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**COMM 202 (2185)**

After studying the assigned reading **21st Century Communication: A Reference Handbook: Chapter 65: The Changing Nature of “News”** considering the concepts of timeliness, proximity, unusualness, prominence, impact, conflict and human interest, provide a current example of a compelling news story. Answer the following questions or prompts:

**A) Why is it compelling? Which of the concepts does it exemplify?**

A compelling news story that is currently unfolding is the recent implementation of tariffs on aluminum and steel imports into the United States. President Donald Trump implemented tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum originating from Canada, Mexico, and the European Union (Home 2018). The reasoning behind the decision was that these materials are deemed vital to national security and that American domestic production must be protected.

All the targeted parties have now threatened to implement counter-tariffs in response. News media covering this story is constantly questioning if this is the beginning of a “trade war” with the potential for severe economic consequences for all parties involved. This news story exemplifies the concepts of timeliness, unusualness, prominence, impact, and conflict.

**Timeliness** – This is an ongoing story. The tariffs were first suggested months ago, but were put into force as of June 1st. Targeted nations are now devising ways of retaliation. In the case of Canada, they are waiting until July before implementing their own tariffs on American goods in hopes that the United States decides to withdraw the tariffs. The European Union has created a list of American goods that they will put tariffs on in the coming weeks if the United States doesn’t reverse its decision. Whether, the United States responds to these counter-tariffs is yet to be seen.

**Unusualness** – One of the strangest things about this situation we find ourselves in is that these tariffs have been implemented against traditional allies of the United States. Canada and the European Union have long been steadfast allies and are genuinely shocked by the decision of the United States to target their aluminum and steel exports. We are now faced with the possibility of a trade war taking place against our allies as opposed to our enemies.

**Prominence** – President Donald Trump is the center of much of the media’s discussions. His decision to implement tariffs is being widely reported as yet another questionable policy decision that could potentially have a negative impact on this country. Much of the opposition to this decision is largely because of the controversy that President Donald Trump brings.

**Impact** – The true impact of this decision has yet to be seen. However one thing is certain, we the consumers will be ones impacted by this decision. With Canada, Mexico, and the European Union planning to retaliate with their own tariffs, the outcome will likely not be good. Prices will probably rise on certain imported goods and the economy may take a hit. Should this “trade war” escalate, goods from the relative countries could become scarcer and/or more expensive.

**Conflict** – The very nature of a “trade war” is conflict. Tariffs implemented by one country on another are an aggressive action that warrants an equally aggressive response. This has to potential to evolve into a series of tit-for-tat moves that seeks to damage the economic standing of the nations involved. The drama involved in conflict makes for good news material.

**B) In general, how have these concepts been challenged by the advent of immediacy in news release?**

Timeliness – Updates on the unfolding trade war are near instantaneous. The individual responses of leaders are reported as soon as they are said. For example this is what Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had to say just recently, "These tariffs are an affront to the long-standing security partnership between Canada and the United States, and in particular, to the thousands of Canadians who have fought and died alongside American comrades-in-arms. (Hutzler 2018)”

Unusualness – The unfolding of these events in real time makes this feel all the more surreal. It’s like being in a slow-motion car crash.

Prominence – Because things are occurring seemingly in real time, the issue feels like it has more relevance. President Donald Trump is at the heart of all of this and so it will remain prominent in the news cycle.

Impact – Since we can see the consequences of this decision unfolding nearly instantaneously, the impact feels more real. When the European Union stated recently that they would target American products like Harley Davidson motorcycles, blue jeans, and peanut butter (Rankin 2018); it made the potential impact of these retaliatory tariffs feel closer to home.

Conflict – Watching the responses of our allies makes this conflict feel more intimate. Each retaliatory decision feels like a new punch to the gut. Observing this conflict escalate will be interesting.

**Bibliography**

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