TABLE OF CONTENTS

Video Summary & Related Content ........................................... 3
Video Review ........................................................................ 4
  Before Viewing .................................................................. 5
  While Viewing .................................................................... 7
  Talk Prompts ...................................................................... 9
  After Viewing ..................................................................... 13
The Story ............................................................................... 15
Activity #1: Building Canada’s 5G Network ......................... 20
Activity #2: Imagine the Worst ........................................... 23
Sources ............................................................................... 25

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News in Review is produced by CBC NEWS and curio.ca

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HUawei ARREST: Canada Caught in a Political Tug of War

Video duration – 18:02

The arrest of a top executive from Chinese company Huawei has placed Canada in the middle of a political tug of war. In December 2018, Canadian authorities detained Meng Wanzhou at the Vancouver Airport at the request of U.S. law officials. Meng is the daughter of the founder of Huawei, the largest technical communications company in the world. She remains in Canada while awaiting possible extradition to the U.S. on charges of fraud and violating international sanctions. Her arrest has heightened diplomatic tensions between China and Canada. And the case has far reaching implication raising security concerns about giving Huawei access to Canada’s 5G network.

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VIDEO REVIEW
The Legend of the Trojan Horse has captured the imagination of people for 2,500 years. Here’s a brief synopsis of the story. (Whether or not the story is true is a matter of debate among historians.)

The Greeks laid siege to Troy, a city-state on the coast of Turkey, but couldn’t penetrate the walls surrounding the city. Traditional methods of attack weren’t going to work so they needed to come up with an idea that was both original and innovative if the Greeks hoped to prevail over the Trojans. A Greek general named Odysseus crafted a plan that met both needs. He directed artisans to create a giant horse — ornate on the outside and hollow on the inside — that was big enough to hold a cohort of soldiers within. The Greeks would sail the horse across the Aegean Sea and leave it outside the main doors of Troy as a token gift to signal “surrender” in the decade long battle. So this is what they did and, as the Trojans saw the Greek ships sailing away, they
rejoiced in their victory, bringing the horse inside the city walls so people could celebrate around the symbol of defeat left behind by the Greeks. When night fell, the soldiers hidden inside the horse snuck out and opened the gates for their Greek comrades, who had doubled back while the Trojans were celebrating. What ensued was a bloody and decisive victory for the Greeks.

The Five Eyes intelligence alliance is made up of Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. These five nations agree to share surveillance and intelligence information with each other as part of a multilateral pact.

1. Have you ever heard of the legend of the Trojan horse? If so, in what context?

2. Have you ever heard of a Trojan horse in relation to your computer? Conduct further research and write a brief explanation of what you have learned about this type of malware.

3. What is the moral of the story?

4. Keep the story of the Trojan horse in mind while you view this News in Review segment.
1. The arrest of 46-year-old Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of Samsung’s founder, set off an international feud between Canada and South Korea.  ❑ TRUE or ❑ FALSE

2. Some members of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance have banned Huawei’s participation in the construction of their national 5G infrastructure because:
   ❑ a) They already have contractors in place to build the network.
   ❑ b) They fear Huawei will use the network to spy on their nation for China.
   ❑ c) Their fees are too high.
   ❑ d) They prefer to stick with local telecoms to get the job done

3. Meng Wanzhou was released on bail of:
   ❑ a) $1 million       ❑ b) $5 million       ❑ c) $10 million       ❑ d) $50 million

4. Canada’s Ambassador to China John McCallum was fired for saying the U.S. did not have a strong case for extradition against Meng Wanzhou.  ❑ TRUE or ❑ FALSE
5. U.S. allegations against Huawei included:
   - a) Corporate espionage
   - b) Honouring copyright
   - c) Murder
   - d) Malpractice

6. The 5G network will make phones slower, block the advent of driverless cars and allow less access to smart technologies.  
   - TRUE or  FALSE

7. Canada is weighing its options before it decides whether or not to allow Huawei to help it build its 5G network.  
   - TRUE or  FALSE
TALK PROMPTS
Consider pausing the video and giving students the opportunity to talk to an elbow partner for a few minutes or use these questions as part of a class discussion.

**TALK PROMPT #1**

Pause the video after Peter Armstrong signs off from his story, @ 2:53

- Why are many national governments wary of Huawei? Why don’t they trust the Chinese telecom giant?

**TALK PROMPT #2**

Pause the video after Katie Simpson signs off from her story, @05:44

1. How grateful was the U.S. to Canada for detaining Meng Wanzhou?
2. Why did Canada fire Ambassador John McCallum?
3. What was Chrystia Freeland’s position on the accusation that the Liberals were playing politics in the dispute with China?
Pause the video after Wendy Mesley’s profile of Huawei, @ 10:30

1. List the charges against Huawei. Which of the charges do you think are the most serious?

2. How powerful is the company? How well positioned is Huawei to build the 5G networks that nations around the world are trying to create?

3. Why are nations like Canada suspicious of Huawei?
TALK PROMPT #4

Play the video through to the end and consider the following questions as a class –

1. What risk does Canada face if it allows Huawei to lead the construction of our nation’s 5G network?

2. Should Canada trust Huawei?

3. What effect would prohibiting Huawei from helping Canada expand its telecom system have on Canadian-Chinese relations?
AFTER VIEWING

Recall the legend of the Trojan horse. What evidence is there from the video that Canada (and the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain) is concerned about Huawei bringing a Trojan horse into our national telecom infrastructure? Is this concern warranted?

Conduct further research to support your conclusions if necessary.
They have to decide. They're either going to be a worldwide telecommunications company or an agent of the Chinese government. They can't be both.

– Angus King, U.S. Democratic Senator
THE STORY

The arrest of Meng Wanzhou

There was plenty of speculation regarding the reason why she was arrested. Officially, Canadian authorities were compelled to enforce the extradition treaty they have with the United States based on allegations that Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou had violated U.S. law by ignoring sanctions placed on Iran and doing business with the rogue state. Unofficially, many Huawei critics claim the arrest and pending extradition are an effort by U.S. officials to make the Chinese telecom pay for all the technology they’ve pirated (the Chinese call it “reverse engineering”) from American entrepreneurs over the years. Regardless of which version one chooses to believe, the arrest of Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver set off an international firestorm that put Canada in the crosshairs of the Chinese government.
Meng: Chinese aristocracy

Meng Wanzhou is part of the upper echelon of Chinese society. The daughter of Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei, Meng is one of four deputy chairs and the current Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the company. Many claim she is the heir apparent to the company’s top position.

Huawei has been a concern for U.S. officials for years but came under intense scrutiny in 2016 when investigators uncovered evidence that the telecom was using a subsidiary called Skycom to get around U.S. sanctions on companies doing business with Iran, as part of its economic embargo on the country. When prosecutors in New York State discovered the scheme, and the potential to arrest Meng Wanzhou came on the radar, they got the Canadian government on board and the Huawei executive was picked up while switching planes in Vancouver in December 2018.

Reaction to the arrest

The reaction in China was immediate: the government demanded the release of Meng and accused Canada of meekly doing the bidding of U.S. President Donald Trump.
Some members of the Chinese media went so far as to call her arrest an act of terrorism. Within a week, Meng appeared before a Vancouver judge and was released on $10 million bail. The judge also ruled that she be confined to one of her Vancouver homes (she has two) at night, with a GPS ankle bracelet confirming her whereabouts at all times. She was also ordered to surrender her passport.

**Retaliation**

To drive their disdain home, Chinese authorities vowed retaliation and quickly delivered, detaining two Canadians in short order. Diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor were picked up for engaging in behaviour that “endangers Chinese security.” After Meng’s arrest, 11 more Canadians (in addition to the high profile detention of the first two) were taken into custody in China. Diplomats worked almost around the clock to try and get these Canadians home knowing that, unless the deportation of Meng Wanzhou to the U.S. was taken off the table, they might be fighting an unwinnable battle.

**McCallum speaks up**

The story took a further twist in early 2019 when Canada’s Ambassador to China John McCallum told a group of reporters that Meng had a
strong case to fight her extradition based on the highly politicized nature of her detention. Prime Minister Trudeau immediately directed McCallum to walk back the comments — which he did. However, a few days later he told a Vancouver reporter that it would be “great for Canada” if the U.S. dropped the case against Meng. He also told the reporter that any deal reached between the U.S. and China regarding the Meng situation should involve the release of Canadians detained in China. Trudeau felt he had little choice after the second incident. The next day, he fired McCallum.

**Murky waters**
The McCallum situation served to highlight the precarious nature of Canada’s relationship with both China and the United States. On the one hand, Canada needs to ensure that it does not cut itself off from one of the world’s largest markets in China. On the other hand, Canada wants to respect its number one trading partner and closest ally, the United States. Ambassador McCallum’s unsuccessful attempt to wade into the murky waters of the Canada-U.S.-China triangle ultimately revealed the Canadian government’s resolute desire to avoid upsetting either nation — perhaps an impossible task given the current climate.
TO CONSIDER

1. Why did Canada arrest and detain Meng Wanzhou?
2. What were the conditions of her release on bail?
3. How did China react to Meng’s arrest?
4. What did Canada’s Ambassador to China John McCallum have to say about Meng’s situation? Why did Prime Minister Trudeau feel compelled to fire the ambassador?
ACTIVITY: Building Canada’s 5G network

For the purposes of this exercise your classroom will transform into a mock meeting of a parliamentary committee dealing with the construction of Canada’s 5G telecom network. Here’s what you need to do:

➢ Form a group of four (4). Your teacher will assign your group one of the following roles.
➢ Each group should feel free to use video, audio and written sources to drive home your points.

GROUP 1

The Committee Chairs – Your job is to listen to the presenters appearing before your committee and determine the direction Canada will take when it comes to building the 5G network. The day after listening to all the other groups’ presentations, you will share your decision with the class the day.

* Make sure you summarize the main points of each group before sharing your decision.

Length of presentation: 10-15 minutes
| GROUP 2 | **The 5G network** – What is the 5G network? Your job is to explain to the class the steps to building the 5G network and any challenges you could face. You are essentially teaching the class about 5G technology and how it is viewed as a game-changer.  
Length of presentation: 10-15 minutes |
| GROUP 3 | **Let’s let Huawei build the 5G network** – According to many technology experts, Huawei is best equipped to build the 5G network based on the advances in telecom infrastructure that the company has achieved over the past 25 years. Make your argument in favour of Huawei.  
Length of presentation: 10-15 minutes |
| GROUP 4 | **No way to Huawei** – Your group will argue that trusting Huawei to build Canada’s 5G network would threaten Canada’s national security. Regardless of Huawei’s technological clout, they’re not to be trusted because they are too tightly linked to the Chinese government.  
Length of presentation: 10-15 minutes |
| GROUP 5 | Here’s who we think should build the 5G network – Your group will find an alternative builder to Huawei. Please provide the names of three (3) telecom vendors who have the ability to build a 5G network and explain why they would be a better option than Huawei.  
Length of presentation: 10-15 minutes |
| GROUP 6 | The Media – Your job is to listen to the presentations and the final decision of the committee. The day after the committee chairs make a decision, you will need to submit a news report to your teacher.  
Length of news report: 250-500 words |
Canada is the only member of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance that hasn’t either banned or put severe restrictions on Huawei’s participation in the construction of the proposed 5G network. The lack of trust in Huawei goes back decades, with accusations of intellectual property theft and close ties to the Chinese government. For those suspecting the worst, they believe Huawei could act as China’s puppet and spy on anyone who uses the new network. Huawei and China vehemently deny the possibility of this happening.

Your job is to create a fictional short story about this possibility.

Here are a few guidelines for your creative writing:

- **Create different names for the main parties involved**: In other words, do not call the spy alliance Five Eyes and don’t call the telecom provider Huawei. You could also create a fictional name for the countries included in your story.

- **Project into the future**: Imagine the 5G network is built and the sinister telecom company has managed to sneak its Trojan horse onto the network, positioning itself to do the bidding of an enemy of your country.
Create a crisis: Imagine a situation that would cause the enemy to want to lash out at your country using information gained through their espionage efforts. Describe how the information obtained through the network allows the enemy to bring your nation to its knees.

Length of story: 400-600 words

Follow the advice of writer and instructor Kate Gies, and let go in your first draft. She says, “Give yourself permission to get your ideas down without them sounding perfect. Don’t put the expectation on yourself to produce pristine sentences.” Once your first draft is completed, you can go back and revise any parts that need work.

For more tips like this one, you can sign up for the Writing Tips newsletter from CBC Books: www.cbc.ca/1.4949602


