



Risk Mitigation Consulting Inc.

Intelligence and Analysis Division

OPEN SOURCE UPDATE

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INTENT

This open source periodical is designed to provide an overview of relevant, publicly available information on threat and hazard events and analysis of potential impacts to the interests of the United States, both at home and abroad. This product is not intended to be a comprehensive overview of all threat and hazard news and inclusion in this product does not constitute a confirmation of credibility nor precedence by RMC.



Threats	Page
Three Men Connected to ‘Boogaloo’ Movement Tried to Provoke Violence at Protests, Feds Say <i>Insider Threat</i>	2
Man Who Allegedly Ran Over Protesters is an Admitted Leader of the Ku Klux Klan <i>Terrorism</i>	3
Chinese Military Officer Arrested for Attempting to Steal Medical Research in U.S. <i>Foreign Intelligence Entities</i>	4
Gun Stores Burglarized in New Orleans Metro Area <i>Property Crime</i>	5
Police Show of Force/Use of Force May Exacerbate Violence at Protests <i>Civil Disturbance</i>	6
Seattle Meets with Organizers, Stakeholders About Reducing City’s CHOP Footprint <i>Civil Disturbance</i>	7

Hazards	Page
At Least 18 U.S. States Report Increasing Coronavirus Cases After Reopening <i>Biological Hazards</i>	8
COVID-19 and Race <i>Biological Hazards</i>	9
Widespread T-Mobile Cellular Network <i>Accidental Events</i>	10
Multi-Dam Failure in Michigan <i>Accidental Events</i>	11



Threats

Three Men Connected to ‘Boogaloo’ Movement Tried to Provoke Violence at Protests, Feds Say – *Insider Threat*

Excerpt: Federal prosecutors in Las Vegas have charged three men alleged to be members of the far-right extremist "Boogaloo" movement with multiple state and federal violations of conspiracy to cause destruction during protests in Las Vegas, as well as possession of Molotov cocktails.

Charging documents say Stephen T. Parshall, aka "Kiwi," 35; Andrew Lynam, 23; and William L. Loomis, 40, all of Las Vegas, were arrested on a state criminal complaint alleging conspiracy to commit an act of terrorism, material support for committing an act of terrorism and multiple explosives violations. The plot was foiled with help from an informant, authorities said.

The "Boogaloo" movement, which federal prosecutors describe as a "term used by extremists to signify a coming civil war and/or collapse of society," has been linked to some online posts about protests over the death of George Floyd.

Analyst Comment: The Boogaloo Movement emerged on internet discussion boards and social media sometime in 2019. The group believes in a second Civil War within the United States. Like many online fringe groups, members' discourse is laden with jokes, memes, and jargon that is obscure to outsiders. The term "boogaloo" refers to the 1984 movie *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo*. Adding "Electric Boogaloo" to a phrase infers that an event or product is an unnecessary follow-up (i.e. "Civil War 2: Electric Boogaloo"). Members refer to themselves as "boogaloo boys" or "boogaloo bois" and have been sighted at protests and riots, sometimes wearing Hawaiian shirts and armed with military-style semiautomatic rifles. The group's beliefs are anti-government and anti-law enforcement. There is also a white supremacist, antisemitic element that believes in a coming race war. Others have tried to ally themselves with Black Lives Matter (BLM) out of a common distrust of law enforcement, but their efforts at building common cause have largely failed. BLM protestors seem to generally regard them as oppositional or as outside agitators. Despite the range of beliefs among different boogaloo factions, all are focused on a potential Civil War.

Department of Defense (DoD) personnel are also susceptible to online extremism. Hate groups sometimes recruit current and former members of the armed services, or they encourage individuals to enlist in order to learn relevant skillsets, and the DoD has struggled to prevent extremists from joining the armed services. Discouraging their presence becomes even more difficult with current servicemembers and veterans. Of the three charged in Las Vegas, two were veterans and one was a reservist. It is impossible to police all online activity, particularly among those no longer on active duty. As such, this demographic will likely remain susceptible to recruitment to these types of groups.

Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/all/three-men-connected-boogaloo-movement-tried-provoke-violence-protests-feds-n1224231>



Man Who Allegedly Ran Over Protesters is an Admitted Leader of the Ku Klux Klan – *Terrorism*

Excerpt: A man who is accused of driving his car through a group of protesters in Virginia is an “admitted leader of the Ku Klux Klan and a propagandist for Confederate ideology,” according to the Henrico County Commonwealth's Attorney.

Harry Rogers, 36, is charged with attempted malicious wounding, felony vandalism, and assault and battery, and is being held without bond.

Rogers’ next court hearing is scheduled for 18 August.

The Henrico County Police Division said in a statement that it received a call from Richmond Police about an incident that had happened during a protest in Richmond. CNN affiliate WTVR reported the protest was a Black Lives Matter march, one of dozens that have occurred across the country since the death of George Floyd last month.

Analyst Comment: After Harry Rogers was arrested, KKK literature and paraphernalia were found in his truck. In the home he shares with his girlfriend, authorities found the green robes of a Grand Dragon (a KKK leadership position) along with numerous firearms. His affiliation with the KKK and his past record of misdemeanors and traffic charges is extensive. In 2017, he was sentenced to 15 days in jail for appearing at a fast food restaurant in his robes with a concealed weapon. Open source reporting shows that Rogers was very likely a member of the Rebel Brigade Knights True Invisible Empire located in Martinsville, VA. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, there are three KKK chapters operating in Virginia, including Rogers’s chapter. KKK chapters are generally independent of each other. There is no national governing body.

Freedom of speech and association are protected by the Constitution. The federal government has no legal designation for domestic terror groups. However despicable, it is not a crime to be a member of a hate group. However, Rogers’s tactic of ramming protestors is most disturbing because the tactic has become common during the protests following the death of George Floyd. Vehicle attacks against demonstrators became an internet meme (“All Lives Splatter”) in right-wing forums and on social media around 2015 and perhaps earlier. A fatal attack using this tactic occurred during the 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, VA. While thankfully no one was killed in Rogers’s attack, there will likely be others who continue to imitate the vehicle-ramming tactic as protests continue in major urban centers. Both authorities and protestors should remain vigilant and account for the possibility that this type of attack will occur again.

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/08/us/virginia-man-car-kkk-trnd/index.html>



Chinese Military Officer Arrested for Attempting to Steal Medical Research in U.S. – *Foreign Intelligence Entities*

Excerpt: A Chinese military officer was caught trying to leave California with university research materials this week, after allegedly lying on an application to obtain a visitor visa for a work-study exchange program, the Justice Department announced.

Xin Wang, a scientific researcher and officer with China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), was arrested at LAX as he was attempting to board his flight to Tianjin, China, according to court documents unsealed this week. He faces visa fraud charges.

Wang entered the U.S. on 26 March 2019, to conduct scientific research at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), according to his J1 non-immigrant visa application. The application, however, is said to have contained fraudulent statements -- including claims that his service with the PLA had ended in 2016 -- that were made to increase the chances that he would receive visa approval.

Officials claim Wang revealed that he had instructions from the director of his military lab to observe the layout of the UCSF lab with the understanding that they wanted to try to replicate it in China. He was also accused of attempting to bring materials to China with him and had already emailed research.

When interviewed by Customs and Border Protection this week, Wang purportedly admitted that he was currently a "Level-9" technician -- which was equated to the rank of major -- for the PLA, employed by a military university lab. He also allegedly said he had received compensation from the PLA and the China Scholarship Council.

WeChat messages are said to have been wiped off of Wang's phone the day he was expected to board his plane.

Analyst Comment: In addition to the targeting of U.S. government, military, and intelligence secrets, China has waged an economic espionage campaign against U.S. academia, research efforts, and private industry. A 2018 report from the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) noted that foreign intelligence collectors consider biotechnology a priority collection sector, to include advanced medical devices, biomanufacturing and chemical manufacturing, biomaterials, biopharmaceuticals, genetically modified organisms, infectious disease treatment, and new vaccines and drugs.

Wang's case appears to center around an objective to target the UCSF lab's layout in order to comparatively evaluate a military lab in China. Additionally, Wang deliberately misled U.S. authorities on his visa application, and he reportedly wiped messages from a Chinese messaging app called WeChat, which could have potentially obscured communication with his contacts in China.



Espionage targeting the medical sector remains a serious concern amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased the collection value of potential pharmaceuticals and vaccines. As discussed in the May 2020 Open Source Update, Iran-linked hackers targeted the U.S. pharmaceutical firm Gilead, which manufactures a drug that had showed potential for COVID-19 treatment. Iran had been particularly hard-hit by the pandemic, and the hack shows their intent to utilize espionage as a means to find a viable medical treatment.

Source: <https://www.foxnews.com/us/chinese-military-officer-arrested-us-medical-research>

Gun Stores Burglarized in New Orleans Metro Area – *Property Crime*

Excerpt: After months of investigation, two New Orleans men have been arrested in connection to one of several gun store break-ins that happened on the Northshore in April.

According to the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff’s Office, Kahliq Williams, 20, and Richard Jones, 22, were arrested in May and stand accused of breaking into a Covington-area gun store on the morning of 17 April. Officials say they stole dozens of guns from the business.

The pair now faces charges of burglary, handling of machine guns (five counts each), theft of firearms (45 counts each), possession of stolen items and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

The arrests come as part of a multi-parish investigation into several gun store burglaries that happened on the Northshore in April.

Analyst Comment: The recent gun store burglaries occurred on the “Northshore” of the New Orleans metro area, a suburban area roughly 30-45 minutes’ driving distance outside of the city itself. While there is no clear evidence to suggest a motive at this time, the demand for firearms has apparently increased due to civil unrest concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These concerns have been compounded amidst widespread protests (some of which have turned violent) in response to the killings of unarmed black individuals to include George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery. Guns sales in May 2020 increased 80.2% from May of 2019, as measured by the number of background checks processed by the FBI. This figure does not include private firearms sales, which do not require a background check in most states.

While not confirmed, it is entirely possible that the brazen theft of multiple firearms could be linked to the increased demand for firearms due to fears of civil unrest. Conversely, New Orleans has an extensive history of firearms theft, as reviewed in local news site NOLA.com’s investigative report *The New Orleans Gun Pipeline: Stolen Weapons Fuel Street Violence*. The firearms stolen in these recent burglaries have already been linked to car jackings, robberies, and likely at least one shooting (according to the New Orleans Police Department).

Source: <https://www.wwtv.com/article/news/crime/2-new-orleans-men-arrested-in-northshore-gun-store-investigation/289-5411660d-4838-45ab-b731-75518acd89ad>



Police Show of Force/Use of Force May Exacerbate Violence at Protests – *Civil Disturbance*

Excerpt: Last Wednesday, Marcell Harris was hit by a rubber bullet. He had joined the second day of protests in this city over the killing of George Floyd, a black man who died after a police officer knelt on his neck for more than eight minutes while bystanders filmed. Though these protests began with peaceful demonstrations outside the city’s 3rd Precinct, interactions between police and protesters had escalated. Police unleashed pepper spray, projectiles and tear gas. Protesters threw water bottles, built barricades and destroyed nearby property.

Harris said he had used his backpack as a shield and maneuvered close enough to take the baton of the officer who shot him. On Thursday night, he returned to the same spot to watch the precinct burn. With no police presence to be seen, he and other protesters were celebrating a victory. “I’m nonviolent,” he said. “But this feels emotional. George Floyd popped the bubble. It feels like the beginning of the end.” The end of what? “What we’ve been going through,” he said, referring to heavy-handed and often deadly policing of African Americans. “All the bulls**t.”

Watching a peaceful protest turn into something much less palatable is hard. There has been a lot of hard the past few days, as people in dozens of cities have released pent-up anger against discriminatory police tactics. Cars and buildings have burned. Store windows have been smashed. Protesters and police have been hurt. When protests take a turn like this we naturally wonder ... why? Was this preventable? Does anyone know how to stop it from happening?

Analyst Comment: Protest activity related to George Floyd’s death has often been emotionally charged and has turned violent and destructive on a number of occasions. However, research has also suggested that peaceful protests can turn violent when police (often wearing intimidating riot control gear as a matter of precaution) utilize tear gas or other aggressive techniques to disperse protests. These researchers suggest “escalating force by police...tends to create feedback loops, where protesters escalate against police, police escalate even further, and both sides become increasingly angry and afraid.” However, it should also be noted that these researchers admit the very nature of studying protests is imperfect and often extremely subjective.

Additionally, outside agitators can provoke violence in an otherwise peaceful protest. Infiltrators could potentially enter a peaceful protest with the intent of committing violent or riotous acts (such as breaking windows or starting fires). Alternatively, counter-protesters could attend a protest they oppose, with the intention of raising tensions and potentially leading to violent clashes.

Source: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/de-escalation-keeps-protesters-and-police-safer-heres-why-departments-respond-with-force-anyway/>



Seattle Meets with Organizers, Stakeholders About Reducing City's CHOP Footprint – *Civil Disturbance*

Excerpt: Seattle's self-declared autonomous zone, now being called "CHOP" or Capitol Hill Occupied Protest, could soon have a smaller protest area if the city gets its way.

City leadership from the Seattle Fire Department, Seattle Department of Transportation and Seattle Public Utilities met with CHOP representatives and representatives of business and property stakeholders. The discussion included options for reducing the footprint of the protest zone, which currently stretches several blocks near Seattle Police Department's east precinct.

The city said it's working to balance the rights of protesters with the proposed changes that would address the need for first responders to once again drive emergency vehicles through the area while opening access for businesses and people who live there.

Analyst Comment: The area that constitutes the Capital Hill Occupied Protest (CHOP) was established on 08 June 2020 by protesters after the Seattle Police Department (SPD) vacated its East Precinct building. The protests were part of the national demonstrations following the death of George Floyd. Floyd died on 25 May 2020 after his arrest in Minneapolis. While the situation at CHOP is developing, reactions in the media have ranged from support among progressives to calls for law enforcement or even military intervention by conservatives, including President Donald Trump. Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan has praised the occupiers, while Assistant Chief Deanna Nollette cited anecdotes of occupiers extorting money from local businesses and the difficulty of responding to emergencies. Police Chief Carmen Best alleged that robberies, rapes, and other violent crimes were occurring. Best has spoken more favorably about the protestors since then, even as their list of demands has included abolishing the Seattle Police Department. Initially, other demands published online reflected common progressive causes, including rent control, retrial of inmates of color, and free college, among many others. The group has since scaled back its rhetoric, asking for a defunding and reformation of the SPD and additional investment in the city's black community.

CHOP is thus far, officially leaderless, although Solomon "Raz" Simone has emerged as the de facto voice of the area. Simone is a recording artist and activist. He has engaged with the media on behalf of CHOP, but some conservative voices have lampooned him as a "warlord." Representatives meeting with city officials could have multiple ramifications. The level of recognition afforded by such talks will only encourage the occupiers and embolden other activists to establish similar camps in other states. However, barring an overwhelming show of force by authorities, a move guaranteed to generate controversy, de-escalation and negotiation may be the first step to returning the six occupied blocks to the city, its businesses, and residents.

Source: <https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/chaz-chop-protesters-occupying-portion-capitol-hill-give-area-new-name/WYBUTJ5CIJCWDJQLFS3PBFH5V4/>



Hazards

At Least 18 U.S. States Report Increasing Coronavirus Cases After Reopening – *Biological Hazards*

Excerpt: More than one-third of all U.S. states saw upticks in cases of the novel coronavirus over the last two weeks, as economic reopening strategies progress nationwide and people return to public spaces. Officials in some states, like Florida and California, have attributed rising diagnosis counts to expanded testing capabilities. Others have pointed to concurrent increases in hospital admissions related to the virus as evidence of a link between reopening and heightened transmission.

Health officials in at least 18 states—California, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Oregon, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Alaska, Hawaii, Utah, Georgia, Wyoming and Washington—have reported recent increases in virus diagnoses amid reopening. Most also confirmed their highest weekly average jump in cases during the first seven days of June, with several reporting record-high daily increases since the beginning of the month. Arizona's total number of confirmed virus cases nearly doubled during that first week, while Florida's rose by about 15 percent.

Analyst Comment: Grappling with an uncertain economic future, many states have decided to move ahead with reopening businesses, schools, houses of worship, and other public spaces. While the number of COVID-19 infections was declining, unemployment claims skyrocketed, leaving many Americans in the untenable position of either going without work or risking infection. Many states have implemented social distancing guidelines, but reopening increases overall instances of potential transmission. Transmission by asymptomatic carriers is still being studied, with the World Health Organization (WHO) admitting that the data is unclear.

The nationwide protests following the death of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 in Minneapolis may be contributing to the rise in infections. Despite many wearing masks, protestors and law enforcement were forced to ignore social distancing guidelines. With symptoms appearing 2 to 14 days after exposure, this may contribute to a “second wave” in the coming days and weeks.

As development continues on an effective vaccine and/or treatment, many American have demanded to be allowed to work and socialize outside of their home, assuming their own level of risk. COVID-19 is most lethal in those 65 and older and those suffering from co-morbidities. This has led to a degree of skepticism among younger and healthier populations, who feel that they will likely be unaffected by the virus. This is understandable, but a second outbreak may only engender a second shutdown and quarantine. With ongoing civil unrest in many urban centers, caution is warranted by public health officials.

Source: <https://www.newsweek.com/least-18-us-states-report-increasing-coronavirus-cases-after-reopening-1510781>



COVID-19 and Race – *Biological Hazards*

Excerpt: The effects of COVID-19 on the health of racial and ethnic minority groups is still emerging; however, current data suggest a disproportionate burden of illness and death among racial and ethnic minority groups.

A recent CDC MMWR report included race and ethnicity data from 580 patients hospitalized with lab-confirmed COVID-19 found that 45% of individuals for whom race or ethnicity data was available were white, compared to 59% of individuals in the surrounding community. However, 33% of hospitalized patients were black, compared to 18% in the community, and 8% were Hispanic, compared to 14% in the community. These data suggest an overrepresentation of blacks among hospitalized patients.

Among COVID-19 deaths for which race and ethnicity data were available, New York City identified death rates among black/African American persons (92.3 deaths per 100,000 population) and Hispanic/Latino persons (74.3) that were substantially higher than that of white (45.2) or Asian (34.5) persons. Studies are underway to confirm these data and understand and potentially reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the health of racial and ethnic minorities.

Analyst Comment: Health differences between racial and ethnic groups are often due to economic and social conditions. In public health emergencies, these conditions can also isolate people from the resources they need to prepare for and respond to outbreaks.

For many people in racial and ethnic minority groups, living conditions may also contribute to underlying health conditions and make it difficult to follow steps to prevent getting sick or to seek treatment if they do. For example, members of racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to live in densely populated areas stemming from the long history of discriminatory segregated housing practices. Residential segregation has been linked to a variety of adverse health outcomes and underlying health conditions. Existing health disparities, such as poorer underlying health and barriers to getting health care, might make members of many racial and ethnic minority groups especially vulnerable in public health emergencies like outbreaks of COVID-19.

Multi-generation housing is more common among some racial and ethnic minority families. Additionally, racial and ethnic minority groups are over-represented in jails, prisons, and detention centers, which have specific risks due to congregate living, shared food service, etc. The types of work and policies in the work environments where people in some racial and ethnic groups are overrepresented can also contribute to their risk for getting sick with COVID-19.

Not all nations currently collect data by race and ethnicity related to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a pattern of disproportionate impacts on racial and ethnic minority groups is beginning to emerge. For example, as of the first week of June, the Black mortality rate across the U.S. has never fallen below twice that of all other groups, revealing a durable pattern of disproportionality. When assessing the impact of COVID-19, these factors must be considered.



Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>

Widespread T-Mobile Cellular Network Outage – *Accidental Events*

Excerpt: T-Mobile on Monday [15 June 2020] suffered a widespread outage across the United States, disrupting connectivity across cellular networks.

According to an outage tracker Downtdetector, complaints started pouring in around 12:30 PM ET and continue through press time. T-Mobile President of Technology Neville Ray acknowledged the glitch on Twitter, and said the company engineers "are working to resolve a voice and data issue that has been affecting customers around the country." The world's third-largest telecom operator in April completed its merger with the Softbank Group Corp-owned smaller rival Sprint, and the combined company has more than 100 million customers in the country.

Several users on social media, including Democratic Representative Ted Lieu of California, claimed that there was a massive "DDoS" or "Distributed Denial of Service" attack on the major US networks.

Security researchers, including Bad Packets Report and MalwareTech, also rubbished the claims of a DDoS attack, where a malicious entity intends to bar the users from obtaining the services of the network by overwhelming it with false requests.

Analyst Comment: According to security researchers, the T-Mobile outage was likely due to a network configuration error, which had cascading effects around several regions within the U.S, and resulted in over 110,000 T-Mobile users unable to make or receive cell phone calls. Still, rumors of a massive DDoS attack causing the outage persisted online, allegedly linked to a Twitter account affiliated with the "hactivist" group Anonymous. DDoS stands for "distributed denial of service", a form of cyberattack in which an adversary degrades or disables a victim's network by sending an excessive amount of malicious traffic to overwhelm the network's capabilities to process legitimate traffic. The incident highlights the impacts of cascading effects related to infrastructure issues, as well as the potential for misinformation to affect emergency scenarios. An extended failure of communications systems could have negative impacts on public safety and economic activity.

Source: <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/t-mobile-outage-disrupts-wireless-045215897.html>



Multi-Dam Failure in Michigan – *Accidental Events*

Excerpt: Unprecedented flooding was ongoing Wednesday morning [20 May 2020] in Midland County, Mich., after a pair of dams collapsed following record rainfall. Thousands of residents have been told to evacuate as floodwaters gush into the communities along the Tittabawassee River, inundating homes and businesses and prompting an emergency declaration from Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D). The flooding is threatening a major Dow Chemical plant that lies along the river.

The Edenville Dam was breached Tuesday evening [19 May 2020] after Midland received 4.7 inches of rain in a 48-hour period, following days of heavy rain across the state. The dam sits about 18 miles upstream of Midland, a city of more than 40,000.

That collapse sent floodwaters gushing into Sanford Lake, where a dam has powered the Boyce Hydroelectric Plant. The Sanford Dam succumbed shortly thereafter, the twin reservoirs of water left with no place to drain but into the city of Midland. A flash flood emergency is in effect for downstream areas of Sanford.

Analyst Comment: The flood severity was estimated to be on the order of a 500-year event. A 500-year flood would have a 0.2 percent chance of occurring in any given year. 10,000 residents were evacuated from the area. This event occurred amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, further complicating evacuation, rescue, and relocation efforts.

The Edenville dam was considered a “high hazard” dam, meaning its failure could damage property and threaten lives. Lawsuits have been filed against the company that owned the dam. The owner of the dam has, for years, failed to comply with its license to utilize the hydroelectric dam. They were cited for failing to maintain and improve spillways – an important tool to direct excess water away from the dam and relieve pressure. In 2018 the owner’s license was revoked due to non-compliance issues and the inability to pass the most severe flood reasonably possible in the area. While the company could no longer use the dam for electrical generation, it was still in possession of the dam. Both dams were in the process of being sold when this event occurred.

Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/05/20/michigan-dams-fail-midland/>
