score which averages polling data and share of control in their government. The score begins with a base score which averages their share of parliament and popular support in an average of polls, then earn a 1.5-point bonus if they control parliament and another 1.5 point if their party controls the nation's executive branch. For example, a party that controls 50 out of 100 seats in parliament, polls at 50% popular support, controls parliament and the executive branch would earn a score of 8. This assessment defines nationalist parties as those who strongly identify with their respective nation's interests and support policies that appear to benefit the country at the expense of international institutions. To limit scope, this assessment considers the 12 largest EU countries in western Europe by size of economy.

**Nationalist Parties Increased Influence in the last 5 Years:**

Party Year Comparison



Nationalist parties generally gained influence from 2014 to 2019, as the above figure shows. ISIS and immigration likely constitute the largest reasons for this shift. Nationalist parties effectively used ISIS claimed terror attacks to blame the EU for intelligence and security failures and call for stronger borders and tighter immigration policies. In addition, nationalist parties took

advantage of dissatisfaction with EU regulations and concerns about population decline to increase their popularity.

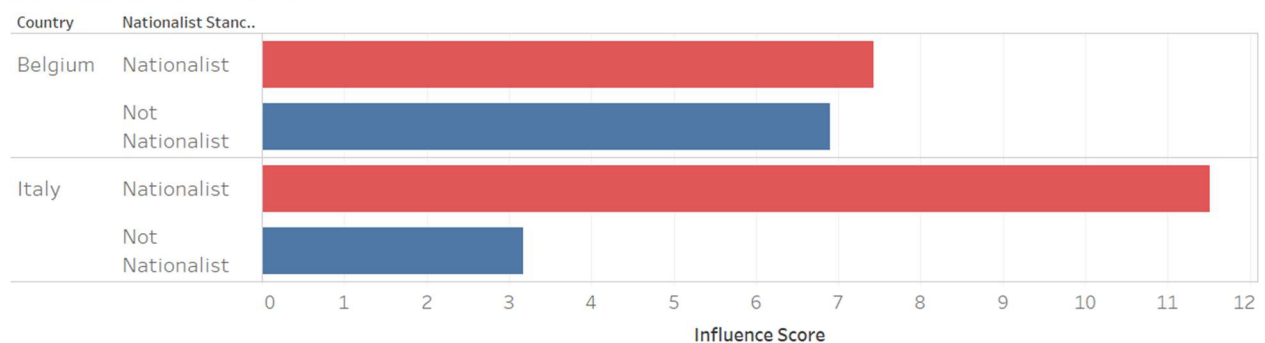
In many cases, nationalist parties gained enough clout to rise from fringe parties with little influence on government to parties with enough share to swing key votes in many countries. For example, Germany's Alternative for Germany (AfD) did not achieve enough share of the popular vote to receive any seats in the Bundestag (Germany's national parliament) in the 2013 national elections. The AfD now possesses the third largest single share of the Bundestag of any party in Germany.

Nationalist parties not only gained popularity and influence in the last five years, but many adopted more nationalist policies as an intentional and effective strategy to gain power. Three new nationalist parties in western Europe established themselves within the last five years, compared to two new non-nationalist parties in the same period that technically operate under new names but effectively only restructured from previous parties.

In addition, many established parties shifted to a more nationalist ideology recently. For example, Italy's Lega party operated as a relatively moderate party until 2013 when Matteo Salvini took over and transformed the party. Salvini brought his staunch anti-EU beliefs to the party and transformed it into far-right nationalist party. Under Salvini's leadership, Lega's influence increased by a factor of 15 in the last 5 years. Similarly, in France, Marine Le Pen effectively brought the National Front party to the mainstream. Though National Front supported nationalist policies before Le Pen, its previous leader did not convey his ideas in a way that appealed to most moderate voters. Le Pen softened the tone of National Front while maintaining many of the same priorities, such as opposing immigration, but does so on an economic and practical basis rather than a racial one. Le Pen nearly became president in 2017 and current polls show her nearly tied in popularity polls compared to current president Emmanuel Macron.

### Nationalist Influence Strongly Permeates Italy and Belgium

2019 Nationalist Power



Unlike other European populist and nationalist parties, the Italy's Five Star Movement's (M5S) platform on immigration remains somewhat ambiguous and instead focuses slightly more on environmentalism, protesting the establishment, and ensuring government transparency. M5S refuses to form coalitions with other parties, which in turn also limits its influence. If M5S

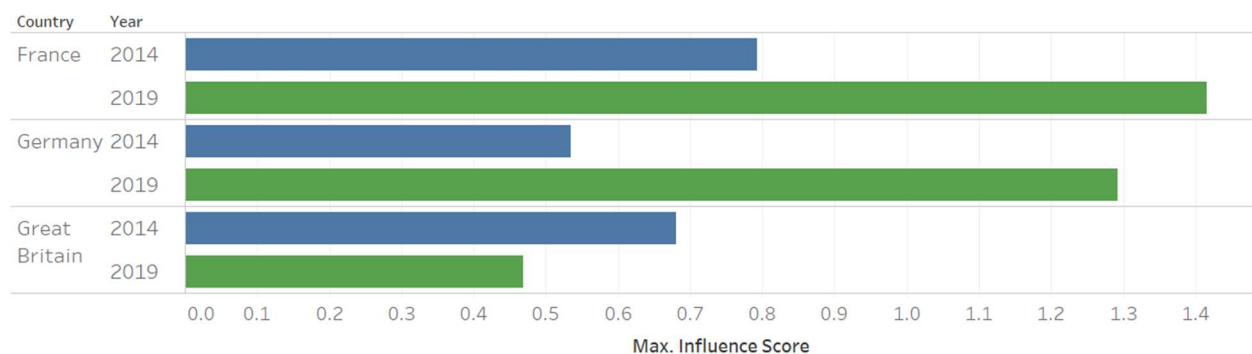
aligned with other parties, it could further promote its agenda across a broader span of the government.

Alternatively, the Lega party leads the center-right coalition and holds strong sentiment against immigration. Like M5S, however, Lega considers itself populist and does not support the EU. Perhaps due to its strong ideals against immigration, primarily from Muslim countries, Lega grew by a larger percent than M5S, although both grew exponentially since 2014. The decline of support for traditional left or right groups, such as the formerly-popular Democratic Party, directly correlates with the rise of the M5S and Lega nationalist parties as Anti-EU sentiment continues to rise. Lega may grow larger than M5S if it can garner further support for its anti-immigration sentiment.

Over the last four years, Belgium experienced a rise in nationalism and an emergence of right-wing politics entering the Belgian political mainstream, primarily because of the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA). A major factor in this rise is the Belgian political party New Flemish Alliance (N-VA). Founded in 2001, N-VA, primarily seeks an autonomous Flanders separate from Belgium. N-VA also campaigns on toughening immigration stances and increasing state security. N-VA secured a third of the vote in 2014 and formed a coalition with Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel and his Republican Movement Party. Many found the coalition unexpected as Michel's party maintains more globalist and pro-immigration stances. In 2018, N-VA withdrew from the coalition forcing Michel to resign after failing to form a new coalition, and Belgium will now face a new election scheduled in May. This shows the power N-VA maintains on the federal government. By the time the May elections roll around, N-VA will likely reaffirm its strong electoral position by continuing to build on its anti-immigration platform. Complicating matter further, Belgium faces deepening divides between the Dutch and French speaking populations.

### Establishment Parties Maintain Control Among European Powers

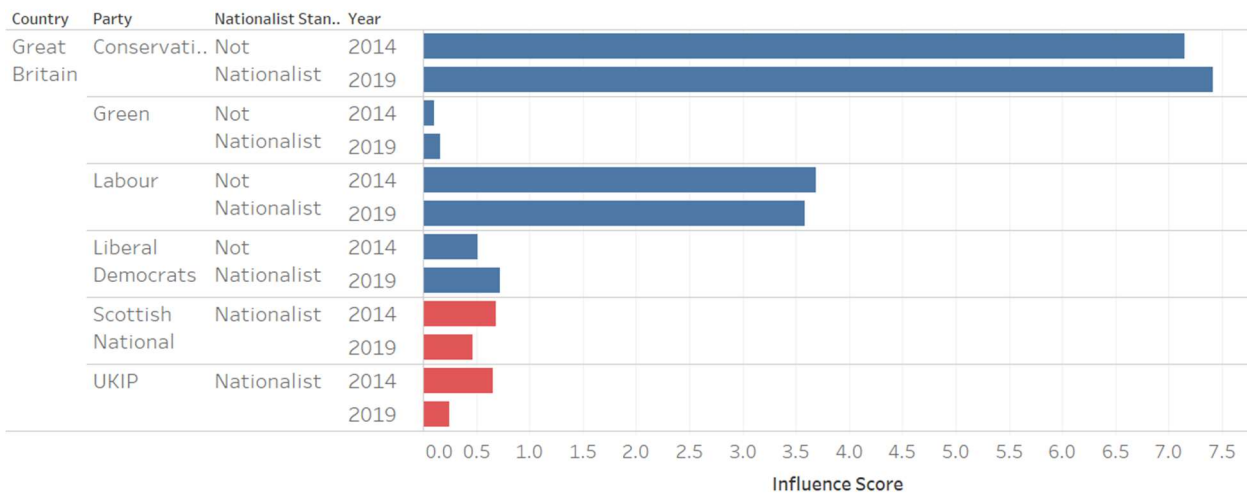
Year Nationalism Increase



As shown in the figure above, many countries saw a rise in nationalism. However, in three of the largest European Union powers each saw either a decrease or smaller increases compared to other countries in nationalist party influence. For example, Germany experienced a slight increase from 2014 to 2019. The AfD party gained more power and now holds a large portion of the seats in the Bundestag. Like Germany, France's nationalist parties, the National Front and

Unsubmissive France (created in 2016) experienced an increase in power. In the UK, however, nationalism decreased. The power that nationalist parties such as Scottish National and the UKIP decreased, potentially as a result of Brexit. Though nationalist parties in France and Germany gained influence, they do not hold as much power as nationalist parties elsewhere in Europe.

#### Great Britain Overall Party Influence



The UK represents an exception to the overall trend of nationalist increase. As shown above, The UK's political climate remained relatively stable over the last 5 years. This trend likely exemplifies the rebuke of Brexit, a major nationalist movement, and a potential return to the previous status quo. The UK Independence Party (UKIP), a far-right nationalist party, rose to considerable influence leading up to the initial Brexit vote in 2016. UKIP's popular support rose by nearly 10 percentage points from 2014 to June 2016. Right after the 2017 snap elections, which also saw British Prime Minister Theresa May's pro-Brexit Conservative party lose significant support, UKIP returned to fringe party status and now barely polls above 5%. The rise and fall of UKIP mirrors popular support for Brexit, which rose to a majority in 2016, dropped off after the 2017 election, and now faces record unpopularity.

#### Outlook and Implications:

National elections taking place across Europe this year will serve as a key indicator of whether nationalist ideologies continue to gain influence. National elections will take place this spring in Belgium, Finland, and Spain. Given current trends, nationalist parties will likely gain more support in these elections. In addition, the EU will elect a new parliament in May, and polls indicate nationalist parties will gain enough influence to block most of any establishment coalition. This will almost certainly limit the EU parliament's ability to pass legislation but will likely also continue to feed the nationalist narrative that the EU cannot effectively serve the people.

The lack of growth experienced by nationalist parties in these countries indicates potential political conflict within the region. As many countries did experience a rise in nationalism, it represents a shift in the political map of the area. With the major powers still leaning primarily away from nationalism, this could create conflict when dealing with issues such as the refugee crisis that affects more than one nation. There is also anti-EU sentiment slowly growing in the region, coming in part from nationalist parties. While EU leaders and strong EU countries such

as Germany and France are looking to avoid another Brexit situation, the rise of nationalism in surrounding countries could potentially create complications or more dissenting voices.

Many nationalist parties thrive on rhetoric calling for a hard stance on issues such as immigration, and with the decrease of refugees flooding into these countries it could lead to disenchantment with these parties. Nationalist parties across Europe took a hardline stance against immigration and used the fear of ISIS as a tool to gain popularity against moderate parties, which generally took a more nuanced and unpopular stance on immigration. With the decline of ISIS and the improvement of the refugee crisis, nationalist parties may lose appeal among voters. They may also seek shift their platforms to other populist ideas such as opposing the perceived high regulations of the EU and addressing their uneven population distributions.

Nationalist parties will likely continue to see growth until their policies face backlash, such as in Great Britain. The turmoil of Brexit shows the practical challenges of the policies nationalist parties advocate for, such as a withdrawal from and breakup of the EU. This indicates that if nationalist parties can rise to implement their platforms, they will likely face pushback from the public and an eventual decline in power as happened with UKIP.

[Alli McIntyre, Andrew Ruffini, Gianna Geiger, Paris Lorts, Zach Coffee, Janessa Leon Guerrero, Morgan Breneiser]

## **CHINA-ITALY: Partnership Likely to Expand Chinese Influence in Western Europe**

**Summary:** An economic partnership between Italy and China will likely increase China's influence in Western Europe, while potentially complicating relations with European allies.

**Development:** On 23 March, Rome signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) acknowledging Italy as a formal partner of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative. The deal includes an agreement to allow China access to the ports of Trieste (located near Austria, Croatia, and Slovenia) and Genoa (a major Italian port in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea). Additionally, China and Italy signed 29 deals valued at \$2.8 billion. Italy recently entered a recession, despite its status as a G7 member.

**Analysis:** Italian cooperation may allow China to develop considerable influence in Western Europe. As a result of Italy allowing China access to the port of Genoa, China will likely use this opportunity to increase its economic network with surrounding countries in the Mediterranean Sea. Similarly, China will very likely use the port of Trieste with the intent to further expand its influence and OBOR initiative in landlocked countries such as Croatia, Slovenia, and Austria. Furthermore, Italy will likely rely on China to help boost its economy, whether in the form of loans or the increased exports of Italian-made products to China

[Tyler Smith]



## **LATIN AMERICA: New Political Alliance Attempts to Encourage Regional Change**

**Summary:** On 22 March, regional leaders of Latin America met to establish the Forum for the Progress of South American, or “Prosur.” This new international institution will likely replace UNASUR as the prominent regional coalition.

**Development:** On 22 March, presidents and representatives from seven South American countries met in Santiago, Chile to sign a joint declaration to create a regional space focused on growth, progress and development of the region. The notable absentees included representatives from Bolivia and Uruguay, while hosts explicitly excluded Venezuela. Although largely rhetorical, the organization demonstrates a shift to the political right, exhibiting a “coordination mechanism supporting democracy and the market economy,” according to conservative Colombian President Ivan Duque. Some skeptics raise the point that “Latin America regional institutions have become hostage to ideology and ephemeral political alignments,” According to the Economist magazine. Chile will chair the institution for the first year, then it will transfer authority to Paraguay.

**Analysis:** Chile as the chief administrator might indicate a strong initial push for programs and cooperation during this first year. Proponents of the bloc hope decisions based on commonly held principles might lead to sustainable integration, while opposing voices draw parallels between the objective of UNASUR and the vision of Prosur. commitment from all countries within the coalition will likely need to remain high for Prosur to find success. Otherwise, a repeat of the failed UNASUR might prove skeptics right. If opposition leader Juan Guaidó’s movement in Venezuela succeeds, Venezuela would likely end up admitted to this alliance. Based on initial reactions, expectations of success will likely depend on the coalition’s ability to work through issues related to political, financial, and methodological aspects of cooperation.

[Bryce Leech]

### **MALI: Gunmen Kill 130 in Raid on Fulani Village**

**Summary:** Tensions between two ethnic groups in Mali continue to escalate, potentially leading to a new affiliation with existing terrorist organizations and possibly an ethnic cleansing.

**Development:** On 23 March, armed men, reportedly in Donzo hunter gear, killed 130 civilians in Ogossagou, a predominantly Fulani community. Donzo hunters attacked the Fulani people several times in the past year in ethnically-motivated incursions. The Donzo people make up the largest ethnicity in Mali's population, while the Fulani claim a much smaller percentage. The violence began with disputes over cows grazing on Donzo land and worsened with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISIS affiliates continually exploiting the ethnic tensions in Mali. The Donzo accuse the Fulani of ties to AQIM, while the Fulani claim Mali's military armed the Donzo and prompted the recent attacks.

**Analysis:** Given that AQIM and ISIS affiliates already capitalize on attacks, a faction of either the Donzo or Fulani will likely break away and form a new branch of AQIM or ISIS. As ISIS faces near-defeat in Syria, and AQIM remains active in the Sahel, the faction would most likely align itself with AQIM. With the resources of a major terrorist organization behind them, the groups could escalate tensions, leading to an all-out war. However, because the Donzo outnumber the Fulani, an escalation of this magnitude could result in a disastrous ethnic cleansing of the Fulani. If accusations that the military provided the Donzo with weapons proves true, the government would not likely intervene as it wants the Fulani people eliminated. Further, such a genocide would face minimal force from the UN, as it acts as a peacekeeping organization and does not take concrete action, as seen during the Rwandan genocide. As such, it is unlikely that either group will succeed in minimizing tensions, and the violence will likely escalate.

[Kaylee Coffman]

## **NORTH KOREA: Pyongyang Attempting to Hold its Ground During Worsening Situation**

**Summary:** Pyongyang made multiple controversial moves after failing to secure a favorable deal at with Washington at the Hanoi Summit. Although its actions show willingness to escalate conflict, the worsening of its economic state does not leave much room to follow through.

**Development:** On 21 March, Pyongyang pulled its staff from an inter-Korean liaison office in Seoul, claiming that the South prioritizes cooperation with the US over its northern counterpart. The North and South created the liaison office last September as the first step toward establishing full-time, person-to-person diplomatic relations between the two nations. Pyongyang's withdrawal from the effort comes after the Hanoi Summit in February, when the US rejected the North's request to remove sanctions against it in exchange for dismantling a single nuclear complex. As a result of these continued sanctions, at least 6.6% of the 25 Million North Korean citizens remain in urgent need of humanitarian care and on 6 March the UN reported a major North Korean food shortage worse than any in a decade. Additionally, satellite imagery showed that the North began rebuilding structures on the rocket launch pad at its Tongchang-ri satellite launching station sometime between 16 February and 2 March—a time frame surrounding the dates of the Hanoi Summit and its outcome.

**Analysis:** North Korea almost certainly withdrew its staff from the inter-Korean liaison office to create a rift between South Korea and the US. The North likely made the move to make the South choose between its cooperation with Washington over its cooperation with Pyongyang, as it knows building peace and diplomacy remains an important policy goal of South Korean President Moon Jae-in. However, with its current economic and humanitarian crisis, the move will not likely help the struggling North Korean citizens, as it now more than ever seems reliant on the South to help with aid and boost economic cooperation under these strict international sanctions. If Pyongyang continues severing ties with Seoul, the situation will likely become significantly worse for its citizens, as it would essentially eliminate a vital source of already scarce aid. Additionally, North Korea is very likely rebuilding at Tongchang-ri in response to its dissatisfaction with the outcome of the Hanoi Summit and as a retaliatory act for not having its sanctions lifted. It will probably continue rebuilding this site as well as proceed with its nuclear without a deal from the US. North Korea may continue escalating conflict and maintaining its threatening nuclearization rhetoric, but as sanctions continue to choke its economy it may begin to relent.

[Morgan Breneiser]

**This is a global intelligence briefing prepared by the students of the Global Security and Intelligence Studies program at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona. The views expressed in this briefing are those of the students, not the university.**

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