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In
the NEWS

“As I grew older and my worldview changed, I gradually realised the damage that the CCP’s authoritarianism was doing to democracy and human rights around the world.”

Former Chinese spy, Wang Liqiang, on his recent decision to defect to Australia

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THE KURDS

still know that the U.S. stands with them despite the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Syria, Vice President Mike Pence said while visiting the region.

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RELIGIOUS ORDERS

should list the names of nuns accused of abusing children as 100 cases have been reported in the United States, according to BishopAccountability.org, a nonprofit corporation that tracks cases of sexual abuse by clergy.

US | A7

It’s very easy for the world communist movement to be confident of victory when the vast majority of their intended victims don’t even know that the threat still exists.

Author Trevor Loudon on the Oct. 18-20 gathering of over fifty international communist parties in Turkey

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Prime Minister Scott Morrison talks to the media at a press conference at Parliament House in Canberra on April 11, 2019.

CCP INFILTRATION

Morrison Calls Alleged China Spy Plot ‘Deeply Disturbing’

ASIO is investigating reports that the Chinese Communist regime tried to install an agent in the country’s legislature

BOWEN XIAO

New allegations that the Chinese communist regime attempted to install an agent inside Australia’s federal Parliament are “deeply disturbing and troubling,” Australia’s prime minister said on Nov. 25 as its domestic spy agency investigates the plot.

The probe had already been started by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) before it was first reported by Australia’s “60 Minutes” programme and affiliated newspapers on Nov. 24, according to Mike Burgess, ASIO’s director-general of security.

Reports about China’s alleged meddling in Australia’s domestic affairs detailed how a suspected Chinese espionage ring had offered “a seven-figure sum” to Melbourne luxury car dealer Bo “Nick” Zhao to run for a seat in Australia’s federal

Parliament. Zhao was found dead in March in a Melbourne motel room and police were unable to conclude how he died.

“I find the allegations deeply disturbing and troubling,” Prime Minister Scott Morrison told reporters in Canberra, adding that the government had bolstered Australia’s laws and security agencies to counter foreign interference.

“Australia is not naive to the threats that it faces more broadly,” he added.

The allegations came just a day after a man claiming to be a Chinese military intelligence agent defected to Australia and presented troves of material to ASIO. In an earlier interview with The Epoch Times, 27-year-old Wang Liqiang described how he had become disillusioned by the

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COURTESY OF WANG LIQIANG



Wang Liqiang, a former Chinese spy, has defected to Australia and offered to provide information about his espionage work to the Australian government.

Australia is not naive to the threats that it faces more broadly.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison

RARE EARTHS

US Hedges Against China Threats With Australian Critical Minerals Alliance

ALAN MCDONNELL

The U.S. has formalised its partnership with Australia on the development of both nations’ critical mineral assets—from bauxite, the main ore of aluminium, to the rare earth elements used in hi-tech lasers. An existing memorandum of understanding was extended on Monday to a formal partnership involving collaboration in research and capacity

development, and the agreement was signed by U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Director Jim Reilly and Geoscience Australia CEO, James Johnson.



Rare earth minerals

The partnership is not without reason. In May 2019, the mouthpiece of China’s communist regime,

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CRONY CAPITALISM

China’s ‘Communist Capitalism’: a Monster Created by Economic Globalisation

CHENG XIAONONG

Economic globalisation has cast a huge shadow across the world. After the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) joined the economic globalisation, it turned the process into a tool for its global domination.

Many Western scholars believed,

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IMPEACHMENT

Trump Wants Pompeo, Bolton, and Mulvaney to Testify in Impeachment Probe

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

President Donald Trump said on Nov. 26 that he wants key witnesses to testify in the impeachment inquiry but is fighting a battle in the courts to defend future presidents from being compromised by a partisan impeachment process.

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WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES



U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton (L) and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (R) listen to U.S. President Donald Trump in Washington on Feb. 7, 2019.

HONG KONG

Chinese State Media Quiet After Hong Kong’s Pro-Democracy Camp Sweeps Elections

EVA FU

Chinese state media have kept largely silent about Hong Kong’s pro-democracy camp scoring a landslide victory in the city’s district elections on Nov. 25, omitting news of the result in its reports.

The mainland media response stands in sharp contrast to the heavy propaganda campaign in the lead-up

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RUSSIA

Putin: Scientists Killed in Nuclear Explosion Were Testing ‘Most Advanced’ Weapons

JACK PHILLIPS

The deaths of five Russian scientists who were killed in a nuclear explosion in August were working on developing an advanced weapon, said Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“We’re talking about the most advanced and unparalleled technical ideas and solutions, about weapons designed to ensure Russia’s sovereignty and security for decades to come,” Putin told the victims’ relatives on Friday during a ceremony in Moscow, reported the Moscow Times.

The five scientists “were conducting the most complex, responsible,

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Accuracy
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The Epoch Times was founded in 2000 to provide honest and uncensored news coverage of China. Based in New York City, our newsroom is dedicated to restoring accuracy and integrity in media. We stand outside political interests and the pursuit of profit. And we stand against the systematic destruction of traditional culture by destructive ideologies such as communism.

Chinese Spy Defects to Australia, Provides Unprecedented Account of Beijing’s Influence Operations

LEO TIMM

A Chinese military intelligence agent has defected to Australia, bringing with him a wealth of insider knowledge that backs up longstanding concerns about Beijing’s attempts to subvert and undermine its opponents abroad.

Wang Liqiang revealed an “unprecedented” trove of information on how the communist Chinese regime funds and directs operations to sabotage the democratic movement in Hong Kong, meddle in Taiwanese elections, and infiltrate Australian political circles, according to reports on Nov. 22 by Nine Network newspapers, an Australian media group.

In an earlier interview with The Epoch Times, the 27-year-old talked about how he had become disillusioned by the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) totalitarian agenda, leading to his decision to defect in May.

He is the first Chinese spy to go public with his identity.

“As I grew older and my worldview changed, I gradually realized the damage that the CCP’s authoritarianism was doing to democracy and human rights around the world,” Wang said. “My opposition to the Party and communism became ever-clearer, so I made plans to leave this organization.”

In April, Wang left Hong Kong for Sydney, where his wife and

I have personally been involved and participated in a series of espionage activities.

Wang Liqiang

child live, and presented his material to the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), the country’s top intelligence agency. He is now staying in a secret location as he cooperates with the agency.

“I have personally been involved and participated in a series of espionage activities,” Wang told ASIO under oath in October.

From Artist to Agent

Wang hails from Fujian, the southeast Chinese province across the strait from democratic Taiwan, according to a statement he provided to The Epoch Times. The son of a local Communist Party official, Wang had a middle-class upbringing and majored in oil painting at the Anhui University of Finance and Economics. Photos from Wang’s time in school show awards he won for his artwork.

At the end of his education, a senior university official suggested that Wang should work at China Innovation Investment Limited (CIIL), a Hong Kong-based company specializing in technology, finance, and media. In 2014, Wang began working with the firm.

While CIIL presents itself as an investment firm focusing on listed and unlisted Chinese defense assets, Wang soon discovered that it was a major front for the Party’s overseas espionage, serving multiple Chinese security organs and CCP officials.

Wang got in the good graces of CIIL CEO Xiang Xin and entered the “inner sanctum” of the company, Nine Network reported, by giving Xin’s wife painting lessons. That gave him wide access to information about both ongoing and past cases of Chinese intelligence operations, much of it connected to the Party’s acquisition of military technology.

During the 2018 “nine-in-one” regional elections in Taiwan, Wang had helped coordinate a massive disinformation campaign by the CCP to undermine the administration of Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen. He had traveled to Taiwan on a forged South Korean passport, where he took part in coordinating on-the-ground operations.



People walk through Sydney’s Chinatown on June 21, 2017.

Meanwhile, Wang was also responsible for working with mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong to maintain ideological influence over them and recruit them for various intelligence-related tasks.

In comments to Nine Network, Wang went into detail about how he and other operatives infiltrated “all universities, including students’ associations and other students’ groups and bodies.”

He said it was simple to recruit mainland Chinese students, who could often be “given some petty favors and benefits,” in exchange for their help.

Influence Operations

As a Chinese citizen brought up to believe that being a patriot meant protecting the CCP’s rule, Wang thought that working as a spy for the regime was an attractive prospect. “It paid well, and I also felt that I was doing things for the country,” he told the outlet.

Peter Mattis, a former CIA analyst and an expert on Chinese espionage, told the outlet that Wang was probably a “cut-out” or “co-optee,” that is, a person who works as an aide to an intelligence officer by “building up a suite of resources to use for intelligence or political influence.”

Wang indicated that many major media in Hong Kong and Taiwan had been bought or infiltrated by CCP operatives to carry the Party’s narratives.

For example, “a senior manager at a major Asian television network is a current military cadre with a Division Commander rank” in the People’s Liberation Army, he told Nine newspapers.

He also corroborated reports that the Communist Party had built a formidable network of influence in Australia by co-opting politicians and political parties, as well as working among ethnic Chinese students to drown out dissent to the mainland regime’s policies.

“Mr. Wang provided bank account transactions to back his claims” that CCP intelligence organs “had dealings with several significant Australian political donors, including a one-time staffer in a federal MP’s office,” the outlet reported.

Chen Yonglin, a former Chinese diplomat who defected to Australia in 2005, had warned the country early on about the subversive influence of Beijing’s agents, saying that the CCP had 1,000 spies active in Australia at the time. Back then, one of the Party’s main priorities was to defame and marginalize practitioners of Falun Gong, a Chinese

spiritual discipline banned by the CCP in 1999.

In 2017, revelations of CCP influence operations in the country made the headlines, including allegations of Chinese billionaires using donations to influence politicians on behalf of the regime.

Australia passed laws in 2018 to combat foreign interference, which were introduced in the wake of what then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull described as “disturbing reports of Chinese influence.” Modeled on similar laws in the United States, the laws created new espionage offenses, set up a register for foreign agents, and banned foreign political donations.

Earlier this year, the country stripped Chinese billionaire Huang Xiaomo of his permanent resident status and denied him citizenship, marking the first direct action against a suspected CCP-influenced agent since the laws were introduced.

Huang, a real estate developer, had reportedly donated AU\$2.7 million (\$1.94 million) to major Australian political parties over the past five years, and has close ties to the CCP. He was president of the Australian Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China (PPRC Australia), a group under the umbrella of the United Front Work Department, a CCP agency tasked with spreading Beijing’s agenda overseas.

Australian Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said the implications of Wang’s account are “very disturbing” and that government law agencies were dealing with the matter, Reuters reported.

The Chinese regime has rejected Wang’s account, with police in Shanghai claiming he wasn’t an operative, but an unemployed 26-year-old who had previously been jailed for fraud.

The Chinese Embassy added in a statement on Nov. 24 that Wang is wanted in connection with a fraud case from earlier this year.

“On April 19, 2019, the Shanghai police opened an investigation into Wang, who allegedly cheated 4.6 million yuan from a person surnamed Shu through a fake investment project involving car import in February,” the statement said.

The embassy said Wang left for Hong Kong on April 10, carrying a fake Chinese passport and a fake Hong Kong permanent resident ID, adding that Shanghai police were investigating the matter.

Leaving the Party

According to Nine Network, Wang’s internal struggle reached a turning point when he received a



Former Chinese spy Wang Liqiang defected to Australia and offered to provide information about his espionage work to the Australian government, in this file photo.

I gradually realized the damage that the CCP’s authoritarianism was doing to democracy and human rights around the world.

Wang Liqiang

fake South Korean passport, with which he was to enter Taiwan and participate in the CCP’s ongoing attempts to interfere in the 2020 presidential race. The island is set to go to the polls in January.

“Staring at his own face in the false passport stirred something in Wang,” the outlet reported. “He realized he was at risk of losing himself. As he would later write, he was on the cusp of becoming ‘a person without a real identity.’”

On April 23, Wang left his post in Hong Kong to visit his wife and baby son in Sydney, having been granted approval by his boss’s wife.

For Wang, betraying the Communist Party, knowing that he might never be able to return to China or see his relatives, wasn’t an easy decision to make.

“Whenever I think of this, I am very sad. My family, not only my parents, but also my grandparents ... I dare not communicate much, as our phones are tapped. This is the saddest thing. ... My heart is extremely sad, and no words can express my grief,” Wang told Nine Network.

However, he ultimately believed espionage was too risky and immoral for him to continue.

“I thought and rethought it time and time again,” Wang told The Epoch Times. “I wondered if this decision would be a good thing or a bad thing for my life. I couldn’t tell you definitively, but I firmly believe that if I had stayed with [the CCP], I would come to no good end.”

Wang’s decision was also informed by his experiences living in democratic societies. In addition to Taiwan, he had previously visited his family in Australia in December 2018.

“Over the few months I spent in Australia, I experienced the democratic freedoms of this country and felt more and more ashamed of what the CCP was doing to undermine democracy around the world,” he said.

“So I decided to completely abandon my work and make a clean break with the Party.”

Morrison Calls Alleged Chinese Spy Plot ‘Deeply Disturbing’

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Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) totalitarian agenda, leading to his defection.

At a news briefing in Beijing on Nov. 25, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang denied reports of meddling in Australia and said the Chinese government won’t interfere in other countries’ domestic affairs. He called the allegations by media reports a lie.

Scrutiny of the CCP and its influence in Australia has been on the rise. Australia passed laws in 2018 to combat foreign interference, which was introduced in the wake of what then-Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull described as “disturbing reports of Chinese influence.”

Jeff Nyquist, an author and researcher of Chinese and Russian strategy, told The Epoch Times the reports about China’s alleged attempts at meddling in Australian politics should come as no surprise.

“Being able to get inside the political system of its enemies, of the countries it wants to subvert, is a key tactic in the bag of tricks of the CCP,” he said. “The threats that China has made, for example, to Australia that they better be on the side of China and not on the side of the United States in any future disagreements are to be taken seriously.”

An article published in Chinese state media threatened Australia over its relationship with the United States.

“This Australia-US alliance will not bring the benefits Australia hopes for. This will bring a long-term military and political confrontation between Australia and Asian countries,” academic Yu Lei wrote in an op-ed in China’s Global Times.

“Australia will not get the 100 years of friendship but 100 years of solitude,” Yu Lei said, according to the Australian Financial Review.

Nyquist said China intends for Aus-



TRACEY NEARMY/GETTY IMAGES

Prime Minister Scott Morrison speaks to media during a press conference at Parliament House in Canberra on Nov. 25, 2019.

What do you think they are trying to get a politician in there for? They want to change Australia’s orientation.

Jeff Nyquist, an author and researcher of Chinese and Russian strategy

tralia to be “part of their sphere of influence.”

“Obviously, if [China] were to get a politician into Washington, that politician would not be free to turn America against itself in an open fashion,” he said. “But a Chinese agent in the Australian government could detach Australia from the American alliance if you got enough people to collaborate with him.”

“Beijing obviously wants Australia to change sides in terms of who it’s allied with. It does sound like a crazy scheme but look at what they’ve done—China has threatened Australia openly,” he said. “What do you think they are trying to get a politician in there for? They want to change Australia’s orientation.”

Another concern is China’s Confucius Institutes (CIs) operating in many of Australia’s educational institutions.

While China claims CIs are purely to strengthen Chinese language

learning, they have been facing scrutiny globally for risks ranging from violations of human rights and loss of academic integrity and freedom to potential infringements on national security.

“I think that [CIs] should be closed both at schools and universities,” Daniel Wild, director of research at the Institute of Public Affairs, an Australian think tank, told The Epoch Times in a previous interview.

“That doesn’t mean that Chinese history and culture can’t be taught in Australia,” he said. “But the concern is really where’s the money coming from and how is that influencing the content of their teaching?”

In a Nov. 24 statement, the head of ASIO said the agency takes the allegations involving the planting of an agent seriously and that they are “committed to protecting Australia’s democracy and sovereignty.” He declined to comment on any specific

individuals or operational matters, citing longstanding practice and the need to avoid prejudice in the investigation.

“Australians can be reassured that ASIO was previously aware of matters that have been reported today, and has been actively investigating them,” he said on Nov. 24. “Hostile foreign intelligence activity continues to pose a real threat to our nation and its security.”

Zhao, the car dealer, told ASIO about the alleged approach from another Melbourne businessman about a year ago, the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper stated in the joint report with “60 Minutes” and The Age newspaper, citing Zhao’s associates and Western security sources.

Wang, who said he defected to Australia, was the first Chinese spy to go public with his identity. In April, Wang left Hong Kong for Sydney, where his wife and child live, and presented his material to ASIO. He is now staying in a secret location as he cooperates with the agency.

“I have personally been involved and participated in a series of espionage activities,” Wang told ASIO under oath in October.

Wang revealed an “unprecedented” trove of information about how the Chinese regime funds and directs operations to sabotage the democratic movement in Hong Kong, meddle in Taiwanese elections, and infiltrate Australian political circles, according to reports on Nov. 22 by Nine Network newspapers, an Australian media group.

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Epoch Times reporter Leo Timm and Reuters contributed to this report.



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Chinese State Media Quiet After Hong Kong’s Pro-Democracy Camp Sweeps Elections

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to the elections, when Hongkongers were warned against voting in support of pro-democracy groups.

The city’s residents turned out in record numbers on Nov. 24 to hand pro-democracy parties a resounding victory in the district council elections. Democratic candidates won 388 of 452 district seats, with more than 260 seats swinging to the pro-democracy camp.

More than 2.94 million Hongkongers voted, amounting to a record turnout rate of 71.23 percent, which led to hours-long lines at polling stations that extended for blocks. The vote was widely seen as a referendum on the ongoing protest movement against Chinese encroachment into the city.

The city’s leader Carrie Lam, who has refused to fully accede to demonstrators’ demands during almost six months of pro-democracy protests, said the government will “listen to the opinions of members of the public humbly and seriously reflect.”

Since June, protesters have made several demands, including for universal suffrage and an independent inquiry into alleged police brutality against demonstrators.

After the election, some Chinese netizens pointed out the difference between results and what had been portrayed by the Chinese propaganda machine.

Hong Kong residents celebrate outside a polling station as pro-Beijing lawmaker Junius Ho Kwan-yiu loses in District Council Elections on Nov. 25, 2019.

BILLY H.C. KWOK/GETTY IMAGES



Some Hong Kong residents celebrate after pro-Beijing candidate Junius Ho lost a seat in the district council elections in Tuen Mun district of Hong Kong early on Nov. 25, 2019.

After the election, some Chinese netizens noted the difference between results and what had been portrayed by the Chinese propaganda machine.

“What a slap on the face, the Hong Kong’s ‘silent majority’ in 2019 has become the biggest joke,” a user wrote on Weibo, China’s Twitter-like platform, referring to the term frequently used by state-run media to portray protesters as a small percentage of the population.

“Who is the majority and who is the minority is already too clear,” another commented.

Results Censored

News of the election results wasn’t reported by Chinese media outlets, which limited their coverage of the event.

State-run outlet Xinhua reported on the election’s conclusion on Nov. 25, which was later republished by multiple other major Chinese media outlets, including Global Times, Sina, and People’s Daily.

The report, filed from Hong Kong, omitted news of the results, noting only when the election opened and closed, and that councilors from 18 districts have “all emerged.”

It added that the “strained societal

sentiment” had “seriously interfered with the election proceedings.”

“Resuming order is still the most pressing task for Hong Kong,” it stated.

Late on Nov. 25, both Xinhua and state-run China Daily carried an article blasting the United States for passing a Hong Kong human rights bill just days earlier in support of city’s demonstrators.

China Daily in several reports on Nov. 25 and Nov. 26 chose to focus on the reactions from Hong Kong and Chinese officials to the election, without going into the poll numbers.

Hu Xijin, editor of the hawkish state-run newspaper Global Times, said in a Nov. 25 video that they “must encourage the pro-establishment party not to lose heart.” The newspaper, in an editorial on Nov. 25, also claimed that voting had taken place in an “abnormal” atmosphere, adding that the elections were localised and thus have limited political influence.

The editorial said that regardless of the election results, they were simply elections “under the rule of the People’s Republic of China,” adding that “the land and sky of Hong Kong will forever belong to China.”

Spinning the Narrative

In the lead-up to the election, Chinese state media focused on rhetoric against Hong Kong democracy supporters.

State broadcaster CCTV on Nov. 23 called on people to “use vote to curb violence,” warning that Hongkongers would “taste their own medicine” if they “cast the wrong vote” by supporting the pro-democracy party.

“The citizens can save Hong Kong, the silent majority must hit back,” the editorial stated.

Another editorial on Xinhua similarly accused pro-democracy candidates of “confusing black and white” and being “rioters who used intimidation, deception, and kidnapping to fish for ballots.”

Pro-Beijing organisations also attempted to fan public sentiment against the protesters prior to the election. On Nov. 20, seven of 10 major Hong Kong print media ran front-page ads that described protesters as rioters and urged voters to “oppose rioting.”

The same ad also appeared on the front pages of at least six newspapers on Nov. 12, after the police’s siege of a Hong Kong university campus made international headlines.

Taiwan Probes 2 Executives Suspected of Violating National Security Laws After Allegations From China Defector

TAIPEI—Taiwan is investigating two executives at a Hong Kong-listed company on suspicion of violating the country’s National Security Act, prosecutors said on Nov. 26, after they were named in a report about Chinese meddling.

The company, China Innovation Investment Ltd., said on Nov. 25 executive director Xiang Xin and alternate director Kung Ching had been stopped at Taipei’s main airport and asked to cooperate in a probe into Australian media reports about Chinese interference in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The allegations were made by a Chinese asylum seeker in Australia, Wang Liqiang, who said he was a spy for China’s ruling communist party (CCP). The Chinese regime has claimed that the man is a convicted fraudster.

Wang said he was part of an intelligence operation working within China Innovation Investment to infiltrate Hong Kong universities and media with pro-communist party operatives to counter the territory’s democracy movement. He also gave details about Chinese efforts to meddle in Taiwan’s political system and elections.

The company said the reports were “fictitious and forged” and that Wang had never been an employee.

Xiang and Kung were referred to the Taipei District Prosecutors Office on Nov. 25 night for further investigation on suspicion of violating the National Security Act, office spokeswoman Chen Yu-ping said by telephone.

They have also been ordered not to leave Taiwan, she said.

The pair was being probed on sus-

China Innovation Investment Ltd. said on Nov. 25 executive director Xiang Xin and alternate director Kung Ching had been stopped at Taipei’s main airport and asked to cooperate in a probe into Australian media reports about Chinese interference in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

picion of “developing an organisation” for foreign forces including the Chinese regime, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison, Chen said.

“The two litigants were very co-operative ... We are looking into the purpose of their visit,” she said, adding that the pair made frequent travels to Taiwan.

The company declined comment on Nov. 26, and referred to its corporate filings. It said on Nov. 25, the two executives were staying in Taiwan to cooperate with the investigation and had retained Taiwan lawyers, but it was not immediately clear who they were.

China Arms Manufacturer Connection

Xiang, a science and technology graduate from Nanjing University of Science and Technology, is the chairman of another Hong Kong-listed company, China Trends Holdings Ltd. China Trends Holdings and China Innovation Investment in 2010 signed an MoU with a company run by major state-backed China defence manufacturer China North Industries Group Corporation—also known as Norinco—to build parts for electric cars, corporate filings show.

Taiwan’s Investment Commission, which is under the Ministry of Economic Affairs, said on Nov. 25 the two executives had applied in December 2016 to invest T\$100 million (US\$3.27 million) to set up a real estate company.

However, Taiwan rejected the application in April 2017 due to national security considerations, it said.

Chang Min-pin, the commission’s

executive secretary, told Reuters that Taiwan’s defence ministry advised against the investment proposal, citing concerns over Xiang’s Norinco links.

Kung’s former post with Beijing-based China Defence Science and Technology Information Centre also raised concerns, he said.

China Innovation Investment’s company profile on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange website says it is a Hong Kong-based investment holding company “principally engaged in the investment in dual usage of military and civil sectors.”

“The company’s investments mainly include military and civil dual-used charge storage batteries, new models of lighting products, eco-equipment materials and energy-saving media terminals,” it added.

The company’s Hong Kong-listed stock price fell more than 6 percent on Nov. 26.

It was not clear if the company has operations in Taiwan.

Taiwan, claimed by China as its sacred territory, is already on high alert for the CCP’s attempts at disinformation and intimidation ahead of Jan. 11 elections for the presidency and legislature.

President Tsai Ing-wen, who’s seeking re-election in January, urged citizens in August to stay on alert for Chinese-financed media “infiltration” after a Reuters report of a Beijing-backed media campaign to purchase press coverage on the island.

Beijing has been cultivating networks of supporters in Taiwan and ramping up campaigns to lure Taiwanese with lucrative business opportunities ahead of the key elections, Reuters reported in June.

By Yimou Lee and Ben Blanchard-From Reuters

AM YEH/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Anti-CCP activists display placards calling for referendum during a rally in Taipei on Oct. 20, 2018.

Pence Meets With Kurds, Says ‘They Know the American People Are With Them’

ZACHARY STIEBER

Vice President Mike Pence said that the Kurds know the United States stands with them even after the U.S. military largely withdrew from Syria under orders from President Donald Trump.

Pence made a surprise visit to Iraq over the weekend and met with some Kurds there. The Iranian ethnic group has pockets in Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Turkey.

“I don’t think there was any confusion now among the leadership here in the Kurdish region that President Trump’s commitment to our allies here in Iraq, as well as to those in the Syrian Defence Forces, the Kurdish forces who fought alongside us, is unchanging,” Pence told reporters.

Trump wants to withdraw all troops from Syria but some 500 have remained in the region to prevent the ISIS terror group from regaining access to oil fields, a crucial source of revenue.

“They know now that while President Trump is absolutely determined to bring our troops home—and that was the basis for the President’s decision in moving our troops out of the border region on the Syrian-Turkish border—that, nevertheless, we’re going to continue to maintain a presence in Syria and, of course, here in Iraq that reflects the strong and enduring partnership that we have with the Iraqi people, including the Kurdish people in Iraq and in Syria,” Pence said.

Pence met with Nechirvan Bar-



Vice President Mike Pence and his delegation meet with Kurdistan President Nechirvan Barzani in the VIP terminal at Erbil International Airport in Erbil, Iraq, on Nov. 23, 2019.

zani, president of the semiautonomous Iraqi Kurdistan region, and other leaders.

Barzani praised America in remarks before his meeting with Pence, telling him that without the support the U.S. military provided in the fight against ISIS, the leaders likely wouldn’t have been able to meet in Erbil, before adding, “We hope that you convey our sincere gratitude and thanks to President Trump.”

“In March of this year, because of the courage of our armed forces and

the courage of the Peshmerga and our Kurdish allies in Syria, we were able to capture the last inch of territory controlled by ISIS in Syria. And this would not have been possible without the extraordinary alliance and partnership between the Kurdish people and the people of the United States,” Pence told Barzani.

After the meeting, Pence told reporters that Kurdish leaders knew the American people supported them.

“I was encouraged to hear from President Barzani of how—President

I don’t think there was any confusion now among the leadership here in the Kurdish region that President Trump’s commitment to our allies here in Iraq... is unchanging.

Mike Pence, Vice President of the United States

Trump’s resolve in holding Turkey to the ceasefire that they agreed to, when our delegation went to Ankara last month. And my sense is that—that now, with our troops in the region and in the air, that Kurdish forces, Syrian Democratic Forces, as well as the Kurdish population here in the Kurdish region, know that the American people are with them. And these are allies who fought shoulder to shoulder with us and bravely sacrificed greatly to defeat ISIS not only in Iraq, but in Syria,” he said.

Putin: Scientists Killed in Nuclear Explosion Were Testing ‘Most Advanced’ Weapons

CONTINUED FROM A1

and critically important work,” Putin said.

“The very fact of possessing these unique technologies is the most important reliable guarantee of peace on the planet today,” he added.

The Russian leader didn’t disclose the weapons involved in the accident but said Moscow would work to improve them further.

Since August, there has been much speculation as to what caused an explosion at a test facility in Nyonoksa in the Arkhangelsk region.

International experts have believed the blast involved the Burevestnik nuclear-powered intercontinental cruise missile, known as the SSC-X-9 Skyfall to NATO, the New York Times and the BBC reported

in August.

The blast was also followed by a 40-minute-long spike in radiation in the area, the report said.

U.S. intelligence sources told CNBC that the incident occurred during an attempt to salvage a lost missile from another test.

“There was an explosion on one of the vessels involved in the recovery and that caused a reaction in the missile’s nuclear core which lead to the radiation leak,” a source told the media outlet in August.

Prof Mark Galeotti, a leading Russia analyst with the Royal United Services Institute, told the BBC at the time that nuclear propulsion is a challenging endeavour to accomplish.



Russian President Vladimir Putin in a file photo.

“There is speed versus the weight of the system, and the risk of a missile that spews radioactive exhaust wherever it goes,” he told the BBC. “These new systems have their origin in Soviet times—they’ve been taken off the shelves and given new investment.”

Edwin Lyman, a nuclear expert at the Union of Concerned Scientists, tweeted that a reactor rod may have fallen out and had become unstable

We’re talking about the most advanced and unparalleled technical ideas and solutions, about weapons designed to ensure Russia’s sovereignty and security for decades to come.

Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation

during the testing.

“If this report is accurate, the only way it could be consistent with the isotopes that were reportedly detected is through an inadvertent criticality during the recovery. That may be possible—for instance if a control rod dropped out of the core while the reactor was submerge,” he wrote at the time.

Russia had tested four of the missiles between November 2017 and February 2018. All of the tests resulted in failure, the CNBC report noted.



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US Hedges Against China Threats With Australian Critical Minerals Alliance

CONTINUED FROM A1

the People’s Daily, was used to issue thinly veiled threats to the United States that China could cut off exports of rare earth elements (REEs) if the trade war with the United States deteriorated.

“Will rare earths become China’s counter-weapon against the unprovoked suppression of the US? The answer is not mysterious,” wrote the People’s Daily. “We advise the US to not underestimate China’s ability to safeguard its own development rights and interests, and not to say we didn’t warn you.” China had previously threatened Japan with similar export bans.

Critical minerals such as rare earth elements are applied in a wide range of modern technologies, from batteries, medical equipment, smartphones, and lasers to fighter-jet engines, meaning that their secure supply is of critical importance for military and cutting-edge technologies as well as high-tech manufacturing.

With the exception of Kazakhstan, deposits of uranium and their extraction and processing are concentrated in western democracies such as Australia and Canada, where adherence to accepted trade practices and the rule of law ensures an open trading environment. Not so for REEs.

Rare earth elements are not ‘rare’ in the earth’s crust, but their concentration in economically minable deposits are. While viable deposits of REEs are found on every continent, their extraction and processing is an extraordinarily complex procedure that can produce large amounts of environmentally damaging compounds. Looser pollution

Heavy mining equipment hauls ore at the Mountain Pass Rare Earth facility in Mountain Pass, California, on June 29, 2015.



DAVID BECKER/REUTERS

The U.S. has a need for critical minerals and Australia’s abundant supplies make us a reliable international partner in securing access to a wide range of those, including rare earth elements.

Matt Canavan, Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

controls and environmental regulations give China a huge competitive advantage over more environmentally responsible western democracies, such that Chinese production now dwarfs that of the rest of the world—making China the number one global supplier.

The United States also has viable deposits and working mines, though ore materials from, e.g., the Mountain Pass mine in California is currently loaded into big bags and shipped to China for processing. U.S. cooperation with other countries could enable the United States and its partners to develop existing deposits, reopen mothballed mines, and forge alliances to secure the processing and, thus, the supply of minerals critical for U.S. manufacturing and security.

“We are working with our close international partners and allies to carry out President Trump’s blueprint to position the United States as a leader in the critical minerals

sector and ensure economic prosperity,” said Secretary of the Interior, David Bernhardt. “This is an important milestone in reducing the Nation’s susceptibility to critical mineral supply disruptions.”

According to the U.S. Department of the Interior, “The new activities focus on joint critical mineral potential mapping and quantitative mineral assessments; determining geological controls on critical mineral distribution; and developing data analytics capability to understand supply and demand scenarios for developing critical minerals trade between the two countries.”

“This is a partnership that will deliver opportunity and security to both nations,” said Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, Matt Canavan. “Australia is in a position to develop stable supply chains to meet the growing global demand for critical minerals, especially in key economies such as the U.S. The U.S. has a need for critical

minerals and Australia’s abundant supplies make us a reliable international partner in securing access to a wide range of those, including rare earth elements.”

Days before the announcement, Canavan announced a raft of new financing measures for the sector in Australia.

To reduce U.S. vulnerability to supply shocks, President Donald Trump issued Executive Order 13817—the Federal Strategy to Ensure a Reliable Supply of Critical Minerals. The Order states that “The United States imports most critical mineral commodities [and] is import-reliant ... for 31 of the 35 minerals designated as critical by the Department of the Interior. The United States does not have any domestic production and relies completely on imports to supply its demand for 14 critical minerals.”

The order elaborates a strategy to reduce the Nation’s reliance on critical minerals, to aid recycling measures, to access and secure supplies of such minerals through trade with allies and partners, and to support U.S. exploration for critical minerals.

While the DOI has a list of 35 minerals deemed critical to U.S. security and the wider U.S. economy, the 17 rare earth elements (such as ytterbium, neodymium and lanthanum) are included in the list as a single group.

The executive order also requires the USGS to develop strategic partnerships and to share best practice in the study of critical mineral supply chains. The USGS has already begun this process with Australia, and Geoscience Australia has already shared some of its expertise in developing geological and topographical datasets.

BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



U.S. National Security Advisor John R. Bolton (L), acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney (C), and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo listen while U.S. President Donald Trump announces an agreement with Guatemala in the Oval Office of the White House on July 26, 2019.

Trump Wants Pompeo, Bolton, and Mulvaney to Testify in Impeachment Probe

CONTINUED FROM A1

“The D.C. Wolves and Fake News Media are reading far too much into people being forced by Courts to testify before Congress. I am fighting for future Presidents and the Office of the President. Other than that, I would actually like people to testify,” the president wrote on Twitter.

The president noted that he wants Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Office of Management and Budget Director and acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, and former National Security Advisor John Bolton to testify in the Democrat-run impeachment hearings.

“John Bolton is a patriot and may know that I held back the money from Ukraine because it is considered a corrupt country, & I wanted to know why nearby European countries weren’t putting up money also,” Trump wrote on Twitter.

“Likewise, I would love to have Mike Pompeo, Rick Perry, Mick Mulvaney and many others testify about the phony Impeachment Hoax. It is a Democrat Scam that is going nowhere but, future Presidents should in no way be compromised. What has happened to me should never happen

to another President!”

Perry and Mulvaney were directly involved in the issues related to the impeachment inquiry, while Pompeo and Bolton could shed additional light on relevant events since they have direct access to the president and high-level meetings. Perry has already told his side of the story in an interview with The Wall Street Journal, and Mulvaney fielded questions from the media during a White House briefing and later issued a clarifying statement.

Trump issued the comment after a federal judge ruled that former White House counsel Don McGahn must comply with a subpoena for his testimony issued by the House Judiciary Committee. The ruling could have an effect on the outstanding subpoenas for Pompeo, Mulvaney, and Perry. The House Intelligence Committee didn’t issue a subpoena to Bolton after his attorney threatened to sue.

Mulvaney’s role is pivotal because he executed Trump’s order to place a hold on aid to Ukraine as early as July 3. No witness has yet come forward to substantiate an allegation by Democrats that Trump leveraged the hold on aid to pressure Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelensky to take actions that could help Trump politically.

At the time of his firing in 2016, former Ukrainian Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin was investigating Burisma, a gas company that paid Hunter Biden, the son of former Vice President Joe Biden, to sit on its board of directors. Joe Biden has bragged about forcing Shokin’s ouster by withholding \$1 billion in loan guarantees from Ukraine.

Mulvaney has said that the hold on aid was placed to make sure the money was well spent, especially considering Ukraine’s notorious problem with corruption. Trump also wanted to find out why other countries weren’t paying as much to support Ukraine. Mulvaney’s comments caused a media frenzy after he said that Trump has discussed “the corruption related to the DNC server” in relation to Ukraine, with some outlets alleging that comment was proof that Trump wanted Ukraine to investigate the Democrats and the Bidens.

“No, the money held up had absolutely nothing to do with Biden,” Mulvaney said in the same briefing. “There’s no question.”

Trump Establishes Task Force on Missing and Murdered Native Americans

ZACHARY STIEBER

President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order establishing a task force on missing and murdered American Indians and natives of Alaska.

The “Operation Lady Justice Executive Order” was signed in the Oval Office amid Native American leaders, including Kevin DuPuis, chairman of Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and AJ Not Afraid, chairman of Crow Nation.

“It is my honour to sign an executive order ... to address a tragedy facing Native American communities—the crisis of missing and murdered American Indians and Alaska natives, in particular women and children. It’s a tremendous problem. It’s been going on for a long time. Many, many decades, beyond that, and we’re going to address it,” Trump said before signing the order.

More than 5,000 Native American women and girls were reported missing in a single year and some are still missing, Trump said. One study showed Native American women are 10 times more likely to be murdered than the average American, he said.

“This should have happened many years ago,” he added.

The Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, co-chaired by Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt and Attorney General William Barr, will do several things, including engaging with tribal communities on the scope of the issue, developing protocols for new and unsolved cases, and establish a team to review cold cases.

Trump said the new strategy will feature aggressive measures to make tribal communities safer. “This has never been done before,” he said.

Melanie Benjamin, chief executive of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, said at the signing: “we cannot have this happening any-

more.”

“It’s a historical day to know that our missing and murdered women have a place and a remembrance and we care about them and their families. So Mr. President, thank you very much,” she said.

In a statement, Barr said, “American Indian and Alaska Native people suffer from unacceptable and disproportionately high levels of violence, which can have lasting impacts on families and communities.”

“Native American women face particularly high rates of violence, with at least half suffering sexual or intimate-partner violence in their lifetime. Too many of these families have experienced the loss of loved ones who went missing or were murdered,” he added. “President Trump establishing the Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives will enable us to further strengthen the federal, state, and tribal law enforcement response to these continuing problems.”

Barr last week unveiled the Department of Justice’s new strategy concerning the large numbers of missing and murdered Native Americans.

DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES



U.S. President Donald Trump signs an executive order establishing the Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives, in the Oval Office of the White House on Nov. 26, 2019.

The Invisible World of Abusive Nuns

BOWEN XIAO

NEW YORK—As a growing number of Roman Catholic dioceses across the United States investigate child sex-abuse claims against clergy and are releasing the names of priests accused of such crimes, another hidden problem has begun to surface—nuns who sexually abuse children.

At least 20 local, state, or federal investigations, either criminal or civil, into church clergy have begun since a Pennsylvania grand jury report released in 2018 detailed abuse by priests. But while those investigations could potentially lead to the release of even more names and accusations, victims’ advocates told The Epoch Times that religious orders should start listing the names of abusive nuns as well—a far less-reported problem, with fewer concrete statistics.

BishopAccountability.org, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit corporation that tracks cases of sexual abuse by clergy members, has identified over the years “a little over 100 known accused nuns,” Terry McKiernan, the founder of the website, told The Epoch Times. Its database, meanwhile, has tracked more than 6,000 accused priests across the United States.

“The numbers are fairly small, but that’s the number that is known,” McKiernan said, referring to the number of publicly accused abusive nuns. “Its a matter of some debate how big the problem actually is.”

Some of the names of the nuns are incomplete because the alleged victims couldn’t recall, according to a list of the names published in August. More names have since been added to the database that don’t appear on the list. The alleged victims are from across the country and come from a wide array of different religious orders.

McKiernan said most of the nuns his organization identified were accused of abuse “between the 1960s and the 1990s.” One group of accused nuns that stood out came from an orphanage in Louisville, Kentucky, where McKiernan said they saw the “highest concentration” of abusers in the database.

The Epoch Times reached out to Catholic League, the nation’s largest Catholic civil rights organization, for comment but didn’t receive a response by press time.

Mary Dispenza, a director at the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) as well as the contact person for those abused by nuns, told The Epoch Times she was approached by 85 alleged survivors of misconduct by nuns during the past two years in the role.

“That’s just a teeny, tiny figure of the number that we think is a possibility,” Dispenza said, adding that a support group has formed that meets with the survivors monthly on the internet.

Only one of the cases that Dispenza heard about filed suit and reached an agreement that was satisfactory. In other cases, some survivors who were nuns themselves told their religious communities about the abuse and the superior removed the nun to what Dispenza called a “mother-house,” a section away from children. But Dispenza said the nuns weren’t



Nuns leave mass in California.



Worshippers during Mass at a Catholic cathedral in Pittsburgh, on Aug. 15, 2018.

asked to leave unless the case was escalated to the criminal level.

“To date, no religious orders have listed or released any names about nun abusers,” she said, adding that a list placed in a parish or school could encourage people who know the abusive nuns to come forward, which could help survivors affirm their stories.

Dispenza, an author and a former nun of 15 years herself, said she was abused by both a nun and a priest when she was a child. She said in many of the cases of survivors who spoke to her, the other nuns knew what was happening but protected or tolerated the behavior of the accused, underscoring the church’s decades-long history of covering up crimes.

She recalled being abused by a nun when she was a young postulant—a girl studying to be a nun. She was 13 years old at the time and was leaving the main chapel in line with the other postulants, when the mother superior of the order suddenly called

That’s just a teeny, tiny figure of the number that we think is a possibility.

Mary Dispenza, director, Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests

her off the line. Postulants always stayed in line, so this was already strange to her.

She recalled the mother superior bringing her into her room, and that, in those days, people would kneel close whenever they wanted to discuss or ask anything with the head of the community.

“I did the proper thing and knelt down close to her almost touching her knees, I don’t remember what she said before or after but I just remember that she took my face between her two hands and kissed me all over, and I remember leaving and just feeling totally confused and bewildered.”

Earlier this year, a Minnesota-based law firm released a report about child sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of Chicago and other dioceses in Illinois that identified six nuns among the 390 alleged abusers.

“Above all else, they protected their institution above all costs,” Pennsylvania’s Attorney General Josh Shapiro said last year, in describing

the findings of his state’s grand jury report.

Dispenza said alleged victims who contacted her ranged from 7 to 18 years old when they were abused. She said more than half of the survivors who contacted her were girls. Most of the cases involved sexual abuse and inappropriate touching, but some involved physical or psychological abuse that included shaming and embarrassment.

The Epoch Times is declining to include more specific descriptions and accounts of the alleged cases of sexual abuse, due to the graphic nature of the alleged crimes and ages of the alleged victims.

Dispenza wants religious orders to start releasing the names of accused nuns and turn them over to the legal system, and is seeking the suspension or removal of the accused from contact with children. She said SNAP, through research, estimates there are a total of about 45,000 to 55,000 nuns across the United States, among about 200 religious orders.

The Pennsylvania grand jury report, two years in the making, accused more than 300 “predator priests” across the state of sexual abuse—and the Roman Catholic Church of a decades-long cover-up of the alleged activity. It detailed how church administrators often dissuaded victims from reporting abuse to police, pressured law enforcement officials to terminate or avoid an investigation, or conducted their own deficient, biased investigations without reporting crimes against children to the proper authorities.

The vast majority of nuns don’t commit any crimes, Dispenza stressed, saying her purpose isn’t to tell horrific stories. Instead, she said, it’s to bring truth to light.

“In truth, most nuns have and live their lives within their vows. But we can’t overlook the fact that some have stepped out of those vows and abused children,” she said. “For the sake of the victims, we need to address that and bring it out into the open. Nun abuse too is a part of our history.”

Trump Signs Bill Making Animal Cruelty, Abuse a Federal Felony

JANITA KAN

President Donald Trump signed a bipartisan bill into law on Nov. 25 that makes animal cruelty a federal felony.

The law, Prevent Animal Cruelty and Torture (PACT) Act, would allow federal authorities to prosecute people engaged in a heinous form of animal abuse known as “crushing,” where individuals maim and

We have the responsibility to honor the dignity of God’s creation.

Donald Trump, President of the United States

torture animals.

PACT Act was introduced by Sens. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and was unanimously passed in the Senate on Nov. 5 and the House on Oct. 23.

During the signing, Trump said he was pleased to sign the PACT Act into law. He said, “we have the responsibility to honour the dignity of God’s creation. With today’s Act we take the critical step of being more responsible and humane stewards of our planet.”

Toomey called the enacting of the legislation a “major victory” for the protection of animals from abuse while Blumenthal said he was “grateful” to see it signed into law. “The barbaric torture of animals

has no place in a civilised society and should be a crime—and thanks to this new law, now it is,” Blumenthal said in a statement.

The Humane Society of the United States welcomed the news in a statement describing it as a “defining moment” for animal protection in the country. The animal welfare organisation said that while 50 states have laws against animal cruelty, there was no federal ban, causing a gap in the law. The new law will provide federal authorities with the tools and resources to go after individuals who commit such acts within federal jurisdiction.

“The approval of this measure by the Congress and the president marks a new era in the codification of kindness to animals

within federal law. For decades, a national anti-cruelty law was a dream for animal protectionists. Today, it is a reality,” Kitty Block, president and CEO of the Humane Society of the United States, said in a statement.

Along with the Humane Society, other groups such as the Animal Wellness Action, National Sheriffs’ Association, Fraternal Order of Police, and the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys endorse the legislation.

The new law expands on a 2010 law that bans the sale of videos depicting animal crushing. It would ensure that individuals who are found guilty of torturing animals face felony charges, fines, and up to seven years in prison.

56 Communist Parties Gather in Turkey to Celebrate 100th Anniversary of the Comintern

TREVOR LOUDON



The international communist movement just celebrated its 100th birthday at a gathering in Turkey.

Far from using the occasion to confess their responsibility for 160 million to 200 million deaths and their legacy of torture, famine, and oppression, the assembled communists look forward to a bright future, in which Marxism-Leninism rules every corner of the globe.

The “One-Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist International: The Fight for Peace and Socialism Continues” was held in Izmir, Turkey, on Oct. 18–20. The gathering drew at least 56 communist parties from more than 40 countries, including most of the world’s major Marxist-Leninist organizations.

The event was hosted by the Greek and Turkish communist parties, which may be significant because Turkey is increasingly also playing a leadership role in the overlapping world Islamist movement.

The Americas were represented by the communist parties of the United States, Canada, Mexico, El Salvador, Venezuela, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

Almost every communist party from Western and Eastern Europe contributed, with the notable exception of the French. Three communist parties from Russia graced the stage, as did the Ukrainian party.

From Asia, the communist parties of Vietnam, Laos, Bangladesh, and Tibet all attended. The Azerbaijanis were there, as were both of India’s main communist parties. The North Koreans were there, but the Japanese were not. China, though now in practice the leader of the world communist movement, skipped the event—but did get plenty of praise from other attendees.

Almost every party from the Middle East was present, including the Lebanese, Bahrainis, Iraqis, Syrians, the Communist Party of Kurdistan, and the Tudeh Party of Iran.

Africa was represented only by the Algerians—the quasi-ruling South African Communist Party was absent.

Oceania was represented only by Australia.

Growing Confidence

Judging by conference speeches, posted online, the general mood was confident and defiant. By all accounts, the communist movement is growing and confident of overcoming its opposition, which in many countries is weak or nonexistent.

The representative of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation was both upbeat and combative:

“Speaking of Russia, we can say with confidence that the left movement, led by the Communist Party, is also ‘on the rise.’ Our party was successful during the elections to many local parliaments. This year was one of the most successful election campaigns for our party.

“The capital international is cracking again – Trump’s trade wars, US and EU contradictions, EU contradictions, etc. Under these conditions, it is important to develop a unified strategy for the communists of different countries in order to use the split of the imperialist international for the triumph of socialism.”

Many in the West believe that because some ruling communist parties, such as in China, Laos, and Vietnam, have adopted some market-based economic policies, they have abandoned Marxism-Leninism. Any real student of Marx will tell you that “market” economics are regarded as a temporary phase to build wealth and military power, and are completely in line with Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

The Vietnamese contribution to the conference affirmed this oft-ignored point:

“On this occasion, the Communist Party of Vietnam would like to express its sincere thanks, deep gratitude to the communist, workers’ parties, progressive forces all around the world for their valuable support, sharing and help in our past struggles for national independence, reunification, as well as in our national construction and defense today.

“We look forward to continuing to receive your feelings, support, encouragement and solidarity in the new period of the development of our Party and country. We reaffirm our close solidarity with the international communist and workers parties.”

The Venezuelans appealed for international communist solidarity in the face of U.S. pressure:

“Today, the cause of the Venezuelan people demands the greatest levels of solidarity from the world’s revolutionary forces. We trust in the enormous power of the peoples’ solidarity to contain any war adventure against Venezuela and to denounce the criminal measures that the US and the EU impose against Venezuela’s sovereignty and the rights of the Venezuelan people.”

The Iranian communists made a similar appeal:

“The Tudeh Party of Iran would like to state categorically that the people’s movement in Iran needs the support and solidarity of the international communist and workers’ parties in preventing imperialist interventions in Iran and in defense of the people’s struggle for democracy and social justice.”

The Canadian communists have long been at the forefront of pushing for Western disarmament and de-industrialization through the “global warming” scam. Communists have always promoted peace through Western disarmament and surrender. They believe there will indeed be “peace”—when there’s no longer any opposition to communism.

“The climate strike demonstrations in October brought more than 1 million people into the streets in Canada – a larger protest than at any time in the last 20 years. This is significant, and hopeful. Mass protests will continue and must be expanded to include the fight for peace and global nuclear disarmament.”

The Mexican communist party is a major part of the program to destroy the United States by promoting illegal immigration from Latin America:

“We raise our voice for the migrant question, an issue that must be addressed by the communist parties that we have to find a common intervention in that important sector of the international working class.”

Further south, the El Salvadoran comrades boasted of their efforts to coordinate the communist parties of their region:

“We want to communicate that our party, in the framework of flying the flag of proletarian internationalism, is promoting communist articulation with the sister parties in what we call: ‘Meeting of Communist Parties of Central America, Mexico and Panama’, where the Communist Party of Mexico, the Guatemalan Labor Party, the Communist Party of Honduras, the Popular Vanguard of Costa Rica, the People’s Party of Panama and the PCS converge. The VI Meeting was held in San Salvador, in the month of March, on the



▲ People hold a banner picturing Communist figures including (L–R) Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Josph Stalin, and Mao Zedong, as they gather in Bakirkoy district as part of the May Day rally in Istanbul on May 1, 2017.

slopes of the historic hill of Guazapa, the guerrilla cradle of the revolutionary process that the country experienced.

“The Communist Party of El Salvador proclaims the validity of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.”

The Lebanese party confirmed that the West is indeed facing a united movement led by China and supposedly non-communist Russia:

“The US-led imperialist system, along with allies in the European Union, Japan and NATO countries, also faces serious challenges with the rapid rise of other rival international poles with conflicting interests with the dominant imperialist states... This rise, mainly of two international powers, China, led by the Communist Party of China (CPC), and its tremendous economic potential, Russia, which today regains its military and political power as well as regional powers in Asia, Latin America and Africa, is already posing a real challenge to the system of unipolar hegemony that has been dedicated for three decades.”

The Lebanese communists who played a significant role in the 2011 “Arab Spring” also condemned Israel and talked of uniting local Islamic states under the communist banner:

“We in the Lebanese Communist Party promise you that we will devote all that we can devote to achieve this crucial task by formulating our local and regional program based on confronting capitalism, imperialism and the Zionist movement through comprehensive resistance by all available means, and confronting reactionary, authoritarian and sectarian regimes, seeking to assemble leftist forces, Arab communism, to put forward a secular nationalist resistance in the path of socialism.”

The North Korean Workers party made it very clear that any concessions made to the United States or the West would only ever be temporary:

“We will always hold the initiative in the righteous struggle for peace and security of the Korean peninsula to defend our socialist system and the gains of the revolution, and never tolerate or sit idle by the sanctions imposed by the imperialists but fight against and frustrate their moves.”

The Brazilian communists emphasized their battle to overthrow President Jair Bolsonaro and the need for communists to go on the offensive both locally and internationally:

“The PCB [Brazilian Communist Party] understands that the moment calls for mobilization and struggle in the streets, accumulating forces to confront the Bolsonaro government. ... In Brazil and throughout the world, it is necessary, more than ever, (for) the resumption

China, though now in practice the leader of the world communist movement, skipped the event—but did get plenty of praise from other attendees.

They gather together to openly plot the destruction of what is left of the free world, with zero mainstream media coverage.

AFP PHOTO/OZAN KOSE



of a counter-hegemonic offensive of socialist and communist ideals.”

The enormous Communist Party of India (Marxist) boasted of the huge numbers they were able to mobilize through their domination of the Indian labor movement:

“In India, the CPI(M) is trying its best to move in this direction of intense class struggles by mobilising workers, peasants, youth, students, marginalized sections and women. On 8-9 January 2019, a 48-hour National Strike of workers called by 10 central trade unions, in which many national confederations of workers and employees also joined hands, was a historic success. The bourgeois media had reported that over 180 million workers participated in this strike. Taking forward these struggles, trade unions have once again called for a general strike on 8th January 2020, for which preparations are afoot.”

US Contribution

Houstonian Alvaro Rodríguez, the international secretary of the Communist Party USA, addressed the assembled comrades on international resistance to U.S. imperialism and President Donald Trump:

“Efforts to beat back the achievements of the worldwide working-class struggle have reached a high point, especially since the election of Donald Trump, a racist, misogynist ‘white supremacist’ as President of my country. Imperialist interventions aimed at regime change and the imposition of the rule of voracious neoliberal capital are underway in many parts of the world. Economic sanctions have been imposed on progressive and socialist governments in Cuba, Venezuela and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. ...

“But the picture is not all bleak. Neoliberal capitalism offers nothing to the working people and toiling masses of the world. Everywhere there is mounting resistance.

“The Communist Party of China, with its 90 million members, is leading the world’s second largest economic power on the road to socialism with Chinese characteristics. Socialist Cuba is holding out strongly against everything imperialism is throwing against it and continues to provide solidarity and inspiration to the world. In Argentina, the right wing Macri government has lost the elections. Elsewhere, right wing, pro-imperialist governments are on the defensive; in Guatemala, Honduras, Ecuador and other countries. In Mexico, a new government is giving promise of advances against old inequities.”

Rodriguez was also fulsome in his praise for a new socialist wave building inside the United States:

“In my country there is a massive youth led movement to combat climate change and global warming. Important political figures, such as

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Representative Alexandria Ocasio Cortez of New York have taken a leading role in proposing new environmental protection laws, called “the Green New Deal”. This effort is supported by many unions, environmentalists and other organizations.

“There are many new signs of working-class struggle. Under the slogan of fighting for a national minimum wage of \$15USD per hour, super exploited and mostly minority and women workers nationwide have reached a high level of mobilization. Youth are also mobilized behind demands for an end to gun violence, to police brutality and many other things. Unionized teachers have been carrying out successful strikes aimed at rolling back neo-liberal policies in the educational field.

“The fight for the rights of immigrants with or without documents is nationwide, intense and has the support of labor unions, African Americans, other minorities and many others. The indigenous inhabitants of my country are mobilized against racism and in defense of the national environment.

“Communists in the United States are involved in all these struggles and more, as part of broadly-based coalitions. The working-class fightback was seen in the midterm legislative elections of 2018, and the likelihood that it will sweep the extreme-right regime of Trump and his allies out of power in the 2020 elections is high.”

In a sane world, an international gathering of parties sworn to the destruction of the West would probably make it to the 6 o’clock news. Most viewers would probably like to know that the world revolutionary movement is alive and well and is able to mobilize hundreds of millions of people at will.

The communists are now leading violent insurgencies in Sudan, Lebanon, Ecuador, Chile, and Catalonia/Spain.

They are heavily involved in every major trouble spot in the world. They are actively trying to depose the two most actively anti-communist world leaders: U.S. President Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

Yet, they gather together to openly plot the destruction of what is left of the free world, with zero mainstream media coverage.

It’s very easy for the world communist movement to be confident of victory when the vast majority of their intended victims don’t even know that the threat still exists.

Trevor Loudon is an author, filmmaker, and public speaker from New Zealand. For more than 30 years, he has researched radical left, Marxist, and terrorist movements and their covert influence on mainstream politics.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

China’s ‘Communist Capitalism:’ a Monster Created by Economic Globalisation

CONTINUED FROM A1

wrongly, that economic globalisation would lead the CCP down the road of democratization. At present, the new trade policy of the United States tries to reduce the negative effects of economic globalisation on the United States and guard against the CCP’s strategic warfare.

Is There Anything Wrong With Economic Globalisation?

Economic globalisation has always been regarded as the highest state of human society’s progress. In the eyes of some leftists, it has even been crowned as “political correctness.” Anyone who criticises economic globalisation is acting “incorrectly.”

Ever since the outbreak of economic and trade conflicts between China and the United States, there has been overwhelming argument in favour of economic globalisation. From Western economists, to anti-Trump media in the United States, to European and Asian governments, and most companies in the business community, they’ve basically all expressed the same view and hope to return to economic globalisation and void the tariffs on China. Their argument is that it negatively affects the stability of the global economy.

The New York Times’ May 16 article titled “The Global Economy Was Improving. Then the Fighting Resumed” exemplifies this view. If so many people share the same voice, does it become a sound conclusion? On the contrary, their voices represent a misperception that has developed over the decades.

The root of this view is the wrong understanding of economic globalisation’s natural defects and the trend of the CCP’s system. Furthermore, this misconception deliberately ignores the adverse consequences of the entry into economic globalisation of large economic entities dominated by a centralised government, and the negative effects brought by multinational corporations’ overseas investment.

After World War II, many third-world countries became independent, and some of them, especially in Asia, embarked on a road of rapid economic development. Economic globalisation was formed gradually in such a process.

At a cultural level, the impact of Western civilisation and business culture on developing countries has made a lasting impression. While in the aspect of investment and international trade, it’s the transfer of investment and technology from developed countries to countries suitable for investment, with cheap products from developing countries flooding into developed countries. Whichever developing country has hitched a ride on globalisation will prosper. So, isn’t economic globalisation a win-win situation for both developing and developed countries? What’s wrong, then?

So far, economic globalisation has not been able to eliminate national borders. National borders mean that a country’s government should protect the welfare of its citizens rather than give priority to the needs of people outside its borders.

On the other hand, voters in democratic governments vote for their own governments, not for a global one, and one of their main criteria for choosing a government is whether the ruling party can protect the well-being of its citizens rather than sacrificing them to achieve some of the government’s global goals. It’s here that Western economists have a blind spot. They comprehend economic globalisation from the perspective of microeconomics only, and see the benefits of it from the standpoint of enterprises only, but forget to see problems from the viewpoint of national voters.

This mistake is manifested in two aspects. First, Western economists believe that in the context of free trade and free investment, enterprises will pursue maximum benefit and bring the greatest gain to the global economy. However, if it’s not only Western companies that are participating in economic globalisation, but also centralised governments like China’s, how can Western companies in China that are tied up by the Chinese government outcompete it?

Second, enterprises from developed countries can indeed reduce costs and increase profits by investing in and transferring production lines to developing countries, but the synchronous actions of many enterprises may cause a sharp decline in domestic manufacturing jobs. While these companies

Continued on A10

AFP/GETTY IMAGES



ENG KOON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



(Top) A worker cuts an oil pipe at a factory in Qingdao in China’s eastern Shandong Province on Feb. 28, 2019.

(Above) Visitors walk past counterfeit brand-name clothing on display at the Beijing administration for industry and commerce in Beijing on June 12 2007.

China’s ‘Communist Capitalism:’ a Monster Created by Economic Globalisation

CONTINUED FROM A9

make money from globalisation, they don’t necessarily pay taxes at home. The companies take advantage of offshore financial centres to evade taxes, while taxpayers in their home countries lose out. Since governments in the developed world don’t have enough revenue, they have to borrow more, and future taxpayers have to pay for it.

How a Centralised Super Economy Manipulates Economic Globalisation

Another mistake Western economists have made is that they never took into account the possibility of economic imbalances between countries at the macro level in terms of the negative effects of economic globalisation. However, the process of economic globalisation so far has preliminarily demonstrated possible consequences of the manipulation of economic globalisation by such centralised super-economies.

If a super-economy whose labor force accounts for 1/6 of the global joins the economic globalisation, this large economy can attract investment and technology from every country, form a complete industrial chain, and then use cheap goods to squeeze the manufacturing enterprises of developed countries. It then occupies the global markets, and finally causes the global economy’s dependence on this country’s economy.

This would be unsustainable even from a purely international trade perspective, as it would result in shrinking manufacturing and large trade deficits in many countries, ultimately making international payments difficult, at which point this super-economy would no longer be able to make money.

On the other hand, for countries that have long relied on Chinese goods, with their own manufacturing vanished and a lack of foreign exchange for Chinese imports, there is little choice but to seek the support of the CCP and accept its political manipulation. In the long run, is this a win-win international economic and political situation, or a win-lose situation? The answer is obvious.

Furthermore, if the government controlling the super-economy is an authoritarian communist government, since such government has a strategic objective ideologically, namely, “socialism to eventually win over capitalism,” then at the executive level, this centralised government will have a global strategic target.

It will aim at the main and the most powerful democracy in the world, trying to weaken it, hit it, and this target is without a doubt the United States.

One of its important means to weaken and attack the United States is to use the domestic market of the super economy and the manufacturing capacity accumulated in the process of economic globalisation to blackmail the U.S. The trade war is a war game in which Beijing tries to get American companies that import Chinese-made goods to lobby on its behalf, while also directly manipulating the American election system by stopping or resuming imports of American agricultural products.

Currently, both sides are facing an unprecedented international pattern. Although the United States faces all sorts of infringement from the CCP, it can’t deal with China in a similar manner as during the Cold War with the Soviet Union, because the CCP has joined the economic globalisation for many years. The economy of these two

has formed a mixed situation of mutual dependence. Once friction between these two upgrades, each side will suffer.

WTO Versus CCP: Who Constrains Whom?

It was an illusion of governments and World Trade Organisation (WTO) officials that the CCP would consciously keep all the promises it made prior to joining. They even believed absurdly that the CCP’s entry into economic globalisation will lead to its democratisation.

It now seems that rather than being effectively constrained by WTO rules, the CCP has set a precedent for successfully circumventing WTO rules. Most WTO members don’t want to take up with the CCP due to their own financial interests, and the result is that the WTO keeps making concessions to Beijing’s foul play. In this sense, the WTO has lost its ability to restrain violations, and its continued existence is therefore in doubt.

Before China came onto the global stage, economic globalisation had already been in place without any major issues. This was not only because the countries participating were basically free societies, but also because they were not large economies, with neither the ambition nor the ability to challenge international rules.

After economic globalisation treated China as an important cooperative entity, things changed significantly. Economic globalisation was originally the cooperation of transnational enterprises between free countries, and the WTO provided rules and guidance around such economic cooperation. What needs to be emphasised in particular is that economic globalisation is not economic cooperation between governments, but cooperation between enterprises of different countries. This is important because all participants in economic globalisation are free countries. Other than market economy, the so-called free countries do not directly manipulate all economic activities, nor do they use government manipulation to achieve their own global goals.

In other words, the participation of free countries in economic globalisation does not, by and large, turn economic globalisation into an instrument of their governments’ global domination. As a result, WTO rules were never written with the goal of how to prevent participating countries from becoming a threat to the global economic and political order. Behind this benign vision of economic globalisation lurks an old dream of global leftists: a global commonwealth.

Unfortunately, due to the naïveté of the world’s major democracies, economic globalisation has set itself a bomb due to explode in the future.

There are two aspects of the naïveté. First, it’s assumed that all countries with market-oriented economies would embrace liberal democracy. Second, it’s assumed that after the end of the Cold War, there will no longer be a realistic possibility of a major power threatening the global economic and political order.

While it’s true that the Soviet Union of the Cold War era was a constant threat to world peace and order, the Soviet Union fully rejected market economy, and as such, members of the Soviet Bloc didn’t engage in long-term, comprehensive economic cooperation with enterprises of free countries.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many naïve Westerners celebrated that the world would never again have an authoritarian power



A worker twists fake “branches” in Sun Xudan’s artificial Christmas tree factory in Yiwu, China, on Dec. 7, 2016.

Unfortunately, due to the naïveté of the world’s major democracies, economic globalisation has set itself a bomb due to explode in the future.

that threatens world peace and order. In their view, since China has adopted a market economy already, it will join the free world sooner or later, as the “panda huggers” in the U.S. and Europe have argued.

Their biggest mistake was failing to see before the CCP joined the WTO that it had built a unique basic institutional framework of “communist capitalism” by promoting a market economy (full privatisation of state-owned enterprises and abandonment of planned economies).

My article published in 2015 put forward the system of “communist capitalism” for the first time, but at that time, I focused on ownership, namely, how the CCP cadres became oligarchs by misappropriating formerly state-owned assets, without further digging to analyse what kind of consequences will be produced once such communist capitalism entered economic globalisation.

Now it seems that “communist capitalism” is neither a normal market economy nor a free society. Through economic globalisation, it not only attracts enterprises, equipment, and purchase orders from various countries, forming the “world factory,” but also makes Western countries’ enterprises rely on China economically.

On the other hand, under such a system, the communist regime will surely try to influence and manipulate the international economic order, to challenge the United States in order to keep and expand its power.

Therefore, it can’t be a real partner with the United States or a fair competitor acting in accordance with international rules, but instead treats the U.S. as an imaginary enemy, strategically. By continuing to weaken the United States with nonviolent means, the CCP is also practically disintegrating WTO rules and their binding force.

Strategic Significance of Sino-US Trade Dispute

After Trump took office, he began to clean up the negative legacies of his predecessors, among which the most important item is the reset of U.S.-China relations.

After the CCP’s accession to the WTO, its global economic scale kept increasing. When China thought it had gained enough strength, it began to control global trade according to its own needs, such as taking technology from other countries and enacting policies harmful to other countries such as the United States. The WTO was helpless in the face of an unreasonable and rogue state.

On the surface, the Sino-US trade dispute looks like many other trade frictions we’ve witnessed around the world, but there is one important factor frequently overlooked: out of the need to perpetuate its nationalist and ideological propaganda, the CCP is targeting both the economy and the military of the United States.

It took advantage economically,

scientifically, and technologically, and then used its resources to strengthen its military, putting pressure on the United States.

This approach bears some resemblance to Japan’s diplomatic and trade relations with the United States before the outbreak of the Pacific theatre of World War II. So it’s ill-advised for the United States to view existing problems from an economic perspective only.

Many of the United States’ strategies deployed against China not only focus on economic relations, but also have an eye toward politics and the military. Although no one in American politics has explicitly made this point yet, the underlying consensus is becoming clearer.

Should the global economic order change? The relative positions of countries are very different. For the CCP, it’s better to stay the course, so it can continue to take advantage of other countries. Many small and medium-sized developed countries are afraid of offending the CCP, yet they also want to keep taking economic advantage of the United States, so they waver.

The United States, which has suffered greatly, is the only country with the incentive to change the global economic order. The change of global economic order can only be done by the United States, which at the moment is a bigger economy and has more global clout than China.

Facing a country that only takes advantage of others and doesn’t keep its promises, the WTO now can only make empty threats and wait patiently for the CCP to take the initiative to change. The CCP, on the other hand, is only willing to make changes that are not harmful to itself, and won’t give up its existing practices so easily.

In this case, the United States, which suffers the most from globalisation, can only safeguard its interests alone. In fact, no other country cares about the United States’ losses. The American interests can only be protected by the United States itself.

The new trade policy of the United States has revealed the dark side of economic globalisation that has long been covered up. The weakness of the WTO in front of the “Red Terror” fully shows the miserable situation of economic globalisation. It may be said that economic globalisation has passed its peak and is now entering into the shadow created by itself. People will have to re-understand the future global economic pattern in order to extricate themselves.

Dr. Cheng Xiaonong is a scholar of China’s politics and economy based in New Jersey. Cheng was a policy researcher and aide to the former Party leader Zhao Ziyang, when Zhao was premier. He also served as chief editor of the journal Modern China Studies.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

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ABOUT US

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Standing outside of political interests and the pursuit of profit, our starting point and our goal is to create a media for the public benefit, to be truly responsible to society.

We endeavor to educate readers about today’s most important topics, seeking to broaden and uplift minds. We believe that rational, balanced debate is key for fostering a healthy democracy and a compassionate society.

As an independent media outlet, we use our freedom to investigate issues overlooked—or avoided—by other media outlets. We seek to highlight solutions and what’s good in society rather than what divides us.

We report respectfully, compassionately, and rigorously.

We stand against the destruction wrought by communism, including the harm done to cultures around the world.

We are inspired in this by our own experience. The Epoch Times was founded in 2000 to bring honest and uncensored news to people oppressed by the lies and violence in communist China.

We still believe journalism is a noble vocation, but only when it genuinely seeks to serve its communities and help them to flourish. In all that we do, we will hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity. This is our promise to you.

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SPECIAL SERIES

How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World

How Communism Sows Chaos in Politics

The Epoch Times here serializes a translation from the Chinese of “How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World,” a new book by the editorial team of the “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party.”

Chapter Eight (Cont.)

3. Inciting Hatred and Promoting Struggle Is the Invariable Course of Communist Politics (cont.)

The first chapter of the “Selected Works of Mao Zedong” is “An Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society,” written in 1925. It begins with the line: “Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This question is the number one question in the revolution.” The Communist Party arbitrarily creates concepts of class where before none existed and then incites these arbitrarily divided groups to struggle against each other. This is a magic weapon the communists use in their rise to power.

To promote its cause, the Communist Party selects and exaggerates certain issues that stem from the decline in moral values. Then it claims that the root cause of these issues is not moral weakness, but rather the structure of society. It singles out particular classes as the “oppressors” and promotes popular struggle against these classes as being the solution to society’s ills.

The hatred and struggle of communist politics are not limited to the antagonism between workers and capitalists. Cuban communist leader Fidel Castro said that the enemy of the Cuban people was the corruption of Fulgencio Batista and his supporters, and that the supposed oppression by large plantation owners was the source of inequality and injustice. By overthrowing the so-called oppressors, the Communist Party promises an egalitarian utopia. The communists used this promise to take over Cuba.

In China, Mao Zedong’s innovation was to promise the peasants ownership of their land, the workers ownership of their factories, and the intellectuals freedom, peace, and democracy. This turned peasants against the landlords, workers against the capitalists, and intellectuals against the government, allowing the Chinese Communist Party to seize power.

In Algeria, communist leader Ahmed Ben Bella stirred up hatred between different religions and ethnic groups: Muslims against Christians, and the Arabs against the French. This became Ben Bella’s springboard to secure communist rule.

Social conflict has become the default state of society. The seed of hatred has been planted in the hearts of the masses, and this is precisely the sinister aim of communism.

The Founding Fathers of the United States built the country based on the principles of the Constitution, which must be known and followed by every citizen. Family, church, and community formed strong bonds across American society. This de-emphasized concepts of social class and made it difficult to concoct class struggle in the United States.

But the specter of communism uses whatever opportunity it can to promote division. Using labor unions, it magnified conflicts between employees and employers. It used racial

divides to rally blacks, Muslims, Asians, and Hispanics to struggle against whites. It fomented struggle between the sexes by promoting the women’s rights movement against the traditional social structure. It created divisions using sexual orientation and the LGBT movement; it even invented new genders to intensify the struggle.

It divides the believers of different religions and uses “cultural diversity” to challenge traditional Western culture and heritage. It divides people of different nationalities by pushing for the “rights” of illegal immigrants and creating conflicts between foreigners and citizens. It pits immigrants and the general public against law enforcement officers.

As society becomes increasingly atomized, a single misstep can trigger a struggle. Social conflict has become the default state of society. The seed of hatred has been planted in the hearts of the masses, and this is precisely the sinister aim of communism.

Communism promotes division and hatred simultaneously. Lenin wrote, “We can and we must write in the language which sows among the masses hate, revulsion, scorn, and the like, toward those who disagree with us.”

The political tactics used by the communist specter in the West employ all sorts of “social justice” issues to incite hatred and intensify social conflict.

In the 1931 Scottsboro Boys case, nine black boys were accused of raping two white women, triggering severe racial discord across the country. The Communist Party USA sprang into action, advocating justice for black Americans and attracting many followers. Among these was Frank Marshall Davis, future mentor to a left-wing president.

According to Dr. Paul Kengor, the goal of the American communists in the Scottsboro Boys case was not merely to boost its membership among the black population and progressive “social justice” activists, but to vilify America as a country rife with inequality and racial discrimination. Claiming that these were the prevailing conditions all throughout the country, they promoted communism and leftist ideology as the only means of liberating Americans from this supposedly pathological and evil system.

In 1935, a riot broke out among the black communities in Harlem, New York, following rumors that a black teen had been beaten to death when he was caught shoplifting. The Communist Party USA jumped at the chance to organize black protests, according to Leonard Patterson, the black former CPUSA member who had played a role in the incident.

Patterson described how communists were specifically trained in Leninist tactics on how to instigate and inflame conflicts. They learned how to transform protests into violent riots and street fighting, as well as deliberately fabricating conflict where there was none to be found.

In contemporary America, communist groups have been involved in every large-scale social conflict or riot. In 1992, footage showing Rodney King, a black resident of Los Angeles, being beaten by white police officers after he was caught for drunk driving was broadcast on television. After the verdict, just when the protesters were about to disperse, someone suddenly smashed a metal sign into a passing car, and the protest swiftly escalated into a violent riot with burning, smashing, and looting.

When asked about the participation of communists in the incident,

Los Angeles County Sheriff Sherman Block said that there was no question that they were involved in rioting, looting, and arson. During the events, fliers circulated by various communist groups like the Revolutionary Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, the Progressive Labor Party, and the Communist Party USA could be found all over the streets and throughout schools. One of the fliers had the words “Avenge the King verdict! ... Turn the guns around! Soldiers unite with the workers!” According to a police officer in the Los Angeles Police Department, people were already handing out fliers before the verdict was announced.

Whatever the profusion of organizations that incite riots and violence in Western society today may call themselves, be it ‘Indivisible,’ ‘Anti-Fascist,’ ‘Stop Patriarchy,’ ‘Black Lives Matter,’ or ‘Refuse Fascism,’ they are all communist or proponents of communist ideas.

Early on, Lenin had instructed communists that “outbreaks—demonstrations—street fighting—units of a revolutionary army—such are the stages in the development of the popular uprising.”

Whatever the profusion of organizations that incite riots and violence in Western society today may call themselves, be it “Indivisible,” “Anti-Fascist,” “Stop Patriarchy,” “Black Lives Matter,” or “Refuse Fascism,” they are all communists or proponents of communist ideas. The violent Antifa group consists of people of various communist leanings, such as anarchists, socialists, liberals, social democrats, and the like. Refuse Fascism is actually a left-wing radical group founded by the president of the Revolutionary Communist Party of the USA. It was behind many large-scale protests aiming to overturn the result of the 2016 presidential election.

Under the guise of free speech, these groups work tirelessly to provoke all sorts of conflicts in Western society. To understand their real objective, one needs only to take a look at the Communist Party USA’s directive to its members as described in a 1956 congressional report:

“Members and front organizations must continually embarrass, discredit and degrade our critics. ... When obstructionists become too irritating, label them as fascist or Nazi or anti-Semitic. ... Constantly associate those who oppose us with those names that already have a bad smell. The association will, after enough repetition, become ‘fact’ in the public mind.”

See next edition for the next installment.

Why Homer Simpson Is Smarter Than All of Us

MARK SCHNEIDER

Commentary
Homer Simpson is smarter than you.

Yes, I'm talking about the famous yellow sitcom dad from the long-running animated series "The Simpsons."

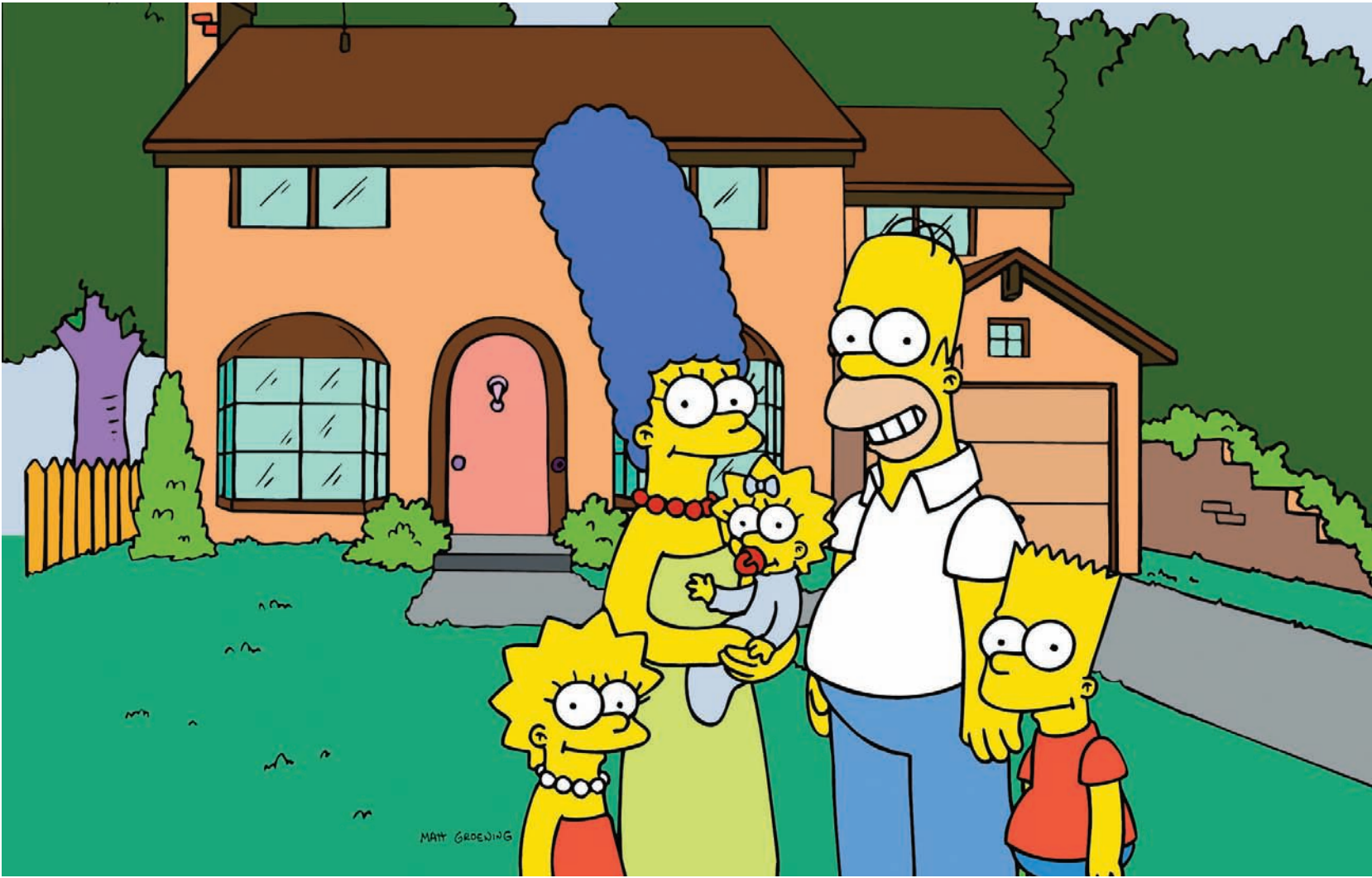
Everything in this article is based on facts and my 21 years of experience in the nuclear industry, plus discussions with thousands of nuclear-trained employees. Not only is Homer smarter than you, he also makes more money than you—a lot more.

Let me start by telling you a story based on actual events that frequently occur at nuclear power plants.

A young man—we'll call him John—has been working at a commercial power plant and is a veteran of the U.S. Navy's Nuclear Power Programme, one of the three top jobs in the military that require the most brain power. John has just failed his second exam in a row, and he's been asked to meet the plant manager at the site's public education centre, which is outside the security area. There, the contents of his locker are waiting for him and he's been informed that he'll no longer be working at the power plant.

What does this have to do with Homer Simpson?

Homer Simpson completed a similar programme well before 1989, when "The Simpsons" started. Based on the information in the long-running series, Homer is actually a licensed reactor operator. Our friend John was in the non-licensed programme and couldn't make it through that. I have taken exams similar to John's, and they require a serious amount of technical information knowledge and attention to detail. From "The Simpsons," we



This undated frame from the Fox series "The Simpsons," shows the popular cartoon family posing in front of their home, from left, Lisa, Marge, Maggie, Homer, and Bart Simpson.

Stop underestimating this yellow sitcom dad.

learned that Homer applied to work at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant right out of high school. Homer is frequently seen operating the dials and knobs in the control room, a task only people with a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) reactor operator license can perform.

That means that Homer went through a 40-month non-licensed training programme, and then, the most academically rigorous education programme on the planet for 18 months. A licensed senior reactor operator I know, who is a Naval Academy graduate, said it was the hard-

est thing he had done in his life. There are exams after exams after exams. First, on engineering fundamentals, followed by nuclear systems, and culminating in an exam approved by the NRC with simulator sessions to match the training.

After earning his license, he still has training sessions several times a year. His license is on the line during each session. If he fails too many evaluated simulator sessions or written exams, they will take his license, along with the extra benefits he gets. This level of training and experience comes with a lot of pay.

Based on public union contracts for power plant workers, Homer's hourly wage as a control room operator is about \$46.50 an hour. But since he has a reactor operator's license, he earns an additional \$8 an hour, plus a \$9,000 annual bonus. With overtime and paid holidays, he makes at least \$160,000 a year and it's possible for him to make \$200,000 a year.

Stop underestimating this yellow sitcom dad.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

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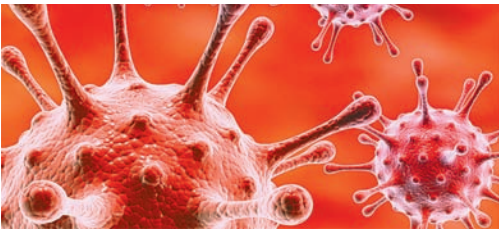
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Viruses Aren’t All Nasty

Our evolving understanding of viruses could change how we treat some diseases.

See B3

EXPLODE/SHUTTERSTOCK



‘THE LAUNDROMAT’

After “The Big Short” blew open the abundant trickery of the finance world, a stellar cast unwrap the explosive Panama Papers.

See B10

LIFE

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The Art of the
POTLUCK
PARTY

Ground rules and classic recipes to help you bring your best



You’ll want your dish to look good, taste good, and arrive safely—unlike Mum’s jambalaya.

BELINDA HULIN CRISSMAN

My mother was the potluck queen. Her contributions to communal culinary fetes in south Louisiana always took center table, showcasing her Cajun heritage and her personal credo of generosity and abundance. Even today, years after she left us for the great kitchen beyond, there are people who tell tales of the savory oven dressing she contributed to the college Thanksgiving potluck, the crawfish cornbread she brought to church socials, or the golden pecan pies she gifted to her ceramic class luncheons. Of course, one of those semi-annual ceramic class award luncheons also became the scene of her biggest potluck disaster.

The Most Important Rule of the Potluck

One year, Mom opted to bring both a pecan pie and a dish of spicy shrimp-and-sausage jambalaya. Since the recreation center kitchen had a balky, unreliable microwave, she decided to bring her jambalaya already warm and spooned into a slow cooker. My sister secured the foil-covered, oblong pecan pie—all nicely browned and fragrant—on the floor of the passenger seat of Mom’s giant Oldsmobile, while the slow cooker full of jambalaya was tucked in a low box in the giant trunk. I can still hear her saying, “You know, I kept thinking I could smell the jambalaya all the way up in the front seat.”

Continued on B4

ADRIATICFOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK



The core treatment strategies of the program are based on diet, lifestyle, supplements, herbs, and medications—usually in that order.

THE ROOT CAUSE

Can Dementia Be Reversed?

A new treatment paradigm for Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia

ARMEN NIKOGOSIAN

For decades, conventional medicine has offered little regarding the treatment of patients suffering from dementia or cognitive decline. Alzheimer’s disease is now the third-leading cause of death in North America, after heart disease and cancer. But treatment is possible.

It is estimated that dementia will afflict approximately 50 percent of the next generation of senior citizens (that would be every other person between the ages of 40 and 60 reading this article right now). Most seniors today feel utterly helpless as they witness the deterioration of their cognitive abilities. Some even accept this as a normal part of aging. But dementia is not a normal part of aging and should not be accepted as such.

And while we’ve all met cancer survivors, no one has ever met an Alzheimer’s survivor—until now.

The ReCODE program (or Reversal of COgnitive DEcline) was developed over the past decade by Dr. Dale Bredesen, the director of research for neurodegenerative disease at UCLA and the author of “The End of Alzheimer’s: The First Program to Prevent and Reverse Cognitive Decline.”

This treatment program is based on addressing the several dozen mechanisms responsible for the expression of Alzheimer’s disease and is completely in alignment with the principles of integrative and functional medicine.

So what exactly is the ReCODE program? To quote Bredesen: “Imagine you have 36 holes in your roof—because we initially identified 36 different mechanisms involved—if you patch one hole, that’s not going to help you much. You want to patch all the holes. Now, a drug typically patches one hole ... [but you need to] patch the other 35 as well.”

The ReCODE program is a full-spectrum, functional medicine approach for addressing all the physiological dysfunctions and imbalances that ultimately present as Alzheimer’s in the patient.

Your brain’s ability to perform its various

Most seniors today feel utterly helpless as they witness the deterioration of their cognitive abilities.

Your brain’s ability to perform its various activities requires connections between brain cells (also known as neurons).

activities requires connections between brain cells (also known as neurons). You have approximately 100 billion neurons in your brain, and each neuron has approximately 10,000 connections, called synapses. That’s more than 100 quadrillion synapses per brain.

When your brain is in a state of good health, this massive number of connections maintains a balance between cultivating new connections and pruning old connections that are no longer needed. Looking at this problem from a root-cause perspective, Alzheimer’s begins with an imbalance between synaptoblastic activity (building or cultivating synaptic connections between neurons) and synaptoclastic activity (destroying or pruning synaptic connections between neurons). It’s all about restoring balance to the brain.

Alzheimer’s patients are on the wrong side of this balance. Their synaptic building activity (synaptoblastic) is too low and their synaptic pruning activity (synaptoclastic) is too high. Bringing this synaptic dynamic back into balance is the final goal of the ReCODE approach.

Many patients ask what the differences are between Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, and cognitive decline. Cognitive decline is a general term denoting any loss of cognitive function of which dementia is a part.

Dementia is a syndrome used to describe symptoms that impact memory, communication, and performance of daily activities of which Alzheimer’s disease is a part. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common type of dementia, associated with beta-amyloid plaque deposits in the brain and characterized by progressive worsening of memory, language, and thought. Since the term Alzheimer’s is used by the general public to denote any form of dementia, that’s the term I use.

One of the first steps of the ReCODE program in restoring this balance is determining what subtype of Alzheimer’s the patient has:

Type 1: Inflammatory or ‘Hot’
These are patients with mainly inflammatory symptoms. They have a brain that is figuratively “on fire” and balance cannot be restored until the inflammation has been brought under control. There have been many similarities observed between adults with this type of Alzheimer’s and children on the autism spectrum—with some overlap of successful treatment modalities for both.

Type 1.5: Glycotoxic or ‘Sweet’
This is a mixed subtype in between inflammatory and atrophic. This is typically associated with diabetes and insulin resistance and is the most common form of Alzheimer’s that we see and treat.

Type 2: Atrophic or ‘Cold’
These are patients in which disease is driven by a lack of essential nutrients, hormones, or other growth factors. Withdrawal of any of these factors (such as testosterone, estrogen, vitamin D, or essential fatty acids to name a few) will unfavorably alter the synaptic balance.

Type 3: Toxic or ‘Vile’
These are patients in whom their Alzheimer’s is driven by poor circulation of the brain. These patients will frequently have other vascular issues as well, such as coronary artery disease or peripheral vascular disease.

Type 4: Vascular or ‘Pale’
These are patients in whom their Alzheimer’s is driven by poor circulation of the brain. These patients will frequently have other vascular issues as well, such as coronary artery disease or peripheral vascular disease.

Type 5: Traumatic or ‘Dazed’
These are patients in which disease is driven by traumatic injury to the brain. It can be one large traumatic injury, but more commonly is a result of multiple, recurrent, minor head traumas, such as those seen in professional football players.

These subtypes are not mutually exclusive of one another, and having one subtype doesn’t exclude a person from having another subtype. Most patients will have one predominant subtype driving their disease and then have varying degrees of the other subtypes as contributing factors to their dementia. A successful ReCODE program will address all the patient’s problems in due course.

A frequently asked question is, “What will I be given or what will I need to do for the ReCODE program to work for me?”

The answer to that question is different for every individual. For one patient, the foundational treatment piece may be following a low-glycemic diet far beyond the expectations of the patient’s primary care physician or endocrinologist. For another, it may be correcting their nocturnal oxygenation as a result of their untreated sleep apnea for the past decade. For another, it could be detoxifying them of the lead they had accumulated from a youth spent breathing in leaded gas fumes. Another may require balancing their hormones, and another, controlling their inflammation from their autoimmune disease, and so on and so on. That question cannot be answered until the individual patient has had a complete functional medicine evaluation.

The core treatment strategies of the program are based on diet, lifestyle, supplements, herbs, and medications—usually in that order. This program has no magic bullets, and if that is what you are looking for, then you should look elsewhere. This is a full-spectrum, multi-faceted approach to your neurological health in specific and your overall health in general.

Armen Nikogosian, MD, practices functional and integrative medicine at Southwest Functional Medicine in Henderson, Nev. He is board-certified in internal medicine and a member of the Institute for Functional Medicine and the Medical Academy of Pediatric Special Needs. His practice focuses on the treatment of complex medical conditions with a special emphasis on autism spectrum disorder in children as well as chronic gut issues and autoimmune conditions in adults.

Viruses Aren't All Nasty—Some Protect Our Health

Our evolving understanding of viruses could change how we treat some diseases

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

CYNTHIA MATHEW

Viruses are mostly known for their aggressive and infectious nature. It's true, most viruses have a pathogenic relationship with their hosts—meaning they cause diseases ranging from a mild cold to serious conditions such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). They work by invading the host cell, taking over its cellular machinery and releasing new viral particles that go on to infect more cells and cause illness. But they're not all bad. Some viruses can actually kill bacteria, while others can fight against more dangerous viruses. So like protective bacteria (probiotics), we have several protective viruses in our body.

Protective 'Phages'
Bacteriophages (or "phages") are viruses that infect and destroy specific bacteria. They're found in the mucous membrane lining in the digestive, respiratory, and reproductive tracts. Mucus is a thick, jelly-like material that provides a physical barrier against invading bacteria and protects the underlying cells from being infected. Recent research suggests the phages present in the mucus are part of our natural immune system, protecting the human body from invading bacteria. Phages have actually been used to treat dysentery, sepsis caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*, salmonella infections, and skin infections for nearly a century. Early sources of phages for therapy included local water bodies, dirt, air, sewage, and even body fluids from infected patients. The viruses were isolated from these sources, purified, and then used for treatment. Phages have attracted renewed interest as we continue to see the rise of drug-resistant infections. Recently, a teenager in the United Kingdom was reportedly close to death when phages were successfully used to treat a serious infection that had been resistant to antibiotics. Nowadays, phages are genetically engineered. Individual strains of phages are tested against target bacteria, and the most effective strains are purified into a potent concentration. These are stored as either bacteriophage stocks (cocktails), which contain one or more strains of phages and can target a broad range of bacteria, or as adapted bacteriophages, which target specific bacteria. Before treatment, a swab is collected from the infected area of the patient, cultured in the lab to identify the bacterial strain, and tested against the therapeutic phage stocks. Treatment can be safely administered orally, applied directly onto wounds or bacterial lesions, or even spread onto infected sur-



Like protective bacteria (probiotics), we have several protective viruses in our body.

Viral infections at a young age are important to ensure the proper development of our immune systems.

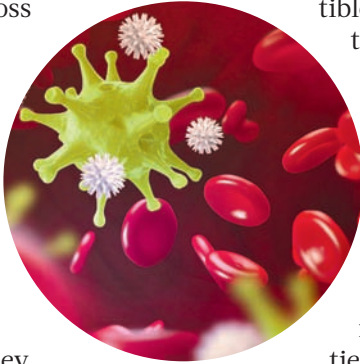
The immune system is continuously stimulated by systemic viruses at low levels sufficient to develop resistance to other infections.

faces. Clinical trials for the intravenous administration of phages are ongoing.

Beneficial Viral Infections
Viral infections at a young age are important to ensure the proper development of our immune systems. In addition, the immune system is continuously stimulated by systemic viruses at low levels sufficient to develop resistance to other infections. Some viruses we come across protect humans against infection by other pathogenic viruses. For example, latent (nonsymptomatic) herpes viruses can help human natural killer cells (a specific type of white blood cell) identify cancer cells and cells infected by other pathogenic viruses. They arm the natural killer cells with antigens (a foreign substance that can cause an immune response in the body) that will enable them to identify tumor cells. This is both a survival tactic by the viruses to last longer within their host and to get rid of competitive viruses to prevent them from damaging the host. In the future, modified versions of viruses like these could potentially be used to target cancer cells. Pegivirus C or GBV-C is a virus that doesn't cause clinical symptoms. Multiple studies have shown HIV patients infected with GBV-C live longer in comparison to patients without it. The virus slows disease progression by blocking the

host receptors required for viral entry into the cell and promotes the release of virus-detecting interferons and cytokines (proteins produced by white blood cells that activate inflammation and removal of infected cells or pathogens). In another example, noroviruses were shown to protect the gut of mice when they were given antibiotics. The protective gut bacteria that were killed by the antibiotics made the mice susceptible to gut infections. But in the absence of good bacteria, these noroviruses were able to protect their hosts.

The Future of Therapeutic Viruses
Modern technology has enabled us to understand more about the complexities of the microbial communities that are part of the human body. In addition to good bacteria, we now know there are beneficial viruses present in the gut, skin, and even blood. Our understanding of this viral component is largely in its infancy. But it has huge potential in helping us understand viral infections, and importantly, how to fight the bad ones. It could also shed light on the evolution of the human genome, genetic diseases, and the development of gene therapies.



Viruses are supposed to be the boogymen of the microscopic world, but some of them seem to have gotten a bad rap.

Cynthia Mathew is a research assistant at the University of Canberra in Australia. This article was first published on The Conversation.



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The Art of the POTLUCK PARTY

Continued from B1

Yes, after a few fishtailing turns, she could indeed smell the jambalaya. The top-heavy slow cooker fell over the side of the box, the lid unhinged, and saucy, spicy, sticky jambalaya spilled all over the trunk.

Mom arrived at her destination and gave a slight beep of the horn for her younger and more able-bodied friends to come out and help her carry her prized dishes inside. She popped the trunk, to the horror and dismay of the helpers (and herself).

The story goes that Mom had to dissuade them from scooping all that wasted shrimp, sausage, and rice back into the toppled-over cooker and pretending it never happened!

Hundreds of dollars worth of ruined ingredients and car-cleaning later, we all learned the most important rule of the potluck: If your dish doesn't get there intact, it doesn't count.

This is extremely important to remember, as we plunge into the prime season of covered-dish celebrations large and small. From October to December, there are back-to-school gatherings; post-summer-hiatus book club, choir, and school booster events, sports-viewing parties; and of course, the obligatory office and community Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Year potlucks. You'll want your dish to look good, taste good, and arrive safely.

History of the Potluck
The term "potluck" has come to refer to

One can assume that the practice of the potluck has an ancient history that far predates recorded custom. After all, what could be more natural than sharing food with others?

a cooperative meal where everyone partaking contributes a dish to the communal menu. By these terms, the first Thanksgiving—whether you count the one at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1621 or the one at St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565—could be considered a potluck, with colonial settlers and native peoples sharing victuals.

However, numerous food history resources date the word to the 1500s, a time when an unannounced visitor or traveler might be invited into a home to share the luck of the pot—that is, whatever was cooking on the hearth. Sharing a meal that a resident family would be eating, without them putting on airs and fancy fixings for company, came to be known as taking pot luck.

By the mid-1800s, the word had evolved to mean a meal to which all participants contribute something. The luck in potluck now refers to the fact that one never really knows what dishes might show up at such a feast.

One can assume that the practice of the potluck—either the original meaning or the modern meaning—has an ancient history that far predates recorded custom. After all, what could be more natural than sharing food with others?

Cowboys in the western United States are credited with popularizing the modern practice of potluck suppers, and the spread of the concept can be attributed to the sheer efficiency of such a meal. If everyone contributes a dish, no one person has to do all the work, and each person can contribute



according to their own talents and pocket-book. Instant party!

Do's and Don'ts
Potlucks now pop up everywhere, from houses of worship to office parties to extended family gatherings and soccer team fundraisers. The meal can be a hearty indoor affair in the dead of winter or an outdoor barbecue at the peak of summer, a feast for 40 or a supper for 16. Whatever parameters exist, there are still a few essential elements to a successful potluck:

The host or the host's designee is the organizer. Even with the freewheeling, "surprise us" atmosphere of a potluck, someone has to make sure there's enough table and countertop space to accommodate dishes, room in the fridge or cooler for things that must be kept cold, and power strips for slow cookers, as well as all the essentials for dining. Plates, cups, napkins, serving utensils, potholders, and trivets can be contributed by guests or provided by the host, but these are not optional things.

SHRIMP AND SAUSAGE JAMBALAYA

Every Cajun and Creole family has its own jambalaya recipe. The dish originated as pure peasant food—a way to stretch leftover meat or seafood with rice and spices. Somewhere along the way, bits of ham, sausage, or tasso was added. Meat-based jambalayas are often saturated with pan gravy and a rich brown color. Seafood-based jambalaya is more often tomato-based. Either way, it's a great potluck dish. Just don't leave it untethered in the trunk like Mom did!

If shrimp are too pricey, or you know some guests are allergic to seafood, you can substitute diced boneless chicken breasts for the shrimp.

- SERVES 12 TO 15**
- 1 pound andouille or smoked sausage, sliced
 - 1 large onion, diced
 - 1 small bell pepper, cored and diced
 - 1 small rib celery, trimmed and sliced
 - 3 cloves garlic, minced
 - 2 (15-ounce) cans tomato sauce
 - 4 cups shrimp broth, chicken broth, or water
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper

- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 whole bay leaves
- 3 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined (see Note)
- 7 cups steamed white rice
- 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced

In a tall soup pot or Dutch oven, cook the sausage over medium-high heat, stirring, for one minute. Add onion, bell pepper, celery, and garlic to the pot and continue to cook, stirring, until onions begin to appear translucent.

Add tomato sauce, broth, salt, black pepper, cayenne pepper, garlic powder, and bay leaves to the mix. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring often, for 1 1/2 hours. The sauce should reduce and thicken.

Stir in shrimp and continue cooking for 5 minutes or until shrimp turns opaque. Remove from heat and add two-thirds of the cooked rice to the sauce. Fold the rice in, allowing the rice to soak up the sauce. Add remaining rice in small increments and stop adding rice when sauce appears completely absorbed. In general, the ratio is 2 cups of shrimp-and-sausage sauce to every 2 1/2 cups of rice; however, if you're not serving the jambalaya immediately, leave the mixture a little on the wet side.

Stir parsley and green onions into the hot rice mixture. Serve warm from a slow cooker or heating tray.

MONICA'S HEAVENLY HASH CAKE

This is my sister Monica's go-to dish for potluck parties, and as an elementary school teacher, she's been to plenty! It's easy to make, easy to transport, easy to serve, and absolutely delicious. I usually make it in a disposable pan (with a sheet pan under it for support) and I've never had leftovers to take home. Chocolate, marshmallows, and almonds with a creamy icing—what's not to like?

SERVES 12 TO 16

FOR THE CAKE

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups Bisquick
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1 cup pecan pieces (optional)
- 1 16-ounce bag miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 cup whole almonds

FOR THE ICING

- 1 pound confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/4 cup malted milk powder
- 10 tablespoons evaporated milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Make cake: Cream together eggs, butter, vanilla, and sugar. Add Bisquick and cocoa powder. Mix well. Stir in pecans. Pour into a buttered 9 by13-inch pan. Bake 35–40 minutes at 325 degrees F.

Remove cake from oven and immediately top with miniature marshmallows, distributing them over the cake. Sprinkle with almonds.

Make icing: Whisk confectioners' sugar to remove lumps. Cream butter with confectioner's sugar. Add malted milk powder, evaporated milk, and vanilla. Mix until smooth. Drizzle icing over the cake and use a spatula to gently coat marshmallows and almonds.

NOTE: Cocoa can be substituted for malted milk powder.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



If you're a guest and your dish requires bowls or soup mugs, be sure to ask the event organizer if you should bring them, or if someone is already contributing bowls. Likewise, if you're the host and you only have a small lunch-sized cooler, you need to buy or borrow one that can accommodate drinks. And don't skimp on the ice!

Make a sign-up sheet. Does your office party for 50 need five different kinds of salsa and three different types of macaroni and cheese? Maybe so. Does your potluck for 12 friends from high school need three chicken salads? Absolutely not. A sign-up sheet lets guests know that their contributions will be appreciated (nobody wants to be the guy who shows up with supermarket potato salad when the potato salad queen has an overflowing cut crystal bowl of the stuff at the same table) and that there will be a good mix of salads, sides, entrees, and desserts.

Don't be afraid to actually list items like soft drinks, dinner rolls, butter, condiments, and paper goods on the sign-up sheet. Such things are needed and give non-cooks in

The temptation to bring food for an army is always strong. Resist the urge.

your crowd an easy out.

Bring just enough. The temptation to bring food for an army is always strong. Resist the urge. Unless you're providing a centerpiece dish—say, a ham or turkey—you can feel very comfortable bringing a casserole that feeds 12–16 to a party of 30 people. Assuming everyone partakes of everything available, a sampling of 30 dishes will result in each guest grabbing a spoonful of each dish.

Think balance. If the sign-up sheet is filled with heavy, rich dishes such as lasagna, barbecue brisket hash, and bacon-studded macaroni and cheese, then a few guests should be encouraged to bring veggie salads or just plates of seasonal fruit. Platters of grapes tucked at each end of the table will add visual lightness as well as culinary balance to the spread, without breaking anyone's bank account.

Consider a theme. Yes, the variety of dishes offered give the potluck its charm. That said, themed dinners can be great fun. Deciding

to give your potluck an ethnic theme—think Mexican, Italian, Thai—or just a concept, like a Barbecue Bash or Kitsch Cuisine, can prompt lots of creative thinking on the part of guests.

One of my favorite types of potlucks is Just Desserts. The host offers a simple main dish, such as sub sandwiches or a hearty soup or casserole, and a side salad. Then guests are asked to bring their favorite desserts, resulting in a smorgasbord of cakes, pies, cookies, and other sweet temptations.

Bring the right dish, in the right dish, at the right time. Your dish should be ready to serve. Don't show up at a potluck with food that you must cook or otherwise prepare. Transferring a closed container of something into a prettier serving dish or into a slow cooker to maintain temperature is fine. Preparing sushi on the spot (when there are no plans for a potluck sushi bar) isn't.

Consult with your host if you need refrigerator space, a microwave session, or any other special accommodations. Oh, and don't leave your dish to "get it later," which puts the burden of cleaning or disposing of it on the host.

My mother would have done well to carry her jambalaya in a sealed container, then transfer it to the slow cooker at the ceramic class luncheon. But then we wouldn't have her cautionary tale, recalled by me and my siblings whenever any one of us is required to "bring a dish."

The greatest tribute to her cooking prowess and lamentations over her spilled jambalaya came at her funeral. As people walked into the family home with condolences, stories, and dishes, one of Mom's friends walked in with her adult son in tow. In his gloved hands was a giant slow cooker full of hot jambalaya.

"He has to go to work," she said. "But I made him come with me to hold the jambalaya pot on his lap. Your mama would haunt me if I spilled it all over my car like she did!"

Louisiana native Belinda Hulin Crissman writes cookbooks and food articles from her adopted hometown of Atlantic Beach, Fla. She's the author of five cookbooks, including "Roux Memories: A Cajun-Creole Love Story with Recipes." When she's not writing, you'll find her scoping out old and new culinary delights.

SUPERB CHEESE GRITS CASSEROLE

I never liked grits as a child, but as an adult, well, I discovered that if you put enough butter, cheese, and cream in a dish, it will taste fabulous every time. This version, with pan-roasted corn, is a true crowd-pleaser. It's perfect for a potluck because, in addition to being easy to transport, it doesn't have to be piping hot to be delicious.

This is a vegetarian side that's perfect to contribute if you know someone is bringing fish or chili. Or, you can make it more substantial by adding chopped sausage or bacon and minced jalapeños to the grits mixture.

SERVES 12

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups freshly shucked corn kernels
- 1 sweet onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup minced green onion
- 6 cups half-and-half
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups stone-ground yellow corn grits

- 1 cup heavy cream
 - 3 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
 - Salt and pepper to taste
- In a heavy skillet over medium-high heat, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter. Add the corn and onion and cook, stirring, until the onion is translucent and the corn kernels are lightly seared. Add the green onion and remove from the heat.
- In a large saucepan, bring the half-and-half and the water to a boil. Whisk in the grits. Reduce heat and cook, stirring almost constantly, for 15 minutes. Add remaining butter and heavy cream and continue cooking for 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in 1 cup of cheese. When the cheese is melted, stir in corn and onion mixture. Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Spoon grits into a buttered, shallow casserole or baking dish. Sprinkle the remaining cheese over the top and bake at 350 degrees F for 10 minutes, or until cheese is melted.



MS. B'S POTATO SALAD

Everybody loves potato salad and most potlucks wind up with more than one version of the dish. That's fine, and it shouldn't stop you from bringing this unique, tangy version. The salad dressing marinade seeps into the otherwise bland potatoes and makes the veggies extra crisp. Use a light hand with the mayonnaise at the finish—this salad doesn't need much.

MAKES 10 TO 12 SERVINGS

- 10 large white potatoes
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced celery
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced carrots
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced radishes
- 1/2 cup small-diced red onion
- 1/2 cup cored and diced yellow squash
- 12 ounces Italian or vinaigrette-type salad dressing
- Mayonnaise to taste
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup diced cucumbers (optional)
- 1/2 cup diced red bell peppers

Wash and peel the potatoes. Cut in half lengthwise, then slice crosswise into quarter-inch slices. Boil potatoes until just tender, about 10–15 minutes, then drain and rinse with cold water.

In a large glass or pottery bowl, combine potatoes with celery, carrots, radishes, red onion, and squash. Pour the salad dressing over the mixture and toss well. Cover tightly and refrigerate for 8 hours or overnight, taking time to occasionally turn or stir the salad to redistribute the dressing.

Before serving, pour the entire mixture into a colander and allow the excess salad dressing to drain. Return potato salad to a serving bowl and add enough mayonnaise to coat the ingredients. Season with salt and pepper, and add cucumbers and red bell pepper.

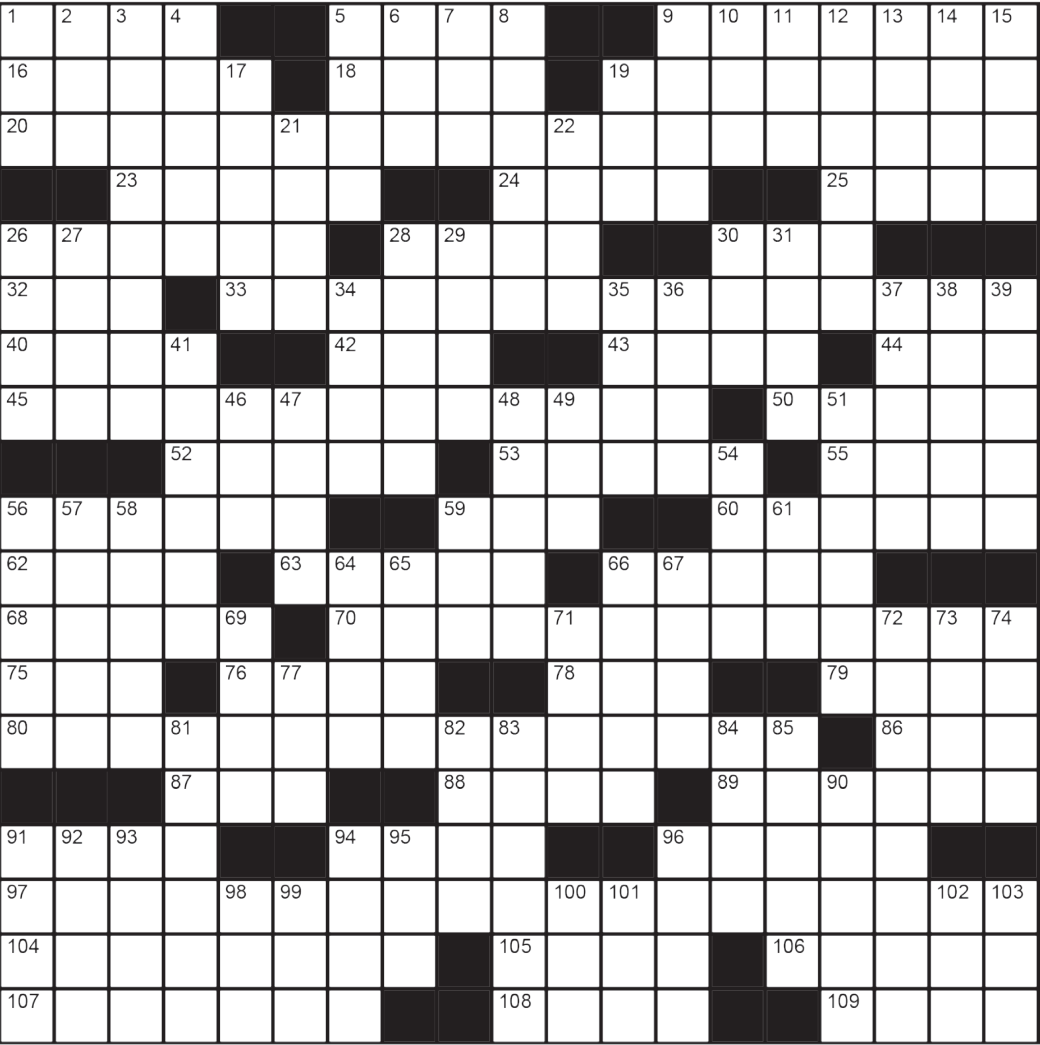


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* Use American spelling to enjoy these puzzles made by our parent company in New York.

CROSSWORD

CONSTRUCTED BY TOM HOUSTON
EPOCH TIMES STAFF



Across

- 1. Pedestal part
- 5. Comic Sandler
- 9. One of a dozen given on 2/14
- 16. Science
- 18. Ghanaian money
- 19. Assembler of pages
- 20. 4 for 8 and 12
- 23. “Unholy Loves” author
- 24. Unctuous
- 25. + and - particles
- 26. Bunkie
- 28. “Like a Prayer” video area
- 30. Bewail
- 32. “Ragtime” author’s monogram

- 33. Political budget tricks
- 40. Saloon selections
- 42. “Lean on a garden ____” (T.S. Eliot)
- 43. Ignoramus
- 44. Menagerie
- 45. “Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion”.
- 50. Charging, e.g. (in basketball)
- 52. Venusian, e.g.
- 53. Might, to Shakespeare
- 55. Gung-ho about
- 56. Notebook
- 59. Overturn
- 60. Ire
- 62. Cork’s place

- 63. Brothers’ keeper?
- 66. Slow mover
- 68. Merchandise
- 70. A pair each of protons and neutrons
- 75. Cream ____
- 76. Dessert ____
- 78. Delicacy
- 79. Trudge
- 80. Camembert’s cousin
- 86. High card
- 87. Amtrak calculation
- 88. Tinged
- 89. It’s measured in radians
- 91. Highlander
- 94. Pitcher
- 96. Gumbo vegetables

- 97. Operations ShadyRAT, e.g.
- 104. Siberia’s wetlands
- 105. Absorb’s opposite
- 106. Become chronic
- 107. Not difficult to pronounce
- 108. Weak one
- 109. Bump on a lid

Down

- 1. Cartoon cry
- 2. 2001 biopic
- 3. Good Samaritan
- 4. Archaic Irish script
- 5. Takes steps
- 6. 12 of 12, briefly
- 7. Big deal
- 8. Brunch drink
- 9. “Fun Home” honor
- 10. Little helper
- 11. According to
- 12. More suggestive
- 13. ____ von Bismarck
- 14. Procrastinator’s promise
- 15. Makes a boo-boo
- 17. Abominable snowmen
- 19. USMC rank
- 21. Look
- 22. Bearing
- 26. Cut the crop
- 27. Bean pot
- 28. Rubber hub
- 29. “21 Grams” star
- 30. Shred
- 31. Ammonia compound
- 34. Cockney dwelling
- 35. “Animal House” character
- 36. Cuts (down)
- 37. Kind of layer
- 38. Way to go
- 39. Sage of ancient Greece
- 41. Circled the rink

- 46. Human rights agcy.
- 47. Palm fruit
- 48. Forger
- 49. 2.5 miles at Indy
- 51. Exciting embellishment
- 54. Russian caesar
- 56. “Boston ____” (Spader-Shatner series)
- 57. Garlicky mayonnaise
- 58. Intro
- 59. Blouse, e.g.
- 61. Plum part
- 64. !, to a printer
- 65. Spectrum color
- 66. Hurry
- 67. Scruff
- 69. Become blackened
- 71. Stomach woe
- 72. Example of excellence
- 73. Centers of activity
- 74. Costar of TV’s “How to Marry a Millionaire”
- 77. Period in history
- 81. Caviar source
- 82. Perlman of “Cheers”
- 83. Cousin of the sand-piper
- 84. “Beasts and Super-Beasts” author
- 85. Overthrow, say
- 90. Punishes, in a way
- 91. Shims
- 92. Puzzler’s favorite ox
- 93. On pins and needles
- 94. Gaelic
- 95. 1999 Pulitzer Prize-winning play
- 96. Chooses, with “for”
- 98. Bro, for one (Abbr.)
- 99. Sig block nr.
- 100. Cousin of an ostrich
- 101. Family address
- 102. “Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives” host Fieri
- 103. Before, to Byron

4NUMBERS

CONSTRUCTED BY C. CHANG
AT 4NUMS.COM

Use the four numbers in the corners, and the operands (+, - X, and ÷) to **build an equation** to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one “unique” solution but, there may also be “equivalent” solutions. Forexample: 6 + (7X3) +1=28 and 1+ (7X3) +6 =28

1021

23

216

+

−

×

÷

Hard 1 - 2 Solutions

2935

42

1532

+

−

×

÷

Hard 2 - 1 Solution

19

15

18

+

−

×

÷

Easy 1 - 1 Solution

49

10

47

+

−

×

÷

Easy 2 - 1 Solution

WORDSEARCH

CONSTRUCTED BY TOM HOUSTON
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Help with Today’s Crossword Puzzle?

C E J R S K A T E D X M S B P
U R A C I E R Y S N A I L E N
R O T C L A S S A C T M A L I
L Q L R M A Y S T E X O R U O
E D F O O S L A Y Q T S C G K
W M F U G O Z I I S C A S A R
S M I T H Y M L E N P A I J A
P R L E A Z O I S N P L N O S
E E L Z M I G D E O R O E E R
E C I G A G O T T S O Z E E S
D U P L O O S P L O E O R M N
Z R A B G E A Q E L M N R N H
A B B O T L P Z G O B E O H F
S A Y A B L E J A N A K R O N
A F O U L W C O L L A T O R K

- AFOUL

AIOLI

AKRON

ALIEN

BELUGA

CANES

CLASS ACT

COLLATOR

CURLEW

ERROR

FILLIP

GOODS

LAPTOP
- LEGAL

MAYST

MIMOSA

OATES

OGHAM

OKRAS

LOGY

OZONE

PROEM

RACIER

RECUR

ROOMIE

ROUTE
- SKATED

SMITH

SNAIL

SOLON

SPEED

SPLEEN

YETIS

ABBOT

ARCSIN

BOGGIEST

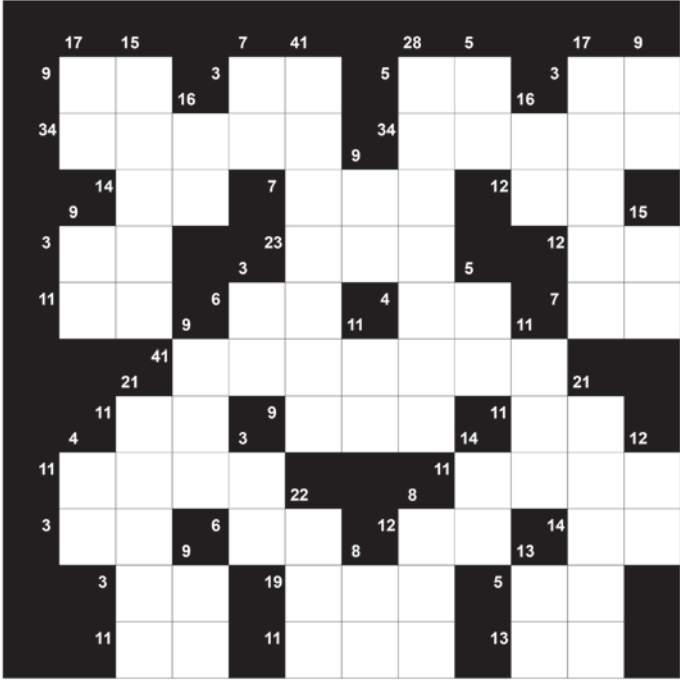
SAYABLE

KAKURO

CONSTRUCTED BY EPOCH TIMES STAFF

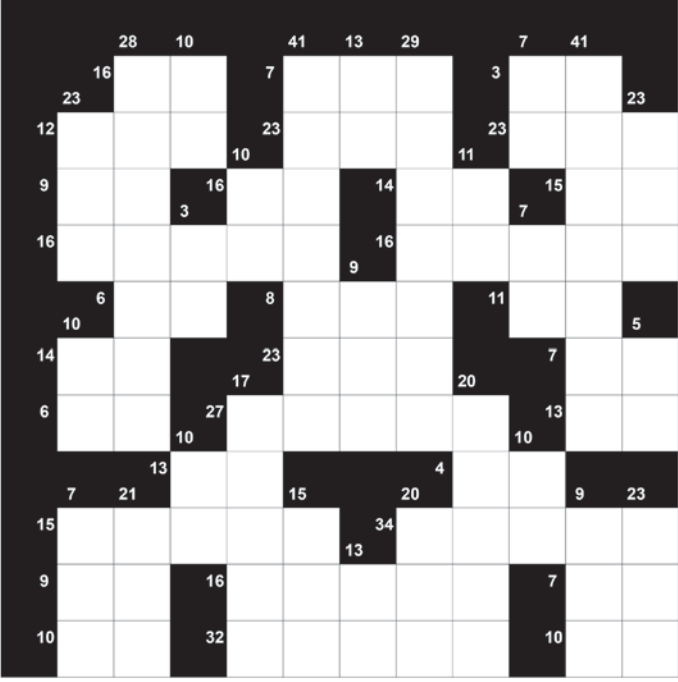
Kakuro puzzles are like crosswords that use numbers instead of words. The goal is to fill the blank squares associated with a clue (called a “run”) with the numbers 1-9 so that the numbers add up to the corresponding clues. Like Sudoku, digits in a run cannot repeat. When the grid is filled, the puzzle is complete.

Large: Easy



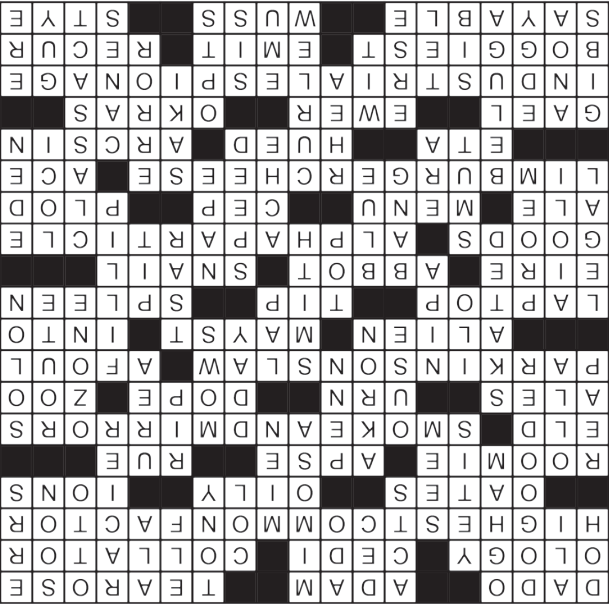
WORK SPACE

Large: Hard

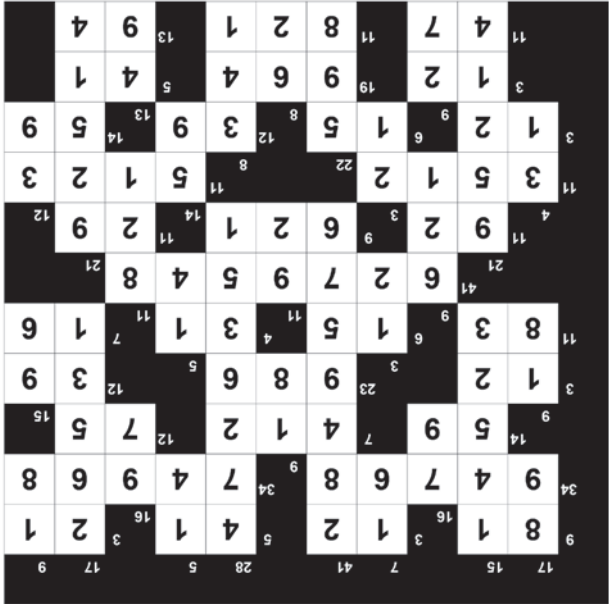


SOLUTIONS

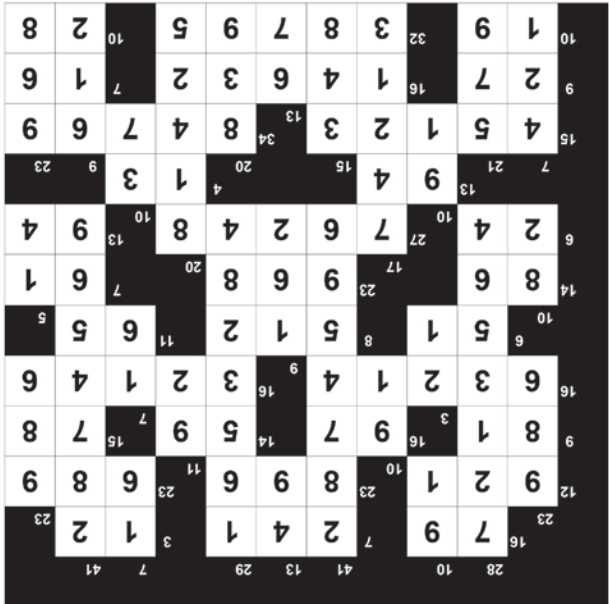
CROSSWORD



KAKURO LARGE: EASY



KAKURO LARGE: HARD



4 NUMBERS

HARD 1

16 ÷ (7 - (10) - 2) ÷ 21
21 ÷ 16 ÷ 10 - 16 ÷ 2

HARD 2

(29 - 15) × (35 - - 32)

EASY 1

9 + 8 - 1 - 1 = 6

EASY 2

9 + 4 + 4 - 7 = 10

Saba Island's Great Road of the Caribbean

DAVID ELLIS

The Dutch are marvels at creating engineering wonders on their home turf, but when they were asked back in the 1940s to build a road around and over the tiny island of Saba in the Caribbean's Netherlands Antilles, they studied it long and hard and decided: "Nee—this is impossible," and went home.

Unfazed, the entrepreneurial Sabans who lived on this jumbled collection of rugged peaks and deep valleys agreed that they wouldn't take no for an answer and that they would build the road themselves.

They were led by a remarkable 40-year-old carpenter, Joseph Hassel, who knew nothing of road-making and so enrolled in a five-year course in the subject ... by correspondence.

While he was studying, he and Saba's barely 1,000 other residents planned their road to villages, isolated farms, and communities on the tiny five-square-mile island, and decided that every able-bodied man, woman, and child would contribute set hours of voluntary roadwork every week.

Then, armed with little more than picks, shovels, rakes, buckets, and spades, they took 25 years to build their concrete masterpiece, which some of Holland's top engineers said was impossible.

In most places, the tortuous artery rises and falls at up to 35 degrees and U-turns zippered to the craggy mountains almost double back over themselves—so that from the sea or air it cuts a similar line as China's Great Wall and thus is dubbed "The Great Road of Saba."

Forty-odd years after it was opened, the road—which has never been given an official name beyond The Road—links the little port of Fort Bay with The Bottom (the village at the base of the largest mountain), picturesque Windwardside, Zion's Hill,

The tortuous artery rises and falls at up to 35 degrees and U-turns zippered to the craggy mountains almost double back over themselves.



- 1. A view of the island, which is only five square miles. It is a 12-minute flight from St. Maarten.
- 2. The capital of Saba, The Bottom.
- 3. The road connects the airport (above) to various towns throughout the island.



and the airport.

There are still only about 2,000 people who live here, in delightful gingerbread houses that all have white-washed walls, red tile roofs, and green window shutters—enforced by law.

And old-timers will recall how, before The Road was built, to get from their wharf to their homes, they had constructed a series of ladders with more than 900 steps from sea level to mountain walking tracks and trails to their farms, homes, shops, and businesses.

Everything from groceries to furniture and farm goods was hauled in (and out) via these ladders and tracks, including—with the help of dozens of locals—an enthusiastic local musician's full-size grand piano.

Saba gets around 25,000 visitors a year, who either come by ferry, a few small cruise ships, or by air ... with the airstrip another marvel of local ingenuity. Once again, when told it would be impossible to build an airport on the island, the Sabans simply said "no" to "nee" and carved the top off one of their many hills, pushed it into the sea, and laid a runway across it.

You've got to have a stout stomach to fly in, and no fear of heights to take one of the handful of taxi-vans around the island, as The Road in places clings precariously to cliffsides that fall hundreds of feet directly into lush valleys below.

The Sabans don't encourage large cruise ships, for fear of damaging their environment and being overrun by gawkers, and happily point out that, anyway, they've got no beaches, no duty-free shops, no dis-

count electronics, and virtually no transport beyond the few taxi-vans.

But they do have spectacular diving, extraordinary scenery, wonderful little stores selling hand-made souvenirs and exceptional lace goods, a couple of interesting museums, including one in a 160-year-old house, little cafés with delightful island-Dutch cuisine, including superb local lobsters, and "Dutch tea" (Heineken Beer) ... and the opportunity to climb 1,064 steps





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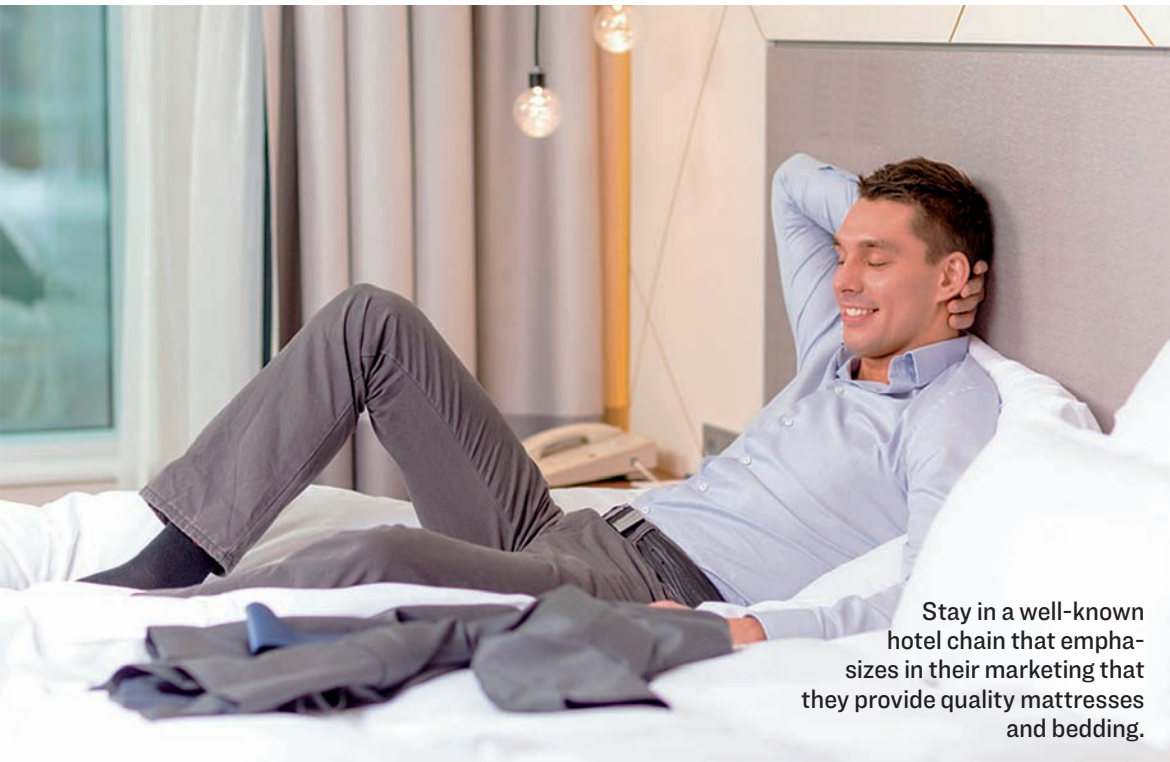


to take in the spectacular vista from the highest peak.

See travel agents about Caribbean Island ferry services to Saba and small holiday vessels, such as the SeaDream I and SeaDream II, that visit the island as part of Caribbean itineraries from November to March.

David Ellis is an Australian freelance writer.

WANDERING LEXICON/SHUTTERSTOCK



Stay in a well-known hotel chain that emphasizes in their marketing that they provide quality mattresses and bedding.

THE CONSUMMATE TRAVELER

Sleeping Well at Your Hotel

MICHELE GONCALVES

It's very important to sleep well, so we can function in our daily lives. Traveling can really make sleep difficult, whether it is due to jet lag or not having your favorite pillow. I can recall a former boss of mine who used to come down to breakfast exhausted on our trips because she just could not relax in a strange bedroom. I, on the other hand, thankfully adjust quickly and can usually rest no matter where I go. Let's go over a few tips to help you get a good night's sleep in your next hotel stay.

Mattresses Matter

The worst sleep I ever consistently had on a business trip was in a local Japanese hotel chain I once stayed at. The mattress was so hard and full of old springs that I woke up each morning with a terrible ache in my back.

Although I endured the pain for most of the trip and even slept upside down (my head was where my feet would normally be) to avoid certain unruly coils stabbing my spine, other colleagues of mine have requested hotels to change their mattress when they couldn't move to another room. My best advice is to stay in a well-known hotel chain that emphasizes in their marketing that they provide quality mattresses and bedding.

Allergy-Free Your Room

I don't personally suffer from allergies to feathers, but many of my colleagues do. I would say that most hotels use feather pillows and comforters on their beds, which can be a disaster if you don't tolerate them. I can recall someone I traveled with who had this issue, but the hotel didn't have any alternatives for her. It would be a challenge to guarantee a good night's sleep

in this case.

Larger hotel chains may have actual allergy-free rooms you can stay in, so be sure to ask upon check-in. Alternatively, most have hypoallergenic options for pillows and bedding upon request. If this is a big concern for you, it is always best



Traveling can really make sleep difficult, whether it is due to jet lag or not having your favorite pillow.

to call ahead and ask the hotel directly what options they have. For small hotels in remote locations, you may need to bring a pillow from home.

Come Prepared to Tune Out Noise

On one of my business trips, I stayed in one of the noisiest hotels ever. The high-rise building was right underneath a popular airport-landing route, and it seemed as if the planes were in my room every few minutes. The windows also didn't block the outside sounds too well, so there were constant car horns and city noise coming in. Most of my colleagues suffered as I did the first night, and agreed that getting a good night's sleep was going to be very difficult. I ended up adjusting to this situation by sleeping with my earbuds and listening to various compilations on my iPod so that I could control the volume to sufficiently drown out the noise. Usually by 3 a.m., the noise would be tolerable and I could continue my night of sleep without any electronic accessories.

Aromatherapy

Some top-notch hotels I have stayed in over the years provided a small tube of essential oil, usually lavender, by the nightstand to infuse on pillows and sheets before retiring for the night. Lavender is a scent that is known for its relaxing and soothing properties, and I can recall enjoying the beautiful smell during the night. If all the other aspects of your bed and surroundings are good, this could be the icing on the cake for your best night of sleep ever. Lavender essential oil is fairly easy to find on the internet, and may even be in some supermarkets. A few drops are all you need.

As always, I wish you all the happiest of travels!

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FILM REVIEW: ‘THE LAUNDROMAT’

The Money’s Not Funny and the Forced Organ Harvesting Even Less So

MARK JACKSON

Remember the Panama Papers? In the news? About a boatload of leaked documents in 2015 that was going to tear down the curtains covering the sneaky offshore shell company activity of billionaires, and expose them like roaches scurrying in a tenement slum? No? That’s probably because you’re not a billionaire. Me neither.

Want to see a movie about that? Yes? No? After all, “The Big Short,” among others, proved that learning about the abundant trickery of the finance world could be fun; good cheating stories are highly entertaining, especially when there’s a good comeuppance. (Which is why HBO’s upcoming NXIVM documentary series about the scoundrel Keith Raniere will most likely be a big hit.)

Director Steven Soderbergh made a movie about the book “Secrecy World: Inside the Panama Papers Investigation of Illicit Money Networks and the Global Elite.” It’s a meandering, slight, yawn-inducing, low-budgety-looking endeavor. Not really fun. A little bit funny. Largely boring. With a rather criminal underusage of a stellar cast. Sharon Stone in a two-minute role as a realtor, really?

I mean—look at this cast: Meryl Streep, Gary Oldman, Antonio Banderas, Jeffrey Wright, Sharon Stone, James Cromwell, Robert Patrick, and David Schwimmer. That’s probably a collection of around 10 Oscars. They don’t need money or accolades; clearly they were here for the

The most weirdly affecting of these true stories, however, is one about the British businessman Neil Heywood (here called Maywood).

‘The Laundromat’

Director
Steven Soderbergh

Starring
Meryl Streep, Gary Oldman, Antonio Banderas, Jeffrey Wright, Sharon Stone, James Cromwell, Robert Patrick, David Schwimmer, Rosalind Chao, Matthias Schoenaerts, Nonso Anozie

Running Time
1 hour, 35 minutes

Rated
R

Release Date
Sept. 27

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

concept and hoped to help Soderbergh turn up the wattage exposing a modern-day evil.

The Proceedings
It’s basically a bunch of wee stories about the little people who suffered from the criminal activity at the heart of Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca. What are shell companies? They’re virtual, international businesses, sans offices and employees, which, while not illegal, facilitate the ability to do illegal things, like hiding money and ducking taxes.

Satirically, Gary Oldman and Antonio Banderas play Jürgen Mossack and Ramón Fonseca, respectively: a pair of charming, fourth-wall-breaking, cravat-wearing, teetotaling, happy-go-lucky narrators and tour guides of the Panama City law firm that bears their names. They stroll with us and provide commentary throughout a series of mini-episodes following people adversely affected by their greed.

There’s the retiree and widow Ellen Martin (Meryl Streep), who loses hubby (James Cromwell) to a freak tidal wave while he’s boating on New York’s Lake George. Thanks to Mossack and Fonseca, she’s not going to get a full insurance settlement.

This turns Ellen into a geriatric Erin Brockovich (“Erin Brockovich” was also directed by Soderbergh), who reveals the teeming roach colony of misdeeds hiding under the Mossack Fonseca shell company United Re-Insurance Group.

So that’s one story.

Two Vignettes, One Twisted, One Horrifying
There are many such vignettes, the most entertaining of which is a twisted comedic bit about an African businessman (Nonso Anozie) who, caught flagrante delicto by his 18-year-old daughter (Jessica Allain), with her bestie college roommate, tries to bribe his daughter not to tell her mother (Nikki Amukabird). He gives her one of his 20-million-dollar shell companies as a birthday present. She and her mom are placated. Until they try to cash out.

The most weirdly affecting of these true stories, however, is one about the British businessman Neil Heywood (here called Maywood, played by Matthias Schoenaerts), who was poisoned

to death by Gu Kailai (Rosalind Chao), the wife of Bo Xilai, a powerful Chinese politician, when Heywood threatened to blow the whistle on the power couple’s offshore holdings.

It’s not Heywood’s story, per se, that affects us, but much more the depiction of Bo Xilai’s involvement in a different horrendous crime: the live organ-harvesting from Chinese prisoners of conscience—specifically adherents of the peaceful qigong practice Falun Gong.

The excessively gruesome portrayal of the scalpel-removal of corneas from live prisoners will scorch your retinas.

The scene doesn’t belong anywhere near the rest of the blithe, comedic treatment of all these fiscal crimes. That said, none of the heartbreak in these stories benefit from being told in this fluffy manner. To be worthwhile, the film needed to engender some outrage.

Meryl Streep ultimately divests herself of all her costumes and disguises, brushes out her hair, and delivers a pretty good speech about how the puppet strings controlling global finances are held by the rich, and that as we speak, many other shady firms just like Mossack Fonseca are up to no good.

In addition to a serious treatment, “The Laundromat” probably could have benefited from a few crooked billionaire scenes, like, say, Jeffrey Epstein’s weird island temple, which may or may not have been intended for human sacrifice. Shady money confers power, power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It’s not really funny.

In the end, though, it’s a laudable cause. The world should be aware of all this sneakiness. Next up, it’d be nice to see Meryl Streep, Gary Oldman, et al, and Steven Soderbergh do a film exposing the sneakiness of China’s entire live organ-harvesting operation. No pun intended.

In addition to practitioners of Falun Gong, let’s also hear about the Uyghurs, Tibetans, and underground Christians suffering in China’s black jails and hidden labor camps. They’re having medical tests run on them for blood type, and for the health of their corneas, kidneys, livers, hearts, etc. Why? So billionaires with offshore shell companies—should they drink too much and get cirrhosis of the liver—can order up nice, fresh livers and get theirs replaced next week, from China.

ALL PHOTOS BY NETFLIX



Gary Oldman (L) and Antonio Banderas in “The Laundromat.”



Meryl Streep and Jeffrey Wright in “The Laundromat.”



Hsieh Ho-hsien enjoyed Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra at Chung Shan Hall in Taichung city, Taiwan, on Sept. 25, 2019.

Pop Star Gains Life-Changing Inspiration at Classical Concert

CATHERINE YANG

Taiwanese actor, singer, and songwriter Hsieh Ho-hsien, known to fans as A Chord, gained pop stardom early on, in his teens. A self-professed follower of rock music, Hsieh said he came to see Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra (SYSO) in concert because he wanted to see what the fuss was about—in just a few short years, and with very limited tours, the East-West classical orchestra has taken Taiwan by storm.

Hsieh found it more than lived up to the hype.

“I feel like there is an electric current running through my body,” Hsieh said on Sept. 25, at the Chung Shan Hall in Taichung City, Taiwan, during a sold-out concert.

To say Hsieh was inspired would be an understatement; Hsieh felt the experience was closer to enlightenment.

“It’s like every cell of my being is responding to the music,” Hsieh said.

He said, joyously, that it was like parts of his mind that were previously not accessed had opened up to him, and artistic visions hidden in his subconsciousness had been unlocked.

“I’ll be leaving with a lot of inspiration to take back with me,” he said.

SYSO was formed due to popular demand. The music of Shen Yun Performing Arts, the premier classical Chinese dance company formed in 2006, is all original and new every year. The dance company travels the globe every season with a live orchestra that draws massive attention.

The orchestra is unique in that it blends East and West; ancient Chinese instruments are folded into a Western symphonic ensemble, and Chinese melodies are arranged with classical Western techniques.

Healed Through Music

Sitting in that auditorium, Hsieh said he felt fulfillment both emotionally and spiritually.

“This music is very special,” Hsieh said. “While I was listening today, my heart became peaceful as I sat there listening with my eyes closed. I felt total enjoyment.”

“It’s the feeling of being fully rejuvenated. It really is a feeling of being healed in my heart, through music,” Hsieh said.

“I felt as if I was brought to the universe, in an outer dimension, and it was very peaceful in the universe. It was a picture of serenity and I felt I was on a journey with the divine.”

Shen Yun means something like “the beauty of divine beings dancing,” and traditional Chinese culture is known to be a divinely inspired one. Hsieh certainly felt that touch of the divine present in the music, which was a program of classical favorites as well as the original works in the unique style Shen Yun is known for.

He said the East and the West melded together perfectly, with the musicians themselves conveying divine harmony in unison.

“They are divinely in sync, able to communicate without a single word,” Hsieh said.

“The entire musical experience, the entire concert and performance felt like a journey with the divine. There were several places

in the music where I felt an electric current went through my body.”

Like Water

Hsieh compared the music to water, with its healing effects, its power, and omnipresence. In traditional Chinese culture, water symbolizes the all-encompassing wisdom of the natural world. Laozi said, “The highest excellence is like that of water”—striving for the benefit of all things without need of recognition or reward.

“It soothes our hearts,” Hsieh said. “When you need it, it comforts you very quietly. You drink, and it’s light and delicate. However, when it strikes, it’s like an ocean wave, and the image and impact will stay in your mind,” he said.

Hsieh said he came to observe how the East and West could be blended together to complement each other, and from the performance he understood that and so much more.

“I think I need to work toward this direction, one that combines both Eastern and Western music. I hope that the world’s people can stay peaceful and then be immersed in music regardless of their ethnicity or nationality,” Hsieh said. “I am so grateful to Shen Yun.”

“I shall work hard starting now by incorporating what I saw, heard, and learned today into my music.”

Two Traditions

SYSO made stops in 10 cities in Taiwan during its tour through Asia, and on Sept. 27 in Chiayi county dazzled a chorus director and musician with its musical excellence.

“This is indeed a world-class musical extravaganza, very powerful!” said Ms. Lining Wang, the executive director of a local women’s chorus. “It speaks a universal language and brings hope and light to the world.”

A former pipa player, Wang paid keen attention to the orchestra’s instrumentation.

Ancient instruments like the pipa, a four-stringed upright lute, and the 4,000-year-old erhu, a two-stringed bowed instrument, take center stage amid a classical Western symphony. But the two traditions on stage don’t clash.

“I was impressed by how the Western flute was able to express the feeling and mood like a Chinese flute,” Wang said. The flute as we know it is a metal instrument, not wooden, but from one composition to another it adapted to the character of the tune. “I was greatly shocked.”

“Today I heard the harp playing with the pipa, both plucked instruments, and the harmony was simply marvelous,” Wang said.

“These are excellently trained musicians; to be able to hear them today, I am very honored and very moved.”

Shen Yun Symphony Orchestra started its four-city U.S. tour at Carnegie Hall in New York on Oct. 12, 2019. Australians can get a taste of the orchestra when Shen Yun Performing Arts tours Auckland, Sydney, Canberra, and Melbourne. Tickets are on sale now for March 2020. The full schedule can be found at ShenYunPerformingArts.org/symphony.

‘Downton Abbey’: Making Goodness Fashionable

MICHAEL LEASER

“Downton Abbey” stunned the film industry last month by pulling in over \$31 million at the box office opening weekend, exceeding forecasts by more than 50 percent and making it the largest opening in distributor Focus Features’ history. Clearly the lives and times of the Crawley family and their servants have not lost their appeal since the popular and successful period television series ended its run nearly four years ago.

What makes “Downton Abbey” so beloved? What distinguishes it from the myriad of costume dramas that have preceded and succeeded it?

It begins with the strong and largely sympathetic characters creator Julian Fellowes has crafted. Fellowes deftly manages to draw the viewer into the cares and concerns of the lowliest footman as easily as he does the lord of the estate. He does so with sharp writing that is, both at turns and sometimes all at once, eloquent, witty, and heart-warming. The tone he establishes is warm without becoming saccharine, comfortable yet never dull, fully engaging the viewer in the joys, sorrows, loves, and losses of these well-drawn characters.

Throughout the series and the film, Fellowes conveys a deep respect for traditional sensibilities while also nodding to the need for some modernization. Nowhere is this dynamic and the tension between these sentiments more clearly and humorously portrayed than through the interactions between Lady Violet, the witty matriarch of the Crawley family, and Isobel Merton, the commoner whose

grandson has become the heir to the Crawley estate. Whether it’s a debate over merging the local hospital with a larger one or Violet’s disapproval of Isobel employing a cook with a scandalous background, the two have some grand rhetorical battles.

At one point in the film, Lady Mary, the eldest Crawley daughter, questions whether it might be time to sell the estate and end Downton Abbey’s quasi-feudal dynamic. Her maid Anna, a long-time servant at Downton, reminds Mary that Downton Abbey still serves an important purpose, not just for those within the household but in the community at large who have been blessed by, and whose livelihoods depend on, the estate.

What elevates “Downton Abbey” even further is its effect of “making goodness fashionable,” a phrase made popular by legendary British MP William Wilberforce, whose two great objects of public service were the “suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners.” Consider Tom Branson, the chauffeur turned widower of the Crawleys’ youngest daughter. Straddling the classes, Branson has learned to subsume his anti-aristocratic political leanings within the personal respect and loyalty he has developed for his wife’s family.

In the film, Branson nobly stops an assassination attempt on the king. Perhaps even more important is the valuable counsel he provides to Princess Mary, who is strongly considering leaving a seemingly loveless marriage. When she asks him about his relationship with the Crawleys, Branson talks about the importance of living, and working, for something greater



Highclere Castle, the setting of “Downton Abbey.”

than yourself, about loving and respecting those you might have little in common with, especially when it means securing your children’s happiness by surrounding them with people who love them. Mary subsequently re-commits herself to her marriage for the sake of her son and the royal family, but with the expressed understanding to her husband that they both must learn to change and adapt to make their marriage work.

Respect for tradition without ultimately letting it impede love and forgiveness is a hallmark of “Downton Abbey.” It is also a significant reason, along with the substantial box office, that, as senior butler Carson suggests, Downton Abbey and the Crawleys may last for another hundred years, or at least another movie or two.

Michael Leaser is an editorial associate at The Charlemagne Institute. As vice president of Cave Pictures, he was executive producer for the film “Wildflower,” associate producer for “The Ticket” (starring Dan Stevens), and helped develop and execute an awareness campaign for Martin Scorsese’s adaptation of “Silence.” He has written 50 film and culture articles for World magazine. This article was first published on Intellectual Takeout.

A Minute With the Cast of ‘The King’

On Shakespeare and role models

Actor Timothee Chalamet plays an unwilling heir who inherits the throne in “The King,” a medieval coming-of-age tale loosely based on William Shakespeare’s plays about Prince Hal and his transformation into England’s King Henry V.

The 23-year-old actor stars alongside Joel Edgerton, who plays Hal’s hard-drinking friend and mentor Sir John Falstaff, Lily-Rose Depp, who portrays Catherine, daughter of France’s King Charles, and Ben Mendelsohn, who features as Hal’s father, Henry IV.

The Netflix film premiered at the Venice Film Festival last month, where Reuters spoke to the cast members and director David Michod about the drama, which also features a recreation of the 1415 Battle of Agincourt.

Below are edited excerpts of the interviews.

Q: This was a very different part from your previous leading roles. What were the biggest learning lessons in making this movie?

CHALAMET: I felt less interested and less naturally drawn to anything that had to do with power but more to do with helplessness and being human and a young human at that—when you’re still figuring out who you are, who you want to be, and having to navigate world affairs basically or governments or the snake-like nature of a royal court.

Q: You, like your character, are a young woman in a position of power, how do you cope with the pressures of being someone many look up to or scrutinize?

DEPP: You do feel that responsibility whether you want it or not. But I think it’s also ... important to remember that it’s hard to consider yourself a role model ... when you’re still kind of figuring out who you want to be yourself.

Q: You wore many hats on this project—you co-wrote it, produced it, and star in it. Why was this a film you felt so passionate about?

EDGERTON: Quite often when you see this story, and there’s been so many wonderful versions of it, you never really see a super young person playing Henry, and Henry was 25 or 26 when he became king. So this was our chance to not only tell our story for other purposes, political purposes, and extract our own essence out of that story but to put youth in the seat of power.

Q: What was it like making this film? The battle scenes in particular must have been hard work.

MICHOD: They almost killed me ... That sounds like an exaggeration but it’s only a little bit ... It was something about the heat and the mud and the stress of it. I mean, it’s so huge.

We shot that battle in two weeks. Normally I think (in) a movie of this ambition, you would maybe have five weeks to do it ... I remember driving away from that battlefield when we’d finished it, just feeling like I’d survived something and feeling traumatized ... Anyway it looks good in the movie, I think, now.

Q: Is there a hope the film will help modernize Shakespeare for younger generations, especially given it’s a Netflix movie?

MENDELSON: When you have Timothee Chalamet playing King Henry, you’re opening doors... to an audience that most probably isn’t familiar with the Shakespeare stuff ... Timmy’s a movie star.

*By Hanna Rantala
From Reuters*

With Love and Avocados: New Zealand Opera, the Kennaways’ Way

The musical legacy of Joan and Rick Kennaway

LORRAINE FERRIER

For the past 23 years, opera—and avocados—have thrived on Rick and Joan Kennaway’s “Operacado” orchard at Glenbervie, Whangarei, in the Northland region of New Zealand’s North Island. The Kennaways’ home is the venue for Opera North’s annual event, Opera in the Garden. The couple founded Opera North in 1996.

The Kennaways have had a huge impact on opera in New Zealand and especially in the Northland region, where they have been nurturing local talent for decades. In 2005, both were officially recognized for their community work when they were awarded a Queen’s Service Medal, a national honor.

Sadly, on Feb. 3, 2018, Joan passed away, just a month before the 2018 Opera in the Garden that she had been planning, right up until her death, was to open.

On April 4, 2020, Opera in the Garden will be held at Rick Kennaway’s home for one last time, before the event moves on to new pastures.

“I’ll be 83 this next year. I’ve decided that at some stage, one has to call it quits,” Rick Kennaway said in a phone interview.

A Life of Song

“Singing has always been a part of my life and Joan’s life,” he said.

Kennaway’s brother Lyle once won New Zealand’s national singing competition, the Mobil Song Quest, which is now known as the Lexus Song Quest. Joan was a finalist twice in the competition, and Rick was a semi-finalist once.

Kennaway met Joan in 1959 while singing in competitions in Auckland. There were two main competitors as far as “Joanie” was concerned: “She did just as well as Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Dame Malvina Major in competitions,” Kennaway said. “It used to be one of the three of them that won most of the classes [divisions].”

All three studied under Dame Sister Mary Leo, the internationally renowned singing teacher from St. Mary’s College, Epsom, in Auckland. Leo invited Joan to become her student after Joan had won several singing contest divisions in an Auckland’s under-17s, that is, for those younger than 17.

Leo taught her own style of lessons, influenced by traditional schools such as García and Marchesi, aiming for the exquisite bel canto sound. Leo’s students dominated the New Zealand and Australia opera scene in the 1950s, ‘60s, and ‘70s.

“Joanie won two scholarships to stay in London as a singer. But she chose to marry me, a farmer, and passed up those scholarships, which was sad in some respects,” Kennaway said.

Joan believed it was the “right choice,” as she said in a 2017 interview with NZ on Air. She added that she “had the most amazing life” in New Zealand. The couple had two children together, and singing was a constant passion throughout the couple’s life.

The Kennaways had a sheep and beef cattle farm in the rural community of Maungaturoto before they moved farther north to Operacado, as they dubbed the place. But the farm work didn’t interrupt the Kennaways’ singing. “We have done a lot of singing around New Zealand, which made it a lot easier for me as a farmer,” he said. Although he notes he’s perhaps not at the same level as Joan was.

“To sing—it’s like a bubble, and it just comes out. You want to sing, and you’ve got to sing. And it’s part of your being, part of your psyche,” she said in the interview.

The couple were involved with the Otamatea Repertory Theatre. “The Otamatea Repertory Theatre rehearsed in a builder’s shed prior to completing its own theater in 1983. The theater was called the Kennaway Auditorium in honor of our involvement in the building of the complex,” Kennaway said. “We did lots of very good shows while we were in Maungaturoto, and we used to bring the show up to Whangarei to perform too.”

“We did a light musical every year, and over the course of time ... we probably did 20 to 25 musicals. For me, acting the part

At the inaugural event, 500 audience members saw 18 singers perform on a stage made out of Huanui Orchard fruit bins.

(Top R) Husband and wife Joel and Maia Amosa perform a duet from “The Marriage of Figaro” on stage at Opera in the Garden, on March 9.

(Right) The crowd settles before a performance at Opera in the Garden, on March 9, 2019.



Baritone Kawiti Waetford performs at Opera in the Garden, on March 9.



of Tevye in “Fiddler on the Roof” was my most memorable,” Kennaway said.

Growing Opera in the Garden

In 1996, the Kennaways decided to retire from sheep and beef cattle farming. Kennaway recalls when they viewed the Glenbervie property: “As soon as Joan saw the garden, she decided this was definitely the place that we needed to hold Opera in the Garden.” The layout of the property was ideal for the event. There was even an avocado orchard, “which suited me extremely well,” Kennaway said.

The Kennaways formed Opera in the Garden in 1997, just a year after they moved to Opercado.

“That first year, we were dubious about the numbers that we might encourage to be in it and then with the number of audience members it would attract,” Kennaway said.

They needn’t have worried. At the inaugural event, 500 audience members saw 18 singers perform on a stage made out of Huanui Orchard fruit bins.

Over the years, the performers and audiences have grown. “Each year we had a few more singers come along, and we eventually got to a stage where I had to say that 60 performers were as many as we could capacitate,” Kennaway said. Since they opened, the number of singers has tripled and the largest audience has been around 1,100—more than double the first performance. Kennaway puts the success down to teamwork: “It’s done in a very cheerful atmosphere. We’ve got some very talented people taking part in it.”

Joan taught many of the budding local performers, national and international talent, who took and continue to take part in Opera in the Garden. An example is the U.S.-based Hayden Tee, who hailed from Maungaturoto. “He’s been doing roles right round the world. He’s [performed] in a lot of the leading opera houses,” Kennaway said, adding that his performance as Javert in “Les Miserables” earned Tee recognition as an outstanding singer.

Baritone Kawiti Waetford is another of Joan’s students who have done particularly well overseas, Kennaway said. Waetford performed in this year’s event.

The 2019 Opera in the Garden

At each Opera in the Garden event, the first half consists of operatic songs and the second half is full of light musical songs. Aside from the opera, throughout the 2019 event, culture and tradition featured strongly. Joan was the musical director since the event’s inception. In 2019, Clare Henderson took on the role.



Joan and Rick Kennaway at Opera in the Garden, in 2015. The couple’s property has been the home of Opera in the Garden since 1997.

Husband and wife singers Joel and Maia Amosa were this year’s guest artists. Both had been taught by Joan. Joel won the 2018 Lexus Song Quest, and Maia was a finalist in the 2018 Dame Malvina Major Foundation NZ Aria competition.

Trumpeters opened the 2019 Opera in the Garden event with the “Triumphal March” from Giuseppe Verdi’s “Aida.” Then Joel and Maia Amosa sang arias from “The Marriage of Figaro” by Mozart. Two songs from Greig’s “Peer Gynt” were performed to honor Maia’s Finnish heritage. Then familiar arias filled the air from Donizetti’s “Lucia di Lammermoor” and Mozart’s “Don Giovanni,” and the sublime “Flower Duet” from Léo Delibes’s “Lakmé,” as well as Charles Gounod’s “Je Veux Vivre” from his version of “Romeo and Juliet.”

Kennaway said that the grand piano is usually the main instrument for the event, largely due to the lack of room onstage to accommodate a full orchestra. But this year, besides the trumpeters who opened the event, musicians from the C4-Strings quartet entertained the audience in the intermission.

George Frideric Handel’s “Prayer in the Night” opened the second half. The Opera North chorus and guests wore a rainbow’s worth of colorful Samoan outfits, reflecting Joel’s Samoan heritage. The singers sung family favorites from musicals such as “The Lion King” and “Oklahoma.” The soulful gospel song “Deep River” was also performed. Some song choices celebrated the different cultures of the main singers: Finnish, Samoan, and Maori.

There’s no doubt that Joan and Rick’s opera legacy lives on in New Zealand through the work of Opera North, Joan’s pupils, and the love the community has for the couple. Opera in New Zealand seems set to continue to thrive.

To find out more about Opera in the Garden, visit OperaNorth.co.nz

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