

## TOP LINE

Public protests initially catalyzed by accusations of police brutality have evolved into ongoing social unrest in a number of U.S. cities, with unclear driving factors. This feedback loop has created a false dichotomy which places frustrations of race, Covid-19 response, economic insecurity, unemployment, and the disconnect between Wall Street and Main Street under the same umbrella. In reality, however, it is unclear what is truly driving the protests – despite mainstream media’s claims otherwise. Unraveling the underlying causes of social unrest is a challenging proposition as headline reporting rarely tells the full, unvarnished story. Even more rarely is a solution presented.

These challenges place business leaders in the difficult position of parsing through limited – and typically biased – information, upon which they’re expected to make well informed decisions about day-to-day security and operations. Complicating matters further are the threatened and real budget cuts to law enforcement offices and police forces across the country. Dynamic security environments are not typically associated with most U.S. major metropolitan areas as violent crime has largely been low in recent decades. Nevertheless, 2020 has brought to light a complex web of factors which are exposing gaping holes in the system upon which most Americans rely for stability and day-to-day security.

Business leaders must evaluate and determine an acceptable outcome in terms of security and daily operations. In the absence of a public law enforcement solution and ongoing social unrest, business leaders should be prepared to determine which actions they are willing to take to achieve a tolerable level of security. Businesses should recognize that risk will not be eliminated, and mitigation will take time given the complex nature of the current security environment. Even so, steps must be taken to ensure business continuity in the fluid security environment that characterizes the United States in 2020.

### *Questions to Consider:*

*What efforts can business leaders make to best understand the civil unrest feedback loop?  
How can business leaders make effective decisions on a day-to-day basis amidst the unpredictability of social unrest?*

## COVID-19: THE HIGHLIGHTS

As a reminder that Covid is here to stay, the Big-10 and Pac-12 [postponed](#) their fall sports seasons, including football, due to the coronavirus; this is likely to prompt other leagues to follow. At this point, the widespread and easily transmissible nature of the virus makes it [unlikely](#) that it will ever disappear and rather, will only be managed over time. Such management may not be entirely vaccine driven, but instead derived from the high number of [asymptomatic](#) Covid infections.

## BEYOND THE NOISE

Federal leaders have threatened to [withhold federal level funding](#) to cities where police forces were defunded or otherwise restrained amid continued social unrest. Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, New York, and Washington, D.C., were among the candidates. Calculations indicate that approximately \$14.8 billion in federal contracts and grants flows to these five cities alone; the withdrawal of such money would certainly take an economic toll against the backdrop of the pandemic. Protests against efforts to cut police funding are also present on the local scale. Seattle's respected police chief [announced her retirement](#) after the Seattle City Council voted to cut her salary and those of other police officers, as well as eliminating as many as 100 officers through layoffs and attrition. The Seattle City Council was subsequently widely criticized for pushing out a respected minority police chief in the name of reform.

The true long term costs of actions to trim police forces and budgets remain unclear; however, [rising homicide rates across the U.S.](#) are a foreboding sign. Rates began to climb in the early months of the Covid pandemic, but prior to the recent waves of social unrest. As such, the exact reason for the rise is unknown; however, economic insecurity and unemployment have spiked during Covid. The confluence of factors is further taxing an already stressed public security apparatus and placing additional pressure on business leaders to create their own solutions in a dynamic environment. As such, business leaders should consider which resources present information upon which they are able to make informed decisions on a day-to-day basis.

### TRUSTED RESOURCES: for numbers & guidance

[Johns Hopkins University](#) – Coronavirus Resource Center

[World Health Organization](#) – COVID-19 Pandemic

[Center for Disease Control](#) – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

***Please contact Secure Source International at [info@securesource.com](mailto:info@securesource.com) to schedule a leadership roundtable with our intelligence and security experts to dive into these topics and discuss security and safety related best-practices.***