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QUOTES *In the
News*

“No one cares about us. Wuhan is controlled, there’s no way you can get diagnosed. They [authorities] have made up the data and your tests will turn out negative, no matter what.”

Ms Wei, a millennial in the epidemic ground zero of Wuhan and suspected carrier of COVID-19

CHINA | A5

“Last year, the Chinese government absorbed three more Latin American countries [into its Belt and Road Initiative]—more than half of all countries in the region.”

Adm. Craig S. Fallor, commander of U.S. Southern Command on China’s interests in Latin America

US | A6

“We may see some longer response times and make more mistakes as a result.”

Facebook on its decision to rely on automated moderation amid the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic

US | A7

“C.S. Lewis points out that our forebears had lived under such fears of sudden death in past centuries, from plagues, Viking raids, to other risks of imminent death.”

Paul Adams, professor of social work at the University of Hawaii, writes on meaningful living in the age of pandemics

OPINION | A12

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AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A medical staff member gestures inside an isolation ward at Red Cross Hospital in Wuhan, China, on March 10, 2020.

CORONAVIRUS

‘Truth is the Only Comfort’

Chinese Citizens Fed Up With CCP’s Coronavirus Propaganda

EVA FU

The Chinese regime has deployed its gargantuan propaganda machine to boost its leadership in its “all-out war” against the coronavirus outbreak. But its efforts do not appear to be winning the hearts and minds of its citizens.

Campaigns by Chinese state-run media to promote ‘positive’ propaganda on its outbreak containment efforts have spurred fiery backlash online, while those living under lockdown in regions hit hard by the virus have consistently vented their frustrations online—in posts which are often later scrubbed by China’s internet censors.

In a February video propagated by Chinese state media, 14 nurses from China’s northwestern Gansu

Province get their heads shaved as a precautionary measure before being dispatched to the frontlines in coronavirus epicenter Wuhan. Several wept during the ordeal, while others looked visibly upset.

The nurses who purportedly volunteered to undergo the procedure were lauded as heroes by state media. Yet many Chinese netizens who saw the video, which has millions of views, thought differently.

“To shave off their hair as a group ... use their sacrifice to put out this performance, then create publicity hype—such an act is far too cruel,” a Chinese commentator wrote on Shanghai-based media Eastday. State-run media Gansu Daily, which

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Nobody believes in the CCP anymore.

Jiang, resident in Wuhan’s Qingshan District



AAP IMAGE/DAN PELED

Calfs are being fed milk at a dairy farm on the Darling Downs, Queensland, on May 21, 2013.

NATION

Farmers Assure Hoarders of Food Supply

Australian farmers have joined a growing chorus urging people to stop panic-hoarding as they promised shoppers there’s enough food to outlast the coronavirus pandemic. Empty aisles don’t mean the country’s stocks are low, growers across the country are reminding people.

It comes as the prime minister warned the panicked behaviour was distracting officials’ attention, diverting important resources in order to keep supply lines open. NSW Farmers vice president Chris Groves says the global virus pandemic will put a large dent in Aus-

tralia’s produce export.

“But Australians can be assured that there will be more than enough food for them,” he said.

Australia does not rely on imported fresh food and currently exports about 75 per cent of its produce.

When China—the world’s largest dairy importer—became the epicentre of the outbreak it reduced its milk imports, stalling an upward swing in global dairy prices that began in late 2019.

However, Chinese consumers are expected to return to normal by the

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OPINION

Coronavirus Pandemic Magnifying the Impact of Trade War on China

JAMES GORRIE

Commentary

If China’s latest pronouncement are any indication, the COVID-19 pandemic is raising the tensions between the United States and China to dangerous levels. With the impact of the trade war in China being magnified by the pandemic and other events, a new tone is present in Beijing’s rhetoric.

Like much of the world, of course, China is in very turbulent economic waters, with widespread business bankruptcies and unemployment a real possibility. That’s very bad news for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) whose sole claim on power is economic performance.

It Began With Trump

President Trump’s objective in launching the trade war with China was to reverse the flow of American manufacturers’ relocation to China, and bringing their manufacturing jobs back to America. Ultimately, Trump’s trade policies were intended to reroute established global supply chains out of China altogether.

The thinking was that as the trade war progressed, the loss of economic activity would exert significant pressure on the Chinese economy. By ex-

CHINESE REGIME

CCP Propaganda Emphasises Threat of Imported Coronavirus Cases

NICOLE HAO

After downplaying the severity of the novel coronavirus outbreak in China, the Beijing regime has begun focusing its attention on cases of people who arrive in China after having been infected with the virus elsewhere.

State media emphasized the threat of imported cases as Beijing set new legal guidelines on March 16 to punish anyone who imports the virus into China.

The regime’s official figures claim that there are now more imported cases than new domestic infections.

However, authorities have opened new medical facilities to treat virus

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CORONAVIRUS

US Law Firm Launches Class Action Against CCP For Coronavirus Pandemic

CATHY HE

A Florida law firm has filed a federal class action against the Chinese regime for causing the coronavirus pandemic, claiming that Beijing’s initial coverup of the outbreak resulted in its global spread.

In a lawsuit filed on March 12, The Berman Law Group alleges that the Chinese regime “knew that CO-

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GREG BAKER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Paramilitary police officers march through Beijing’s Great Hall of the People on April 30, 2019.

That’s very bad news for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) whose sole claim on power is economic performance.

tension, it would undercut the CCP’s legitimacy as the sole ruling authority in China. Rising levels of internal dissent would, hopefully, weaken the Chinese regime’s grip on the country and perhaps inhibit its expansionist appetites.

Going From Bad to Worse

Trump’s steep tariffs against China did indeed inflict a sharp decline in economic activity in 2019. By some estimates, it cost China \$53 billion in lost trade revenues in 2019 alone. And the losses in Hong Kong due to the ongoing protests only added to the decline. Retail sales plunged 24.3 percent year over year, and GDP fell by 1.3 percent over the year.

Then, add to all that the 2019 African swine fever epidemic and the corn-devouring armyworms that ravaged China’s grain harvest—2019 was an

Continued on A10

Accuracy
& Integrity

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.

43 Australians Recover From Coronavirus As Scientists ‘Chase’ Vaccine

KATABELLA ROBERTS

More than 40 Australians who tested positive for COVID-19 have recovered, the Department Of Health said on March 18.

As of 6:30 a.m. on March 18, there were 454 confirmed cases in the country, of which 43 had recovered from COVID-19, according to official figures, and six, all aged over 70, had died.

The department said that the source of infection for 26 cases is currently unknown, with another 138 cases under investigation. Meanwhile, 228 cases have been established to have been acquired from overseas—mostly from Iran, Italy, the UK, and the United States—and a further 62 cases were contacts of previously confirmed cases.

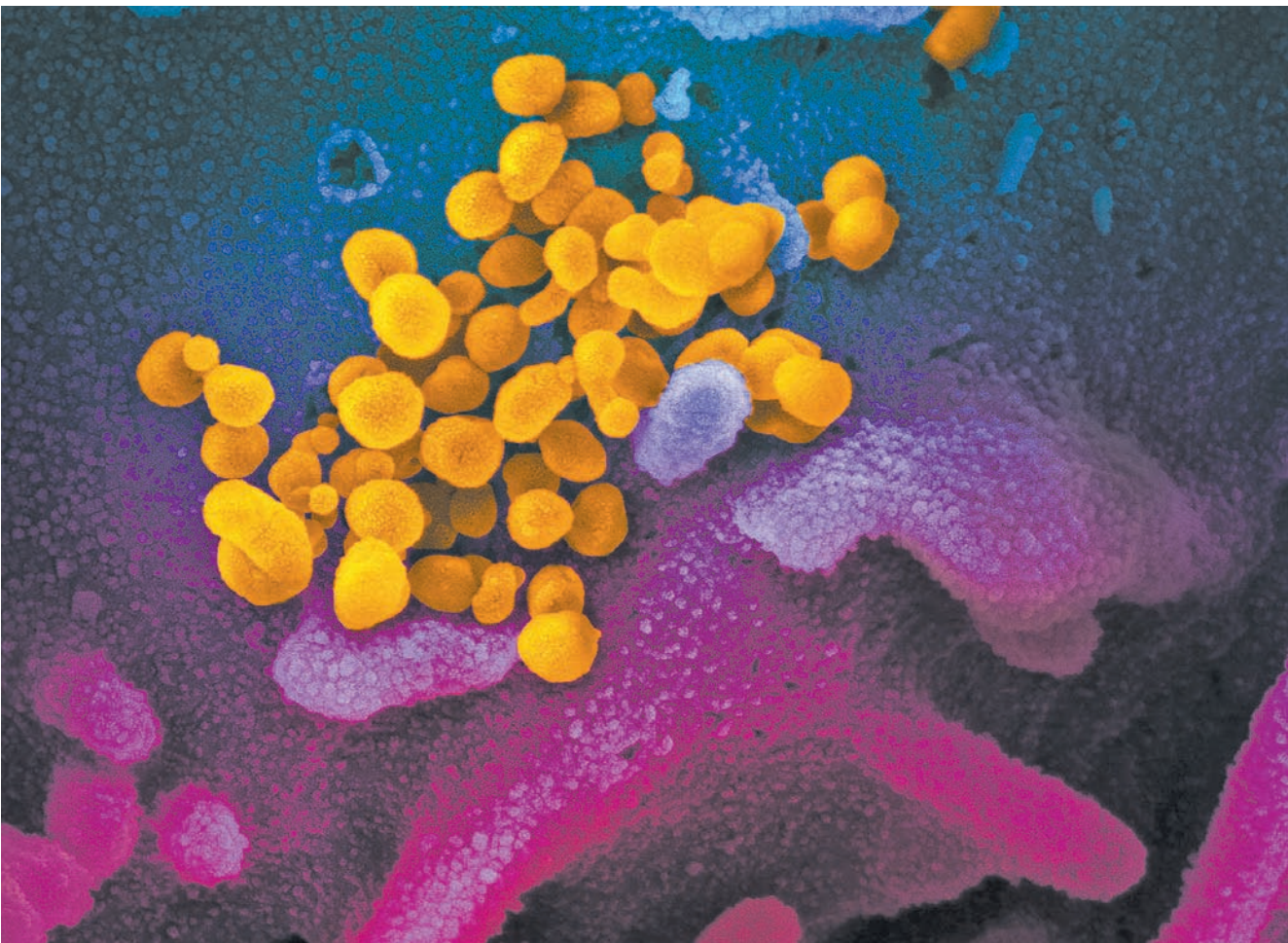
The announcement comes as researchers at the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity revealed that they now have a glimpse into how the human immune system is responding to the coronavirus after taking blood from one of Australia’s first COVID-19 patients and identifying the antibodies recruited by the body to fight the illness.

Four blood samples were taken from a woman in her 40s who tested positive for the virus in Wuhan in China, where the disease originated. The blood samples were taken

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This information will allow us to evaluate any vaccine candidate, as in an ideal world, the vaccine should mimic our body’s immune response.

Professor Katherine Kedzierska, head of the Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity laboratory



This scanning electron microscope image shows SARS-CoV-2 (yellow)—the virus that causes COVID-19—isolated from a patient in the United States, emerging from the surface of cells (blue/pink) cultured in the lab.

both before and after her recovery, and researchers found an “emergence of immune cells in the blood.”

Laboratory head Professor Katherine Kedzierska told ABC that the body responds to COVID-19 in the same way it responds to the flu.

“The immune cell populations we have seen emerging before patients recover are the same cells that we see in influenza,” she said.

“Because this is a new virus, we didn’t know how the body would respond,” Professor Kedzierska said, adding that she is now hopeful the findings will prove helpful in developing an effective vaccine.

“This information will allow us to evaluate any vaccine candidate, as in an ideal world, the vaccine should mimic our body’s immune response,” she added.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Wednesday upgraded the countries international travel advice to the highest level, with citizens told not to travel overseas as the government declared the pandemic a “human biosecurity emergency.”

“We are upgrading the travel ban on Australians to level four for the entire world. That is the first time that has ever happened in Australia’s history,” Prime Minister Scott Morrison said at a news conference Wednesday morning. “The travel advice to every Australian is ‘Do not travel abroad.’ Do not go overseas. That is very clear, that instruction.”

“Regardless of your destination, age or health, our advice is ‘do not travel’ at this time,” the advice on

the Smart Traveller website said. “As more countries close their borders or introduce travel restrictions, overseas travel is becoming more complex and difficult.”

Morrison noted that the ban is indefinite and that other countries appear to be putting up similar travel restrictions.

The prime minister also ordered a halt on “non-essential” indoor gatherings of more than 100 people, effective immediately, on top of an existing ban on outdoor events of more than 500.

However, schools, universities, airports, public transport, medical and emergency services facilities, aged care homes, jails, courts, parliaments, supermarkets and many workplaces will remain open, he said.

Victoria Lifts Conventional Gas Exploration Ban

Conventional gas exploration and production will resume in Victoria after years of being banned, because a three-year investigation found it can be done safely.

But fracking will become unconstitutional in the state.

Victoria has had a moratorium on onshore gas exploration for years and it had become a point of political contention, particularly over energy prices and supply.

The decision to scrap the ban from July 2021 comes after a three-year investigation into the issue by the Victorian Gas Program, a group overseen by the state’s Lead Scientist Dr. Amanda Caples.

The probe found an onshore conventional gas industry won’t compromise the state’s environmental or agricultural credentials.

“There are things that need to be improved, there are some further steps we need to take. But we can safely, explore and extract natural gas against those highest of standards,” Labor Premier Daniel Andrews told reporters on Tuesday.

There are potential onshore gas resources in the Otway Basin and parts of Gippsland.

More than 80 per cent of residents in Victoria’s southwest and Gippsland are supportive of seeing them used, the investigation found.

The industry could generate A\$310 million annually for regional economies and create 6,400 jobs over the lifespan of its projects.

The probe held more than 800 events and gatherings to gauge community views and those of environmental and business groups.

The state opposition and Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry



have welcomed the lift on the moratorium, calling it long overdue.

Lobby group Environment Victoria doesn’t share their enthusiasm, saying the move to lock in the burning of more fossil fuels is a “backwards step” in addressing the risks posed by climate change.

“It’s incredible that after our horror bushfire season any government would now encourage new fossil fuel projects,” the group’s chief executive Jono La Nauze said.

Andrews said Victorians ultimately want record investment in renewable energy and strong targets for emissions reduction, which the government is providing.

But gas is a “significant transitional fuel” and the government needs to take a “balanced approach,” he stressed.

“You can’t just turn off fossil fuels tonight, and then hope to be turning on the light tomorrow. It doesn’t work that way,” he said.

New licences for gas supply will be reserved first for Victorian businesses and households, the premier added, in the absence of a national gas reserve.

“Our gas is for our businesses and our households first,” he said.

Business lobby the Ai Group said the benefits of the decision won’t be felt any time soon, with further exploration to establish probable reserves to take years in the best case.

Other laws have also been introduced to permanently ban fracking and coal seam gas exploration under the Victorian constitution.

That was an Andrews Labor government election promise ahead of the 2018 vote.

AP IMAGE/JAMES GOURLEY

Labor Premier of Victoria Daniel Andrews speaks to the media in Sydney on March 13, 2020.

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The probe found an onshore conventional gas industry won’t compromise the state’s environmental or agricultural credentials.

By Marnie Banger
From AAP

Farmers Assure Hoarders of Food Supply

CONTINUED FROM A1

latter half of 2020, according to a report by Rabobank.

Meanwhile, it’s business as usual for farmers in the never-ending cycle of growing “the world’s best produce”, Grant said.

“The hens are still laying eggs, the dairy cows are still being milked, grain growers are preparing winter crops, orchards are still bearing fruit.”

He said despite lingering drought and a catastrophic bushfire season, NSW’s livestock supply is steady and growers are out picking fresh apples and bananas.

Farmers want to remind NSW shoppers the state also grows both rice and wheat, along with the vast majority of its fruit and vegetables.

“There’s no need to panic if there’s no rice or pasta on supermarket shelves,” Groves said.

Groves said it was up to the supermarkets to work with farmers to ensure shelves were stocked.

Aldi, Coles, IGA and Woolworths have issued a plea for customers to be more considerate and only buy what they need.

In a newspaper advertisement, the grocery retailers also called for shoppers to stop attacks on staff and fellow customers after more people were filmed spouting verbal abuse.

Scott Morrison named the behaviour one of the most disappointing things he had ever seen.

“There is no reason for people to be hoarding supplies from fear of a lockdown or anything like this,” he told reporters in Canberra on Wednesday.

The supermarkets say they’re doing everything they can to speed up the turnover of goods.

Coles and Woolworths have introduced a dedicated shopping hour between 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. on weekdays for the elderly and vulnerable across the nation. Supermarkets have also introduced purchase limits for items like toilet paper, hand sanitiser, pasta, and long life milk, with some chains temporarily suspending their change-of-mind refund policies to discourage over-purchasing.

From AAP



Assorted canned fruit and vegetables made by SPC pictured in Brisbane, on Feb. 5, 2014.

AAP IMAGE/DAN PELED

AHMAD ZOHRABI/ISNA VIA AP



A man disinfects the shrine of Saint Masoumeh against coronavirus in the city of Qom, Iran, on Feb. 24, 2020.

Hub of Iranian Revolution Becomes Epicenter Amid Coronavirus Outbreak, Experts Explain Political Implications

VENUS UPADHAYAYA

The city of Qom in Iran, a significant destination of Shia pilgrimage and the epicenter of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, has become an epicenter of the coronavirus crisis, and experts believe this has political repercussions within Iran and in the entire Middle East.

“In the 1960s, Qom became the center from which Ayatollah Khomeini opposed the Pahlavi dynasty,” Dr. Pierre Pahlavi told The Epoch Times via email. Pahlavi is a professor at the Department of Defense Studies at the Canadian Forces College and a member of the Pahlavi family that ruled Iran before the ayatollah took over.

“In January 1978, the holy city was the scene of the first clashes between the radical clergy and the monarchist forces. Qom was for several years the residence of Khomeini and, for that matter, the real capital of the Islamic republic for a few months after the collapse of the imperial system,” Pahlavi said.

Spread From Qom

Iran reported the country’s first two deaths in Qom on Feb. 19. Since then, the virus has become unstoppable, initially spreading unabated by the clergy’s message to pilgrims to keep coming, unlike other cities in the world that immediately shut their doors.

“We call this holy shrine Daral-shafa, means people come and heal from mental and physical illnesses, so they must be open,” said Seyyed Mohammad Saeedi, the custodian of the Shrine of Masoumeh and Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei’s representative in the city, according to a video on social media.

Nicole Robinson, a Middle East expert at the Washington-based Heritage Foundation, told The Epoch Times via email that hundreds of Chinese students and junior clerics study at the seminaries in Qom, and the senior clergy’s management of the virus was a disaster.

“It is unclear how long ago the outbreak began, but the Iranian government’s response to keep religious shrines open despite the initial outbreak is likely the reason the virus was not contained and instead spread to other cities in Iran,” Robinson wrote.

CNN reported that about 8 percent of the Iranian Parliament is infected.

“Additional visits to Qom from top Iranian government officials such as Iraj Harirchi, Iran’s deputy

health minister, spread the virus among high-level officials in the Iranian government,” said Robinson.

As of March 17, 988 Iranians had died due to the coronavirus, and 16,169 were infected, according to Iranian state media.

However, Radio Farda, a Persian language broadcaster supported by the U.S. Congress, reported on March 9 cover-up by the Iranian regime and sourced the Entekhab news website saying the coronavirus death toll was more than 2,000.

Shifting the Blame

Seyyed blamed U.S. President Donald Trump for the growing crisis in the city.

Ali Bakeer, an Ankara-based political analyst, said the Iranian regime never enjoyed transparency, and the coronavirus crisis shows that it can’t be trusted, even in times of such disasters.

He said Qom is a “shelter for the Shiites of the world, the center of religious seminaries and the city where Shiite sources of emulation live.”

“The enemy wants to instill fear in people’s hearts, make Qom look like an unsafe city, and to take revenge for all its defeats,” Seyyed said during an evening prayer, according to Radio Farda.

Pahlavi said conspiracy theories have always flourished in Iran under such situations.

“Since Operation Stuxnet, the cyber virus used to neutralize Iran’s nuclear program a decade ago, Iranian politicians and military leaders have developed a besieged citadel syndrome that tends to get mixed up in paranoia,” he said.

Operation Stuxnet was a computer virus that made its way into the Iranian equipment controlling centrifuges used to enrich uranium, dealing a temporary challenge to the Iranian nuclear program, according to Reuters.

Repercussions Inside Iran

The coronavirus crisis has added to

the Iranian regime’s internal woes, as it has experienced public protests since December 2019.

Pahlavi said this new crisis is adding to the regime’s sources of tension and could prove “very damaging” for its future.

“The inability of Iranian leaders to contain this new crisis and their propensity to minimize its magnitude have only increased the distrust of the Iranians vis-à-vis a system which they deem more and more incapable of defending their interests,” said Pahlavi.

Iran has been facing anti-regime public protests since 2017, which recently intensified after the Iranian military confessed to mistakenly shooting down a Ukrainian plane, killing at least 130 Iranian citizens.

Gregg Roman, director of the Middle East Forum, called protests in December 2017 an “ironic” situation because they started over a bird flu crisis that led to the mass culling of chickens and other poultry, leading to a rise in the price of eggs.

The egg prices increased by 50 percent and even 100 percent, according to Vox, and became symbolic of wider economic problems that the Iranian regime couldn’t solve, as the protests quickly spread to many other cities.

“So now the fact that they [elite] are the ones who are being subjugated and are being more prone to this virus, this sort of like, you know, the Faustian bargain that they made with their public health officials,” Roman said, adding that the virus has come back to “bite them.”

Robinson said the regime’s incompetence to deal with the crisis will only fuel further public dissatisfaction.

Kill Zones

Roman alleged that the Iranian regime is refusing to take responsibility for the public health crisis and is “creating kill zones, kill zones throughout cities which are allegedly infected with the virus.” Roman used the term “kill zones” to emphasize the Iranian regime’s incompetence in dealing with the virus.

An Atlantic report from late February described how, in the first few weeks of the outbreak, the Islamic regime encouraged people to visit Qom instead of implementing self-quarantine, facilitating spread across the whole country.

The NCRI stated in a March 10

MOHAMMAD MOHSENZADEH/MIZAN NEWS AGENCY VIA AP



A medic moves a patient in a ward dedicated for people infected with the coronavirus, at Forqani Hospital, in Qom, Iran, on Feb. 26, 2020.

release that deaths exceeded 3,600 and that the regime’s cover-up in Qom has turned “Tehran’s 9.7 million population into a killing ground” because Qom and Tehran are strongly connected.

Social media is replete with videos of mass burials of coronavirus victims inside Iran, including a few videos of people protesting against these burials near their homes.

There are also videos of the regime sanitizing people and roads, using pesticides and agricultural sprays. The Epoch Times couldn’t verify the authenticity of these videos.

Repercussions in the Middle East

Experts said that the coronavirus will make Iran more isolated and less secure in the Middle East, thus substantially impacting its power in the region.

“The Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Bahrain, and Oman have already reported their first virus cases, and all these countries have strong links to Iran,” Serim said.

“Even, Lebanon, UAE, and Bahrain have already claimed that their virus cases were stemmed from the Iranians.”

She said the epidemic will impact Iran’s significance as a religious pilgrimage center.

Ali Bakeer, an Ankara-based political analyst, told The Epoch Times in a message that the crisis will impact the legitimacy of the regime in the region.

He said it will “increase the economic pressure on Iran, and contribute to further isolating it, as more states are aware right now how dangerous this regime is.”

Bakeer said the Iranian regime never enjoyed transparency, and the coronavirus crisis shows that it can’t be trusted, even in times of such disasters.

Pahlavi said the governments of other Arab countries with Shia minorities are concerned that their citizens will travel to the religious sites in Iran and bring home the virus.

In a statement, the Saudi Arabian government denounced the Iranian regime for granting Saudi citizens entry to Iran amid the virus outbreak and urged Iran to reveal the identities of the citizens.

“These actions are a proof of Iran’s direct responsibility in increasing COVID-19 infections and in the virus’s outbreak all around the world,” according to the Saudi statement.

Pahlavi said the Saudi statement illustrates that, in addition to being a major public health problem in the Middle East, the coronavirus epidemic has become the subject of a real psychological war between the countries in the region.

Esra Serim, a France-based Turkish analyst, told The Epoch Times in an email that she doesn’t expect the domestic unrest to escalate inside Iran in the next few days, but it can continue.

“Because a regime isolated by the U.S. administration could pose grave danger to both the regional and global health and environment,” she said.

Serim said Iran’s economic woes will continue to increase because the country is under U.S. sanctions and relies on China for help.

“And now Iran’s relationship with China is forced to be disrupted due to the serious epidemic in China,” she said.

Chinese Regime to Expel US Journalists Working for Three Major News Organisations

CATHY HE

The Chinese regime is set to expel U.S. journalists based in China who work for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Washington Post, in retaliation for the Trump administration's recent actions targeting Chinese state-run media outlets in the United States.

The ministry also announced that it would require China-based branches of Voice of America, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and Time magazine to report information about their staff, finances, operations, and real estate in China. That measure, it said, was in response to the United States designating the five state-run outlets as foreign missions.

Early this month, the U.S. State Department designated five Chinese state-run outlets as "foreign missions," and slashed the number of Chinese staff allowed to work at the media outlets' offices in the United States. An administration official previously labeled those outlets, including Xinhua News Agency and China Global Television Network, as "explicit propaganda organs of the Chinese Communist Party."

At the time, senior administration officials said such actions were an act of reciprocity against Beijing's continued use of "intimidation to silence members of a free and independent press."

In retaliation against the United States for reducing staff sizes at those outlets, the Chinese foreign ministry said in a March 17 statement that it would require all journalists of U.S. citizenship employed at The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post whose press credentials are due to expire before the end of the year to hand back their press cards within 10 days.

"They will not be allowed to continue working as journalists in the People's Republic of China, including its Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions," the statement said.

The ministry added that it would impose "reciprocal measures against American journalists" over "discriminatory restrictions the U.S. has imposed on Chinese journalists with regard to visa, administrative review and reporting," without providing further detail.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, at a March 17 press briefing, said he regretted the regime's decision to "further foreclose the world's ability to conduct free press operations, which, frankly would be really good



People walk past the New York Times building in New York City on July 27, 2017.

It would be impossible not to interpret Beijing's latest move as an effort to control the uncontrollable story, namely the spread of COVID-19

Suzanne Nossel CEO of rights group PEN America



A woman sells copies of The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal newspapers in New York City on July 18, 2006.

for the Chinese people ... in these incredibly challenging global times, where more information, more transparency are what will save lives."

He rejected the regime's assertion the United States' measures prompted it to take action.

"This isn't apples to apples," Pompeo said. "You all know the press freedoms you have. ... You all get to ask me whatever questions you want, and I give you the answer. We know that that kind of freedom doesn't exist inside of China."

Marty Baron, the executive editor of the Washington Post, said in a statement, "We unequivocally condemn any action by China to expel U.S. reporters." Amid the current coronavirus pandemic, the regime's decision is "particularly regrettable because it comes in the midst of an unprecedented global crisis, when clear and reliable information about the international response to COVID-19 is essential."

"Severely limiting the flow of that information, which China now seeks to do, only aggravates the situation," Baron said.

Pompeo previously said that the measures formed part of the Trump

China Emphasises Threat of Imported Coronavirus Cases in Latest State-Media Narrative

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patients in Beijing and Wuhan, suggesting that there are more people in need of care than officially stated.

The Epoch Times previously obtained internal government documents that detail how authorities are underreporting confirmed diagnoses and destroying relevant data.

In recent interviews in Wuhan, the epicenter of China's epidemic, residents said that many people around them are still exhibiting coronavirus-related symptoms, while hospitals are still full of patients.

But China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 16 new infections on March 15, with four from the city of Wuhan, and 12 imported cases.

Some experts are also concerned that China may experience another outbreak after officials lifted quarantine measures and encouraged people to return to work.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the United States' National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said during an



A police officer wearing a protective mask stands guard at Tiananmen square in Beijing, China, on Jan. 23, 2020.

interview with ABC News on March 15: "As they [China] start getting back to normal personal interaction, I hope we don't see the second blip, but it's possible."

More Hospital Beds

NHC spokesman Mi Feng said at a March 16 press conference: "Preventing the imported cases has already become the most important task of China's epidemic prevention and control."

That day, China's highest court, its top prosecutor's office, the Ministry of Public

Security (in charge of police), the Ministry of Justice, and the General Administration of Customs jointly set new guidelines, saying that anyone who brings the virus into China could be punished.

Meanwhile, the Beijing government reopened the Xiaotangshan Hospital, a field hospital used during the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) outbreak in 2002-2003. It arranged for hundreds of medical staff to work there.

"The hospital has 1,000 beds, dedicated to treating people from other countries, including COVID-19 [disease caused by the virus] patients in mild and moderate condition, and suspected patients," state-run media Xinhua reported.

However, Beijing's health commission has only reported a total of 37 imported cases in the city.

Shanghai also has a field hospital—Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center—for treating coronavirus patients. On Jan. 23, Beijing News reported that more than 240 medical staff

were dispatched to that facility, which has 660 beds.

On Feb. 10, Caixin reported that Shanghai authorities started to construct more buildings in the hospital complex, but didn't provide more details. Wuhan city built its field hospital Huoshenshan Hospital, which has 1,000 beds, in 10 days.

On March 15, Wuhan netizens shared a video on social media, indicating that authorities were quietly building a new makeshift hospital near Wuhan that would supply 4,000 beds. This information couldn't be independently verified by The Epoch Times.

Ms. Li

Ms. Li, a Chinese national who returned from the United States, could be the first person to be punished under the new regulations.

Beijing city police announced on March 16 that it would investigate Li, because she was infected with the virus in the United States, but didn't report that to Chinese officials.

The regime has promoted the case in media articles that are critical of the U.S. government for not diagnosing patients properly.

Li, who holds a Chinese passport, works for a U.S. firm in Massachusetts, Pang Xinghuo, deputy director of Beijing city's Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said during a press conference in Beijing.

She exhibited mild symptoms while in the United States, and her doctor recommended that she self-quarantine at home. But she decided to seek treatment in China, and took flights, along with her husband and son, from Boston to Los Angeles, then from Los Angeles to Beijing, according to Pang.

She took fever-reducing medication, which helped her to pass body temperature screenings when she boarded the flights, Pang said.

After arriving in Beijing, she was diagnosed with COVID-19 and treated at a local hospital. Her husband and son were placed under quarantine as suspected patients.

‘Truth is the Only Comfort’: Chinese Citizens Fed Up With Beijing’s Coronavirus Propaganda

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first published the video, later deleted the post from Weibo, China’s Twitter-like social media platform.

But the outrage has not been limited to online—in the country’s worst-hit virus zone Wuhan, locals, in a rare show of defiance, took to voicing their displeasure with authorities’ handling of the outbreak in unconventional ways.

On March 5, when Sun Chunlan, the country’s Vice Premier, visited a residential compound in Wuhan along with a group of officials, locals who were sealed inside their apartments greeted them by yelling out complaints from their windows.

“It’s fake, everything’s fake!” One woman shouted. Their shouts continued until the officials exited the compound.

However, authorities made sure this episode wouldn’t be repeated when Chinese leader Xi Jinping visited Wuhan five days later. Footage circulating online show police wearing hazmat suits standing guard inside people’s apartments and on their balcony. In a notice on Chinese super-app WeChat, a local residential committee officer at a building complex in Wuhan said the officers would stay in residents’ homes for around an hour for “security clearance.”

“Anybody with a clear mind will not fail to see that this is purely an inspection show,” Chinese political commentator Yuan Bin wrote in a column for the Chinese-language edition of The Epoch Times.

Beijing’s Propaganda Playbook

A recently leaked document from Hubei Province, whose capital is Wuhan, revealed that authorities have deployed huge efforts at tightening the flow of information and shaping the official narrative amid the outbreak.

Officials have engaged at least 1,600 trolls in the province alone to aggressively monitor online speech and scrub any information critical of the regime.

The main goal is to enhance the



(L) A security guard walks past a propaganda banner saying, “Do Not Leave Home Often During Holidays, Wear a Mask When Going Out, Keep a Distance and Do Not Shake Hands When Meeting” in Temple of Heaven Park, Beijing on Feb. 15, 2020.

(R) A Chinese man takes a gate ticket from a woman on the other side of a makeshift barricade wall intended to control the entry and exit of outsiders in Beijing, China, on Feb. 25, 2020.

Saving Chinese people is its obligation, the basic responsibility of a government ... what is there to be grateful about?

Gao, a Wuhan local

“promotion of the positive side,” the document said, in part by having a “wartime” propaganda mechanism in place to control public opinion online and offline, “big and small,” with “minute precision.”

The propaganda efforts, according to the document, should focus on illuminating the effective containment measures, and “vividly retelling” the “moving deeds” of medical staff, officials, police officers, and volunteers.

Further, it asked all media to step up their promotion of “exemplary figures” and heroes from the outbreak frontlines, with the goal of having each state and provincial outlet feature two to three such models in their daily reporting.

In line with such directives, the province’s major media have published over 50,000 outbreak-related reports by mid-February, the document said, with some articles garnering hundreds of millions of views.

Hyping the regime’s capability to handle the virus, the central government also declared 113 medical teams and 506 medical workers as “model citizens.”

‘Truth Is the Only Comfort’

Wang Zhonglin, the Chinese Com-

munist Party (CCP) Secretary of Wuhan, triggered an outpouring of rage after he recently called for a thorough “appreciation education” to teach the public to be grateful to the Party for its outbreak response.

“Wuhan people are heroic people who also know how to be grateful,” Wang said on March 6, according to state-affiliated Changjiang Daily.

The remark did not sit well with local residents. “Gratitude should be self-initiated, right?” Gao, a Wuhan local, told The Epoch Times.

“Saving Chinese people is its obligation, the basic responsibility of a government ... what is there to be grateful about?”

Hu, who lives in the Jiangnan District of Wuhan, said the official has “reversed the proper order.” “He should thank the people of Wuhan,” Hu told The Epoch Times.

More people, locked in their homes, lamented the struggle in obtaining fresh food supplies and sustaining their lives. One resident, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he had been skipping meals every day to cut down expenses.

“They have buried us alive,” Wuhan resident Xin told The Epoch Times, adding that certain food prices have

surged by up to ten-fold. Officials, however, are able to abuse their privileges and obtain the products at cost, Xin said.

Xin had recently filmed a video to protest their lack of supplies, for which he was reprimanded by local police officers. “They don’t solve the problems, but only go after people who raise the problems.”

“We commoners can only pray for heaven’s blessings, we live one day at a time.”

Jiang, who lives in Wuhan’s Qingshan District, the same area where locals heckled officials from their windows, labeled the CCP as the “most shameless” regime in the world.

“Nobody believes in the CCP anymore,” he said.

Zhang, also from Wuhan, believes that locals’ experiences of this crisis have made people less willing to cooperate with the regime.

“When locals circulate the images of police in hazmat suits in their homes, there’s a message they are trying to convey: we can’t talk, and dare not talk,” she said, referring to the measures adopted during Xi’s visit to the city.

“Truth is the only comfort.”

Experts Sceptical CCP Virus Epidemic Is Under Control

EVA FU

She wakes up every other hour as she tries to sleep. Diarrhea keeps her up all night. There’s a persistent bitter taste in her mouth.

For Wei, a millennial in the epidemic ground zero of Wuhan, the burning question of whether she has the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, has lingered since Jan. 18, when she went to a bar and came back home feeling sick. But three CT scans and two nucleic acid tests later—which came back negative—she remains only a “suspected” case.

The Epoch Times refers to the novel coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19, as the CCP virus because the Chinese Communist Party’s coverup and mismanagement allowed the virus to spread throughout China and create a global pandemic.

Several of Wei’s friends are in the same boat. Xia, for example, has dry coughs and insomnia. Another, who had similar symptoms as Wei, later developed pulmonary calcification and was diagnosed with COVID-19. She’s now in serious condition.

“No one cares about us,” she told The Epoch Times in an interview. Wei doesn’t have the common symptoms of fever and coughing, but hasn’t recovered from her mysterious illness.

Are these people really virus-free?

Wei has a friend whose lungs’ CT scan looked like “frosted glass” (ground-glass opacity, a common clinical trait of patients), but tested negative for COVID-19 eight times.

“Wuhan is controlled. There’s no way you can get diagnosed. They [authorities] have made up the data and your tests will turn out negative, no matter what,” Wei said.

A Chinese man wears a protective mask as he and others have their temperature checked by a guard at a temporary entrance to a commercial area in Beijing on March 11, 2020.

It’s impossible for China to have zero new cases—it suppressed it [data] so that many cases were simply not reported

Chen Bingzhong, a former official at China’s National Health Commission



Makeshift Hospitals

Meanwhile, questions persist over the fate of patients who were released after Wuhan’s makeshift hospitals were shut down. The last one closed down on March 10.

They were set up in the city’s stadiums, expo centers, and gyms to treat the growing number of patients. But this month, city authorities announced that fewer patients were being admitted, and therefore, the facilities would no longer be needed.

The Epoch Times previously interviewed Fu, a patient with mild symptoms, who stayed at a temporary hospital in the Hanyang District of Wuhan, along with 900 other patients, until the facility discharged her on Feb. 28. On March 10, she received a diagnosis report indicating film spurs in both lungs, while her artery, liver, and gallbladder were damaged.

Fu spoke with 20 other patients who were discharged despite having similar lung damage.

A Second Wave?

In the past few weeks, China has been reporting a declining number

of infections. For 10 days in a row until March 15, Chinese authorities reported no new cases in all regions outside of Wuhan. On March 16, authorities reported 21 new cases in the whole country, with 12 of them being imported cases, or people infected with the virus who had arrived in China from a foreign country.

If all goes well, around March 20, the country might be cleared of new infections, and Wuhan businesses may be able to resume production in another two weeks, Li Lanjuan, a senior expert at China’s National Health Commission, told Chinese state media.

Since late January, authorities in Hubei Province, where Wuhan is the capital, enacted strict lockdown measures, closing down all public transportation and roads.

But this month, parts of Hubei began easing restrictions. Wuhan itself announced it would allow people to travel into Wuhan again, provided they self-quarantine for 14 days at their own expense.

International experts have questioned whether the lowered numbers of infections could continue.

“As the country revs up its economy and reintegrates into the world, there remains danger of re-introduction of the virus,” Laurie Garrett, an expert on epidemics and columnist for Foreign Policy, told The Epoch Times in an email.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, in a recent interview with ABC, said the U.S. authorities were paying attention to what happens in China after lockdown measures ease up and people start resuming normal life.

“Hopefully, it will stay down, but it possibly could come back up,” Fauci said.

Chen Bingzhong, a former official at China’s National Health Commission, was skeptical about the Chinese figures.

“I think this is impossible. It’s such a serious disease, they are basically falsifying data,” he told The Epoch Times. “It’s impossible for China to have zero new cases—it suppressed it [data] so that many cases were simply not reported.”

The Epoch Times has previously obtained internal government documents that detail how authorities are underreporting confirmed diagnoses and destroying relevant data.

Restrictions Remain

Authorities also hinted at a more severe outbreak.

In Beijing, the city’s education commission announced on March 17 that all schools will remain closed due to the CCP virus.

Netizens also shared a video of what appeared to be local government staff cleaning a road sign dated March 12 that reads, “All highways out of Hubei Province have been closed down.”

Millennials Are ‘Core Group’ That Will Stop Coronavirus Spread: White House

MIMI NGUYEN LY

The White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Debbie Birx singled out millennials on Monday at a press conference announcing new coronavirus guidelines, saying that millennials are the “core group that will stop this virus.”

“I want to speak to purely our largest generation now, our millennials. I’m the mother of two millennials,” Birx said. “They are the core group that will stop this virus. They are the group that communicates successfully, independent of picking up a phone.”

“They intuitively know how to contact each other without being in large social gatherings. We are asking all of them to hold their gatherings to under 10 people, not just in bars and restaurants, but in homes,” she added.

“They’re the ones that are out and about, and they’re the most likely to be in social gatherings and they’re the most likely to be the least symptomatic,” she also said. “There are more millennials now than any other cohort and they can help us at this moment.”

Birx said if Americans followed the new guidelines from the White House Coronavirus Task Force for slowing the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, the United States would see a dramatic difference in the outbreak’s trajectory.

Moving to speak to the general public, Birx said, “We really want people to be separated at this time.”

“To be able to address this virus comprehensively, that we cannot see, for which we don’t have a vaccine or a therapeutic, the only thing we have right now is the amazing ingenuity and compassion of the American people.

“We’re appealing to all Americans to take these steps, to protect each other and to ensure that the virus doesn’t spread,” Birx said. “These guidelines are very specific. They are very detailed. They will only work if every American takes this together



Coronavirus Response Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx speaks during a press briefing at the White House in Washington on March 16, 2020.

There are more millennials now than any other cohort and they can help us at this moment.

Dr. Deborah Birx, U.S. Coronavirus Response Coordinator

to heart and responds as one nation and one people to stop the spread of this virus.”

President Donald Trump said at the press conference that “if we [the United States] do a really good job,” deaths due to COVID-19 can be greatly diminished compared to if no actions were taken, and the coronavirus outbreak could be estimated to “wash over” around July, August, or slightly beyond. Trump added that authorities are working to bring the situation to a “best case, not a worst case” scenario.

Alongside good hygiene practices, the guidelines advocate for older people and those who have a serious underlying health condition—such as a significant heart or lung problem—to “stay home and away from other people.” It also advises people to not visit nursing homes or retirement or

long-term care facilities “unless to provide critical assistance.”

The guidelines say people should stay home if they feel sick or if their children feel sick, and “keep the entire household at home” if someone in the household has tested positive for the coronavirus.

The guidelines also recommend to “work or engage in schooling from home whenever possible,” and “avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people.”

It also advises against eating or drinking at bars, restaurants and food courts, and instead to “use drive-thru, pickup, or delivery options.” People should also “avoid discretionary travel, shopping trips, and social visits.”

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, acknowledged on

Monday that some people may consider the guidelines too extreme, but he asserted that they “were well thought out.”

“The thing that I want to reemphasize and I say it over and over again, when you are dealing with an emerging infectious disease outbreak, you are always behind where you think you are, if you think that today reflects where you really are,” he said.

“Therefore, it will always seem that the best way to address it would be to do something that looks like it might be an overreaction,” Fauci added. “It isn’t an overreaction. It’s a reaction that we feel is commensurate, which is actually reality.”

“Take a look at the guidelines. We hope that the people of the United States will take them very seriously, because they will fail if people don’t adhere to them.”

“We have to have, as a whole country, cooperate and collaborate to make sure these get done,” he said.

China Expands Influence in America’s Backyard, Southcom Commander Warns

SIMON VEAZEY

China’s influence in America’s backyard is intensifying, according to the U.S. military commander for Central and South America, as he highlighted Beijing’s investments in infrastructure, military training, and equipment in the region.

“Most concerning, certain investments have strategic value for future military uses,” said Adm. Craig S. Faller, commander of U.S. Southern Command.

“The ‘aha!’ moment for me this past year has been the extent to which China is aggressively pursuing their interests right here in our neighborhood,” he told the House Armed Services Committee on March 11.

The region represents a vicious circle of threats to the stability and security of the U.S. homeland, Faller said.

He said that the U.S. military presence would be ramped up in the region later this year, to reassure allies and partners.

“This will include an enhanced presence of ships, aircraft, and security forces,” he said.

Weak institutions and corruption within young democracies in the region are being preyed upon by transnational criminal organizations (worth \$90 billion a year) and by China, Russia, and Iran, he said.

The Pentagon is currently reviewing the different geographical commands to realign them with the needs of the National Defense Strategy, which prioritizes tackling China and Russia.

The military’s pivot away from counterinsurgency has focused on revamping military equipment and

U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper (L) and U.S. Navy Adm. Craig Faller (R), commander of U.S. Southern Command, address the media during a press briefing at U.S. Southern Command in Doral, Florida, on Jan. 23, 2020.

With 19 Latin American and Caribbean nations now participating in the [BRI] and pledges of at least \$150 billion in loans, [China] is now the region’s largest investor and creditor, practicing the same type of predatory financing and ‘no strings attached’ largesse it has wielded in other parts of the world.

Craig Faller, U.S. Navy Adm.



strategy to undo the strategic advantages built up by Russia in Europe and China in the Pacific region.

But far away from these military neighborhoods, in places such as in Africa, Pentagon leadership has still underscored that the priority is on tackling “great power competition” with Russia and China.

In written testimony, Faller said, “As the Department of Defense has prioritized the Indo-Pacific region, Beijing has aggressively turned its attention to the Western Hemisphere, exporting corrupt business practices and disregard for international law and standards to countries already struggling with government corruption and weak governance.”

Faller described China’s growing influence in Southcom as a “concerning trend,” noting the growing impact of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt, One Road)—the name given to Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s flagship foreign policy and propaganda push.

“Last year, the Chinese government absorbed three more Latin American countries into [BRI], bringing the regional total to 19—more than half of all countries in the region,” Faller said.

The region is home to a quarter of all U.S. exports, he said, as well as key global infrastructure, such as the Panama Canal, sea lanes, and deep-water ports.

Belt and Road Initiative

Chinese infrastructure investments could allow its military to threaten sea lanes “vital to global commerce” and the movement of U.S. forces, said Faller.

He also noted that fleets of Chinese-flagged fishing vessels routinely violate the sovereign fishing rights of coastal states.

“With 19 Latin American and Caribbean nations now participating in the [BRI] and pledges of at least \$150 billion in loans, [China] is now the region’s largest investor and creditor,

practicing the same type of predatory financing and ‘no strings attached’ largesse it has wielded in other parts of the world,” said Faller.

“This includes ‘gifts’ of equipment to regional militaries and aiming to copy our successful military education program.”

“Beijing is also gaining real-time, street-level situational awareness by selling surveillance technology through its ‘Smart Cities’ initiative,” said Faller. “The same technology the Chinese Communist Party uses to monitor and repress its citizens.”

South America is also seen by Beijing as a strategic location of “immense value” for space activity, said Faller, and is pursuing five additional points of access to regional space infrastructure.

“They certainly recognize the importance of this part of the world,” he told members of the House Committee, “and so must we.”

Faller also highlighted the ongoing crisis in Venezuela, where almost 5 million people have fled after the economic collapse and crisis under regime leader Nicolás Maduro.

“Under Russian and Cuban tutelage, oppression in Venezuela is ever-increasing,” he said.

“Russia continues to play the role of ‘spoiler,’ seeking to sow disunity and discredit the United States within our own hemisphere,” he said.

“Russia once again projected power in our neighborhood, establishing a military footprint in Venezuela; deploying (for the first time) its most advanced nuclear-capable warship; and sending a research ship capable of mapping and cutting undersea cables, as well as two other naval research vessels to operate near our homeland.”

Florida Law Firm Launches Class Action Against Chinese Regime For Causing the Coronavirus Pandemic

CONTINUED FROM A1

VID-19 [the disease caused by the novel coronavirus] was dangerous and capable of causing a pandemic, yet slowly acted, proverbially put their head in the sand, and/or covered it up for their own economic self-interest.”

The outbreak, which originated from the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December, has now spread to more than 100 countries, with more than 100,000 infections outside of China and thousands of deaths. The United States currently has more than 6,000 cases of the virus.

“As we have alleged in our complaint, Chinese officials knew by January 3rd that COVID-19 was transmitted human to human and patients started dying a few days later,” Matthew Moore, the firm’s class action attorney, said in a press release. “Yet, they kept telling the people of Wuhan and the world at large that everything was fine, even holding a public dinner in Wuhan for over 40,000 families on January 18th.”

While Chinese authorities confirmed the initial cluster of coronavirus cases on Dec. 31, 2019, it was not until Jan. 20 that it confirmed human-to-human transmission of the virus. Prior to that, officials had



Members of the People's Armed Police march in Tiananmen Square after the daily flag raising ceremony prior to the closing meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, on March 15, 2019.

described the outbreak as “preventable and controllable.” Yet a January study of the first 425 cases of the disease in Wuhan found “there is evidence that human-to-human transmission has occurred among close contacts since the middle of December 2019.”

The lawsuit names the People’s Republic of China, Hubei Province, the City of Wuhan, and several Chinese

government ministries as defendants.

“This could have been contained while Chinese officials instead attempted to put a positive narrative on the unfolding epidemic for China’s own economic self-interest,” said former Florida State Senator Joseph Abruzzo, the firm’s director of government relations.

The outbreak is expected to slam

They kept telling the people of Wuhan and the world at large that everything was fine, even holding a public dinner in Wuhan for over 40,000 families on January 18th.

Matthew Moore, Berman Law Group’s class action attorney

economies around the world, including the United States, with some economists forecasting a global recession by the end of the year. The Trump administration has proposed an \$850 billion economic stimulus package to provide relief from the economic fallout of the pandemic.

“It is the Chinese government that should be paying damages for economic stimulus to the United States, not the American people,” said Russell Berman, co-founder of the firm.

The class action, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, lists four Florida residents as plaintiffs, as well as a training center for baseball players in Boca Raton. None of the plaintiffs have contracted coronavirus, Moore told law.com.

Tech Giants Warn of AI Moderation Errors as Staff Work From Home

Alphabet Inc’s YouTube, Facebook Inc., and Twitter Inc, warned on Monday that more videos and other content could be erroneously removed for policy violations, as the companies empty offices and rely on automated takedown software during the coronavirus pandemic.

In a blog post, Google said that to reduce the need for people to come into offices, YouTube and other business divisions are temporarily relying more on artificial intelligence and automated tools to find problematic content.

Such software is not always as accurate as humans, which leads to errors, it added, however. And “turnaround times for appeals against these decisions may be slower,” it said.

Facebook followed suit, saying it would work with contract vendors this week to send home all content reviewers indefinitely, with pay.

The social media company drew public criticism last week for asking policy enforcers to continue coming to work, as it lacks secure technology to conduct moderation remotely.

Facebook also said the decision to rely more on automated tools, which learn to identify offensive material by analyzing digital clues for aspects common to previous takedowns, has limitations.

“We may see some longer response times and make more mistakes as a result,” it said.

Twitter said it too would step up use of similar automation, but would not ban users based solely on automated enforcement, because of accuracy concerns.

The three Silicon Valley internet services giants, like many companies worldwide, have asked employees and contractors to work from home if possible, to slow the fast-spreading respiratory disease. Mass gatherings for sports, cultural and religious events have been canceled globally.

Google said human review of automated policy decisions also would be slower for other products and phone support would be limited.

Its content rules cover submissions such as campaigns on its ad network, apps uploaded to the Google Play store and business reviews posted to Google Maps.

“Some users, advertisers, developers and publishers may experience delays in some support response times for non-critical services, which will now be supported primarily through our chat, email, and self-service channels,” Google said.

The content review operations of Google and Facebook span several countries, such as India, Ireland, Singapore and the United States.

By Paresh Dave
From Reuters

We may see some longer response times and make more mistakes as a result.

Statement from Facebook

Prominent Houston Pastor Pleads Guilty to Defrauding Elderly Investors

A prominent Houston megachurch pastor who counseled presidents and top executives pleaded guilty on Wednesday of conspiracy to sell \$3.5 million in worthless bonds to elderly investors.

Kirbyjon Caldwell, senior pastor at the Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston, one of the nation’s largest Protestant churches with about 17,000 members, faces between five and seven years in jail and a fine of up to \$250,000 under his plea agreement.

Neither Caldwell nor his attorney could be reached for immediate comment.

A spokeswoman for Windsor Village United Methodist Church referred questions to an email address that did not reply.

Caldwell has been an adviser to former presidents, including George W. Bush, a limited partner in the Houston Texans professional football franchise, and served on the board of power company NRG Energy.

He faces sentencing on July 22, according to David Joseph, the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana. Caldwell’s partner in the fraud, Gregory A. Smith, a Shreveport, Louisiana, investment adviser,

pleaded guilty last year to the same charge.

“These defendants used their positions as religious leaders and investment advisers to defraud Louisiana residents – many of whom are elderly and retired,” said Joseph. The pair used money from the bogus investments for personal expenses, vehicles and a vacation property.

Caldwell has made partial restitution to victims in the case and agreed to pay \$1.9 million before his sentencing, Joseph said.

By Gary McWilliams
From Reuters



Then-U.S. President George W. Bush (L) is greeted by Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell (R), the founder of the Pyramid Community Development Corporation, at the Power Center in Houston, Texas, on Sept. 12, 2003.

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OPINION



South Korean soldiers wearing protective gear spray disinfectant to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, at a shopping district in Seoul on March 4, 2020.

Where Ties With Communist China Are Close, the Coronavirus Follows

Severe COVID-19 outbreaks highlight different countries’ entanglements with Beijing

EPOCH TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD

In the final weeks of 2019, a novel coronavirus outbreak occurred in the city of Wuhan, in central China. As the world welcomed a new decade, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) opted to suppress information about the emerging crisis until it could no longer remain hidden.

Nearly two months after mainland Chinese authorities acknowledged the outbreak and the existence of the contagious virus, the crisis has spread round the globe, assuming epidemic proportions in multiple regions. The number of infected beyond China’s borders is now in the tens of thousands, with more than 2,000 having succumbed to the virus. The stock market has plunged as experts warn of a possible economic recession.

A variety of factors have facilitated the rapid spread of the coronavirus, officially termed SARS-CoV-2, and the disease that it causes, COVID-19. Globalization has brought the peoples of the world into closer contact, increasing the risks of a worldwide pandemic.

Yet the heaviest-hit regions outside China all share a common thread: close or lucrative relations with the communist regime in Beijing.

Medical Crisis, Political Peril

Under political or economic influence from the People’s Republic of China (PRC), many foreign entities and politicians, including international organizations, have been swayed to the extent that they take the side of the CCP, accommodating the pernicious communist system and turning a blind eye to unspeakable crimes committed by the mainland Chinese authorities.

Recent decades have seen the PRC greatly expand its power in economic and geopolitical affairs. Deceiving the world with a narrative of “China’s peaceful rise,” the communist regime has lured foreign governments and international firms to invest in China’s rapidly developing markets.

But the CCP has never abandoned its ideological tenets of class struggle and to-



A tourist wearing a protective mask walks past the closed Colosseum monument in Rome on March 10, 2020.

talitarian control. In the 30 years since the Tiananmen Square massacre, and from the start in 1999 of the persecution of the spiritual practice Falun Gong to today’s systematic persecution of all faiths and independent thought, the state of human rights in the PRC has only worsened.

The true nature of the CCP and communism has long been known to readers of The Epoch Times. Fifteen years ago, The Epoch Times published the editorial series “Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party,” igniting a grassroots movement in China to reject communism. Since 2004, more than 350 million people have renounced their ties to the Party and its affiliated youth organizations.

Seen in conjunction with the CCP-hijacked geopolitical environment of today, the geographical distribution of what the World Health Organization (WHO) now calls a coronavirus pandemic highlights the ultimate peril facing those who align themselves with the specter of communism.

Outside China, the spread of COVID-19 has been most severe in Italy, Iran, South Korea, and Japan. Not all of these countries are located near China, but all have extensive interests in the PRC.

Italy, the most heavily affected country outside China as of March 18, was the first (and only) G-7 nation to sign onto the PRC’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt, One Road). In an attempt to prop up its weakening economy, Italy has also sought to capture the Chinese market for selling its luxury goods.

With the outbreak now forcing Rome to put the country under lockdown, such prospects have been put on hold.

Italy also has signed scores of sister-city agreements with China, with the cities of Milan, Venice, and Bergamo included among them. These are the areas hardest-hit by the virus.

In the Middle East, Iran has seen a surge in the number of infections, particularly among government officials.

The Iranian regime has had a comprehensive strategic partnership with China since 2016, and its ties with Beijing began years before that. In violation of international sanctions, Iran has imported embargoed materials from China, while continuing to sell oil to the PRC. The Islamic Republic allowed flights in and out of four major Chinese cities until the end of February.

On-the-ground footage taken by Iranian citizens is reminiscent of the tragedy playing out in Wuhan, with overworked medical staff, despondent patients, and body bags lining hospital floors.

And while official figures released by the Iranian authorities show deaths and confirmed cases trailing behind Italy’s numbers, it is likely that the real scale of the outbreak remains grossly under-reported. Reviewing available data, an epidemiologist cited by The Washington Post on March 5 estimated that the actual number of people infected in Iran could have been up to 28,000, nearly five times what the regime had reported.

In South Korea, the public has grown increasingly critical of President Moon Jae-in for refusing to ban Chinese tourists at large and instead only barring entry for those who recently traveled to Hubei Province, the epicenter of the epidemic in China.

More than 1.4 million people have signed a petition to the Presidential Blue House calling for Moon to be impeached. The petition text reads, “Seeing Moon Jae-in’s response to the new epidemic, we feel that he is more of a President for China than Korea.”

History’s Lessons

Despite its proximity to, and extensive

business with, mainland China, Taiwan has seen a relatively small number of infections.

On Jan. 26, John Hopkins University identified Taiwan as having the second-highest risk of epidemic spread outside China. However, robust prevention measures have proven effective.

Taiwan officials began to board planes and assess passengers on Dec. 31, 2019, after Wuhan authorities first confirmed the outbreak. In early February, Taiwan banned entry to foreign nationals who have traveled to the PRC. As of March 10, there are just 47 confirmed cases in Taiwan. The self-ruled island has been held as a model for epidemic control, despite being repeatedly denied participation in the CCP-friendly WHO.

As China affairs commentator Heng He put it, Taiwan has a clear understanding of the communist regime and may be the only state that learned the lessons of the 2003 SARS outbreak, which also began in China.

In Hong Kong, which has seen millions of residents stand up to Beijing’s encroachment on the city’s freedoms and rule of law since last year, the outbreak has been similarly subdued.

By contrast, Japan, albeit not geostrategically aligned with the PRC, placed profit over prudence. With millions of Chinese traveling to Japan for shopping and sight-seeing annually, the country was slow to close its borders to mainland arrivals.

Recently, the CCP has attempted to portray its draconian handling of the coronavirus epidemic as a triumph for the Party’s authoritarian system. But the Chinese historical record is more sobering. Throughout the centuries, plagues and other calamities signaled the downfall of imperial dynasties.

Taking history as a mirror, as ancient Chinese scholars did, it is apparent that the coronavirus pandemic is a calamity linked with the CCP and its 70 years of brutal rule. And today, the world is an interconnected community. Any country, community, or organization that keeps too close to the CCP and falls for its deception will taste the bitter fruits of that involvement.



(Above) Medical staff treat patients infected by the coronavirus at a hospital in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 24, 2020. (Top right) Iranian firefighters disinfect streets in a bid to halt the wild spread of coronavirus in Tehran on March 13, 2020. (Bottom right) A police officer walks past placards of detained rights activists taped on the fence of Hong Kong’s Chinese liaison office, in protest of Beijing’s detention of prominent anti-corruption activist Xu Zhiyong, who criticized Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s handling of the coronavirus, in Hong Kong on Feb. 19, 2020.

China Goes on Propaganda Offensive

Beijing joins Tehran in risking escalation of hostilities in blaming the US for global spread of COVID-19

JAMES GORRIE



Now that the world is awash in the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is doing what it does best: put the blame anywhere and everywhere else but where it belongs.

The blame for the outbreak, of course, belongs squarely with the Party itself and no one else.

But Chinese government officials have now openly speculated about U.S. responsibility for the outbreak and even accused the U.S. military of planting the virus in China. At the same time, other officials are sticking to the unsubstantiated Wuhan market story to explain the outbreak.

Telling a Simple Truth

The latest words of deflection came from at least two high-ranking Chinese officials this week, in response to comments made by U.S. national security adviser Robert O’Brien.

O’Brien said that the delayed reaction and deception on the part of the Chinese regime “probably cost the world two months when it could have been preparing for the outbreak.”

O’Brien is right, of course. It’s well-documented that the Party prevented discussion of the outbreak, which occurred as early as October of 2019, arrested medical professionals who tried to sound the alarm to the country, censored internet traffic about it, and delayed deploying preventative measures by weeks and months.

All of these failures by the Party leadership enabled an outbreak that was eminently containable, to rapidly rise to a nationwide epidemic and eventually to where we are now, in a global pandemic. Again, that timeline is documented.

Let the Projection Begin

Within a day, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian responded to O’Brien’s accusations on Twitter, in English, writing:

“When did patient zero begin in US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!”

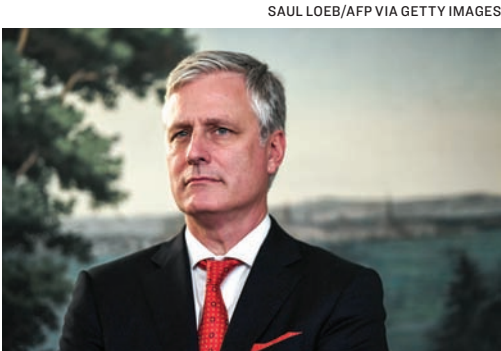
Such a detailed response was undoubtedly ordered and approved at the very top of the Party, which must have felt the need to respond. What’s more, the tone of the response reveals the deep concern of the Party leadership regarding its damaged credibility within the minds of the Chinese people.

The Chinese people are rightfully angry at their government for the gross mistreatment of doctors, such as Dr. Li Wenliang, who was prevented from warning people about the danger in the very early days of the outbreak. Li was eventually arrested, forced to sign a bogus confession, and died on Feb. 7 from the disease that, according to the CCP, was no threat to the public.

The Party’s recent censoring of another doctor, Ai Fen, who works at a medical center in Wuhan, the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic, has generated a massive new wave of public anger. Fen



(Left) Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Geng Shuang during a briefing in Beijing on Nov. 28, 2019. (Right) National security adviser Robert O’Brien at the White House on Oct. 23, 2019.



was censored for repeating the reality that the state missed opportunities to contain the virus.

A Massive Response to Censorship

And yet, the Chinese people are finding incredibly resourceful ways around the Party’s censorship, including 3,000-year-old, outdated versions of Chinese characters, to express their anger toward their governments’ policies of delay, deflect, deny, and destroy toward anyone who second-guesses its authority or competency.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang called the United States “immoral and irresponsible” for saying that Beijing’s delayed response to the coronavirus outbreak made it worse.

Furthermore, China state-run media has attacked the United States on a variety of ideological fronts, declaring that Western values and democracy are insufficient to fight the coronavirus, that racism and income inequality will mean unequal treatment, and more.

In an ironic twist, China’s Global Times has accused the United States of the “politicization of the virus” to gain negotiation advantage in the trade war and to punish Huawei, as well as harboring “anti-Asian sentiments” and other nefarious motives.

Iran Hypes Conspiracy Theories

Not surprisingly, in the wake of its massive outbreak, Iran has ramped up its propaganda to an entirely new level.

The regime in Tehran is blaming the United States for “waging biowarfare” against Iran. That’s quite a charge, accusing the United States of an act of biological warfare. Why would Tehran make such a claim? The answer is simple—Iran’s government is literally ground-zero for the country’s infection. The outbreak has decimated the Iranian leadership, with 10 percent of the ruling government members either infected or dying.

But given its close relationship with China and its obvious lack of preparation for the outbreak, Iran’s high infection rate should have been expected. But the truth isn’t useful to Tehran. It’s much easier and helpful to peddle conspiracy theories.

In that context, it’s certainly reasonable to wonder if the recent attack by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq against U.S. and British soldiers was a staged reaction to divert the Iranian public’s attention away from the real cause of the high COVID-19 infection rate.

Was the attack meant to reframe the virus narrative as being the fault of the United States?

That’s unknown. But with tensions as high as they are in the region, it’s a high-risk move in any context.

Does Tehran have an answer to that question? Are they preparing their nation for a bigger response?

Although propaganda is, by definition, intended to misinform and control the public narrative in order to support the ruling regime, it is also provocatively dangerous. Inflammatory messaging, that is, telling a lie so big that it can’t be withdrawn, can drive regimes to engage in contrived acts of revenge to justify their lies and preserve their positions of power.

Escalation often follows, which can quickly lead all of us down a path that would be better for everyone if it were avoided.

James Gorrie is a writer and speaker based in Southern California. He is the author of “The China Crisis.”

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Costs to South Korea of ‘Standing With China’ During Coronavirus Outbreak Outweigh Gains

TIAN YUN

As the deadly novel coronavirus rages across the world, countries with close ties to the Chinese regime seem to be paying a price.

South Korea’s coronavirus outbreak had been relatively calm—until the latter half of last month.

On Feb. 19, the country reported 15 new cases, including its first death. The next day, the number increased by 53, exceeding the total number of confirmed cases from January, and the day after that, new cases surged to 100. Since then, the number has skyrocketed as the outbreak worsens by the day.

There are two recent events worth noting.

On Feb. 20, Kang Seung-seok, South Korea’s newly appointed consul general in China’s outbreak epicenter of Wuhan, visited the city with donated relief supplies from his home country. Kang told Chinese media upon arrival that it’s “very meaningful for the South Korean government to dispatch me to Wuhan during this very difficult period,” according to the Chinese Communist Party’s mouthpiece newspaper People’s Daily.

Kang also said South Korea and China—especially Hubei Province, whose capital is Wuhan—enjoy very close relations, and that they would maintain such relations through “mutual understanding and help,” no matter the circumstances.

Chinese state media prominently covered his trip, calling him a “non-conformist” in choosing to visit Wuhan while everyone else was avoiding it.

Also on Feb. 20, Chinese leader Xi Jinping had a phone conversation with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. Chinese state media said Moon had “specially called to express his condolences and support,” which “shows the friendship between China and South Korea, as close neighbors look out for each other and share life’s ups and downs.”

Moon, for his part, said that “China’s suffering is our own suffering, and the Korean government will try its best to give assistance to its closest neighbor in these difficult times.”

On Feb. 11, the South Korean consulate in Wuhan wrote on its official Weibo account: “China’s difficulty is our difficulty, Korean Consulate stands with you!” The consulate also hung banners on its outer wall with those words emblazoned on them.



Medical staff, wearing protective gear, move a patient infected with COVID-19 from an ambulance to a hospital in Seoul, South Korea, on March 9, 2020.

Shincheonji church members had been holding meetings in Wuhan until December.

While these words appear to address the people of China, it’s in fact helping and encouraging the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The regime, in trying to maintain its power and image, has continued to ignore the plight of Chinese citizens and hide the truth about the outbreak.

The CCP also intentionally confused the concept of Party and nation. Under the banner of “China,” it has deceived the world and won over the sympathy of foreign countries as well as support for its power. By saying “we stand with you,” South Korea is effectively choosing to stand with the CCP.

South Korean Church’s Wuhan Meeting

South Korea’s first patient, confirmed on Jan. 20, was a 35-year-old Chinese woman who had traveled from Wuhan. On Jan. 19, the woman landed in Seoul, and was immediately quarantined for exhibiting symptoms that included a fever. Several other returnees from Wuhan later tested positive for the virus.

Shincheonji, a secretive church in the country’s southern city of Daegu that claims to have more than 200,000 followers, has been identified as the center of South Korea’s outbreak.

As of March 10, South Korea’s top

health authority KCDC has identified 4,710 cases linked with Shincheonji, accounting for about 63 percent of the tally.

Shincheonji church members had been holding meetings in Wuhan until December, according to South China Morning Post.

The sect had around 200 members in Wuhan, according to the newspaper, which cited anonymous sources.

A kindergarten teacher, who had been part of the Wuhan gatherings, told the Post that “rumors about a virus began to circulate in November but no one took them seriously.”

On Feb. 29, South Korea’s Ministry of Justice said about 3,600 Shincheonji members had traveled to South Korea from China over the past eight months, with 42 of them from Wuhan.

Could the community infections in Daegu be connected with some of these members from China?

Although Moon’s administration has imposed travel restrictions on visitors from Hubei, it didn’t apply such a ban on travelers from other parts of China.

On Feb. 4, a petition was drafted, demanding Moon’s impeachment over his handling of the outbreak.

Failure to enact timely travel restrictions against China, the petition said, endangered the lives of South

Koreans. Moon “seems more like the president of China, rather than the president of South Korea,” it read.

The petition had gathered about 1.47 million signatures by its March 5 deadline.

Responding to calls from the public and lawmakers for a broader travel ban on China, Moon said such limitations were impossible and held no practical benefit. According to local media, Moon was worried that the restrictions could backfire and encourage other countries to impose similar measures against South Korean citizens.

Beijing Regime Turns Against South Korea as Virus Hits

As South Korea rushed to control its outbreak, Chinese state media derided the country’s “slow response.” Toutiao, a popular Chinese news app, said South Korea was trying to “cheat off China’s test paper, but got the opposite results.”

Some local Chinese officials also quarantined people who traveled from South Korea. Chosun, a South Korean newspaper, remarked that the Chinese regime was exhibiting schadenfreude.

The coronavirus outbreak has directly affected countries that have close economic ties with China, such as South Korea, where the tourism and automobile industries have suffered significant losses.

According to data from the Korea Automobile Manufacturers Association, South Korean automaker Hyundai has cut back production of 120,000 cars, resulting in a loss of more than 1 trillion won (about \$843.87 million).

The drastic worsening of the outbreak in South Korea deserves some reflection. The CCP has asked Chinese people to “follow the Party’s instructions and guidance,” and other countries to “stand with” the Party. But it concealed the truth about the virus from its own citizens and the world’s people, which has resulted in global damage.

The facts have again shown that being friends with the CCP will be detrimental to the country and its people. To “look out for each other” with the CCP could be a recipe for disaster, and the costs outweigh the gains.

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

Coronavirus Pandemic Magnifying the Impact of Trade War on China

CONTINUED FROM A1

extremely challenging year in China. The CCP leadership appeared just slightly less omniscient than it did the year before.

But all of those economic blows, individually and combined, pale in comparison to what the COVID-19 epidemic did to China’s economy in January and February of 2020. Estimates put the cost of the epidemic at \$144 billion to China’s economy in just the seven days of the Lunar New Year Holiday alone. That’s not counting the continuing stream of businesses fleeing China like refugees trying to escape an advancing army. For the foreseeable future, China will see more businesses leave than stay.

But if the economic damage from China’s Wuhan virus epidemic was crushing—and it was and continues to be—the decline in global demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic could well be cataclysmic for China’s already depleted economy.

According to China’s National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), industrial productivity fell by 13.5 percent year over year, with fixed asset invest-



Yes, nations compete with one another for power, and governments are not manned by angels. But typically, only illegitimate ones like the CCP treat their own with as much disdain, or more, than the outside world.

ment declining massively by 25 percent. Retail sales, a bellwether for consumer demand, cratered by 25 percent in January and February of this year. There is little reason to expect it to recover any time soon.

Current estimates, which are, let’s keep in mind, only educated guesses, suggest that the global economy will grow around 2.4 percent in 2020, compared to 3.7 percent in 2018, down more than a third. China will suffer an inordinate share of that pain, as its manufacturing base goes into meltdown.

China’s GDP will contract by 6 percent or more in the first quarter compared to 2019, and likely more as the year goes on. Monday’s data from the NBS indicate that factory production in China fell at the fastest rate in 30 years, and that the pandemic may well cut China’s growth by 50 percent in the first quarter.

Food Inflation Means an Angry Nation

Meanwhile, food inflation is another growing concern for the CCP. Chinese consumers are now spending one-third of their income on it. Pork prices have more than dou-

bled over the past year and vegetable prices have gone up 17 percent.

Falling incomes due to a contracting economy will make the impact price hikes and shortages that much worse. Going forward, hunger, civil unrest and pressure on the CCP leadership will likely head skyward.

Cooperation or Adversarial Competition?

Given that context, China’s attempt to place blame for the pandemic with the United States while concurrently calling for cooperation belies its more competitive rather than cooperative positioning on the world stage with America. Its belligerent rhetoric, which is typically reserved for its domestic audience, may be Beijing laying the footing for more overt adversarial competition with the United States for markets, resources and influence around the world.

In fact, influence—and what is often called “soft power”—is a big part of Beijing’s long game of replacing the United States as the global hegemon. But given the challenges China faces this year and beyond—or in spite of them—the CCP won’t let established

rules and norms stand in the way of China’s path of ascendance that, as the world’s most populous country, is their right.

And why not? They never have before.

That’s why Beijing’s rhetorical posture should command our attention. Economically, the CCP leadership finds itself backed into a shrinking corner with no immediate or simple resolution. Conditions in China will get worse—and likely get much worse—before they get better. That augurs for further domestic oppression by the Party and civil resistance by the oppressed.

A Belligerent Tone and Message

Beijing is playing a dangerous and callous game not only with their own people, but with the world as well. Yes, nations compete with one another for power, and governments are not manned by angels. But typically, only illegitimate ones like the CCP treat their own with as much disdain, or more, than the outside world.

Their refusal to allow the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) into Wuhan to study the virus, for

instance, evinces the pointed question of, “Why not let us help you help your people?”

Furthermore, the destruction of the virus data, or manipulation of it, which denied the rest of the world the opportunity to study the CODIV-19 virus for two months or more before being subjected to it themselves, undoubtedly cost thousands of lives. Such blatant disregard only confirms the worst about Beijing’s motivations.

In that context, the pathology of the message from China’s foreign ministry is a tonal blend of victimhood, self-absolution and some strain of righteous vengeance, especially toward the United States. It gives one the sense that they may be foreshadowing another chapter or two to come that will be built upon the rhetorical foundation that they’re laying today.

James Gorrie is a writer and speaker based in Southern California. He is the author of “The China Crisis.”

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SPECIAL SERIES

How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World

The Communist Economic Trap

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 Nine (Cont.)

7. Communist ‘Ideals’: Tempting Man Toward His Own Destruction (Cont.)

Marxism deceives people with the promise of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” However, socialist economies are beholden to power. Ordinary people do not have basic freedoms, not to mention being able to act at will according to their own ability. Given that human desires are endless, even the richest person on earth can’t get all he or she wants, let alone the average person. It’s impossible to achieve a superabundance of goods in the first place, given the natural scarcity of resources, not to mention their distribution to whoever needs them.

Communism also deceives people by promising that every member of society can give full play to his or her abilities. Marxism says that the division of labor creates alienation. But in fact, division of labor is necessary for any society. Adam Smith argues in “The Wealth of Nations” that a division of labor can greatly increase productivity and promote prosperity. The differences created by the division of labor are not necessarily conflicts, nor need they lead to alienation and depersonalization. People from all walks of life can elevate their morals, contribute to society, and bring happiness to mankind.

The communist economic outlook is anti-moral. Its damage has already been seen in socialist and communist countries. The various forms of disguised communist economics in the West have also brought damage to society. Communism inevitably creates totalitarian tyranny, poverty, and famine. It incessantly expands the evil in human nature and destroys human morality. It is the vilest and worst countercurrent in human history.

Once mankind suppresses its selfish desires, the ideology of communism will no longer be able to lure the human heart.

Looking back at over a century of communism’s history, the ruthless reality time and time again proves that it is a history of inciting hatred, mass murder, and evil. All communist totalitarian countries see the cruelest killing, and people in these countries have the least freedom and human rights. Resources are exhausted for military purposes. People’s belongings are robbed of them to make the privileged class rich with power, while the majority are left to labor in poverty.

The communist movement not only deprives people of their lives, but also leads to enormous destruction of traditional values and culture. In particular, in communist China, moral standards have already dropped to a horrifying degree, far beyond what one can easily imagine. The harvesting of organs from living people, good people who practice self-cultivation, has become a state-sanctioned industrial operation. Communists have turned humans into monsters. Medical personnel, who are supposed to help the sick, have become demonic murderers. The CCP’s evil has reached across the world. Countries that are supposed to be upholding human rights are

enticed with economic incentives to turn a blind eye.

Over the past century, communists have used the original communist teachings to attract the general public, intellectuals, and younger generations. After the collapse of the Eastern European communist regimes, the remaining communist regimes no longer kept their violent communist images, and instead absorbed the capitalist economic system and morphed into regimes that promote high taxes, a high level of welfare benefits, and wealth redistribution. They claim that they are raising the overall living standards and that everyone will enjoy “the good days” of socialism. Thus, they continue to deceive.

Communism caters to man’s pursuit of goodness while leading him to turn almost into a religious fanatic for communist ideology.

Communism caters to man’s pursuit of goodness while leading him to turn almost into a religious fanatic for communist ideology. It uses the pursuit of goodness as its banner to pull people away from God. It pollutes people’s minds, strengthens people’s evil nature, and leads people to commit all manner of crime. People indulge in material enjoyment, casting aside loftier and nobler beliefs in the higher purpose of life. Communism makes people bleed and sweat. In return, people are poisoned and killed. If the world’s people do not wake up now, they will face even more horrifying consequences.

Conclusion: Prosperity and Peace Can Be Obtained Only Through Morality

Striving for happiness is human nature. A prosperous economy can bring happiness, yet the economy does not exist in a vacuum. When the path of economic development deviates from ethics and morality, an economic crisis may follow. A society that is merely wealthy is not only incapable of bringing joy and happiness, but its prosperity will be short-lived. As the foundation of ethics and morality crumbles, a disastrous outcome may await.

In 2010, People’s Daily reported that despite the economic development, the Gross National Happiness Index has been declining in China year after year. The world’s second-largest economy is plagued with corruption, environmental pollution, and food-safety incidents, making the Chinese people extremely insecure about their lives. In this case, wealth has increased as morality and happiness have declined.

This reflects the fatal flaw in communism: Human beings are composed not only of flesh, but far more of the mind and the spirit. Before man came to the world, God laid down the path that man’s life would take. The Chinese say “every bite and every sip is preordained,” analogous to how faithful Westerners say grace before dinner to thank God for his providence. People who believe in God understand that wealth is a grace bestowed upon them by God. They have a humble and thankful heart, and hence they are content and happy.

Among those aboard the doomed Titanic as the ship sank in 1912 was millionaire John Jacob Astor IV, whose fortune could have built 30 Titanics. Yet when facing death, he chose what he thought was morally correct and protected women and children—he gave his spot in the final lifeboat to two terrified children. Similarly, Isidor Straus, co-owner of Macy’s department store, said, “I will not go before the other men.” His wife, Ida, also refused to get on a lifeboat, giving her place to Ms. Ellen Bird, their new housemaid. Ida chose to spend her final moments with her husband.

These people of great wealth chose to put traditional values and faith before the opportunity to save their assets and lives. Their choice of morality and justice manifests the radiance of human civilization and human nature: A noble character is more valuable than life, which is yet more valuable than wealth.

Mr. Li Hongzhi, the founder of Falun Dafa, wrote in “Wealth With Virtue”:

It is the duty of the ruler and officials to bring wealth to the populace, yet promotion of money-worship is the worst policy one could adopt. Wealth without virtue (de) will harm all sentient beings, while wealth with virtue is what all people hope for. Therefore, one cannot be affluent without advocating virtue.

Virtue is accumulated in past lives. Becoming a king, an official, wealthy, or nobility all come from virtue. No virtue, no gain; the loss of virtue means the loss of everything. Thus, those who seek power and wealth must first accumulate virtue. By suffering hardships and doing good deeds one can accumulate virtue among the masses. To achieve this, one must understand the principle of cause and effect. Knowing this can enable officials and the populace to exercise self-restraint, and prosperity and peace will thereby prevail under heaven.

If humankind maintains the aforementioned values for wealth and life, the economic challenges rooted in human beings’ greed, sloth, and jealousy will be reduced considerably. Once mankind suppresses its selfish desires, the ideology of communism will no longer be able to lure the human heart. Then God will bless mankind with high standards of morality. Consequently, we will have the ideal economy for mankind: wealth for the world, calmness in our hearts, and peace in society.

The communist specter has made intricate arrangements to destroy mankind. Its economic arrangements are only one part of the story. To free ourselves from the control of communist “ideals,” we need to unpack the conspiracy, identify the fraudulent messages, and stop putting our hope in this bankrupt ideology. We also need to restore traditional values and recover morality and virtue. Thus, humanity will be able to embrace everlasting prosperity and happiness and have true peace. Human civilization will then radiate with new vitality.

This concludes Chapter Nine.

See next edition for the next installment.

Living in an Age of Pandemics: Is Covid-19 a Blessing in Disguise?

PAUL ADAMS



Even asking whether the new coronavirus is a blessing, of any kind, requires some explanation.

Opinions differ about the seriousness of the threat the pandemic poses, to public health or to the economy. But almost no one talks about it as a blessing.

A few callous economists may have pointed to the economic benefits, for the viability of social security and pension funds, of reducing the “surplus population” (in Scrooge’s words) of the elderly. You may see the new virus as the pathogen of the century or as no big deal.

Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla, took one view, saying “The coronavirus panic is dumb,” while Bill Gates, on the contrary, said, “I hope it’s not that bad, but we should assume that it will be until we know otherwise.” Whichever view you incline to, you probably don’t see it as a blessing.

Like other people and governments, I’ve tried to steer between panic and complacency. I look for a middle way that takes sensible precautions but avoids either hasty and rash decisions or the kind of denial that says there’s nothing to see here and blames the contrary view on politically driven conspiracies, stupidity, or personality problems.

But individuals and governments are not in the same position. There are things that we as individuals should think and do in the face of such a threat that a government dare not.

Consider a newspaper article by C.S. Lewis, “On Living in an Atomic Age.” It was published in 1948, three years after the unprecedented slaughter of World War II ended with the dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan. The Soviet Union was already developing its own nuclear program during the war and carried out its first atomic bomb test in 1949.

There was widespread fear, East and West, that the world was headed for a nuclear war that would wipe out human civilization. The fear was palpable. Some of us grew up convinced that we were the last generation of our species.

The subject of Lewis’s article—living in an atomic age—was not what governments should or should not do to mitigate the danger or the dread. Rather he discussed what we civilians should be doing as we lived our lives under such a threat of immediate death and the possible extinction of our species.

He wrote about the anxiety people felt who had survived a world war and now lived in the shadow of an even more apocalyptic nuclear exchange. Global catastrophe, according to the Doomsday Clock maintained by atomic scientists since 1947, was only minutes away.

Lewis points out that our forebears had lived under such fears of sudden death in past centuries, from plagues, Viking raids, and invasions to other risks of imminent death. He argues that the threat of death, like death itself,



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO/AIRMAN 1ST CLASS SAVANNAH L. WATERS

is part of the human condition. We may not be able to avoid death from such causes, whatever the government does or fails to do.

He makes an argument for the hope that comes from faith and belief in life beyond death and beyond the natural world we currently inhabit. I do not want here to go into that argument, but to cite a passage from Lewis’s article about how we can choose to live now with such threats of sudden death:

“If we are going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They might break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds.”

Getting on With Our Lives: Doodlebugs and Disease

Lewis’s response to the unprecedented experience of living in a nuclear age reminds me of stories I heard as a child of my elders carrying on with their lives, as civilians, under the fear of sudden death in the last year of World War II.

I was too young to remember them, but the war stories that most impressed me as a child were of the first flying bombs or cruise missiles. Hitler sent the V1 rockets, which the British nicknamed doodlebugs, to cause havoc and demoralization in Britain as the Allied invasion got under way in 1944. The V in the rocket name was for vengeance or retaliation (Vergeltungswaffe).

I was born in southeast England, over which the rockets flew on their way to London. Adults told me years later about the distinc-

Son joins his mother in a cool-down stretch during a ‘Mummy and Me’ Yoga class at U.S. Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Aug. 29, 2016.

They might break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds.

C.S. Lewis, British author

tive buzzing sound the doodlebugs emitted as they passed. When the buzz stopped, the bomb fell. If it happened before reaching London, the bomb’s ton of explosives might fall somewhere very close to us.

The rockets came in their thousands, only to be replaced by the even more deadly V2 rocket. The V2 was supersonic, reaching speeds of over 2,000 mph. Silent and invisible, it fell without warning, seemingly out of nowhere, on those below. There was no defense against it except the slow success of the Allied invasion. The rockets stopped when the Allies overran the bases from which they were launched.

What struck me as a child was not the scale of the killing—small compared to that of the war as a whole—but the anxiety of civilians who lived day after day under this threat of death coming suddenly from the skies.

We all, especially those of us in one or more high-risk categories (I am in two that I know of), live now under the threat of this microbe in 2020. We all have complaints about the official response and advice for the government on what it should do. We have our own opinions about the risk of infection and what seems the inevitable failure of containment.

Lewis was writing about a threat that seemed even more serious at the time, though it has not so far materialized. He invites us to focus for a while on our own lives and how we respond to living, as we all do, in the shadow of death.

Memento Mori

Lewis’s advice here is right (adjusting for the demands of social distancing in a pandemic), but it is not advice a government can readily give without appearing callous or complacent.

His advice can be summed up in the words of a famous British government poster produced in World War II: “Keep Calm and Carry On.” But the poster itself did not become well known and much imitated until our present century. At the time the government produced large numbers and then destroyed nearly all of them.

It is not advice for the government to give to a man whose family has been killed and his house destroyed by a flying bomb against which, in the case of the V2, the government had no defense.

So in what sense is a pandemic like the new coronavirus, for

which we have no immunity or vaccine, a blessing? It is a reminder to us all of our mortality. In that sense it is like Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent in the Catholic tradition. On that day, Catholics are marked with ashes on the forehead as a public reminder that we come from dust and to dust we will return.

We all need such reminders, and they are common practice in other world faiths, whatever their beliefs about life after death and beyond the natural world. Some Buddhist monks visit a charnel house to contemplate death. Sufis have the practice of visiting graveyards to meditate on death and their own mortality. The 13th century Zen master Dogen reminds us in his Gatha or evening prayer, not to squander our lives: “Life and death are of supreme importance. Time swiftly passes by and opportunity is lost. Each of us should strive to awaken. Awaken! Take heed, do not squander your life.”

Some kept a death’s-head on their desk as a memento mori, to help them keep in their minds the inevitability of death. It is a reminder that we all must die, though we don’t know when or how, and need to live our remaining days mindfully, not sleepwalking through life.

Most of us need a lot of reminding, and many whistle in the dark to avoid the subject. The Swiss medical doctor and Catholic mystic Adrienne von Speyr (quoted by Kathryn Jean Lopez in her recent essay, “Love in the Time of Coronavirus”) notes that “Even when stern messengers forewarn us, we manage to stifle the thought of our death and to go on living as if our earthly existence would never end.”

A sustained reminder, like the German doodlebug or our current worldwide plague, is a blessing, however effectively disguised, in that it reminds us to live our lives well, purposefully, and so that our remaining days, long or short, will be a blessing for others.

Paul Adams is a professor emeritus of social work at the University of Hawaii and was a professor and associate dean of academic affairs at Case Western Reserve University. He is the co-author of “Social Justice Isn’t What You Think It Is” and has written extensively on social welfare policy and professional and virtue ethics.

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



SCOTT OLSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientist’s “Doomsday Clock” reads seven minutes to midnight after being adjusted two minutes closer in Chicago, Ill., on Feb. 27, 2002. The Doomsday Clock has been used by the Bulletin since 1947 to represent the perceived danger of a catastrophic nuclear event.

FOOD AS MEDICINE

Honey Combats Heart Disease

Honey, unlike sugar, can have a helpful impact on cholesterol levels.

See B8

MAMA_MIA/SHUTTERSTOCK



FROM THE TUSCAN TABLE

Acquacotta, a Peasant Soup From the Maremma

Eggs and cheese add modern richness, but stale bread and bare-bones vegetables remain at the heart of Tuscany's humble 'cooked water.'

See B10

MARCH 19 - 25, 2020 B1

LIFE

THE EPOCH TIMES

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK

The immune system's complexity has long challenged doctors and researchers.

What Is the Immune System?

This complex interaction of organs, cells, and microbes keeps us alive, though few of us understand it

CONAN MILNER

Remember learning the systems of the body? The skeletal system describes our inner architecture. The circulatory system shows our heart and blood vessels. The digestive system traces the path of our food as it travels from assimilation to elimination. Each system provides a basic lesson in anatomy and function. Together they reveal

Modern medicine has just begun to verify ancient notions about how the body protects itself from disease.

the body's multi-layered complexity. But where is your immune system? What parts are involved? How do they connect and communicate? These questions can be difficult to answer, because you can't get a good understanding of the immune system from just one angle. It's also a bit of an enigma. The immune system is a relatively recent discovery, but the concept may be as old as medicine itself.

Continued on B2

YURCHANKA SIARHEI/SHUTTERSTOCK

What Is the Immune System?

This complex interaction of organs, cells, and microbes keeps us alive, though few of us understand it

Continued from B1

In fact, modern medicine has just begun to verify ancient notions about how the body protects itself from disease.

When doctors and scientists discuss immunity today, they typically speak at the microscopic level. They talk about things like leukocytes, lymphocytes, T-cells, B-cells, and several other specialized immune cells that protect the body against microscopic threats like viruses and bacteria.

But what does the immune system look like at the macro level? If we define immunity as the body’s ability to protect us from microbial threats, the first line of defense is the skin. It’s the places where the skin is open—like our mouth and nose—where our body becomes more vulnerable to infections.

Past the skin barrier, things get a lot more complicated. Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Erin Nance describes the immune system as a “complex network of physical, hormonal, and chemical defense mechanisms.”

All of this infrastructure is needed to deliver immune support to every cell of the body in a timely manner. However, the organs at the conceptual center of immune function are those that circulate lymph—a bodily fluid that contains high levels of immune cells.

“The primary lymph organs, the thymus and bone marrow, are responsible for generating white blood cells,” Nance said.

The thymus is a gland located in the upper chest, just above the heart. It produces and distributes immune cells in response to microbial threats. Marrow is spongy tissue found inside bones where more of these immune cells grow.

They are called primary lymph organs because these structures are essential for our immune development.

Our understanding of these vital organs is relatively new. That’s because modern medicine’s concept of immunity is only about a century old—and we’re still learning how it all works. For example, scientists didn’t know what the thymus did until the 1960s.

A more recent example of our ever-evolving immune understanding involves two small lymphatic organs found right behind your mouth and nose. For decades, doctors believed that tonsils and adenoids were little more than troublesome tissue. When these parts become chronically inflamed—often in children who get recurring sore throats and ear infections— they are routinely removed.

But this practice may be weakening our immunity. A 2018 study published in a JAMA journal found that kids who lose these organs saw “significantly increased relative risk of later respiratory, allergic, and infectious diseases.”

Tonsils and adenoids belong to the secondary lymphatic organs category, along with the lymph nodes (clusters of bean-shaped nodules located in your chest, neck, groin, and armpits), and the spleen—an abdominal organ that filters damaged blood cells, and releases immune cells when an infection is detected.

Secondary lymph organs contribute to our overall immune strength, but unlike the thymus and bone marrow, we can live without them if necessary. According to Nance, one of the great features of our immune system’s design is its built-in redundancy.

“There are multiple places where the white blood cells are produced, stored, matured, and activated,” she said.

Gut Immunity

So far, our picture of the immune system includes a physical barrier (skin), and the lymphatic organ network. But in the last few decades, we’ve discovered a whole new level to our immune system—the gut.

About 70 percent of our immune system is located in our digestive system. But why is it there? According to Stephen Wangen, a doctor who specializes in treating gut disorders, it’s because the digestive system needs extra protection.

“This is the place where we are most exposed and most vulnerable to the microbial world,” Wangen said.

That 70 percent figure refers to the mucosal lining that covers the gut wall. This is lymphatic tissue that acts as a surveillance system, constantly scanning for microbial invasion. Other parts of the body with a mucosal lining, such as your mouth, nose, and urethra, also have this detection feature.

Gut bacteria play a role in our immunity as well. A healthy microbiome—that three to five pounds of beneficial bacteria that lives in our intestines—can crowd out undesirable pathogens, preventing them from settling and thriving inside of us.

This new level of immune understanding has helped explain the purpose of another previously puzzling organ—the appendix. Like the tonsils and adenoids, surgeons routinely removed the appendix because it was thought to be a vestigial leftover that only caused problems. However, today we know the appendix is another appendage of the immune system. It helps mature white blood cells, produce antibodies, and stores healthy gut bacteria if the rest of the microbiome gets wiped out during a GI infection.

The microbiome concept has also helped explain previously puzzling malfunctions, such as why we now see so many people with food allergies.

“All the drugs, chemicals, and antibiotics we take in have impacted the microbiome,” Wangen said. “It’s changed how the immune system views the food.”

Inflammation: The Language of the Immune System

The more scientists study the immune system, the more complex it appears to be. However, such complexity also means that this system can malfunction in numerous ways.

So how do we take care of our immune system? And how can we recognize when things go wrong?

Wangen believes that modern medicine’s microscopic perspective may actually get in the way of real healing. He remembers learning about leukocytes, cytokines, and all the other immune cell lingo when he was in medical school. But he came to see it more as a business model, rather than good medicine.

“They’re just taking it down to this molecular level and then creating drugs that will change different factors,” Wangen said. “But what does that mean in the big picture?”

When Wangen wants the big picture to immune problems he sees in his practice, his primary focus is inflammation: symptoms of redness, heat, and swelling.

“One of the fascinating things that we tend to neglect, and I don’t think the average person would have any idea about it, is that the immune system is what creates inflammation,” he said.

We typically see inflammation as something bad, and it definitely can be. But it also has a positive aspect that is vital to our health.

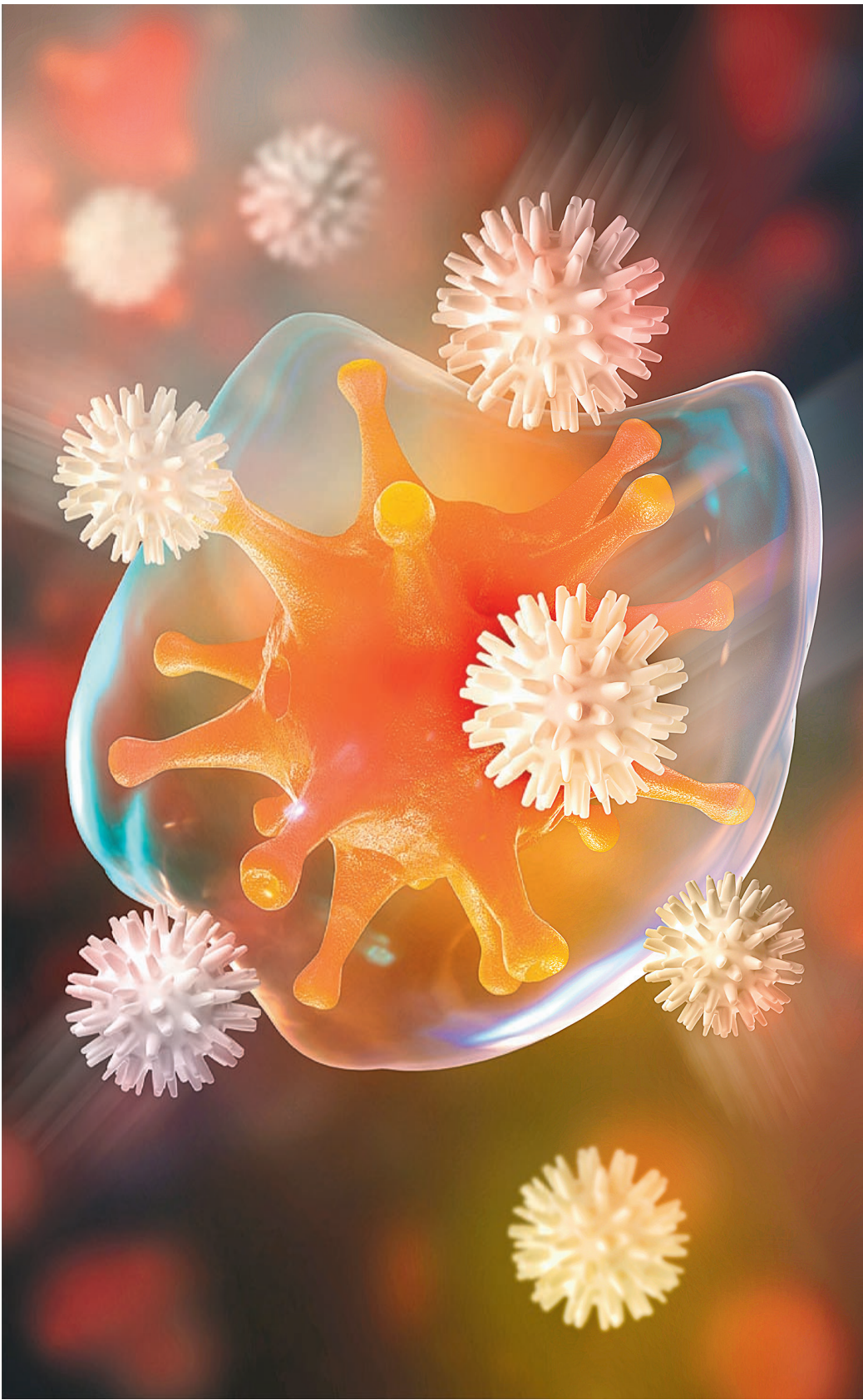
We need some inflammation for healthy immune function. It is a weapon our body uses to fend off infection, as well as an appropriate reaction to an injury. If you sprain your ankle or bump your head, swelling and redness results. This inflammatory response allows immune cells to get to the site quickly, clear out the damage, and rebuild healthy tissue.

However, inflammation is supposed to be a temporary state, because it can also be hard on the body if it rages for too long. Once the infection is defeated and the wound healing is underway, the swelling and redness are supposed to fade.

But when inflammation fires up at the wrong time, or your body becomes chronically inflamed—these are immune malfunction signals that demand attention. Otherwise, it will turn into disease.

“Almost everything is inflammatory, from dementia to cancer,” Wangen said. “If you dig deep, you start to find that all disease has an inflammatory foundation. I was surprised a few years ago hearing about decreased bone density in osteoporosis turns out to be an inflammatory process as well. Everything might be inflammatory at some level.”

The conventional treatment for excess



We are continually finding entirely new dimensions of the intricate system our body employs to fight off disease.

Surgeons used to routinely remove tonsils, adenoids, and the appendix because they did not understand their roles.

Modern medicine’s microscopic perspective may actually get in the way of real healing.

inflammation is anti-inflammatory drugs. But Wangen urges his patients to think instead about what might be behind their inappropriate inflammatory response. It could be something we know to promote inflammation, like unrelenting stress or excess sugar consumption, or it could be something unexpected—like a food that most of us would consider healthy.

“People can react to just about anything—dairy, eggs, almonds—you name it. It just depends on the person and how their immune system is responding to that food,” Wangen said. “When we figure it out, their digestive tract gets better. Their chronic sinusitis, headaches, or what have you, all get better.”

So why do some people suffer from numerous food allergies, and others seem to be able to eat anything without consequence? According to integrative physician Dr. Terry Wahls, we may all have the same basic parts, but the factors we’ve been exposed to are often drastically different.

“We all have a different set of microbial exposures, antibiotic exposures, and polluting chemical exposures. We have had a different set of lifestyle factors (sleep deprivation, physical and emotional stress),” Wahls said. “All those factors influence how readily my immune cells can protect me, and how readily they can repair and maintain me. If I can’t be repaired and maintained, then I go down the path of rapid aging, early cancers, and dying from infections. I have a shortened life span.”

In her practice, Wahls looks at a patient’s past to understand why their immune cells

NICOLETA IONESCU/SHUTTERSTOCK



got over activated. She then determines what can be done to get immune cells back to normal healing function. Often, all the patient needs are diet lifestyle changes. “We’ve been very successful with that,” Wahls said.

Old-Fashioned Immune Health

The immune system, as we understand it today, is a relatively recent construct. However, the idea that our body has the power to heal and protect itself from disease has been observed for millennia.

Compared to modern medicine’s increasingly complex picture of the immune system, the ancient ideas were very simple. Interestingly, these old concepts are starting to make a comeback.

If you look at ancient Chinese medicine, you won’t find mention of cytokines and T-cells, but you will find time-tested techniques on how to keep the body well.

“All the drugs, chemicals, and antibiotics we take in have impacted the microbiome. It’s changed how the immune system views the food.”

Stephen Wangen, a doctor who specializes in treating gut disorders

The oldest known book of traditional Chinese medicine—The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine—explains that the way to defend against seasonal illness is with abundant internal energy, known as qi. The book says that if you’re full of good qi, “no evils can invade.”

In this paradigm, in which the aim of good health is to embody the balance of nature, disease is merely evidence of living out of balance. One chapter in the Yellow Emperor book states, “Whenever the evils are gathered inside, a deficiency of healthy energy must be present.”

Gathering good qi simply means living in balance with nature, and practicing the basic tenets of good health: exercise, a healthy diet, reduce stress, etc. Chinese medicine includes very clear prescriptions for diet and lifestyle, including an emphasis on moderation, something that was also commonly proposed by health practitioners of other ancient traditions.

A few decades ago, modern medicine scoffed at the diet and lifestyle prescriptions of the past. But as new science validates old ideas, more doctors can see their value.

In her clinical research, Wahls has been able to show that lifestyle factors can have a profound effect on immune health. The four most significant factors she has found are eating vegetables, emotional connection, getting outside (the immune system needs ample vitamin D), and sufficient sleep.

“When we don’t get enough sleep, our immune cells are nowhere near as effective at protecting us against the various viruses that lay dormant in our brain and our body,” Wahls said. “That’s when these latent viruses can turn on and lead to chronic health problems.”

Wahls knows firsthand how valuable diet and lifestyle can be. It’s how she was able to resolve her multiple sclerosis—a debilitating disease where the immune system attacks and destroys the body’s own cells. The experience changed how she practiced medicine and clinical research. And the evidence is beginning to change the minds of other doctors.

“My conventional rheumatology, dermatology, and neurology colleagues are starting to realize that diet and lifestyle can be very effective in cooling off disease,” Wahls said. “But it takes a lot of patient education to help people understand, and take some effort to change their diet, to begin meditating, to pay attention to sleep, to give up foods that increase leaky gut, to eat more deeply colored vegetables, like carrots, beets, berries, and leave out the sugar.”

Wahls’ work helps bridge the divide between the simple lifestyle instructions of the ancient medical model with the proof we demand in modern times. She struggled for years to get her papers published, but she says now the tide is turning.

“This is the nature of human existence,” she said. “When we all have the understanding of our current constructs, it’s really hard to see something other than what you expect to see. It can be frustrating to the innovators on the cutting edge. But this is how life is.”

THE ROOT CAUSE

Mitochondria: This First Responder May Ease Chronic Inflammation

This organelle’s critical role combatting cellular stressors may help heal our misfiring immune system

ARMEN NIKOGOSIAN

Mitochondria are the microscopic power plants found in nearly all cells in the body and are responsible for producing most of the energy we use on a daily basis. While their energy-producing function is critical for normal cellular activity, it has been recently discovered that they also behave as “first responders” when the cell is exposed to chemicals, viruses, or other stressors that can damage DNA.

In a recent study published in Nature Metabolism, researchers found that mitochondria act as the first line of defense in sensing DNA stress. The mitochondria will sense that the cell is under attack and warn the rest of the cell to prepare to protect itself.

It has been theorized by other researchers that in these situations the mitochondria undergo something called the cell danger response (CDR). The CDR occurs when mitochondria detect a cellular stressor that induces them to shift from an energy-producing organelle to that of an inflammation-producing organelle. In an acute situation, such as an infection, this would assist the immune system in keeping the body in balance and help clear the stressor in a timely manner. The new findings that mitochondria play a role in the early detection of cellular stressors further supports the CDR theory.

While the primary purpose of this recent study was to find new cancer treatments that prevent tumors from becoming resistant to chemotherapy, we can use this information to further our search for achieving optimal health by improving energy production, maintaining immune balance, and, potentially, reducing chronic inflammation in our bodies.

Achieving optimal health is intricately linked to mitochondrial function for anyone over the age of 40.

Mitochondria are the batteries of the cell and dysfunction is present in a whole host of chronic conditions, most notably aging. After age 40, our mitochondria begin a process of natural decline that mirrors the deterioration of our bodies during the aging process.

Mitochondrial function is also depressed in chronically ill adults and the growing portion of children who are chronically ill.

Mitochondrial support with diet, lifestyle changes, and supplements is the first step in any successful effort to slow aging, or recapture energy and vigor. Supporting our mitochondria is also a foundational treatment for any chronic inflammatory condition.

In today’s world, we increasingly see signs of mitochondrial dysfunction at younger and younger ages. Chronic inflammation and the increase in chronic medication use in young people are leading causes of this early-onset dysfunction and should be a first consideration for doctors who treat patients with mitochondrial issues.

Mitochondrial support consists of diet, lifestyle factors, and replacing nutrients crucial to this important organelle.

Diet

Going gluten-free and eating a low-grain diet with reduced simple sugars can alleviate mitochondrial dysfunction. Adding high-quality dietary fats, anti-inflammatory nutrients, and certain “superfoods” known to enhance mitochondrial function can also help. These superfoods include almonds, avocados, grass-fed beef, coconut, olive oil, wild salmon, and green tea, to name a few.

Lifestyle

A sedentary lifestyle isn’t healthy for anyone, but it can be worse for someone suffering this affliction. Regular daily exer-

cise tailored to the unique needs of the individual can help. Another good habit is intermittent fasting or time-restricted eating, which gives the body proper time to rest and allows cells to carry out autophagy, which is essentially a process by which cells recycle themselves.

Supplements

Supplement treatments replace nutrients known to make the mitochondrial function more efficient. Some examples are coenzyme Q10, carnitine, alpha-lipoic acid, vitamin C, vitamin E, and others. Dosing is done based on weight and typically goes far beyond the RDA recommendations or standard dosing as recommended by supplement companies.

An experienced functional medicine practitioner should be able to formulate a mitochondrial support program suited to the unique needs of the individual and their associated problems.

While mitochondrial support has traditionally been used to improve symptoms such as fatigue, brain fog, and other issues centering around energy production, these new findings, which link mitochondria with the early response to cellular stress, may reveal completely new aspects for treatment.

Many patients with mitochondrial dysfunction have decreased immune response and recurrent infections. It was thought for many years that improved im-

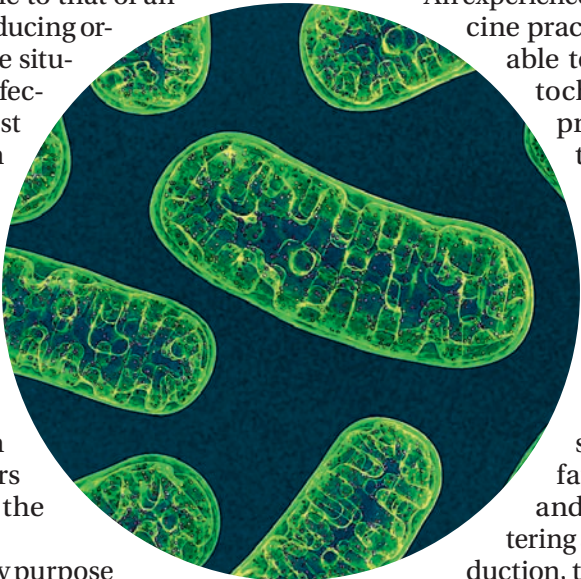
mune responses through mitochondrial support were related to better cellular energy efficiency, however, improvements in mitochondria’s “first responder” function much better explain this treatment outcome.

The diversity and power of our immune system is vast, with new aspects being discovered every year. What other immune functions can mitochondrial support improve? Although this recent study doesn’t delve into the intricacies of activating and deactivating inflammation, promptly reducing the inflammatory response should be possible with better mitochondrial function. A “first responder” should be able to sense when the cellular stressor has decreased or disappeared, allowing the immune system to turn off its attack more promptly.

Researchers have often observed chronic inflammation being reduced in patients through adequate mitochondrial support but didn’t have a mechanism to explain how this happened.

With these findings, we may have found this mechanism. With more than 60 percent of Americans possessing at least one condition associated with chronic inflammation, adding this new treatment to our toolbox may benefit millions of people.

Armen Nikogosian, M.D., 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.



Mitochondria, pictured above, exist within our cells and play a crucial role protecting our DNA.

Mitochondrial support with diet, lifestyle changes, and supplements is the first step in any successful effort to slow aging, or recapture energy and vigor.

Chronic inflammation and the increase in chronic medication use in young people are leading causes of this early-onset dysfunction.



Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (Gwaneum), Goryeo Dynasty, mid-14th century, Korea. Hanging scroll mounted as a panel; ink, color, and gold on silk. Gift of Charles Lang Freer.

Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara (Gwaneum) Korea, Goryeo Dynasty, circa 1220–1285. Gilt wood and gilt copper and iron with crystal inlays.



A Rare Beauty That Bestows Fearlessness for Buddhists

The deity Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara at the Smithsonian

LORRAINE FERRIER

Life can be hard. When faced with fear, crisis, and hardship, some Buddhists call out to Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara for help. Avalokiteshvara immediately responds by bestowing fearlessness, according to Chapter 25 of the Buddhist scripture known as the Lotus Sutra.

Stated in the same chapter:

He rains down sweet dew and Dharma rain,
Which extinguish the flames of affliction.

Dharma refers to the Buddha’s teachings that Buddhists believe to be the universal, eternal truth.

The Lotus Sutra mentions 33 different forms of Avalokiteshvara: male or female, human or nonhuman. Avalokiteshvara could be anyone from a god to a layman, a king to a beggar, an elder to a youth, or even a heavenly dragon, and all manner of spirits. Whatever form Avalokiteshvara takes is always the best for the situation at hand and the spiritual growth of the being seeking help. Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is known as the bodhisattva of infinite compassion and mercy.

Bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteshvara are on earth solely to save living beings from the pain and suffering that comes from being bound by the cycle of birth, life, and death—a cycle that Buddhists call samsara. Just as a mother selflessly puts her children’s needs before her own, so does the bodhisattva put the needs of all living beings first. As a high spiritual being, a bodhisattva has only one lifetime to undergo before obtaining the state of a supreme Buddha. And during that lifetime, the bodhisattva vows to attain enlightenment (spiritual awakening) in order to help others, a selfless act that Buddhists call bodhicitta.

Buddhists believe they will receive the blessings and protection of bodhisattvas by reciting mantras and bringing offerings to them at temples.

The name of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara changes from country to country, but each represents the same deity. Many may be familiar with the Chinese name Guanyin. In Korea, Avalokiteshvara goes by the name of Gwaneum.

A Korean 13th-Century Sculpture of Gwaneum

Right now, a rare sculpture of Gwaneum can be seen up close at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art. The devotional figure is on loan from the National Museum of Korea, in Seoul, and can be seen in the exhibition “Sacred Dedication: A Korean Buddhist Masterpiece” at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

The Gwaneum sculpture is believed to have been made for a temple around 1220–1285, late in Korea’s Goryeo period (918–1392).

Glistening from head to toe in gold, the wooden Gwaneum is carved, swathed in jewels and a simple silk robe, and topped with a stunning metal crown intricately rendered with lotus flowers, bejeweled flames, and wooden ribbons that seem to flutter. A jewel on Gwaneum’s third eye, between and slightly above his eyebrows, denotes one who sees with enlightened vision, that is, can see beyond our physical plane.

He sits almost nonchalantly with his left foot extending directly toward us and his right leg bent, raised to hip height and extended out to his side: a pose called rajalilasana—Sanskrit for royal-ease pose.

Not only is this Gwaneum the oldest known gilded wooden figure in an informal pose, but it also has a crown. To find a bodhisattva sculpture and crown surviving together is rare.

14th-Century ‘Water-Moon Avalokiteshvara’

To understand more about the Gwaneum figure, the Freer Gallery invites viewers to draw upon the painting “Water-Moon Avalokiteshvara” in its collection. Although the Gwaneum figure was made a century

prior to this Avalokiteshvara hanging scroll painting, it’s helpful to compare the two pieces of Goryeo period art.

In the painting, the bodhisattva is helping Sudhana, a young pilgrim, shown at the bottom left of the picture. The scene is from “Entry Into the Realm of Reality” in the Flower Garland Sutra, where Sudhana meets Avalokiteshvara as one of the 53 teachers that Bodhisattva Manjushri has told him to find on his path to enlightenment.

Just as a mother selflessly puts her children’s needs before her own, so does the bodhisattva put the needs of all living beings first.

In the painting, Avalokiteshvara is adorned with jewels similar to those of the wooden Gwaneum, but in the hanging scroll, Buddha Amitabha is clearly painted on Avalokiteshvara’s crown, something missing on the figure. On the gilt-wood Gwaneum, an empty space can be seen on the crown where it’s believed that the Buddha would’ve been secured on a separate metal plaque.

The bodhisattva in the painting is holding a set of crystal rosary beads in his right hand, leading scholars to believe that the wooden figure may have held some at one point in time. Avalokiteshvara has a halo in the painting and is encased in an oval called a mandorla, both signs of a divine being. These also may have been once a part of the wooden figure.

Avalokiteshvara is painted sitting on the rocky outcrop of his celestial home at Mount Potalaka, which some believe could be an island off the coast of West India. If the place sounds familiar, it’s because the Dalai Lama’s home Potala Palace in Tibet

is named after Potalaka. Tibetan Buddhists believe that each Dalai Lama is the reincarnation of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

Consecration Versus Curiosity

The exhibition also presents in-depth research about the figure from the National Museum of Korea, including how the figure was made and the dedication objects found inside.

Buddhists practice consecration ceremonies, which they believe invite the spirit of the enlightened being onto the figure being dedicated.

Inside the Gwaneum figure are two sets of dedication objects: One set dates from when the figure was made in the 13th century, and another set is from some 200 years later. Items inside include woodblock-printed Buddhist texts in Sanskrit, and objects symbolizing the Buddhist concept of the universe.

Some of the offerings inside are incomplete; perhaps their removal was deliberate in order to protect heavenly secrets at the time the figure was taken from the temple and out of worship.

As consecration is such a solemn practice, the laying out of these pieces from their revered context somehow undermines the exhibition’s aim to present how Buddhists once revered their beloved bodhisattva. For many Buddhists believe now, as they did then, in Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara’s ability to relieve suffering. In the words of the Lotus Sutra:

That for those who hear his name or see him,
And who are mindful of his name unceasingly,
He can extinguish the suffering of all realms of existence.

To find out more about the “Sacred Dedication: A Korean Buddhist Masterpiece” exhibition, which runs through March 22 at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art, Washington D.C., visit [Asia.Si.edu](#)

REACHING WITHIN: WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

Suffering and Sincerity in Bonnat’s ‘Job’

ERIC BESS

I recently saw Léon Bonnat’s painting “Job,” which powerfully represents the suffering and spirituality of Job. I decided to visit Job’s story in the Bible, and I came to deeply consider my relationship to my own sufferings.

Léon Bonnat

Léon Bonnat was a French academic painter during the 19th and early 20th centuries. He traveled to Spain to study Spanish Baroque art under Federico Madrazo before returning to Paris to study painting at the École des Beaux-Arts, the national school of art in France.

Instruction at the École, however, had become stagnant and abstract. Instructors were no longer teaching methods for creating art but were theorizing about art, and student work was suffering as a consequence.

According to art historian Alisa Luxenberg, “Bonnat saw three cancers within the academic system: partisanship, routine, and entitlement.” Students were often selected to win competitions because of favoritism and persistence instead of talent; they became lazy and felt entitled in an environment that fostered absolute and unvaried instruction.

In 1863, a decree was implemented to reform instruction at the École. Many of the faculty members resisted these reforms. But Bonnat, at this point a practicing artist, signed a letter to Napoleon III that supported the reforms. This signature created tensions between Bonnat and his colleagues.

The debates concerning the reforms were very tense. Artists were potentially sacrificing their future careers depending on what stance they took in relation to the reforms.

Later, Bonnat said this about signing the letter: “That blessed signature is in the process of causing me disagreements with all my friends. Where I only saw a question of transforming [the École’s] studies, wholly to their benefit, they see an act of profound intrigue, and they associate me with people who want to destroy the Institut, the Rome prizes, freedom itself and, consequently, . . . the death of art. It is very serious and I will have trouble getting out of it.”

Despite the tensions between Bonnat and his colleagues, he later became a professor and director at the École.

Interestingly, teaching caused Bonnat to question his original concerns with the instruction at the École. He came to reflect that perhaps being abandoned by his professor was not negligence at all. On the contrary, it was likely part of the training.

In reference to his atelier training, he stated:

“[Art instructor Cogniet] knew that one learns well only what one learns on one’s own, in trying, in seeking. He thought that mutual learning is the most efficient teaching, and finally and above all, he did not want to impose on his students his way of seeing, of understanding, and interpreting life.”

Bonnat endured professional hardships because he remained true to and sincere in his convictions. Yet he also was not dogmatic in his views but open to questioning them, and he came to believe that his greatest education in painting came not in the instruction that was provided but in the sincerity of one’s own efforts.

In 1880, Bonnat completed his painting of Job, after the reforms of 1863 but before he became a professor at the École in 1888.



Self-portrait of Léon Bonnat, 1855, at the age of 22. Orsay Museum.

Job’s Sufferings

Job is a biblical character of the Old Testament whose faith in God is tested due to great suffering caused by Satan. Job’s story is paraphrased as follows from the Book of Job:

Job is a very successful and blameless man who shuns evil and worships God. God asks if Satan has seen Job’s virtue and faith. Satan suggests that Job is virtuous and faithful only because he is successful; take away his success, and his virtue and faith will falter.

God, believing Satan to be wrong, allows Satan to take away Job’s successes. In one day, Job loses his sheep, servants, and children to thieves or natural disasters. Despite this, Job praises God.

Satan returns to God and suggests that Job still praises God only because his body has not been harmed. Satan then causes Job to have horrible boils and skin sores. Job’s wife asks him to renounce God and die. Job refuses and states the importance of accepting the good with the bad.

Three of Job’s friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar arrive to comfort him. At this point, Job curses the day he was born and believes he is living only to increase his suffering. Each of his friends tells him that his suffering must be the consequence of sinful behavior, and each explains God’s justice according to his own understanding.

Job, however, sure of his virtue, comes to question God’s justice. He denounces his friends’ accusations and demands to defend his virtue before God.

God reveals himself to Job and tells him that he, with his limitations, cannot understand the justice of God but must, nonetheless, trust God. Job agrees. God also tells the three friends that they were wrong about God and that Job was right. God was satisfied with Job, because Job is sincere with his questions and concerns. God restores Job’s health, gives him twice as much property as he had before, new children, and a long life.

Bonnat’s Depiction of Job

Bonnat depicted Job naked and alone on a background of darkness. He used baroque contrast of light and dark to illuminate the form of Job in front of the darkness. Job’s head tilts toward the heavens with a pleading look of suffering on his face, and his hands are stretched in front of him with his palms up as if he is preparing to receive something.

Though the composition is a simple one with a single figure, Bonnat arranged the figure in one of the most compositionally stable shapes: a triangle. Job’s head is the top of the triangle, his arms are the sides, and his legs are the bottom.

Why did Bonnat depict Job in the shape of a triangle? Why is Job depicted naked and alone? Why are his hands outstretched? What moment of Job’s story did Bonnat depict?

An Interpretation

I think Bonnat depicted the moment in which God reveals himself to Job. Job has called to God for a face-to-face meeting and God appears. Job receives God’s message with his hands outstretched.

Job is naked and alone because sincerity and honesty are necessary in order to meet with God. Thus, Job is shown in his bare truth as he meets with God.

Maybe this is why Job’s hands are outstretched with his palms up: It is only in his sincerity and honesty, in baring himself, that he is able to receive what God is to provide. Maybe the exposure of his palms is also an acceptance of trust in God’s justice.

This whole event is confusing and turbulent for Job, yet Bonnat depicted him in the shape of a stable triangle. Maybe, despite his sufferings and despite Satan’s role in the story, Job’s soul was always being taken care of by God. In this case, his sufferings may have appeared as unjust and therefore unstable. Is it possible that Job’s sincere and honest approach to his sufferings allowed him a deeper trust in God, a more stable faith?

Enduring Great Suffering

It is simply a fact of life that human existence goes hand-in-hand with suffering. Irrespective of wealth, class, race, or gender, we all suffer. How we deal with that suffering can define who we become as human beings.

It is tempting to want to blame our sufferings on others. It is often too convenient to say that “everything would be different if this one thing would change.” Another temptation is to use our sufferings to elevate ourselves: I am better than others because I suffer more. Both of these positions can lead one away from God.

What might it mean to approach our suffering sincerely and honestly? What might it mean to lay ourselves bare? Before requesting to

Why is Job depicted naked and alone? Why are his hands outstretched? What moment of Job’s story did Bonnat depict?

defend himself before God, Job first questions his own virtue and finds himself true to God’s law. Maybe this act—this introspection—contains within it what it means to approach our sufferings sincerely and honestly; maybe we must be honest with ourselves about our actions and their consequences and ask God the questions that are deep in our minds and hearts.

Like Job, Bonnat had to stay true to what he believed—in this case, what he thought to be good for the arts in France—despite pressure from his colleagues. Bonnat stuck to his guns as a supporter of reform as a means to promote actual instruction at the École, but this threatened his friendships and career in the process.

Despite this, however, he was eventually granted a professorship and directorship at the École. He was blessed through his sincere but plagued efforts, just as Job was later blessed after enduring his sufferings.

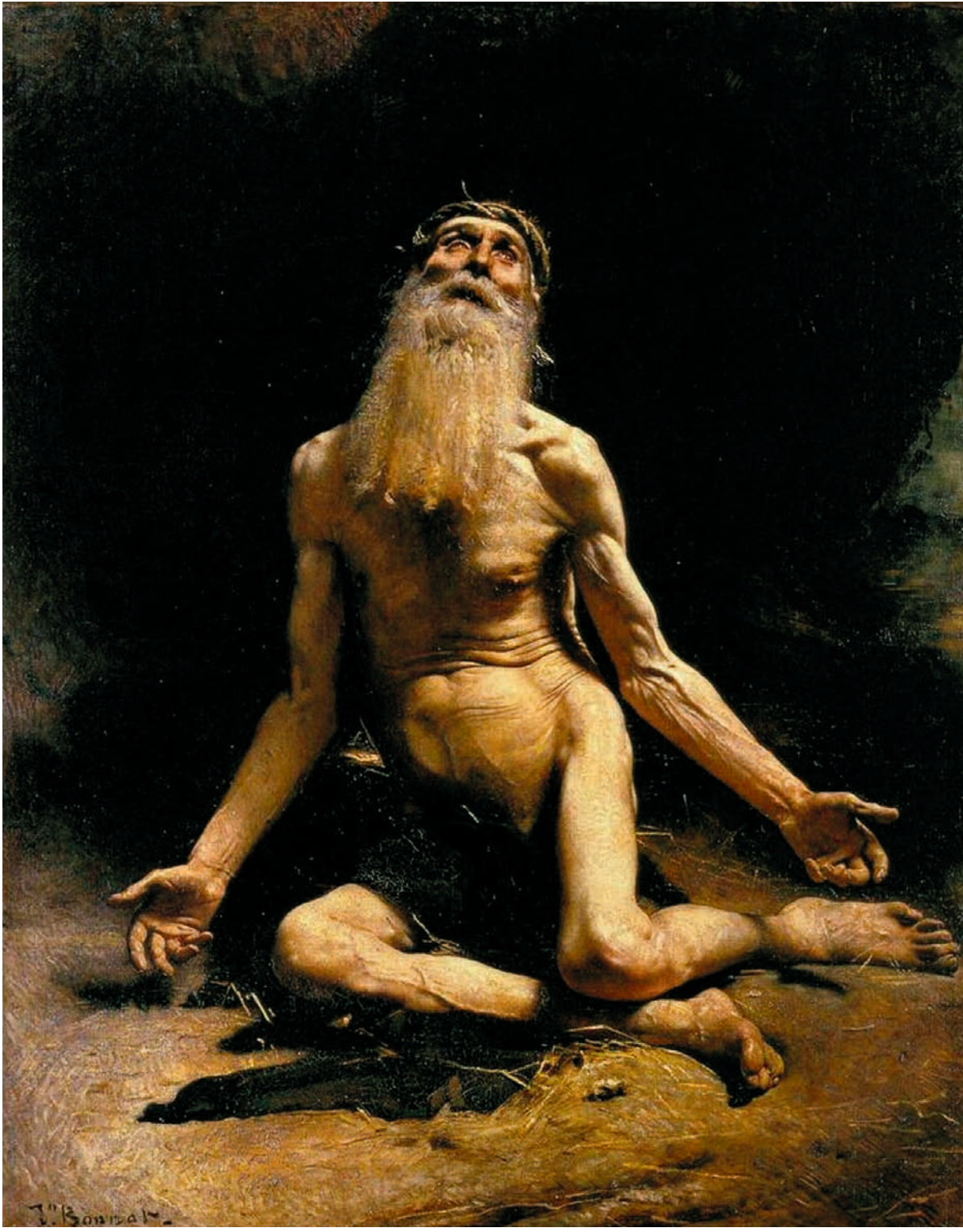
To me, Bonnat seemed more interested in sincerely helping the arts than in holding on to insincere views in order to save face, friendships, or his future. Job does the same in the presence of his friends: He approaches God sincerely and honestly, and God reveals himself to Job.

Moving forward, I will do my best to avoid blaming others for my suffering. I will also avoid elevating myself above others because of what I’ve suffered. There’s always someone who has suffered more than I have. Instead, I will share my sufferings with God in an honest and open way so that I may be fortunate enough to experience his blessings. Hopefully, I will have the wisdom to question my assumptions and stay sincere in my heart and mind despite the temptations around me.

Art has an incredible ability to point to what can’t be seen so that we may ask “What does this mean for me and for everyone who sees it?” “How has it influenced the past and how might it influence the future?” “What does it suggest about the human experience?” These are some of the questions we explore in our series Reaching Within: What Traditional Art Offers the Heart.

Eric Bess is a practicing representational artist. He is currently a doctoral student at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSV).

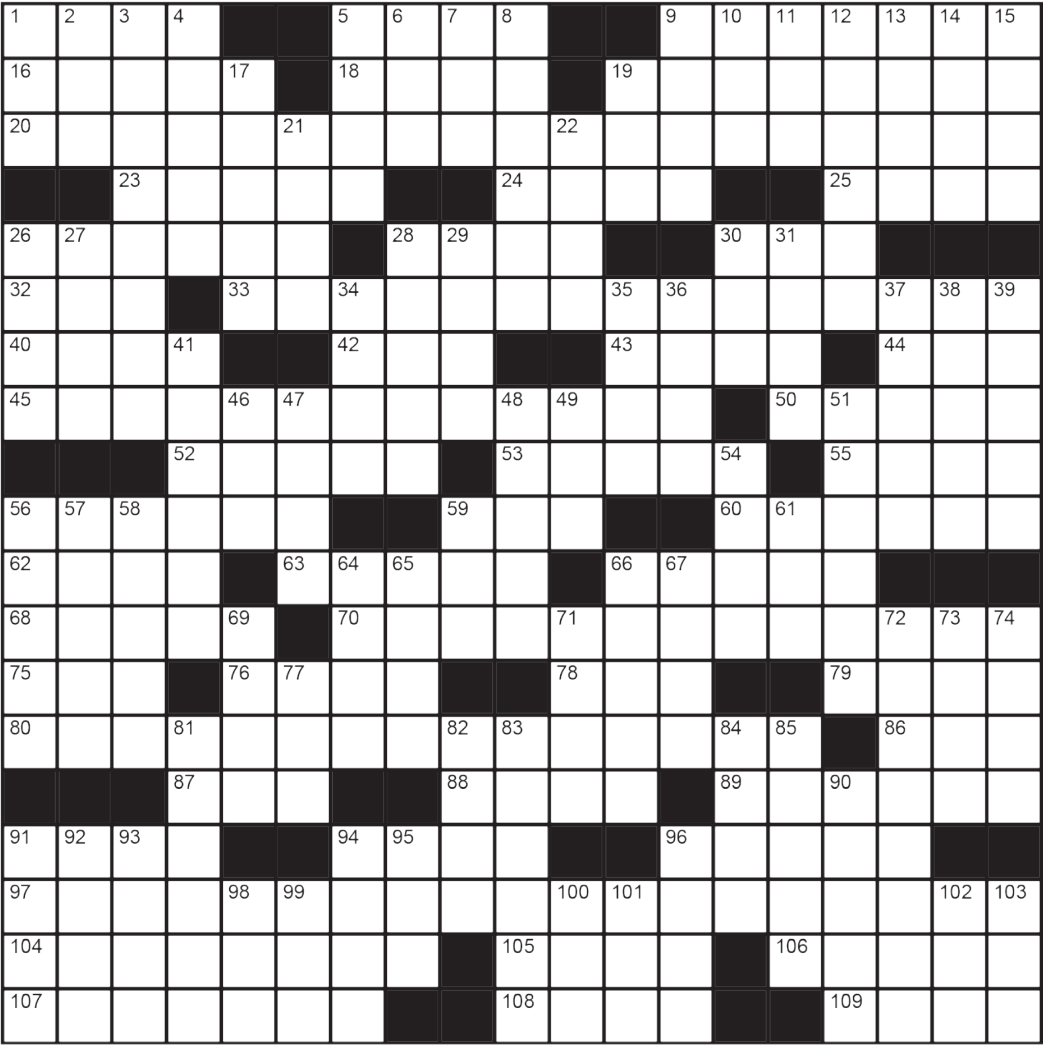
“Job,” 1880, by Léon Bonnat. Oil on canvas.



* 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. Thousandths of an inch
- 5. “Psych” finale
- 9. “Game of Thrones” hatchlings
- 16. Graphic symbols
- 18. Windows key
- 19. 9,600-cubic-mile volcano, the world’s largest
- 20. Baby Fae’s heart operation in 1984, e.g.
- 23. Complain
- 24. Renown
- 25. Time on end
- 26. Male reproductive organ
- 28. Astringent substance
- 30. Money for old age: Abbr.

- 32. Word to a doctor
- 33. French dessert
- 40. Stem
- 42. Destroy the interior of
- 43. “They was watchin ‘Yo! MTV Raps’ / What’s the ____ on the craps?”: Ice Cube
- 44. Haw’s partner
- 45. The positron and electron
- 50. Taper off
- 52. Blender setting
- 53. Moor
- 55. Neighbor of Turkmenistan
- 56. Chain of connected ideas
- 59. Clear

Down

- 60. Undercut
- 62. Lab gel
- 63. Automobile headlight holder
- 66. Egg cream ingredient
- 68. Zoroastrian
- 70. Unbiased
- 75. “Flying Down to ____”
- 76. Endorse
- 78. “All you can ____”
- 79. Days of ____
- 80. Over-reliance on academic reason
- 86. Latish lunchtime
- 87. “Natal” or “prene” preceder
- 88. It’s just for openers
- 89. “Play to his base...”
- 91. Duty

- 94. Sans purpose
- 96. CD forerunner
- 97. Where bread and water are served
- 104. Boudoir wear
- 105. Hot to trot
- 106. Hound’s trail
- 107. California export
- 108. Whirl
- 109. Cozy

Down

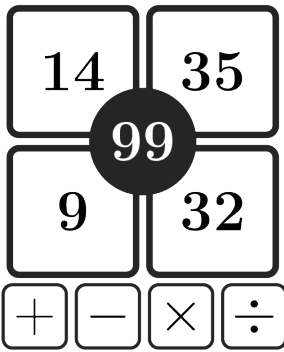
- 1. A little of this, a little of that
- 2. Hotel amenity
- 3. 10-1, for example
- 4. Sound of contempt
- 5. Arabian Sea nation
- 6. “____ O’Clock People” (Stephen King)
- 7. “I know some people” people
- 8. Coffee measure
- 9. Tycho Brahe, for one
- 10. Groove
- 11. “Inspiration of Japan” airline
- 12. French sponge cake
- 13. Mishmash
- 14. Twelve
- 15. Minus
- 17. Zeno follower
- 19. British parent, familiarly
- 21. Spate
- 22. “Lost Horizon” character
- 26. Acapulco appetizer
- 27. Make
- 28. Urgent
- 29. “An Iceland Fisher-man” author Pierre
- 30. Little troublemaker
- 31. Santa ____, CA
- 34. Tyrant
- 35. Companion of Artemis
- 36. Bridge position
- 37. Archaeological find
- 38. Caterpillar hairs

- 39. Fix
- 41. Bladed cleaners
- 46. Bit of paronomasia
- 47. 1973 ____ oil embargo
- 48. Some like it hot
- 49. Fronted
- 51. Diagnostic technique
- 54. German mister
- 56. Bay of Naples isle
- 57. Once more
- 58. Fortuneteller’s card
- 59. Hi-____ graphics
- 61. “‘Tis paid with sighs a plenty, and sold for endless ____”: Housman
- 64. Cutting part
- 65. Brass component
- 66. Played out
- 67. Himalayan legend
- 69. Vacation spot
- 71. In apple-pie order
- 72. “Later!”
- 73. Sea eagle
- 74. Does and bucks
- 77. Worldwide workers’ grp.
- 81. Banner
- 82. #1 on the Mohs scale
- 83. Break up a team?
- 84. Quick trip
- 85. Long tresses
- 90. “____, in thy orisons...”
- 91. Norse capital
- 92. Film genre
- 93. “Elbow,” in Latin
- 94. Tennessee’s state flower
- 95. Hair coloring
- 96. Kudzu-like
- 98. Young doe
- 99. “ Butterflies ____ Free”
- 100. Aussie outlaw Kelly
- 101. Spoon-____
- 102. Nancy, e.g.
- 103. Crack

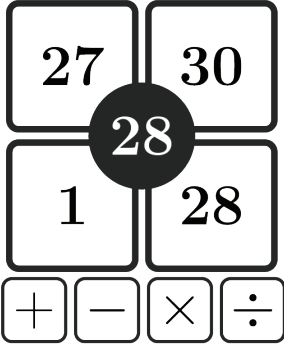
4NUMBERS

CONSTRUCTED BY C. CHANG
AT 4NUMS.COM

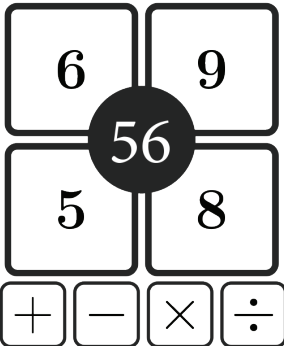
Use the four numbers in the corners, and the operands (+, -, X, and ÷) to **build an equation** to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one “unique” solution but, there may also be “equivalent” solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) +1 =28 and 1+ (7 X 3) + 6 =28



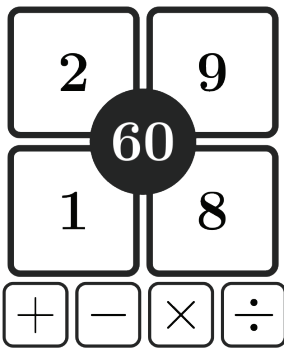
Hard 1 - 1 Solution



Hard 2 - 1 Solution



Easy 1 - 1 Solution



Easy 2 - 1 Solution

WORDSEARCH

CONSTRUCTED BY TOM HOUSTON
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Help with Today’s Crossword Puzzle?

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

ACUTE
AGAIN
BEZEL
CAPRI
CATENA
CHILI
CUPFUL
EMEND
ENSIGN
ERODED
GATEAU
GROAN

HEATH
ICONS
MANES
NYMPH
ORANGES
PANDER
PARSI
PUREE
SETAE
SHARD
SNORT
SPOOR

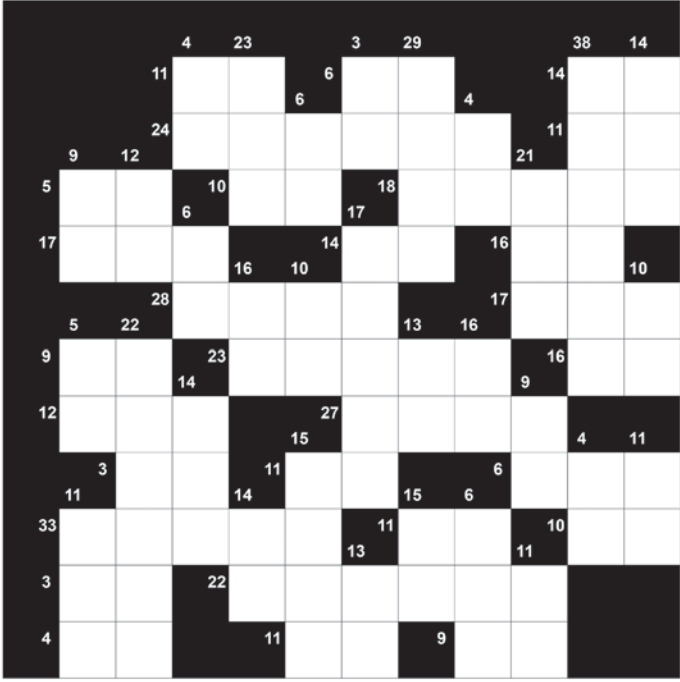
STALE
STOIC
SYRUP
TAROT
TESTIS
TOODLE-OO
UNYOKE
VINYL
WIPERS
ABATE
BIOPSY
LINGERIE

KAKURO

CONSTRUCTED BY EPOCH TIMES STAFF

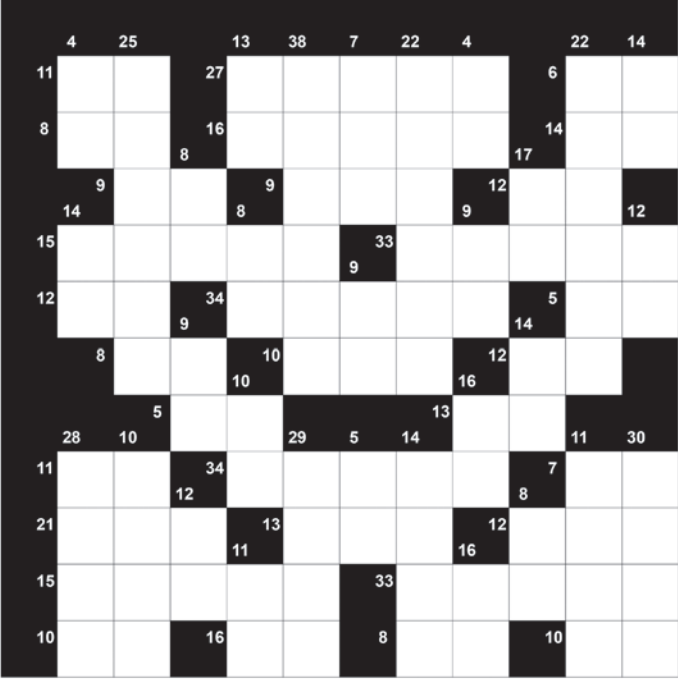
Kakuro puzzles are like crosswords that use numbers instead of words. The goal is to fill the blank squares associated with a clue (called a “run”) with the numbers 1-9 so that the numbers add up to the corresponding clues. Like Sudoku, digits in a run cannot repeat. When the grid is filled, the puzzle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

Large: Easy



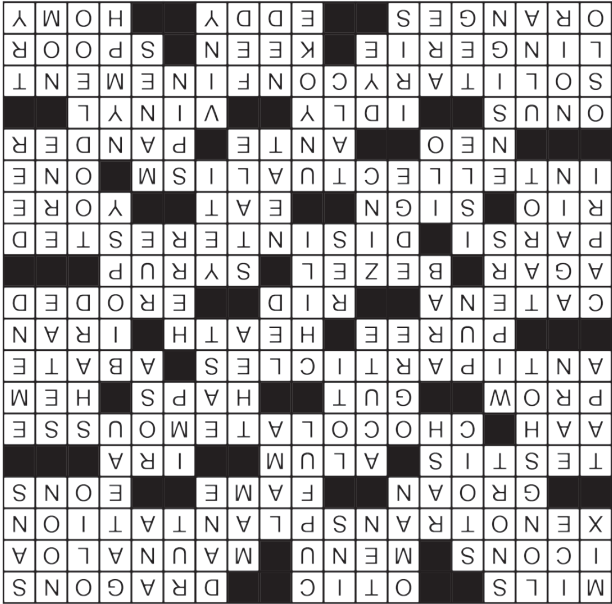
WORK SPACE

Large: Hard

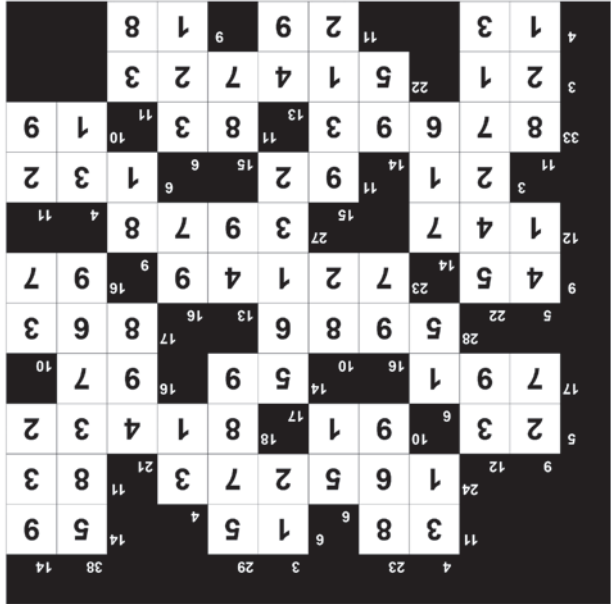


SOLUTIONS

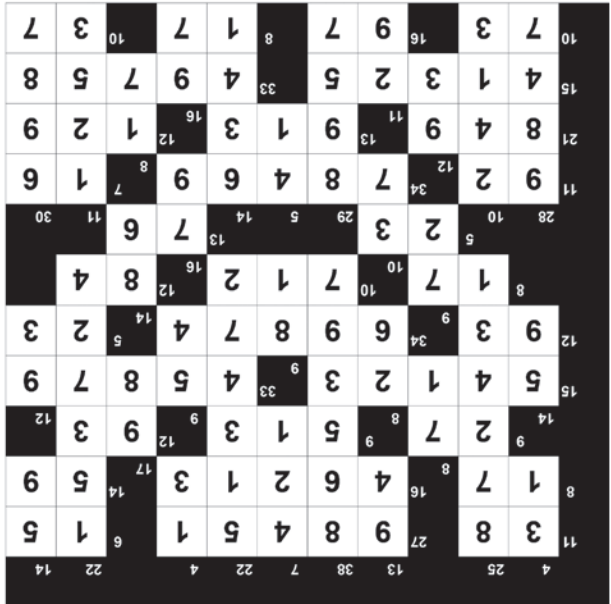
CROSSWORD



KAKURO LARGE: EASY



KAKURO LARGE: HARD



4 NUMBERS

- HARD 1
 $6 \times (32 + 14 - 35) = 9$
- HARD 2
 $30 + 27 - 28 - 1 = 1$
- EASY 1
 $(9 - 5) + 6 \times 8 = 59$
- EASY 2
 $(9 + 1) \times (8 - 8) = 0$

FOOD IS MEDICINE

Honey Reduces Risk of Heart Disease

Honey can have an opposite and healthy impact on cholesterol as compared to sugar



Honey has an unprecedented history of use as food and medicine, stemming back as far as recorded history.

Got a sweet tooth that you just can’t squash? Relax. Nature has provided a healthy way to satisfy your sugar cravings.

In a cooperative effort between researchers at the medical sciences departments of Iran’s Isfahan University and Mashhad University, honey has been shown to aid the body in healthy processing of fats by decreasing the overall amount of cholesterol and fats in the bloodstream. The study was published in August 2018 in the journal of the European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN), Clinical Nutrition ESPEN.

Researchers were inspired by previous studies that demonstrated honey’s beneficial effects on cardiovascular disease symptoms. Their chief aim was to investigate whether the effect of honey consumption on overall lipids in the blood was markedly different than the effects of sucrose, or table sugar, on the blood lipid profiles of 60 young, healthy male subjects.

Good Fats Are Key to Heart Health

A lipid profile also called a coronary risk panel, is a blood test that measures total blood triglycerides including high-density lipoproteins (HDL), often referred to as “good cholesterol,” and low-density lipoproteins (LDL), commonly known as “bad cholesterol.” In truth, there is only one “type” of cholesterol, a molecule that is incapable of dissolving in blood. In order to transport cholesterol to the various cells throughout the body, lipoproteins such as LDLs and HDLs act as cholesterol carriers.

LDLs may have earned their bad reputation due to the fact that once they have deposited their cholesterol load, they become small enough to burrow into the linings of arteries where they can oxidize, resulting in damaging inflammation. Conversely, one of HDL’s functions is to carry anti-oxidative

enzymes to cells where they may help neutralize potential harm done by depleted LDLs’ oxidation.

The blood lipid profile is a primary screening tool for assessing an individual’s risk of developing coronary heart disease. The word “lipids” refers to fats and fat-like substances that are key regulators of cellular activity, such as the energetic functions of your body.

The effectiveness of this cellular transport system is dependent on having the right amount of healthy fats in your bloodstream. If an imbalance occurs, excess cholesterol may get deposited into the walls of blood vessels, eventually leading to atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, which can cause heart attack and stroke due to blocked blood flow to the heart and brain.

The main finding of this study, noted researchers, was ‘the ability of natural honey to modulate some of the risk factors of cardiovascular disease.’

In the focus study, 60 male subjects between the ages of 18 and 30 were randomly recruited and assigned to one of two groups: honey (experimental) and sucrose (control). Participants were included in the study if they were healthy, non-athletic, and a non-smoker. Participants were excluded if they already consumed a large amount of honey in their daily life, took any sort of medication, or had recently undergone major diet and lifestyle changes.

Body mass index (BMI) was measured and participants’ physical activity was self-reported via the International Physical Activ-

ity Questionnaire (IPAQ), a survey that assesses walking time, moderate and vigorous physical activities, and time spent sitting throughout a typical week.

The experimental group received 70 grams of natural honey per day, while the control group received 70 grams of sucrose per day for a period of six weeks. Fasting lipid profile, including total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, LDL and triacylglycerol, was determined for each subject at the beginning of the trial (baseline) via a 5-milliliter blood sample, which was collected in the morning after a 12-hour fasting period.

The lab tests were repeated after the six-week intervention period was complete. All 60 participants successfully completed the trial, and in the final analysis confounding variables including age, physical activity, and some nutrient intake were adjusted.

Honey Improves Cholesterol While Table Sugar Is Toxic
Participants’ initial baseline measurements for fasting blood sugar, systolic blood pressure, and diastolic blood pressure were not different between the honey and sucrose groups, indicating that there were no significant pre-existing differences between the groups at the beginning of the study. After the final blood lipid profiles were produced, researchers compiled the following findings:

- Consumption of honey decreased total cholesterol and LDL and increased the presence of HDL in the blood.
- Consumption of sucrose had the inverse effect, increasing total cholesterol and significantly raising LDL levels, while decreasing HDL in the blood.

In summary, total cholesterol significantly decreased in the honey group compared with the beginning of the trial, while total cholesterol increased in sucrose group. LDL cholesterol was de-cholesterol increased in the sucrose and increased by sugar intake. Honey also increased HDL cholesterol in the blood, while sucrose decreased the presence of this healthy fat.

The main finding of this study, noted researchers, was “the ability of natural honey to modulate some of the risk factors of cardiovascular disease.” According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States with one person dying from cardiovascular disease every 37 seconds. Researchers called for further clinical trials to confirm their promising results.

Honey: Nature’s Oldest Health Food

Honey has an unprecedented history of use as food and medicine, stemming back as far as recorded history. It has been found

in ancient Egyptian tombs, still perfectly preserved, and in cave art dating back some 8,000 years. Honey contains many active biological constituents including polyphenols, which are nutritionally dense phytochemicals that have antioxidant properties.

Many studies have confirmed that polyphenols provide a protective effect against diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arterial diseases, and more. There are more than 200 abstracts on GreenMedInfo.com extolling the numerous health benefits of consuming pure, raw honey. Members can access GreenMedInfo’s in-depth research tools and learn more about how honey is one of nature’s most miraculous foods.

The GMI Research Group is dedicated to investigating the most important health and environmental issues of the day. Special emphasis will be placed on environmental health. Our focused and deep research will explore the many ways in which the present condition of the human body directly reflects the true state of the ambient environment. This work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of GreenMedInfo LLC. Want to learn more from GreenMedInfo? Sign up for their newsletter at www.GreenmedInfo.health



Walking your grandchild to and from school is a great way to get some gentle exercise.

MADE TO MOVE

How to Keep Things Moving When Suffering from Joint Pain

DEVON ANDRE

The last thing you want to do when your joints hurt is exercise. In fact, you might not even want to hear about it.

But it helps. In fact, it might help more than anything.

The right exercises performed properly might be the solution for any type of joint

pain. I’m talking ankle, knee, hip, shoulder, and elbow. And the stuff that works doesn’t even have to be specialized. Simply getting more activity can relieve pain and potentially delay or prevent the need for surgery.

There is one caveat to the effectiveness of exercise, and that’s consistency. If it’s not a regular part of your life, it won’t do much

VA’s Keto Test for Diabetic Patients Raises Warning From Skeptics

Silicon Valley startup promotes high-protein and high fat diet program with known nutritional deficiencies

JASPER CRAVEN

A partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs and Silicon Valley startup Virta Health Corp. is focusing attention on the company’s claim that it provides treatment “clinically-proven to safely and sustainably reverse type 2 diabetes” without medication or surgery.

The assertion is at the heart of an ongoing debate about the keto diet’s effect on diabetes. Some diabetes experts are skeptical of Virta’s promise and are expressing concerns that the company’s partnership with the federal government is giving the diet too much credence.

The agreement has helped raise the national profile of Virta, a fledgling health company that has developed a proprietary system of remote coaching and monitoring for people with Type 2 diabetes to help them follow the keto diet, which is high in fat and low in carbohydrates.

Despite its strict requirements, the keto diet has gained popularity in recent years with consumers and studies noting it helps shed pounds and can lead to improved health. But the company’s claim about reversing diabetes is unusual. Type 2 diabetes is often linked to excess weight, and the company said its studies suggest that significant weight loss through keto can lower patients’ blood sugar and their need for diabetic medications.

The diet has won support among some diabetes researchers and patient groups. But other public health advocates are concerned that the science of treating diabetes with a keto diet is not well studied. They worry about keto’s effect on the heart and the scarcity of vegetables and fruits generally in the diet.

In a press release announcing the collaboration, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said Virta’s regimen would help the department create “a more comprehensive approach to care.”

Under the accord, Virta is providing its services free to about 400 VA patients for a year while federal officials evaluate the service and their health.

In November, Virta announced in a news release that the initial 90-day results were promising. It said veterans reported weight loss, reduced blood sugar, and lower reliance on diabetes medication.

But Virta declined to provide KHN with underlying data, citing the need to protect patient information. It did arrange an interview with its then-chief counsel and vice president of finance, Anand Parikh. He said he expected the partnership with the VA to soon expand. Parikh, who left the company in December, said that future government collaboration will likely involve payment to Virta but that it was too early to estimate a price. The treatment currently costs other patients \$370 per month, plus a one-time \$500 initiation fee.

A VA spokesperson did not respond to detailed written questions concerning the partnership.

The VA runs the country’s largest integrated health care system and is considered a leader in diabetes care. Roughly 25 percent of its patients have the disease, which is twice the national average. Inside the VA, diabetes is the leading cause of blindness, renal disease, and amputations.

Virta offers diet coaching, monitoring, and support through a smartphone application. Patients can use the services around the clock and regularly upload their blood sugar readings and other medical details, such as weight and blood pressure.

“One of the most important things about our approach is that we individualize for



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

The keto diet’s focus on fat and protein makes for a tasty breakfast, but lacks complete nutrition.

Many health experts said there is little evidence the diet can produce long-term results that ameliorate diabetes.



Some studies suggest that low-fat diets with plenty of plant-based nutrition, like the Mediterranean diet, produce similar results and have fewer health risks.

each person,” Parikh said.

The VA’s work with Virta has raised alarm bells, including on Capitol Hill.

In October, Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.) sent a letter to Wilkie saying that the “partnership between the VA and Virta Health Corporation provides tacit approval of the ketogenic diet as a means to reverse the impacts of type 2 diabetes.” His letter also added, “Promoting a ketogenic diet for patients with diabetes may put them at increased health risk.”

Neither Gottheimer nor his staff returned repeated requests for comment about what prompted his letter.

Virta’s Studies Find Benefits of Keto

Virta officials first floated the idea of a partnership during President Barack Obama’s administration. A deal was finalized last year after former Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), who is now a Washington lobbyist, signed up to work for the company. Miller retired from his seat in January 2017 after serving as the powerful chairman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee for six years.

The day after registering as a lobbyist for Virta, Miller sent a note to Darin Selnick, then a senior VA political appointee, with proposed language for an agreement between Virta and the VA, according to emails obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. Selnick reviewed it, then passed it along to an official in the VA’s research department.

Parikh said the VA thoroughly evaluated Virta’s research before the deal was done. The partnership was announced in May.

Virta was founded in 2014 by venture capitalist Sami Inkinen after doctors told him he had signs of a prediabetes condition. Joining him were Dr. Stephen Phinney and Jeff Volek, who researches low-carb diets. The two had written a book about the Atkins diet, which also emphasizes severely limiting carbohydrates and turning to some high-fat foods.

A spokesperson for the American Diabetes Association declined to comment on Virta’s treatment regimen but pointed to an article in its magazine that noted some benefits of a keto diet, such as lowering blood sugar and

weight, while listing its potential drawbacks, including missing nutrients, risk of dehydration, and high cost.

Still, many health experts said there is little evidence the diet can produce long-term results that ameliorate diabetes.

Moreover, some studies suggest that low-fat diets with plenty of plant-based nutrition, like the Mediterranean diet, produce similar results and have fewer health risks. The VA’s clinical guidelines for diabetes care, while acknowledging potential benefits of low-carb diets like keto, make clear that “the evidence in support of the Mediterranean diet was more uniform and robust than that for the lower carbohydrate dietary approaches.”

Proponents of the keto diet note that a vegetarian option is also available.

Virta’s website lists six research papers as proof that the company’s assistance for diabetes results in significant improvements in various clinical markers of diabetes, including obesity and blood sugar levels.

The papers were peer-reviewed, yet they are all based on a single, non-randomized clinical trial of 262 patients, which was funded by Virta. Among the authors of these papers are Volek and Phinney.

In April, two Virta consultants co-authored a journal article reviewing various studies and said they showed that low-carb diets were “effective in reversing diabetes in the short term.”

Concerns About Missing Nutrients in the Diet

Dr. Randall Stafford, who directs Stanford University’s Program on Prevention Outcomes and Practices, reviewed Virta’s research and called the results “encouraging.” Yet he said the control group was “fairly useless, given that it was composed of people who did not want to change their diets.”

Stafford said results don’t suggest that Virta’s treatment alters diabetes.

“My interpretation is that the keto diet is a temporizing measure, not a cure,” he said.

In April, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, a nonprofit research and advocacy organization that advocates for plant-based diets, urged Wilkie in a letter to cancel the Virta partnership.

“The company’s approach is to place patients with diabetes on a low-carb ketogenic diet,” the letter reads. “At best, this type of diet may act as a ‘Band-Aid’ for diabetes, yet it carries serious health risks,” including higher cholesterol levels and nutrient deficiencies.

A large study by the European Society of Cardiology published in 2018 found those who ate a low-carbohydrate diet were at greater risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

In an opinion article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Dr. Shivam Joshi, a lifestyle medicine physician associated with NYU Langone Health, suggested that Virta’s April review of studies should “be interpreted with caution” as the group of participants was self-selecting and said the review “presents an overly enthusiastic narrative” that passed over studies critical of the ketogenic lifestyle.

“Any diet can be effective when bundled with intense lifestyle interventions,” Joshi said in an interview. “The real question needs to be over the long-term benefits of the diet itself.”

Jasper Craven is a freelance journalist. KHN’s coverage of these topics is supported by The John A. Hartford Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and The SCAN Foundation. This article was first published by Kaiser Health News.

for you. This can be a big problem because the hardest parts of an exercise routine are getting started and making time.

To get your daily dose of exercise, you’ll need a plan and a little motivation. Here are four ways to help you include activity into your day to promote healthier pain-free joints.

Make time: If you’re spending a lot of time in front of the television, start replacing a few of your less enjoyable 30-minute sitcoms with exercise. If sports are your thing, go for a walk during the pre-game show or at breaks in the game. You can also exercise while watching.

If your day is too packed, think about getting up 30 minutes earlier. Using that

extra half hour can allow you some time to get up and at it, or at least clear some space later in the day. If you can’t piece together 30 straight minutes, split exercise into three 10 or two 15 fifteen-minute intervals.

Remove your options: You can build exercise into your day by electing to make a few sacrifices. Start taking the stairs instead of elevators or escalators, for example. Get off the bus or subway a couple of stops early and walk the rest of the way. Walk to run errands in reasonable distances, or choose a parking space that allows you to walk to multiple locations. When talking on the phone, walk around, or perform movements like ankle extensions.

Find a buddy: Working out with a partner can make things more enjoyable and keep you more accountable.

Find alternatives: If the weather is a drawback, you don’t have to exercise outside. People put off by cold or damp temperatures can drive to the local mall to do laps, find a gym close by, or take an exercise class.

Activity has the potential to relieve joint pain now and into the future!

Devon Andre holds a bachelor’s of forensic science from the University of Windsor in Canada and a Juris Doctor from the University of Pittsburgh. This article was first published on Bel Marra Health.

Walk to do errands in reasonable distances, or choose a parking space that allows you to walk to multiple locations.



FROM THE TUSCAN TABLE

Acquacotta, a Peasant Soup From the Maremma

Eggs and cheese add modern richness, but stale bread and bare-bones vegetables remain at the heart of Tuscany’s humble ‘cooked water’

GIULIA SCARPALEGGIA

In the Maremma, a rugged stretch of Italy’s western central coast, you will find a Tuscany that you do not expect. It is far from the Renaissance splendor of Florence, or the stereotype of the Chianti hills covered with vineyards and olive groves. The Maremma is the land of Tuscan cowboys, the butteri, of buffaloes and cattle with half-moon-shaped horns. It is wild; it stretches from sandy coasts with pine forests to wooded hills up to Mount Amiata. Here you will experience that thrilling feeling of discovering a region for the first time, laying your eyes upon a landscape of hills sloping toward the sea not yet touched by hundreds of tourists before you. Here you will feel at home, welcomed by the region’s practical and straightforward hospitality. You can visit dairies and organic farms, markets on the seafront and sagre, the local food festivals. It is a land of foraged mushrooms, of wild boar and game meat, of the famed tortelli maremmani, the large spinach and ricotta-stuffed pasta. But a dish that better represents Maremma is its iconic bread soup, the humble acquacotta.

Humble Origins
Formerly a swampy marshland, the Maremma area was considered unhealthy and dangerous, a place where one could easily die of disease or hunger. When the area was plagued by malaria, people took refuge from the marshy plains high up in hilltop towns like Pitigliano, Sorano, Capalbio, and Massa Marittima. Extensive redevelopment works later revitalized Maremma. Though it lay abandoned for centuries, the Maremma was a destination for seasonal workers from the Amiata, Casentino, and Apennine mountains, who would descend from their mountainous homes in the winter to make charcoal. Acquacotta is a nomad dish that followed the people from Mount Amiata who traveled to the plains of Maremma each winter in search of work, bringing with them only a few ingredients. Literally “cooked water,” acquacotta is a perfect example of Tuscan peasant cooking. This cucina povera relies on ingredients such as stale bread, seasonal vegeta-

This cucina povera relies on ingredients such as stale bread, seasonal vegetables, beans, and cheap cuts of meat—and on the resourcefulness and ingenuity of Tuscan housewives.



The Maremma, one of the wildest areas of Tuscany.

bles, beans, and cheap cuts of meat—and on the resourcefulness and ingenuity of Tuscan housewives, who could turn wilted greens and leftover bread, used down to the last crumb, into delicious and nutritious dishes. Acquacotta is one of many dishes that feature stale bread and seasonal vegetables as their main ingredients. Others include pappa al pomodoro, a tomato bread soup; panzanella, a tomato and cucumber bread salad; and the iconic ribollita, a bean and Tuscan kale soup thickened with slices of stale bread. **How to Make It** The basic ingredients for acquacotta are water, onions, stale bread, a drop of olive oil, and salt. I should list time as one of the main ingredients, too, as the soup is so bare that the only way to extract flavor is to use time. You begin with plenty of finely chopped onions, cooked in a large pan in a few tablespoons of olive oil until soft and translucent, so that they can reveal their sweetness. There’s often chili pepper in this soffritto, the sautéed onion in olive oil. Though Tuscan cooking usually relies on black pepper rather than chili pepper, which is a more Southern ingredient—think to Calabria and its love for extremely spicy food—in the local food of Maremma, you often find the unmistakable heat of a pinch of chili. Sometimes, when in season, you can add a few leaves of basil to the soffritto, too. Apart from the basics, the ingredients change according to the season. Celery is very common: chop a few stalks, without the leaves, and add them into the pot along with the sautéed onions. Tomatoes are typically added, either the canned, peeled variety or those small, thick-skinned vine tomatoes kept for months in a barn. Carrots, which might normally be paired with celery in soups, are seldom used, as they tend to make the acquacotta too sweet. Many families add seasonal leafy vegetables, such as Swiss chard or spinach; foraged herbs would be a perfect complement to a seasonal acquacotta, too. Bountifully available in the wild and slightly bitter, they would benefit from a long cooking, to soften their stringy texture. Simmer all the vegetables on the lowest heat, until you get a chunky, flavorful soup. Then, place a slice of stale bread at the bottom of a bowl; you can toast it or

rub it with garlic, if you like. Pour the soup with a ladle over the bread, adding enough broth to soak it through. This is for a poor acquacotta, probably very close to the original recipe, made with the simplest ingredients you could find in the back of your pantry or in the wild. Nowadays, in some local trattorias, you can even find on the menu an acquacotta made with stock instead of water, which is quite curious, as such a recipe loses one of its basic pillars, and the very reason for its name. Given that the times are not as meager as they used to be in the Maremma, eggs and pecorino cheese have become key ingredients for acquacotta, too. The eggs are poached directly in the soup, just before serving: cook them until the whites are thick and the yolk runny. Finish the soup with a generous dusting of pecorino, the typical sheep’s milk cheese of the Maremma region, and if you have some fresh ricotta, stir a spoonful into your bowl—it will immediately thicken the soup and add a delicate, milky flavor.

ACQUACOTTA

SERVES 4

5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

4 yellow onions, finely chopped

Dried chili pepper or red pepper flakes, to taste

4 stalks celery, finely chopped

1 cup white wine

2 400g tins whole peeled tomatoes

8 cups warm water

Salt

4 eggs

4 slices stale bread

Aged Pecorino Toscano

In a large pot over low heat, add the olive oil, chopped onions, and dried chili pepper. Brown the onions for about 10 minutes. When the onions are translucent and begin to caramelize, add the finely chopped celery and sauté for 10 more minutes, stirring often.

Pour in the white wine and cook off the liquid on low heat for another 10 minutes.

Break up the tomatoes with your hands and add them into the pot, along with the water. Stir and adjust for salt. Cook on very low heat for about 1 hour, stirring from time to time to keep it from drying out too much.

When the soup is ready, crack in the eggs. Cover the pot and let them poach directly in the soup, until the whites are set.

To serve the acquacotta, place a slice of bread in each bowl, top with a poached egg, and ladle the chunky soup all around it. Finish with a generous dusting of grated pecorino cheese.

Recipe by Giulia Scarpaleggia
Giulia Scarpaleggia is a Tuscan born and bred food writer, food photographer, and author of five cookbooks, including "From the Markets of Tuscany." Find her online at her blog, JulsKitchen.com

ASK AN EXPERT

A Gentle Introduction to the World of Wine

Aldo Sohm, world-class sommelier of New York City's Le Bernardin, offers advice

ANDREW THOMAS

When it comes to wine, it's difficult to know where to start. The variety of grapes and appellations alone is enough to make your head spin, and figuring out what to smell and taste for, or how to pair a bottle with food, just adds to the confusion. Throw in etiquette, and you might find yourself entirely lost.

Fortunately, we have experts to guide us. Enter Aldo Sohm, master sommelier at Eric Ripert's critically acclaimed Le Bernardin in New York City, and the director of his own Aldo Sohm Wine Bar, steps away from the restaurant. In an effort to answer the many questions he's received on the job, and to share his passion for wine with others and encourage newcomers to find their own, Sohm recently released a new book, "Wine Simple: A Totally Approachable Guide from a World-Class Sommelier."

Originally from Austria, Sohm began waiting tables at age 19. During his third job working at the front of the house, he was waiting on a Swiss couple who were passionate about food and wine, when they asked Sohm what they should have to drink with their meal. Perplexed and unable to provide an answer, Sohm began to research the world of wine, reading as much as he could on the subject.

Sohm quickly became passionate about wine, and immersed himself in literature and tastings. At age 20, he was able to secure a job at Hotel Arlberg Hospiz, which was well-known for its wine program, and was permitted to join all of the wine tastings as long as he set up and broke down.

After a trip to Florence, Italy and an arduous two years of study, Sohm received his sommelier diploma in 1999. Five years later, he arrived in New York in 2004 to work for Kurt Gutenbrunner's restaurant Wallsé. In 2007, Sohm won the Best Sommelier in America competition, and the next year, was



Aldo Sohm, master sommelier at Le Bernardin in New York City.

crowned the Worldwide Sommelier Association's Best Sommelier in the World.

I had an opportunity to speak with Sohm about his new book, and learn about the vast world of wine from grape to glass.

The Epoch Times: What motivated or inspired you to write “Wine Simple?”

Aldo Sohm: Wine can be very intimidating. As a sommelier I see this every day at work at Le Bernardin and Aldo Sohm Wine Bar. I wanted to help make it more approachable and fun as well as provide my opinion.

The Epoch Times: Why do you think the world of wine can be intimidating for people? How can they become less intimidated?

Mr. Sohm: It's a very complex topic—and on top of that, try reading a German wine label, let alone a Greek one. With "Wine Simple" I wanted to point out that you don't have to be a dedi-

cated sommelier to enjoy wine. Sometimes you don't want it to be a complicated science and just want to have a good glass of wine.

The Epoch Times: How did you determine how to structure the book? And why did you decide to make it so visual, including so many illustrations and infographics?

Mr. Sohm: The moment learning becomes playful, it becomes fun. With "Wine Simple," we're providing the information in easy, digestible bites. Whether you read it for an hour or simply open it for 20 seconds you can take something from it. The illustrations help give a certain lightness to it.

The Epoch Times: What are some common myths and misconceptions about wine?

Mr. Sohm: One myth: White wine with fish and white meat, and red wine with dark meat. For example, a domestic pinot nor works just great with grilled salmon, or a light red such as chianti would work well with roasted chicken breast with some tomato sauce, because of the sauce. There's a classic Austrian dish called Tafelspitz, a boiled beef and broth, which is typically served with white wine. The bottom line is that it makes a difference whether the protein is poached, roasted, or grilled. The sauce also has a major influence on the pairing.

The Epoch Times: What questions would you suggest asking a sommelier, or a wine shop clerk, to help pick the perfect bottle?

Mr. Soh: Tell them what wines you liked in the past (also the ones you disliked). I suggest taking a photo on your phone to remember. Also, it's helpful to ask them what is drinking really well right now.

The Epoch Times: What are some wines you're really excited about right now?

Mr. Sohm: I'm not a moody person but I'm a moody drinker, therefore I follow the season and what I'm craving. I always love champagne, and I seem to often go back to wines from Rías Baixas (Spain), Piedmont, and Tuscany. When it snows, I love richer versions of champagne, such as Christophe Mignon Pur, Savart, and Chartogne-Taillet.

For freezing cold weather, I like:

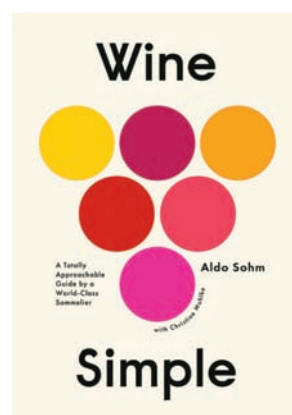
For freezing cold weather, I like:

- St. Joseph Domaine Jean-Louis
Chave, Rhone
- Pian del Ciampolo Monteverdine,
Tuscany
- Blaufränkisch Wachter-Wiesler,
Austria
- Chateau Bourgneuf, Pomerol
- Castro Candaz Mencía, Ribeira Sacra

The Epoch Times: What advice do you have for people who are just beginning to become interested in drinking wine?

Mr. Sohm: I suggest buying three bottles of a grape (same price point) and comparing them to see which you like best. All of our palates vary. For example, some people like oysters and others do not. It doesn't mean one is right and the other is wrong, it's a great and normal thing.

Read, research, travel, and don't forget to have fun. Surround yourself with passionate and curious people and discover wine but also food. They often go hand in hand.



"Wine Simple: A Totally Approachable Guide from a World-Class Sommelier" by Aldo Sohm and Christine Muhlke (Clarkson Potter, \$US32.50).

The image features a bright yellow background. At the top center, the words "THE EPOCH TIMES" are written in a dark blue, serif font, stacked vertically. Below this, the phrase "TRUTH and TRADITION" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font, with "and" in italics. In the center, the words "YOUR ADVERTISE-
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“Choosing good communication and gratitude over grumbling takes work, but it is worth it,” Goyer says.

BARBARA DANZA

Tricia Goyer is a homeschooling mom of 10, a bestselling author of more than 70 books, a speaker, a podcaster, and a family advocate.

In her current season of life—some of her children are now grown—her household consists of her husband, eight of their children, and an elderly grandparent with dementia. It was under these circumstances that she and her family challenged themselves to live “grumble-free,” that is, abstaining from complaints. As she put it, “What could possibly go awry?”

Goyer tells the tale of their “impossible” year in her new book, “The Grumble-Free Year: Eleven Family Members, and One Impossible Goal.” I asked her about their experience.

The Epoch Times: What inspired you to attempt to live “grumble-free?”

Tricia Goyer: Just as we were about to become empty nesters, my husband John and I adopted seven children, ages newborn to teen. For years, we dealt with big behavior problems and anger that came with adopting kids from hard places. We sought therapy and worked toward healing, yet we soon discovered our family still struggled with finding peace in our home. It came down to one big culprit: grumbling.

In our house, there are many people with wants and needs, which leads to much conflict and complaining. Eight kids still at home, two parents, and my elderly grandma all living together meant we could either live with the fault-finding and bellyaching, or we work to do something different.

The Epoch Times: How did your family respond when you told them you wanted to embark on a grumble-free year?

Ms. Goyer: My husband and I asked my family if they’d be willing to take on the challenge: one year without grumbling. The younger kids thought it was a great idea. The younger teens thought it was impossible. The older teens questioned, “How?”

We knew it would be easy to start but hard to maintain, so we told our kids that if we all worked on not grumbling for a year we’d celebrate by going on a family cruise. (And, just maybe, my husband and I had already been planning on the cruise anyway ...) We knew it was enough to keep everyone motivated to keep working at it. And when I slacked, my kids would remind me of our challenge and our goal.

The Epoch Times: How did you define grumbling?

Ms. Goyer: Grumbling is more than words. It includes eye-rolling, moaning, slamming cupboards, heavy sighing, and stomping away. It’s more than just muttering words ... it goes deeper. Grumbling is truly rooted in discontent. We don’t get what we want when we want it, and so we complain about it.

Sadly, our grumbling not only hurts our relationships with each other, but it also puts up a barrier between us and God. When we grumble, we’re telling God, “What you’ve given us is not enough; you’re not enough.”

The Epoch Times: What were the biggest challenges of living grumble-free?

Ms. Goyer: Truthfully, the biggest challenge was looking at myself first and being an example. I wanted my kids not to grumble, and I had to be the example. Grumbling is easy. Harder is figuring out what’s really going on, trying to make changes, and attempting to communicate better.

While grumbling is not OK, I realized it is good communication to tell my husband my worries, the day’s challenges, and my needs. Overcoming my internal grumbles, transforming my thoughts and attitude, and talking about my needs has helped me to be honest and transparent. And my children are learning that, too.

Usually, there’s something more going on behind the grumbles. It may be bigger worries. It may be families being too busy and disconnected. As I started with myself first, I had to figure out these things and then teach them to my kids.

The Epoch Times: What surprised you about this journey?

Ms. Goyer: What surprised me the most was that before our grumble-free year I hadn’t actually given my kids tools to help them to do things differently. Grumbling comes easy. Knowing how to respond in a different way takes work.

I remember asking my kids, “What should you do instead of grumbling?” And I received blank stares. I had to give them ideas on how to share a need without grumbling. Or how to take a deep breath and respond to a parent’s request in an appropriate way.

I worked with my kids to think through how to respond instead of grumbling. Then, we practiced doing it right. I’d send my kids outside and pretend to call them in, just so they could “act out” responding correctly. Or I’d pretend to serve something for dinner that they didn’t like and have them say, “Thank you for taking your time to make dinner. I will eat everything else, but can I just take a few bites of that?”

We teach our kids how to do so many things, but somehow we’ve forgotten how to teach them to communicate well and be grateful without grumbling.

The Epoch Times: What was the biggest lesson you learned during your grumble-free challenge?

Ms. Goyer: The biggest lesson I learned was that pointing out my kids’ grumbling didn’t improve anything. The thing that worked the best was pointing out when they got it right. Praise goes farther than nitpicking. It turns out when kids see a mom praising one of their siblings loudly for not complaining, or being grateful instead, they will want the same type of positive attention.

The Epoch Times: Do you feel your family succeeded in your challenge?

Ms. Goyer: Yes! Our family grumbles a lot less, and I would call that a success. There are many times daily when I see one of my kids working up to grumble, and then choose to communicate in a better way.

We also have a common language

and common knowledge about grumbling. For example, when it’s been a hard day I’ll tell the kids, “I know we’re all hungry, and I know we’re all tired—so it would be easy to grumble right now—but we can all work together to keep positive attitudes.” Acknowledging times in which it would be easy to grumble helps us not to.

The Epoch Times: How has this challenge changed your family?

Ms. Goyer: We’ve all changed together—and we’ve each changed individually—which is something that our kids will be able to carry through life. As we work on our combined weaknesses, it actually causes us to build up our individual strengths. I’m always pleased when a teacher or coach tells me how much they appreciated one of my kids’ good attitudes.

Also, I’ve found it easier to turn around my attitude, too. Many times a day, when I feel like grumbling, I think of something I’m thankful for instead. Or I figure out a way I can communicate a need in a positive way. The changes are both external and internal.

The Epoch Times: What advice would you give to parents who want to inspire their family to live grumble-free?

Ms. Goyer: I hope parents will take time to focus on what’s often overlooked: our discontent. We get stuck in a rut of complaining, instead of working to do something different. Choosing good communication and gratitude over grumbling takes work, but it is worth it. Our challenge has turned out to be a gift to our family—one that will continue to give.



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