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CANADA: Snap Elections Likely Detrimental to Reputation of Administration

Summary: Despite Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's projected retention of power, the inability of his party to gain a parliamentary majority and the unpopularity of the snap elections will almost certainly prove detrimental to the remainder of his time in office.

Development: On 21 September, preliminary results from Canada's snap election showed that Trudeau will remain in power but will fall short of gaining a parliamentary majority. The election, which Trudeau called for in August, comes two years before the next required election. However, many voters and some of Trudeau's opponents painted the call for the snap election as a power grab for Trudeau's Liberal Party to regain the majority it held prior to the 2019 elections. Concerns regarding Trudeau's political longevity surged following several scandals. The scandals include photos of Trudeau in blackface, the federal ethics commissioner finding that Trudeau broke ethics laws in 2018, and now the morality of holding elections and campaign events while the country experiences a surge of the Delta variant of COVID-19.

Analysis: The unofficial results of the snap election likely indicate the beginning of the long-term decline of Trudeau's popularity and overall effectiveness in government. The inability of the Liberal Party to regain its majority in parliament likely speaks to Trudeau's declining popularity and the perception of the snap election as an attempted power grab. This perception will almost certainly damage Trudeau's reputation and may decrease his chances of reelection in the next election cycle. Political opponents of Trudeau and the Liberal Party will likely use the unpopularity and the perceived futility of the snap elections in future policy debates and conflicts. Trudeau will likely face issues in passing legislation without a parliamentary majority.

[Alli McIntyre]

TAIWAN: Military Spending Boost Will Almost Certainly Incite Chinese Aggression

Summary: Taipei's military modernization initiative through its \$9 billion military funding boost will almost certainly precipitate volatile Chinese backlash.

Development: On 17 September, Taipei sent combat aircraft, warships, and early warning aircraft to warn off 10 Chinese aircraft flying in Taiwan's air defense zone. Beijing trespassed a day after Taipei announced its plan for a nearly \$9 billion boost to military spending over the next five years in response to Beijing's repeated threats. Previously, Beijing regularly sent aircraft into Taiwan's airspace, sometimes with nuclear capabilities, prompted by the One China Policy. Because of these repeated encroachments, Taipei plans to modernize its capabilities with cruise missiles and warships. These will serve alongside the agile stealth warships Taipei already possesses.

Analysis: Taipei's military modernization in response to repeated Chinese threats will almost certainly continue to spur aggressive actions between the two actors. Beijing will likely continue sending aircraft with nuclear capabilities, especially as Taipei's modernizing and strengthening efforts continue. If Taipei's military strengthens too much, Beijing may make the first major move towards initiating a military conflict. In addition to weaponry, Taipei will almost certainly use the spending boost towards continuing training for invasions through invasion drills and expanding the size of its military. For now, Taipei will likely rely on the tools at its disposal, like the stealth warships.

[Savannah Gallop]

MYANMAR: Continued Village Raids Likely to Spark Violent Clashes

Summary: The continuation of deadly village raids as a result of increased targeted attacks on members of the military will likely prompt outrage and violent responses from the civilian forces throughout the country.

Development: On 19 September, military forces loyal to the ruling junta clashed with a joint force comprised of the Karenni Nationalities Defense Force, the Karenni Army, and the People's Defense Force (PDF), following the junta's continuation of village raids. Resistance forces reported four injured during the fighting, with two in critical condition, while the junta reported six killed. On 16 September, the PDF conducted ambushes throughout the country and killed 26 junta soldiers. In response, the Myanmar military increased raids on resistance-controlled towns and roads. Widespread reports of burning villages and violent tortures on detainees continue following the raids. Since the declaration of war by the civilian resistance organization, the National Unity Government, on 7 September, civilian casualties reached over 1,100 killed by junta conducted raids, arrests, tortures, and shootings. In response, the PDF and other ethnic resistance groups reportedly conducted a total of 139 attacks to date on the junta.

Analysis: Civilian resistance forces conducted attacks will likely continue to increase against the junta in response to its violent raids occurring in villages. Myanmar's military will almost certainly respond with increased armed attacks on resistance-controlled regions, further escalating the violence. With the junta's heavy military ordinance, the PDF and other ethnic resistance forces will probably continue to use targeted attacks and assassinations against the military. As raids continue, the KNDF and PDF will probably continue to combine forces and work to defend villages from future raids.

[Damon Reyes]

INDIA: Renewed COVID-19 Vaccine Export Likely to Alleviate Strain on Global Economy

Summary: The reestablishment of India's COVID-19 vaccine export will almost certainly increase the availability of vaccines to developing nations, likely aiding global economic recovery.

Development: On 21 September, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya reported New Delhi will resume exporting COVID-19 vaccines in October. India, the world's leading COVID-19 vaccine producer, halted exports in early April to accommodate domestic demands due to rising infection rates. Mandaviya stated India's vaccine manufacturers expect to produce 300 million vaccines for domestic use and export the surplus to other countries. Many developing nations struggled to obtain COVID-19 vaccines after New Delhi ceased exporting the vaccine, and worldwide COVID-19 cases surged in the following months. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected most of the world's economy, including an exceptional strain on public health and food systems.

Analysis: New Delhi's renewed export of COVID-19 vaccines will likely result in increased availability of vaccines to developing nations, potentially spurring increased economic activity. As global vaccination rates increase, many nations will likely continue to return to normalcy by withdrawing border closures, trade restrictions, social distancing, and lockdowns, which will likely spur global economic growth. New Delhi's vaccine export may encourage other nations to review their own vaccine exports and work towards quickly vaccinating more of the global population.

[Alex Cyr]

LEBANON: Imported Iranian Fuel Likely Signals Hezbollah's Role in Economic Recovery

Summary: The arrival of Iranian fuel in Lebanon as a part of a Hezbollah-backed deal may help ease the economic pressure of the fuel crisis while likely signaling Hezbollah's role in Lebanon's recovery as a new government takes power during a severe economic crisis.

Development: On 16 September, Iranian fuel arrived in Lebanon as a part of a deal orchestrated by Hezbollah political affiliates in efforts to ease the grave fuel crisis afflicting the country. Iran's oil sector remains under heavy Western sanctions, causing many to fear the deal would prompt Western economic retaliation against Beirut for accepting the oil. Lebanon currently faces the worst economic crisis in decades with the currency losing 90% of its value and about three-quarters of the nation living below the poverty line, according to Aljazeera. The nation remains locked in a fuel crisis as government subsidies perpetuated a fuel shortage allowing for a black market of smuggling fuel to Syria to take root. The new government led by Prime Minister Najib Mikati and President Michel Aoun hopes to lead the country out of its desperate state.

Analysis: The successful importation of Iranian fuel will likely cement Hezbollah's role in Lebanon's recovery as both a voice for the Lebanese people's needs and as a source of international pressure aiding the nation's recovery. The nature of Hezbollah's political influence allows the group to operate outside of state responsibility, which will likely boost the group's political position within the nation. Public gratitude and strong relations with Aoun may set Hezbollah up as a central player in Beirut's recovery. Hezbollah's political power will probably work to the advantage of Lebanon and the economy as the group acts as a broker between Beirut and Tehran while sidestepping international hurdles. Hezbollah's role may prove vital as a short-term solution to the fuel crisis. However, should Western actors take action against Iranian fuel imports, the result will likely prove detrimental to Beirut's long-term economic recovery.

[Tim Fergus]

About GSIS

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's (ERAU) Bachelor of Science in Global Security & Intelligence Studies (GSIS) degree program at our Prescott Campus blends both academic and professional studies to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become future leaders in intelligence, security, and law enforcement. The program provides students with a sound foundation in the liberal arts, including international relations, foreign languages and cultures, international law, foreign policy, political and military history, and other essential topics.

About EE

Eagle Eye Intelligence (EE) is an intelligence and research organization led by the students of the GSIS program at ERAU in Prescott, Arizona.

Dr. Philip E. Jones founded EE and Embry-Riddle's GSIS program in 2002, following a career with the Central Intelligence Agency and consulting work in international development and global security. Currently, Professor Dale R. Avery, a former career intelligence analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency and Office of the Director of National Intelligence, serves as EE's faculty advisor.

EE strives to provide actionable intelligence and analysis to its customers during the academic year. We are driven by a number of goals – continuous development, nonpartisanship, interdisciplinary studies, global awareness, and professionalism.

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not represent the position Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University or the College of Security and Intelligence.

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