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BRIEFS

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA: Serb Nationalist Victorious in Bosnian Election

Summary: After ethnically-charged elections in Bosnia, a Serb Nationalist Milorad Dodik won a chair in Bosnia's triumvirate presidency, potentially exacerbating fragile ethnic relations and undermining Bosnia's government.

Development: On 7 October, Bosnian Serb Milorad Dodik, Muslim Bosniak Sefik Dzaferovic, and Croat Zeljko Komsic won their respective ethnic seats in Bosnia and Herzegovina's presidential election. Divided after the Dayton Accords of 1995, Bosnia's government consists of a tripartite ethnic presidency, with Croat, Serb, and Bosniak seats (chairmanship rotates every eight months); lawmakers for parliament's lower house; and governments in two autonomous regions. Pro-Russia Dodik, who won the Serb presidential seat, frequently displays Serb-nationalist rhetoric and advocated for the secession of the Serb Republic (one of the autonomous regions) and its integration into Serbia. Komsic, a Croat moderate, also won out over Putin-and-Zagreb-backed incumbent Dragan Covic who, like Dodik, seeks the ethnic fragmentation of Bosnia and the establishment of a separate Croat-only zone within Bosnia. The Croat race, however, also experienced a great deal of ethnic tension, as hardline incumbent Covic favored nationalistic policies that clashed with moderate Komsic, who vowed to work for the benefit of all Bosnians regardless of ethnicity. Additionally, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), along with other organizations, announced concerns over Dodik's elections and is seeking a possible recount.

Analysis: Many observers viewed Bosnia's elections as a test of its progress toward EU and NATO membership and Dodik's win for the Serb presidential chair may jeopardize that progress, as his win will likely exacerbate ethnic rivalries. With the exception of Kosmic's win, nationalistic rhetoric seemed to dominate across the ethnic chairs, leaving any solutions to economic or political problems off the ticket. Additionally, Dodik's strong Serb-nationalist rhetoric may further weaken the already fragile Bosnian government and reduce the power of Bosnia's presidency, and he will almost certainly use his position to hamper Bosnia's efforts to join NATO. The ethnically-charged atmosphere of these elections further demonstrates the delicateness of a complicated government whose institutions barely stave off ethnic violence. In addition to the possibility of renewed ethnic hostility, Bosnia may also face growing Russian influence as Moscow may use this opportunity to further divide Bosnia and stall its integration into the EU and NATO.

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BRAZIL: Bolsonaro's Likely Victory Could Foreshadow A Less-Democratic Presidency

Summary: Right-wing presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro will likely win Brazil's presidency after securing a strong victory in primary elections. Bolsonaro's approach to presidency will likely reflect his military background and lack of experience as a politician.

Development: On 7 October, front-running presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro secured a victory in Brazil's first round of presidential elections, winning 46.93% of votes after 94% of votes were counted. To win the Brazilian presidency in the first round of elections, Bolsonaro would have had to secure a minimum of 50% of votes. Left-wing candidate Fernando Haddad received about 29% of votes, leaving him the runner-up to Bolsonaro, and will compete in a runoff election later this month. Bolsonaro represents the far rightwing of the Social Liberal Party and caught the public's attention through his lack of political correctness and haste to make highly controversial statements expressing racism, sexism, and homophobia. Bolsonaro's popularity in the polls appeared to gain new momentum after his survival of an assassination attempt on 6 September by a leftist attacker. However, his appraisals of former military dictatorships and right-wing extremism have alienated large groups of Brazil's diverse populations, leaving him campaigning as a political outsider. Brazilians will vote in the final election on 28 October to determine Brazil's new president.

Analysis: While the leftist Worker's Party has won the past four presidencies, Bolsonaro will likely secure presidency against Haddad in the final election on 28 October. If elected, Bolsonaro would probably appoint military leaders into key government roles—rather than those of the elite class of corrupt establishment politicians—to uphold his promise to eradicate government corruption. Bolsonaro has spoken highly of Brazil's military dictatorship (1964-1985) and could possibly steer his presidency in a similar direction to fight violent crime, corruption, and high unemployment with an iron-fist. Some hopeful followers of Bolsonaro's campaign probably believe that his extremism could put an end to the country's state of social chaos and possibly create a gateway to an administration focused on the people. Opponents, however, likely feel that Bolsonaro will fail to please the people because of his highly controversial, unapologetic expressions of discrimination toward Brazil's highly diverse society. With this approach to leadership in mind, some of Bolsonaro's supporters have expressed willingness to sacrifice certain democratic norms and civil liberties as a price to pay for a safer, more prosperous Brazilian lifestyle. Therefore, if elected, Bolsonaro will likely take a non-traditional approach to leadership that could more closely resemble a dictatorship than a democratic presidency.
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BULGARIA: Murder May Increase Scrutiny of EU Fund Use and Journalist Treatment

Summary: Bulgarian authorities discovered the murder of journalist Viktoria Marinova, which will likely call more EU and public attention to corruption among eastern European nations.

Development: On 7 October, Bulgarian authorities discovered journalist Viktoria Marinova raped and murdered in the town of Ruse, Bulgaria, and authorities believe Marinova died from blows to the head and suffocation. They found Marinova's body in a park with her cell phone, keys, glasses, and parts of her clothes missing. Marinova served as a board member of a TV station in Ruse and recently aired an investigation into the fraudulent use of EU funds by certain businessmen and politicians. Bulgarian police briefly arrested two other journalists involved in the investigation in September. Currently, Bulgarian authorities claim Marinova's murder does not relate to her work, and the TV station Marinova worked with claimed they had not received any threats directed to her. Officials around Europe are calling for a full investigation, as Marinova is the third prominent journalist murdered in the EU this year.

Analysis: Whether or not Marinova's murder relates to her work, her murder as part of the increase in journalist murders will likely heighten the scrutiny in which the EU, the public, and third-party activist groups view the treatment of journalists and misuse of EU money in Eastern Europe. Evidence that her investigative work triggered her murder could lead other journalists to limit the scope of their investigations or move elsewhere. However, even if Marinova's death does not ultimately connect to her work, it has already prompted EU officials to argue for more expansive freedom of press. If journalist murders and the EU fund misuse continue, the EU may consider an official investigation or a freeze on certain funds going to countries with corruption issues, such as Hungary, Czechia, and Bulgaria.

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CAMEROON: Election Results Likely to Escalate Civil Conflict

Summary: Tensions in Cameroon rise amid presidential elections. President Paul Biya will likely win reelection, but opposition groups will almost certainly not accept election results.

Development: On 7 October, vote counting began as presidential election polls closed. Opposition candidate Maurice Kamto declared himself the victor before election officials released official results. Violence by opposition forces and clashes with Boko Haram hindered many citizens across the country from voting, according to the International Crisis Group. The Anglophone regions in the far north of Cameroon had very few opposition observers present at the polling stations despite several bouts of violence, according to locals. Election officials will release the official results for the election by 22 October.

Analysis: The election results will probably escalate tensions and violence across Cameroon, particularly in the Anglophone regions. Biya will likely remain in office, and Kamto and his supporters will almost certainly claim election fraud, reject the results, and increase his resistance movement activities. If an opposition candidate wins the election, supporters of Biya will likely claim that violence in the country kept voters at home and away from the voting stations and the government may not honor the election results. If Biya loses the election but

does not relinquish power, the conflict in Cameroon could possibly escalate to civil war.
[Robert B. Lundgren]

CHINA: Injects \$175 Billion into Economy in Response to Trade Frictions

Summary: Amid the US-China trade frictions, China cut its reserve requirement ratio (RRR) to increase the flow of money into its economy, likely creating instability in China's economy that could possibly leak into the global economy as well.

Development: On 7 October, China decided to lower the RRR by 1%, thus allowing more of the state's money to flow through the economy. By liquidating this portion of China's reserve, an estimated \$175 billion will enter the economy. Beijing claims that this will further reinforce "fund stability" in the banking system, lower the funding costs for banks, and thus reduce the financing costs for enterprises. China's decision comes after Washington committed to placing tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods with a threat of escalation if the two countries fail to reach a deal. The International Monetary Fund claims that U.S.-Chinese trade frictions will cause total global growth to decline by 0.5% by 2020 if the US and China fail to reach an agreement.

Analysis: China's lowering of the RRR likely indicates an effort to stimulate economic growth, following a mild decline since the beginning of the trade friction with the US. Chinese stock markets already dropped as a result of the decision, as investors likely remain unwilling to buy stocks in a liquidated system. As a result, stocks will probably continue to decline, or fluctuate at the least, leaving China's economy unstable and unfavorable for investors. Such instability could possibly diffuse into the global economy and upset it as well, consequently affecting the economies of any nation involved in trade with China. As a result, these nations might seek trade partnerships elsewhere, opening new opportunities for trade giants similar to China.
[Parker Labine]

JAPAN: South East Asian Countries Reaffirm Security and Development Goals

Summary: Five South East Asian countries' leaders met in Japan for the annual Mekong-Japan Summit as Japan seeks to gain a more productive economic influence in the region parallel to that of China.

Development: On 9 October, the leaders from Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam convened in Tokyo for an annual summit to plan projects and drive development in South East Asia. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated that Japan has invested over \$17 billion in the region over the past three years to build quality infrastructure. Aside from the primary goal of pushing developmental projects in the region, Abe and his South East Asian counterparts also support a free and open Indo-Pacific strategy. During the summit, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha reaffirmed that Thailand will hold democratic elections in February

2019. Although the primary objective of the summit revolved around upgrading infrastructure, health care, and information technology, the group also raised concerns about the stability and security of the South China Sea (SCS).

Analysis: An increase in Japanese investments in South East Asia will likely provoke Chinese President Xi Jinping and challenge Beijing's investments in the region. Japan will likely push for a more passive agenda in the region rather than China's fast-moving investments, which have lacked in quality. Additionally, Japan seeks to increase manufacturing in these countries, a proposal that builds off the hundreds of Japanese factories in countries such as Thailand. Japan likely sees the investment potential in these South East Asian countries, and, in response, they will likely welcome and increase Tokyo's investments to become an alternative to those of Beijing. Given its claims to the international waters, Beijing will likely push back on the assurance from all six countries to maintain a rules-based order in the SCS. Any subsequent increase in Chinese activity in the SCS will likely push the topic of Japanese investments in Indochina toward the bottom of the agenda at next year's summit and the topic of the SCS to the top.

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[RUSSIA: Defense Deal Likely to Advance Future Cooperation with India](#)

Summary: Russia will provide S-400 surface-to-air missile systems to India, while solidifying its position as India's chief ally in defense.

Development: On 5 October, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a deal allowing New Delhi to purchase five S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile systems from Moscow. The two leaders signed eight other agreements covering nuclear energy, railways, space, and defense. Additionally, Moscow will supply India with four advanced Talwar-class frigates as originally discussed in 2017 as well as rights to manufacture Russian Kalashnikov assault rifles. The estimated \$5.4 billion contract came amid the threat of US sanctions on countries conducting business with Russia's defense and intelligence sectors.

Analysis: New Delhi will almost certainly continue to work with Moscow in the future to expand trade and cooperation regarding defense, as Indian government officials expressed their eagerness in the partnership. While India's stated policy is of "strategic autonomy," investment in Russian defense technology will require a continued dependence on Russia for incessant service requirements and likely signifies future defense cooperation between the two nations. The move by Moscow will most likely strengthen its ties with New Delhi and could possibly counter growing American influence in India. Additionally, the sale of Russian S-400s to India will likely anger Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan will likely seek a surrogate for waning American support, which will likely allow Moscow to better its relations with Islamabad.

[Nicholas Hughes]

TECH: Microsoft Windows Update Deletes User Files

Summary: Microsoft's latest update to their Windows operating system contained a serious flaw that caused the Documents and other folders in the user directory to be deleted.

Development: On 4 October, Microsoft deployed an update, sometimes referred to as Redstone 5. Almost immediately, Microsoft began receiving reports that users were missing files after applying the update. Numerous users deemed the flaw widespread, and on 7 October Microsoft pulled the update to prevent more users from losing their files, which halted the spread of the problem but failed to help those already affected. The same day, Microsoft Tech Support announced they had methods to recover the deleted files in some cases. As of 9 October, the software giant claims they solved the issue and rereleased the update for testing.

Analysis: This incident gives users another reason as to why they should always maintain a reasonably current backup of their files, as it does not require a malicious actor to delete/destroy files. Regardless, Microsoft should have discovered and fixed the flaw during the beta testing phase of development. The purported cause from Microsoft involved a cleanup method they had introduced in a previous patch which introduced a bug that caused extra empty copies of user folders to appear, and when they attempted to patch the issue, they introduced a cleaner that failed to check that the folder was empty before deleting it. This could possibly explain why testers did not encounter this bug, as many of them likely used OneDrive to back up their files to escape this issue, so their user directories contained few if any files to begin with. The fixed version of the Windows 2018 update is likely safe to install and download when fully released, but waiting a day or two would ensure the issue is resolved. If a user were already affected by the file deletion bug, they should minimize use of their machine and contact Microsoft support immediately, as time is a critical factor in their ability to recover files.

[Mark Burrell]

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