



To our valued readers,
OUR SINCEREST THANKS FOR HELPING US DELIVER THE JOY OF TRUTH AND TRADITION TO AUSTRALIA THIS YEAR. FROM OUR ENTIRE TEAM, HAVE A MAGICAL CHRISTMAS SEASON.

This is the last edition of The Epoch Times for 2019. Printing will resume on Jan. 9, 2020.

In the NEWS

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Carolina Schmidt, COP25 President and Chile's Minister of Environment, speaks at the U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP25) in Madrid, Spain, on Dec. 15, 2019.

UN CLIMATE SUMMIT

UN Climate Summit Ends as Major States Resist Calls for Action

Secretary-General António Guterres said he was “disappointed with the results.”

TOM OZIMEK

A handful of major states resisted pressure on Dec. 15 to ramp up efforts to combat global warming as a U.N. climate summit came to a delayed close. The summit talks in Madrid, dubbed COP25, were viewed as a test of governments' collective will for more aggressive cuts to greenhouse gas emissions. But the conference, in its concluding draft, endorsed only a modest declaration on the “urgent need” to close the gap between existing emissions pledges and the temperature goals of the 2015 Paris climate pact. Brazil, China, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and the United States had led resistance to bolder action, delegates told Reuters. At a midnight stocktaking session on Dec. 15, Carolina Schmidt, Chile's environment minister, who served as president of the talks, appealed for consensus.

“I request all your strength to get an ambitious agreement. I count on you to reach consensus,” she said. Earlier, Andres Landerretche, COP25 presidency coordinator, ratcheted up expectations, saying at an on-site press conference that his mood was one of “general-moderate optimism” and that he hoped the final contributions of delegates would “crystallize into a very good outcome.” As it turned out, the Madrid talks became mired in disputes over the rules that should govern international carbon trading. Brazil and Australia were among the main holdouts, delegates said, and the summit deferred big decisions on carbon markets until later. “We are of mixed emotions,” Schmidt said after the final decisions were made. *Continued on A4*

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TRADE WAR

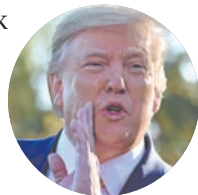
Beijing to Buy Additional \$200 Billion in US Goods as Part of Initial Trade Deal

CATHY HE & EMELAKAN

WASHINGTON— The Chinese regime has committed to buying an additional \$200 billion in U.S. goods and services over the next two years in a “phase one” trade deal struck between the two countries, according to a senior White House official. The deal also includes commitments by the regime to reform “critically important structural issues,” including in the

areas of intellectual property, forced technology transfer, and currency and foreign exchange, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) said in a statement. After weeks of negotiations to *Continued on A5*

U.S. President Donald Trump speaks to the press after announcing an initial deal with China at the South Lawn of the White House in Washington on Oct. 11, 2019.



SWINE FLU

Indonesia Declares African Swine Fever Outbreak as Australia Increases Biosecurity Checks

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Protest Calls for Termination of China's Belt and Road Agreement in Victoria

HENRY JOM

MELBOURNE, Australia—Australians have called on the Victorian Labor government to terminate the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) agreement after calls for transparency related to the agreement were ignored. Approximately 200 people rallied on the steps of Victoria parliament on Dec. 15 to voice their concerns over what many have described as being *Continued on A2*



Edward O'Donoghue Liberal MP speaking in Melbourne on Dec. 15, 2019.

CHINA

Expert: ‘The Sword Is Being Thrust Into the South Pacific’

BONNIE EVANS

China is moving into the South Pacific in major and menacing ways, according to a panel of experts who convened at the Global Taiwan Institute on Dec. 9 to discuss China's growing presence and influence in the island nations of the South Pacific. China's recent efforts in the region have paid off diplomatically. Both the Solomon Islands and Kiribati switched their diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the People's *Continued on A4*

UNITED NATIONS

UN Discloses Names of Chinese Dissidents to Beijing: Whistleblower

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A United Nations whistleblower has accused the organization's human rights agency of endangering Chinese rights activists by disclosing their names to the Chinese regime. “The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) apparently continues to provide China with advance information on whether named human rights defenders plan to attend meetings (in Geneva),” Emma Reilly, a human rights officer at the OHCHR, said in an Oct. 21 letter to U.S. congress members and senior officials, Fox *Continued on A6*

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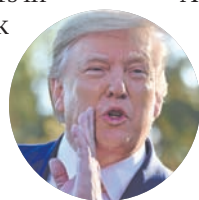
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Accuracy & Integrity

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.



Protest Calls for Termination of China's Belt and Road Agreement in Victoria

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as a "dud deal" agreement.

Speaking at the event titled "Standing against Daniel Andrews Belt & Road signing," was Edward O'Donoghue MP, the Liberal party member of the Victorian Legislative Council for Eastern Victoria. He said that Labor Premier Daniel Andrews did not go through the proper consultative process when he signed Victoria up for the BRI. The event was co-sponsored by Australia Hong-Kong Link and Victoria Hongkongers.

"This is a deal that Daniel Andrews has signed us up to—a deal that should have been negotiated by the federal government, not by the state government," O'Donoghue said. "It's a dud deal. A dud deal for Victoria."

O'Donoghue added that countries such as Africa, including countries in Asia, and the South Pacific that have signed up with the BRI have now become an arm of the Chinese regime. In several countries, including Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, locals have accused the BRI of being a platform to serve the CCP's interests through debt-trap diplomacy.

"We're seeing that in Africa, in Asia and the South Pacific—the way the Chinese government has used the BRI [is] not just for economic leverage and economic growth, but for political and geopolitical leverage as well," he said. "It's a strategic document. It's about strategic leverage for the Chinese government, and we're seeing that already."

Victoria is currently the only state in Australia to have formally expressed its support for China's BRI, also known as the One Belt One Road project.

On Oct. 23, Labor Premier Daniel Andrews signed a new deal with the Chinese regime and its BRI, and urged the Australian government to follow suit, reported The Sydney Morning Herald. The new deal follows a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the BRI that was signed on Oct. 25, 2018, between Andrews and China's Ambassador Cheng Jingye.

Morgan Jonas, co-organizer for the rally, said his concerns over the signing of the memorandum were echoed by many Australians, including many political leaders.

Morgan added that the Labor



"Standing against Daniel Andrews Belt & Road Signing" rally held at the steps of Victoria Parliament on Dec. 15, 2019.

... let me be very clear. A deal with the Chinese communist party has nothing to do with free trade—it is all about strategic interest.

David Limbrick, Victorian Liberal MP

premier's ambitious infrastructure agenda requires large funding—funding that Victoria cannot afford and doesn't have.

"This could explain why Daniel Andrews seemingly rushed the decision to seek out a new line of Chinese finance via the BRI," Morgan said.

Federal Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton questioned whether the new deal was conducive to the national interest.

"Why does he believe this is in our national interest? Why does he believe it's in Victoria's interest?" Dutton said. "It's a decision that's been made by Mr. Andrews, so he can justify the decision. I haven't heard the rationale or the reasoning behind what seemed to be a pretty rushed decision."

According to The Sydney Morning Herald, the Premier shrugged off concerns about Victoria strengthening its ties with the Chinese regime.

"We need a strong partnership," Andrews said. "Victoria has one, and we would hope that every state and territory and indeed the Commonwealth would have a strong partnership and a friendship with China."

David Limbrick, Liberal Democratic Party member of the Victo-

rian Legislative Council, said that though he supports free trade, the BRI does not constitute free trade.

"... let me be very clear. A deal with the Chinese communist party has nothing to do with free trade—it is all about strategic interest," he said.

Peter Westmore, president of the National Civic Council, added he does not want to see Victoria enlisted in the BRI.

"We do not need the cooperation of Chinese corporations in the running of Victorian infrastructure projects. We want to make sure that the government of Victoria is totally independent of foreign political influences," Westmore said.

Bernie Finn, a Liberal party member of the Victorian Legislative Council for the Western Metropolitan region, expressed his concerns for Victoria at the rally.

"What are we owing the Chinese government for perhaps generations to come? We don't know. How long before the Chinese government says 'We'll have the metro tunnel.' It might even be before it actually gets opened."

Fiona Hui, a Hong Kong-born Australian citizen and organizer for a petition calling for ASIO to investi-

gate Daniel Andrews' role in the BRI, said that under the digital and financial cooperation of the BRI, Huawei may soon be introduced in Victoria.

"Let's not be naive, the belt and road, and Huawei goes hand in hand together. When there's belt and road, there is Huawei. You watch, I hope that Victoria is not going to have the Huawei network in the next year or two."

Hui's petition has collected approximately 16,000 signatures since it started on Nov. 2.

Hui added that Huawei is now allowed in Perth trains, as well as the NSW public transport network, and called on the Australian public to lobby against this occurring in Victoria.

"According to the current contract, it can be terminated. [Daniel Andrews] has to do it right now. Please continue to speak out about the Chinese influence in Australia," Hui said.

"I hope Victoria is not the next victim, but it is looking quite likely if the citizens remain quiet."

Epoch Times reporters Mimi Nguyen Ly and Katabella Roberts contributed to this report.

Indonesia Declares African Swine Fever Outbreak as Australia Increases Biosecurity Checks

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tating disease could spread to Australia.

Pig deaths totalling 28,000 have been reported in the province of North Sumatra over the last three months, and deaths in other provinces are being tested for the disease. The source of the infection in Asia's ninth-largest pork producer remains unclear.

ASF, also known as "pig Ebola," is a highly contagious disease that is fatal to pigs but harmless to humans. There are no vaccines for the disease, which kills 80 percent of the animals it infects.

According to Outbreak News Today, 11 countries have reported ASF outbreaks since August 2018, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, Myanmar, North Korea, South Korea, Mongolia, and Timor-Leste.

"This is the largest animal disease outbreak in history," said Dirk Pfeiffer, a veterinary epidemiologist at the City University of Hong



Health officials and veterinarians standing next to a dead pig at a farm in Hanoi, Vietnam, on May 27, 2019.

Kong. "It makes the foot and mouth disease and BSE [mad cow disease] outbreaks pale in comparison to the damage that is being done. And we have no way to stop it from spreading."

The outbreak was first reported in China in August last year, according to The Epoch Times. All but two of the country's 34 provinces were affected, with the country saying that it has been forced to destroy more than 1 million pigs.

According to some esti-

mates, up to 200 million animals may need to be slaughtered following the outbreak, reported The Irish Times.

Because China is home to almost half of the world's pigs, the global price for pork soared by up to 40 percent.

When the outbreak hit Vietnam early this year, it was reported that 56 of its 63 provinces were affected by the disease. Last week, Vietnamese officials announced that 2.5 million pigs had been culled so far.

While the disease is harmless to humans, the culling could put many Vietnamese at risk of poverty.

"I don't have any other job and my income that provides for my entire family relies solely on these pigs. If they die because of swine flu then everybody in the family will die too," Sem Oun, a 58-year-old Vietnamese farmer, and father of two, told The Associated Press.

In Vietnam, 2.4 million households are engaged in pig farming, The Epoch Times reported.

Due to its devastatingly fast spread, many preventative efforts are being taken by non-infected countries such as Australia.

Australian travelers are being warned not to bring back food or footwear if they travel to Asia.

"Most importantly, just disinfect your shoes or, you know, if you don't need to bring your things back leave them over there," Australian Pork Limited's chief executive Margo Andrae told the ABC.

The virus can easily travel long distances through footwear, clothing, or vehicles as it can live for several weeks.

Agriculture Minister Senator Bridget McKenzie said the reports were concerning given the number of people that travel between Australia and Indonesia.

"There are about 188 flights a week from Indonesia direct into Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Cairns, Perth, Adelaide and Darwin," McKenzie said.

She added that the virus is extremely hardy and can

survive in frozen pork for up to two years and in the blood for six years.

The Morrison government on Dec. 11 announced a A\$66.6 million package to address the immediate risks to Australia's biosecurity. The funding will see 130 extra biosecurity officers and an extra six detector dogs at Australian airports, among other strategies.

A staggering 27 tonnes of pork has been confiscated by biosecurity officers just from airports in less than a year, with 50 percent of seized product testing positive for ASF.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is working with the Directorate General of Livestock and Animal Health Services on preventative regulations. They are currently drafting recommendations on African swine fever control appropriate for Indonesian conditions.

"We have to prevent and fight this disease like fighting an enemy," Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc told Cabinet officials.

Footprint of Destruction: Chinese Projects Damaging Environment Across Africa

DOMINIC KIRUI

NAIROBI, Kenya—The environmental footprint China is leaving in Africa through its projects, mainly the “One Belt, One Road” initiative, has sparked a heated debate on the continent in the past few years. The reason is that China is doing little to ensure that countries in which it has big projects are left with minimal environmental impact. In fact, they’re often left in far worse shape than when they were found.

Kenya’s President Uhuru Kenyatta recently gave the China Road and Bridge Corporation the go-ahead to construct an elevated 27-kilometer (17-mile) expressway linking downtown Nairobi to the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. The aim was to ease traffic congestion and enable travelers to catch their flights in a timely manner.

However, the expressway was earmarked to cut through Uhuru Park, a much-loved recreational park spanning 32 acres on the fringes of Nairobi’s Central Business District.

After protests and public outcry, the government revised its decision and rerouted the road, which is to be built in the next two to three years. If the project had gone ahead as planned, it would have cut 1.3 acres off the historic park.

The Chinese-built standard-gauge railway that runs through the Nairobi National Park is another case. In December 2016, the National Environmental Management Authority issued a license giving Kenya Railways permission to construct SGR Phase 2A, which passes through the middle of the park on an elevated bridge. The Nairobi National Park is the only one in the world that shares a fence with a city: Nairobi.

Funded by China, the \$1.5 billion railway links Naivasha to Nairobi, where it links to another Chinese-funded \$3.2 billion line between the Port of Mombasa and Nairobi. The section that runs through the park stretches for 7 kilometers (4 miles).

The railway has interfered with the natural habitat of the plants and animals in the park, and the ecological and environmental damage is irreversible, Kahindi Lekalhaile, chief operations director at the Africa Network for Animal Welfare, told The Epoch Times. In addition, there has been increased human-wildlife conflict since the construction of the railway.

“A country like Kenya cannot ignore China and must hold them responsible for the damage they cause,” otherwise there will be bigger problems down the road, Lekalhaile said.



The artificial lake at Uhuru Park adjacent to the Nairobi Central Business District in Kenya on Nov. 13, 2019. Plans giving a Chinese company the go-ahead to build an elevated expressway through the park were shelved after a public outcry.

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A section of the standard gauge railway as it enters the Nairobi National Park, Kenya, on Nov. 13, 2019.

“By allowing the Chinese to build the railway through the Nairobi National Park and also eventually through the Lake Nakuru National Park as it heads towards Kisumu is like saying that any person in power can influence an institutional organization, and the courts or civil society groups can do nothing about it apart from just talk and raise public awareness.”

Several other large projects funded or built by the Chinese across Africa have led to serious environmental degradation, while at the same time allowing Beijing to grow its influence in Africa, flexing its muscle through the projects.

The Merowe Dam in Sudan, which went into operation in 2009, is one of the world’s most destructive hydro-power projects, according to the group

International Rivers. The \$2.4 billion dam was funded by China Export-Import Bank and Arab financiers, and built largely by Chinese companies.

Although the project doubled Sudan’s electricity generation, it has had a major environmental impact, including the displacement of more than 50,000 residents of the fertile Nile Valley.

In 2006, midway through construction, the UN Environment Programme assessment documented damage, including silt loss for flood recession agriculture, dam sedimentation, riverbank erosion, reduced river valley groundwater recharge, blocking of fish migrations, and the impact on local endangered species such as the Nile crocodile.

A report by the South African Institute of International Affairs found

that Chinese projects across Africa are often concentrated in sectors that are environmentally sensitive. These include oil and gas exploration, mining, hydropower, timber extraction, and infrastructure projects such as roads, railway lines, and power transmission lines that attract environmentally sensitive investments.

“There are concerns over the environmental impact of Chinese investments, especially in mining, hydropower, roads, and smelters,” according to the Australian Centre on China in the World at Australian National University, in Zambia.

“Some local environmental NGOs accuse Chinese mining companies of serious pollution of air, water, and land; damaging wildlife habitat and displacing local communities without adequate compensation” wrote Beyongo Mukete Dynamic, a researcher at the center.

For years, Mozambique has battled a loss of forests to illegal logging, while the vast majority of that timber is imported by China, according to a 2014 report by the Environmental Investigation Agency.

“In some years, China recorded 99 percent of total globally recorded timber imports from Mozambique. Chinese demand is clearly responsible for nearly all timber exports from Mozambique, which is in turn now responsible for the majority of the 93 percent illegal logging rate currently blighting the country,” the report stated.

According to the U.S.-based Global Forest Watch, between 2001 and 2017, Mozambique lost 2.88 million hectares (7.1 million acres) of tree cover amid growing demand in China for valuable hardwoods such as rosewood.

Brian Waswala, an environmental science lecturer at Maasai Mara University and lead author of UN Environment’s Sixth Global Environmental Outlook for Youth, said that at least some of the blame lies with host nations that either lack stringent environmental legislation or have such laws but fail to enforce them.

“All countries are sovereign, and Chinese development partners cannot dictate environmental compliance terms,” Waswala told The Epoch Times.

“There should also be interdisciplinary collaboration within the host countries’ government departments, and the public, too, need to play a part. Few citizens even know the provision of public participation in the development agenda. Most are oblivious of the law, and so any dubious developer, Chinese or not, would take advantage of this lapse.”

Brexit Is ‘A Powerful Deterrent and a Lesson’ for EU Members

EMEL AKAN

WASHINGTON—Britain’s long and complicated exit from the European Union (EU) has been so negatively viewed by the bloc’s other members that even EU-skeptics have changed their opinion, said Radoslaw Sikorski, a member of the European Parliament.

Sikorski, who chairs the European Parliament’s delegation for relations with the United States, said at an event hosted by The Christian Science Monitor on Dec. 13 that “the English Europhobes” wrongly assumed that the UK’s departure from the EU would trigger a domino effect and cause the union to collapse.

“Actually, the opposite has happened. The EU has never been as popular and has never commanded this widespread loyalty as now as a result of Brexit,” he said. “Because people see the mess and they don’t see that it’s an example to follow.”

Boris Johnson, Britain’s then secretary of state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs and Radoslaw Sikorski, Poland’s former foreign minister arrive for the 2017 Munich Security Conference in Munich, Germany, on Feb. 17, 2017.

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Even the populists in countries such as Poland, Italy, and France, he said, have changed their views and backed away from calls to exit the bloc.

“So, actually, Brexit has been a powerful deterrent and a lesson,” he said.

British voters, last week, handed Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his Conservative Party a decisive victory that will allow Johnson to launch the UK’s exit from the bloc.

In a landslide win, the

Conservative Party secured 365 seats in the Houses of Parliament, the biggest win for the party since Margaret Thatcher’s 1987 victory. The Conservatives needed 326 seats to win the election.

Sikorski said he wasn’t surprised by the UK’s election result.

“I’m glad that the combination of Marxism and anti-Semitism doesn’t seem to command a majority in Britain, which is a rare piece of good news,” he said, referring to the defeat

of the UK’s Labour party and its left-wing leader, Jeremy Corbyn.

The Labour party suffered its worst election result since 1935. After the election, Corbyn announced that he would step down as party leader.

According to Sikorski, it will take at least a decade to determine whether Brexit is a failure or not. He said, however, he hoped another generation would reaply for membership to the union.

It has been more than three years since Britain voted to leave the bloc. According to a study by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, Brexit could cost the UK economy as much as £70 billion (\$90 billion) over the next decade.

A study by Stanford University found that the highly uncertain future created by Brexit was estimated to have gradually reduced investments in the country by about 11 percent over the three years following the

June 2016 vote. According to the same study, productivity in the UK dropped between 2 percent and 5 percent during the same period.

After his election victory, Johnson pledged Britain would leave the bloc by Jan. 31, “no ifs, butts, no maybes.”

The divorce from the bloc marks Britain’s biggest economic and political move since World War II. The country still faces a tough road ahead, as it needs to work out a new economic and trade relationship with the EU, its most important trading partner.

In a tweet on Dec. 13, Trump congratulated Johnson on his victory and said the United States and the UK “will now be free to strike a massive new Trade Deal after BREXIT.”

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow also told reporters on Dec. 16 he would visit the UK in early January to start economic and trade talks.

Expert: 'The Sword Is Being Thrust Into the South Pacific'

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Republic of China in September.

"The sword is being thrust into the South Pacific," said retired Navy Capt. James Fanell, a former director of intelligence and information operations for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, specializing in Indo-Asia Pacific security affairs, with an emphasis on the Chinese navy and its operations.

And "unless we do something together with Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan, and Japan, then the Chinese will win."

Kiribati: A Strategic Target

Kiribati is strategically attractive to China because of the enormity of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), says Fanell, now a fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy in Switzerland.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) defines an EEZ as a nation's sovereign rights "for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources" of the water and seabed, extending 200 nautical miles out from its coastline.

It also gives sovereign rights in those waters for the "production of energy from the water, currents, and winds."

The implications are obvious, Fanell indicated.

"The first thing we will see is the fishing fleets, which will rape all of the tuna out of there. Then, the fishing fleets will have to be protected, and the maritime militia will be out there. Then, the PLA Navy will follow."

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reports that Kiribati has "some of the most productive tuna fishing grounds in the Pacific."

In addition, Kiribati's proximity to the equator makes it a desirable location for both spacecraft launches as well as for satellite telemetry.

The Chinese government has been enhancing its space capabilities. China's Xinhua news outlet reported in April that "China aims to build a scientific research station in the south polar region of the moon ... in about 10 years."

Kiribati already has an abandoned Chinese satellite tracking station that was in operation during its first period of diplomatic relations with Beijing, which ended in 2003.

Fanell, who acted as a consultant to the Australian television show "60 Minutes," traveled to the region on a fact-finding trip in late October and early November.

He and the production team were told by Kiribati authorities that they "couldn't leave the hotel" and that



Melanesian boys flash peace signs as they drift past an Australian-supplied patrol boat in Iron Bottom Sound off Honiara, Solomon Islands, on July 20, 2003.

We can't wait 10 years. The Chinese are moving.

James Fanell, a former director of intelligence and information operations for the U.S. Pacific Fleet specializing in Indo-Asia Pacific security affairs, with an emphasis on the Chinese navy and its operations.



Corporal Jasmine Elliot, RAAF, takes her first overseas deployment to the Pacific Islands on Oct. 11, 2019 in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

the "government was not happy to have them there." He was allowed out eventually, once it was determined that he wasn't a member of the press.

Nonetheless, he was shadowed throughout his visit to the island nation.

Fanell remarked that these islands form part of the first island chain of Australia and New Zealand.

"If they don't want to be isolated, they need to do something about it," he said.

Trump Administration's Renewed Commitment

"There is no naïveté left in our government today. This administration gets it," Fanell said, referring to the

Trump administration.

Jennifer Spande, the U.S. State Department's deputy director for Australian, New Zealand, and Pacific Island affairs, said the United States has made a commitment to help its allies in the South Pacific be "strong, free, and open."

That commitment "started with President Donald Trump," Spande said.

In May, Trump was the first U.S. president to host the presidents of three South Pacific allies at the White House. The presidents of Palau, the Marshall Islands, and the Federated State of Micronesia (as a group, often referred to as the freely associated states) also met with Secretary of State

Mike Pompeo.

The three countries are bound to the United States in a Compact of Free Association (COFA). The COFA enshrines the sovereignty of each nation, and their right to conduct their own relationships with other countries, with caveats.

The United States has "full authority and responsibility for security and defense" of the islands, according to a State Department fact sheet. In return, the islands are "obligated to refrain from taking actions that would be incompatible with these security and defense responsibilities."

In other words, military relationships with other countries are expressly excluded, at least without U.S. permission.

In return, the United States gives \$350 million annually to the islands. In a new effort to expand disaster assistance, digital connectivity, and electrical availability, the United States has made an additional pledge of \$100 million to the region, Spande said.

China Expands Presence in Solomon Islands

A group of Chinese companies have taken control of a gold mine on the Solomon Islands' main island of Guadalcanal two hours from the capital Honiara, Fanell said.

The Gold Ridge mining development project is now controlled by China Railway Construction Co., Chinese-owned Australian developer AXF Group, and Wanguo International Mining, according to Fanell and other sources.

AXF's website states, "Our largest investment is in the Gold Ridge Project in the Solomon Islands."

An Aug. 9, 2017, press release on Wanguo's website confirms the deal, stating, "In an unprecedented partnership arrangement, Gold Ridge Community Investment Ltd (GCIL), which comprise the local landowners, owns 10% of Gold Ridge Mining Limited."

But AXF will own 90 percent of the company.

China's efforts to gain more control in the Solomons haven't been limited to mining.

In Tulagi, in the Solomons' Central Province, the local government attempted to lease the entire island of Tulagi to China SAM Group for a period of 75 years, Fanell said. The attorney general withdrew approval once the deal was leaked to the press, but left the door open to the Chinese to "reapply in the proper format."

Time Is of the Essence

Time is running out, however, Fanell warned.

"We can't wait 10 years," Fanell continued. "The Chinese are moving."

UN Climate Summit Ends as Major States Resist Calls for Action

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U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said in a tweet that he was "disappointed with the results." He added that the summit outcome, in his view, meant that "the international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation & finance to tackle the climate crisis."

Counter Conference Seeks to Inject 'Dose of Reality' Into Climate Debate

Meanwhile, The Heartland Institute hosted a counter-conference in Madrid, during which experts challenged the climate emergency narrative.

"We are here to present a dose of reality and sound science, as opposed to much of what we hear from the United Nations," said James Taylor, director of the Arthur B. Robinson Center on Climate and Environmental Policy at The Heartland Institute.

Speakers at the event included Will Happer, former top science adviser to President Donald Trump. Happer argued in support of the posi-

Meanwhile, The Heartland Institute hosted a counter-conference in Madrid, during which experts challenged the climate emergency narrative.

tion that human greenhouse gas emissions are having a significantly lower impact on global temperatures than some claim.

H. Sterling Burnett, who serves as a Heartland senior fellow on environmental policy, said in a report from the conference that Happer's presentation demonstrated that human effects on climate were far more benign than what was "predicted by alarmist climate theory and are certainly not causing a climate crisis."

"Happer described the many beneficial effects of higher atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, including a dramatic greening of the Earth as more carbon dioxide serves as aerial fertilizer for crops and vegetation," Burnett said.

Heartland reorganized its event, called the Climate Reality Forum, after the U.N. climate summit was moved due to social unrest.

"COP 25 had to change locations from Chile to Spain at very short notice (after it had already changed locations from Brazil to Chile), after riots erupted around the country in protest to energy price hikes to pay for Chile's climate

change programs, forcing Chilean President Sebastian Pinera to put troops on the streets and cancel his plans to host COP 25," Burnett said.

Meteorologist Anthony Watts, a Heartland Institute senior fellow, said that algorithms relied on by climate alarmists to predict crisis-level global warming incorporate "bad data," including from temperature sensors close to artificial heat sources such as buildings. Watts said that by not discarding corrupt data, the models show more warming than is measured by weather balloons and global satellite instruments.

German YouTube personality Naomi Seibt, referred to by some as the "antidote to Greta Thunberg," discussed her shift away from believing in the existence of a climate crisis.

"It is important we keep questioning the narrative that is out there instead of promoting it," Seibt said.

"These days, climate change science really isn't science at all. ... They draw their conclusions before even testing their hypotheses, and they base their assumptions on completely incoherent mod-

els, which is just an insult to science itself."

Heartland policy adviser Ronald Stein noted the lack of hard evidence in support of climate crisis claims.

"The doomsday forecasters are now grasping at new names to rebrand the movement. What was once global warming, is now climate change, climate disaster, global meltdown, climate collapse, scorched earth, climate emergency, and the latest movement, 'We don't have time.' Like Gore's initial predictions, all the tweets lack the basis for their dismal projections," Stein wrote in an op-ed.

"The tweets are void of any 'beef or facts' as to what's going to cause this forthcoming demise. They tweet rhetorical questions and emotional statements, and the millions of followers being brainwashed with scaremongering dogma slurp it up, as environmentalism has become the new religion."

Geologist Gregory Wrightstone, author of "Inconvenient Facts: The Science That Al Gore Doesn't Want You to Know," told The Epoch Times that a radical shift away from fossil fuels into unproven and unre-

liable sources of energy would cause not just economic contraction, but human misery.

"We're being told: 'No, don't use our resources to better mankind. You need to quit using fossil fuels that are actually lifting people out of generational poverty,'" he said.

"There are an estimated 4 billion people around the earth who are living in energy poverty. There are 4 million deaths a year from lung disease from people cooking in their homes with wood, a lot of it dried dung. They could benefit from more electrification, propane, compressed natural gas, so they don't have to die an early death.

"What these people are doing who are pushing the Green New Deal and the Paris Climate Accord, they're destining billions of people around the world to continued generational poverty," Wrightstone said. "We've been lifting people out of poverty using fossil fuels by providing abundant, affordable, reliable energy, and not one of those three words are associated with wind or solar."

Reuters contributed to this report.



Rescuers move a dead body out of a sinkhole in Shenzhen, China, on May 21, 2013.

Ground Collapse at a Metro Station in Chinese City Two Weeks After Inspection

OLIVIA LI

A sudden ground collapse occurred outside Xiamen's Lucuo metro station in the evening of Dec. 12. The road was busy and at least four cars were seen falling into the sinkhole. Underground water pipes broke causing muddy water to quickly flood the sinkhole and spill onto the metro platform and tracks.

The collapse occurred at 9:52 p.m. local time. Around 11 p.m., Xiamen Metro announced online that the sinkhole was about 500 square meters in size, and all the drivers inside the vehicles managed to escape safely.

Xiamen is a coastal city in Southeast China's Fujian Province. Among China's second-tier cities, it is considered more developed and affluent than most of its peers.

The inspection team claimed that all aspects of construction including civil engineering, mechanics, and electrical, were satisfactory.

Lucuo metro station is relatively new. It belongs to Xiamen Metro Line 2, which had been inspected and passed two weeks before the incident. The inspection team claimed that all aspects of construction including civil engineering, mechanics, and electrical, were satisfactory.

Mr. Huang, a well-known real estate freelancer in Xiamen, revealed in his blog that there were two minor collapses in this location before the Dec. 12 incident. On both occasions, when witnesses called the city mayor's hotline to report the problem, the person handling the hotline told them that there was nothing to worry about.

This is the third ground collapse reported by Chinese state media in December.

On Dec. 1, a major ground collapse, also near a metro station, occurred in Guangzhou. A street-cleaning truck and a scooter plunged into the giant sinkhole, trapping three people. Local authorities did not attempt to rescue the victims. Instead, three hours later, they ordered filling of the sinkhole with mud concrete to prevent further road erosion, and showed total disregard for those trapped in the hole who may have still been alive.

Two days later, on another major thoroughfare in Guangzhou, the sidewalk suddenly collapsed around 6 p.m., forming a sinkhole about 4 square meters in size. Luckily, no pedestrians fell in or were injured.

Beijing to Buy Additional \$200 Billion in US Goods as Part of Initial Trade Deal

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work out the details of the "phase one" trade agreement—initially announced in October—the United States and the Chinese regime said on Dec. 13 that they concluded their talks and were ready to sign the deal in early January.

In a series of tweets on Dec. 13, President Donald Trump said that both sides "agreed to a very large Phase One Deal."

He wrote that Beijing has "agreed to many structural changes and massive purchases of Agricultural Product, Energy, and Manufactured Goods, plus much more."

Beijing has "committed to increase their purchases of manufactured goods, agricultural goods, energy products, and services by at least \$200 billion over the course of the next two years," the official told reporters on a conference call.

That means China will boost its imports from the United States by at least \$100 billion, on average, in 2020 and 2021; U.S. farm products will account for roughly half of that increase.

"In the agriculture area, we're looking at China making commitments to make purchases in each of the next two years of an average of \$40 billion to \$50 billion," the official confirmed.

In 2018, U.S. goods and services exports to China were \$179.3 billion, according to the USTR.

"The farmers are going to have to work a lot of overtime to produce that much," Trump told reporters.

Beyond the two years, the official said, "there's an expectation that this [the purchases] will continue going forward."

China will import more U.S. wheat, corn, and rice after the deal, China's vice agricultural minister said Dec. 13, without elaborating.

According to the USTR, the United States will keep 25 percent tariffs on nearly \$250 billion of Chinese imports, along with 7.5 percent tariffs on approximately \$120 billion of goods.

However, a new 15 percent levy on nearly \$160 billion of Chinese goods, which was to take effect on Dec. 15, was canceled.

Trump told reporters after the announcement that he would use remaining U.S. tariffs as a bargaining tool for the "phase two" deal, negotiations for which will begin "immediately."

Larry Kudlow, chief White House economic adviser, told reporters in a conference call that the deal marked a "very important first step in solving our trade relations imbalances with China," adding that "it represents an opening of China."

Both sides are aiming to sign the deal in January, according to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, one of the lead negotiators in talks with China. He told reporters after the announcement that the signing would be at the ministerial level and wouldn't involve Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

He warned, however, it would still be wise to be skeptical of whether China would deliver on its promises. The United States won't impose new tariffs as long as Beijing continues to act in good faith, he added.

Speaking in a late-night press conference in Beijing, Vice Commerce Minister Wang Shouwen confirmed the deal, saying that a consensus was reached on a wide range of issues, including intellectual property protection, technology transfer, purchase of agricultural products and expanding trade relations.

"The deal can help expand economic and trade cooperation between the two nations and effectively manage the trade disputes," Wang said, according to a report by the South China Morning Post (SCMP).

As part of the agreement, Beijing confirmed that it wouldn't impose tariffs on U.S. goods scheduled for Dec. 15 as retaliation.

"China hopes the U.S. will fulfill its commitment," Liao Min, deputy director of the office of the Central Commission for Financial and Economic Affairs said, according to the SCMP report. "Removing tariffs is the



U.S. President Donald Trump shakes hands with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He after announcing a "phase one" trade agreement with China in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington on Oct. 11, 2019.



A U.S. cargo ship berthing at a port in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province on April 1, 2019.

core concern of China."

'State of the Art' Protections

The official said the deal contained "state of the art" protections for critical structural issues, such as IP protections, and measures to halt forced property transfer.

The IP reforms covered in the deal include the areas of trade secrets, pharmaceutical-related IP patents, trademark protection, enforcement against pirated and counterfeit goods, as well as online infringement, he said.

In addition, the regime has committed to change civil and criminal procedures in its enforcement of IP, the official added.

He said the regime also has agreed to end its long-standing practice of requiring foreign companies to transfer technology to domestic firms as a condition of market access, known as forced technology transfer.

However, the official noted the deal doesn't address major issues surrounding cyberhacking and Beijing's data localization laws, which requires all firms to store its data within China's borders. These issues are to be dealt with in the "phase two" agreement. The new partial trade deal with Beijing also doesn't address Chinese subsidies, one of the top concerns of the Trump administration and the impetus for starting a trade war.

'Strong Enforcement Mechanism'

Included in the deal is a "strong dispute resolution system that ensures prompt and effective implementation and enforcement," Lighthizer said in a statement.

He said the dispute resolution system will prescribe time-frames for actions at three stages: starting from the working level, escalating all the way up to the ministerial level, that is, by Lighthizer and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He.

If no resolution is reached by the end of that process, then the complaining party can take proportionate responsive action, "potentially in the form of tariffs," he said.

The enforcement mechanism applies to all chapters in the trade agreement.

Good for US Economy

Stephen Moore, an economist and former Trump campaign adviser, said that the deal would be good for the president ahead of the 2020 election and for the U.S. economy.

"I think it's more of a truce than a deal," he told The Epoch Times' affiliate NTD. "I think it's basically a kind of time out on this trade war. And I think that's a good thing for Donald Trump and the U.S. economy right now."

He noted that the trade war for the past three years has been "hanging over the head of the economy, like a big dark cloud."

Hence, "employers and industry people in the United States are very happy with this news," he added.

Moore also raised doubts about China's commitment to sign the deal.

"I don't want to get too irrationally exuberant here because I think it's still not settled in my opinion, until you actually get the government in Beijing to really sign on the dotted line."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce (USCC) applauded the news, calling it a "welcome gift for American businesses and consumers."

"With substantial tariff increases set to kick in just days before the holidays, relief from those tariffs and the higher costs they impose on consumer goods and services is a welcome gift for American businesses and consumers," Myron Brilliant, executive vice president and head of international affairs of USCC, said in a statement.

"The reduction of tariffs imposed in September is also a good step. This agreement creates greater certainty for American businesses, after months of uncertainty, as they plan for the year ahead."

The partial deal is a good step but there's more work ahead, according to Stephen Ezell, vice president of global innovation policy at the Washington-based think tank Information Technology and Innovation Foundation.

"It is essential that we work toward a comprehensive longer-term resolution to the U.S.-China trade dispute, in which the United States works with China to address many of the innovation mercantilist practices such as excessive subsidization, support for state-owned enterprises, forced technology transfer, and intellectual property requirements," Ezell said.

"These are the most fundamental issues in the U.S.-China trade and economic relationship and a resolution of trade dispute that does not effectively address these underlying issues will be incomplete," he added.

I don't want to get too irrationally exuberant here because I think it's still not settled in my opinion, until you actually get the government in Beijing to really sign on the dotted line.

Stephen Moore, economist and former Trump campaign adviser

UN Discloses Names of Chinese Dissidents to Beijing: Whistleblower

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News reported on Dec. 14.

The list of names provided to the Chinese authorities included Tibetan and Uyghur activists, some of whom are U.S. citizens or residents, according to Fox News.

Reilly said that the practice has continued since 2013.

The United Nations and the OHCHR did not respond to inquiries from The Epoch Times.

In a Dec. 14 briefing, UN Human Rights Council spokesperson Rolando Gomez dismissed the allegations as a “distortion,” saying that “under no circumstances the Office of the High Commissioner divulged names of human rights defenders coming to the council,” Fox News reported.

Reilly, an Irish and British dual national, also accused the organization of retaliating against her in response to the complaints.

“Instead of taking action to stop names being handed over, the UN has focused its energy on retaliating against me for daring to report it. I have been ostracized, publicly defamed, deprived of functions, and my career has been left in tatters,” Reilly said.

She also said the UN approved of Beijing’s request for the name list even though it denied a similar request from Turkey.

According to Washington-based non-profit Government Accountability Project, Reilly first raised objections to the handover of dissidents’ names in early 2013 through an internal report. She said in response to an inquiry from the Chinese UN ambassador, she and other staff were instructed to provide information on whether 13 human rights activists were planning to attend a Human Rights Council session.

Reilly had also reported such practices to senior staff members and through other internal channels, but saw no immediate action from the organization until the Irish government intervened in 2016, the Government Accountability Project said.

The United Nations headquarters in New York on Sept. 19, 2019.



The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights apparently continues to provide China with advance information on whether named human rights defenders plan to attend meetings.

Emma Reilly, a human rights officer at the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

The advocacy group further noted the disappearance of Chinese lawyer and activist Cao Shunli at a Beijing airport in September 2013, while Cao was on her way for a UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva. The arrest took place six months after Reilly’s first internal report. Cao died in detention in China six months later after being denied medical treatment.

Reilly said she had suffered from a range of alleged reprisals due to her speaking up, including being discriminated for promotion, excluded from meetings, and receiving prejudicial performance evaluations.

Responding to Gomez’s comments, Reilly said that the UN has “consistently refused to act” on her request to “stop this horrific practice.”

“When Chinese dissidents come to the UN to speak out about human rights abuses, the last thing they expect is for the UN to report them to China,” she said.

Chinese Influence at the UN

Concerns over the Chinese regime’s influence at the United Nations Human Rights Council have been mounting in recent years.

In July, the Chinese delegate twice interrupted Hong Kong singer and activist Denise Ho during her testimony at the council, during which she appealed to the UN to remove

China from the organization and speak up for Hong Kong, a city embroiled in protests since June in opposition to perceived growing political interference from Beijing.

In November 2018, eight non-profit groups in a joint statement expressed concerns after the United Nations Human Rights Council removed at least seven of their submissions in a report for consideration by UN member states ahead of a review of Beijing’s human rights record. The groups voiced concern that the submissions were objected to by the Chinese Communist Party.

In April 2017, security officials at the UN headquarters in New York expelled a prominent Uyghur activist Dolkun Isa from the premises without explanation. Later in 2018, the former Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo, revealed in an interview with Chinese state broadcaster CCTV that he had personally ordered the activist’s expulsion.

“As a Chinese diplomat, we can’t be a bit careless when it comes to issues relating to China’s national sovereignty and national interests,” Wu said at the time.

The Chinese regime has detained an estimated more than 1 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minori-

ties in the northwestern region of Xinjiang in a massive campaign to combat purported “extremism.”

In January 2017, ahead of a keynote speech from Chinese leader Xi Jinping at the UN European headquarters in Geneva, UN officials deployed rare stringent security arrangements, shutting down parking lots and meeting rooms, and sending home early its roughly 3,000 staff members. Small pro-Tibet protests near the site were also declared unauthorized.

Ted Piccone, senior fellow at Washington-based think tank Brookings Institution, warned that the Chinese regime is “playing the long game” in regards to human rights and reshaping the international system to its advantage.

“Without a well thought out and long-term counter-balancing strategy, China’s growing economic leverage will probably allow it to achieve its objectives”—defending its “authoritarian system of one-party control” and exporting its values that undermine the international human rights system, Piccone wrote in a 2018 report.

“The result would be a weaker international human rights system in which independent voices are muffled and public criticism of egregious abuses muted behind the banner of national sovereignty.”

Trump Hints at Jail Time for Comey After Ex-FBI Chief Says ‘I Was Wrong’ on Spying

ZACHARY STIEBER

President Donald Trump hinted at jail time for James Comey after the former FBI director admitted that he was wrong about the FBI’s spying on a Trump 2016 presidential campaign aide.

Comey and other intelligence community leaders claimed for years that the FBI’s applications to spy on the aide, Carter Page, were done correctly. But Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz shredded those claims in a report released last week, revealing 17 significant errors or omissions and additional errors made in following internal guidelines.

“He’s right, I was wrong,” Comey admitted on Sunday.

“I was overconfident in the procedures that the FBI and justice had built over 20 years. I thought they were robust enough. It’s incredibly hard to get a FISA. I was overconfident in those. Because he’s right. There was real sloppiness, 17 things that either should’ve been in the applications or at least discussed and characterized differently. It was not acceptable and so he’s right. I was wrong,” he added.

Trump reacted on Twitter, writing: “So now Comey’s admitting he was wrong. Wow, but he’s only doing so because he got caught red-handed.”

“He was actually caught a long time ago. So what are the consequences for his unlawful conduct. Could it be years in jail? Where are the apologies to me and others,



Former FBI Director James Comey (C) talks to reporters following a closed House Judiciary Committee meeting to hear his testimony on Capitol Hill in Washington on Dec. 7, 2018.

He was actually caught a long time ago. So what are the consequences for his unlawful conduct. Could it be years in jail? Where are the apologies to me and others?

Donald Trump, President of the United States

Jim?” Trump added.

Trump also took aim at Horowitz, who wrote in the report that his team didn’t find evidence of political bias among FBI officials but admitted in a Senate hearing, “I think it’s fair for people to sit there and look at all of these 17 events and wonder how it could be purely incompetence.”

“It’s unclear what the motivations were. On the one hand, gross incompetence, negligence? On the other hand, intentionality, and where in between? We weren’t in a position—with the evidence we had—to make that conclusion. But I’m not ruling it out,” he also said.

Trump said that it was obvious actions by the FBI were motivated by bias.

“As bad as the I.G. Report is for the FBI and others, and it is really bad, remember that I.G. Horowitz was appointed by Obama. There was tremendous bias and guilt exposed, so obvious, but Horowitz couldn’t get himself to say it. Big credibility loss. Obama knew everything!” he said in another missive on Twitter on Sunday.

Comey said on Sunday that he was responsible for what happened but claimed he did not know that FBI agents uncovered damaging information about ex-British spy Chris-

topher Steele, whose salacious dossier played a “central and essential role” in getting the FISA warrant to spy on Page.

“As the director, you’re not kept informed on the details of an investigation. So, no, in general, I didn’t know what they’d learned from the sub-source. I didn’t know the particulars of the investigation,” Comey said.

He also said that Horowitz didn’t find misconduct by any FBI personnel, despite Horowitz referring FBI lawyer Kevin Clinesmith for criminal prosecution.

“The Inspector General did not find misconduct by FBI personnel, did not find political bias, did not find illegal conduct. The Inspector General found significant mistakes, and that is not something to sneeze at; that’s really important,” Comey said. “But the American people—especially your viewers—need to realize, they were given false information about the FBI. It’s honest. It is not political. It is flawed.”

When Horowitz was asked whether his report meant Comey and other FBI staffers are exonerated as Comey had suggested on Twitter recently, he disagreed.

Last week, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham asked Horowitz: “The former FBI Director James Comey said this week that your report vindicates him. Is that a fair assessment of your report?”

Horowitz responded: “I think the activities we found here don’t vindicate anybody who touched this FISA.”



Doug Wead, presidential historian and author of "Inside Trump's White House," in Virginia on Nov. 21, 2019.

Doug Wead on Writing an Official Record of Trump's Presidency

IRENE LUO & JAN JEKIELEK



When Donald Trump was elected president, he asked then-President Barack Obama what his biggest problem would be after taking office.

North Korea, Obama said. Privately, Obama told Trump that "you will go to war with North Korea during your time in the White House."



"Well, Mr. President, have you called him?" Trump asked, referring to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

"No, he's a dictator," Obama replied.

Or so the story goes, according to presidential historian Doug Wead's new book, "Inside Trump's White House: The Real Story of His Presidency," which is based on a number of exclusive interviews with President Trump, his family members, and others in the Trump orbit.

Prussian statesman Otto von Bismarck said that "politics is the art of the possible," but Trump operates in the realm of the impossible, Wead said in an interview with The Epoch Times for the "American Thought Leaders" program.

Trump believes "that a businessman takes on the impossible. You do the most difficult thing first, then you move to the next most difficult thing," Wead said. The president took Obama's words to heart and swiftly took steps to neutralize the threat of nuclear war.

"That was his instinct: You've got a problem with somebody? You call him. And that's what he did with Kim Jong Un," Wead said.

When Trump assumed the presidency, relations with Kim had reached a breaking point. The North Korean regime boasted that its nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles could hit U.S. soil, and the Trump administration threatened a military strike. Trump later told Wead that a war with North Korea had been "unbelievably close."

But, in 2018, Trump became the first sitting president to meet the leader of North Korea, and for the first time, a North Korean leader crossed the border into South Korea for a summit with President Moon Jae-in. The two pledged to formally conclude the Korean War, which had ended in 1953 with an armistice instead of a peace treaty. The Trump administration also successfully secured the release of three U.S.

President-elect Donald Trump is sworn in at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 20, 2017.



What I wanted to do was get accurate stories, real stories down on paper—truth on paper.

Doug Wead, presidential historian

My whole perspective on the president changed immediately when I met him.

Doug Wead, presidential historian

prisoners and the remains of many U.S. soldiers who had gone missing during the Korean War.

Trump's approach to North Korea is just one among numerous stories intricately woven together and recorded for posterity in Wead's new book, which was published on Nov. 26.

Wead breaks down, in detail, the highs and lows of Election Day, when Trump was initially told by his children that he had lost.

He paints a nuanced picture of the man who decided to rip up his original victory speech after he saw on television Hillary Clinton's supporters at the Javits Center in tears. And he tells Trump's story through the eyes of his family, as someone who was brave enough to take on the political establishment, even if it meant little reward for himself.

Unprecedented Access

"He's very, very instinctive," Wead said. When Wead walked into the Oval Office for one of his interviews with the president, Trump was holding letters—his correspondence with Kim—and waving them above his head.

"Nobody's seen this. My people don't want me to give these to you. But I want you to read them," Trump told Wead.

"He had just decided that morning: 'I'm going to let you voice record me. I'm going to give you access to everybody in the family, everybody in the White House,'" Wead

said. "Before the day was over, he arranged for me to have a special room in the White House, where I could sit and take my time and read."

"I have to feel chemistry with someone, and I feel chemistry with you.' That's how he explained it," Wead said.

And so it was that Wead was given unprecedented access to the president and members of his family.

Too many books about Trump are filled with hearsay and anonymous sources, Wead said.

"It nags on me. Why doesn't anybody go on record?"

Years from now, Wead said, historians will look back, and "they're going to want to know, what did the president say? What did Jared and Ivanka say? What did Don Jr. say? What did Tiffany, Laura, and Eric, what did they say? And that's what I wanted to capture."

Betrayal by America's Elites

"For years, I could see that my father was very frustrated with politicians in the United States," Eric Trump told Wead. "He would read a story in the newspaper and he would just roll his eyes."

Trump was exasperated by the endless wars abroad, the decline of U.S. infrastructure, the proliferation of opioids, the bad trade deals, and the continued transfer of American wealth abroad, Eric told Wead.

Continued on A10

The Afghanistan Papers Are a Scathing Indictment of the Rule of Expertise

CLIFFORD HUMPHREY



Commentary
For the past few weeks, the news has been all-consuming. The House impeachment hearing, the Horowitz Report, and the election in the United Kingdom have dominated the newscycle. In the midst of all this, though, perhaps the biggest story of the decade broke last week, and many people missed it.

On Dec. 9, the Washington Post published a six-part exposé on “The Afghanistan Papers,” a collection of more than 2,000 pages of hitherto undisclosed notes detailing the military’s own critical assessment of the war in Afghanistan and the efforts to conceal its failures from the public. The account is astonishing and infuriating.

The longest war in U.S. history has now been shown to be a cocktail of both neoconservative and progressive ideological agendas, mixed with the blood and treasure of U.S. citizens, garnished with ever-present human hubris, poured into a vortex by the U.S. military-industrial bureaucracy.

The Afghanistan Papers are an indictment, not only of all the experts who have misled us about the war, but also and especially of their ideological expertise, which they thought gave them a right to determine policy for the American people.

War Is a Political, Not a Technical, Act

I recently spoke with a guy who was involved in the military in some capacity that was too secretive for him to divulge (or at least he wanted me to think so). When I questioned the legitimacy of what has been called “the interagency consensus” to set U.S. foreign policy, he immediately informed me that the experts know things that private citizens just can’t understand, and so they must, therefore, defer to the experts.

Furthermore, he continued, the guy the American people elected to be president wants to pull out as many as 4,000 troops now and is really making it difficult for these experts to carry out what they all agree is a good strategy. How dare he!

It’s a little disturbing that members of our military need reminding that self-proclaimed experts have no right to rule free Americans. Our ancestors fought a revolution to throw off the smug rule of Britain’s king and parliament and established a republic, not a meritocracy.

The Constitution grants to Congress the power to declare war and to the president the power to conduct war. Both of these institutions are filled with elected officials who are thus responsible to the people.

The American framers, then, believed that war is a political act, to be declared and conducted according to the people’s will.

A regular theme in the Papers, the Post reports, is an utter uncertainty about the very objective of the war: “Some U.S. officials wanted to use the war to turn Afghanistan into a democracy. Others wanted to transform Afghan culture and elevate women’s rights. Still others wanted to reshape the regional balance of power among Pakistan, India, Iran and Russia.”

The question of the purpose of a war is a political question that ought to be answered by a Congress and president that represent the will of the American people, not the competing budgets and ideologies of various, unaccountable agencies. Because war is a political act, it ought to be declared and conducted by people who are directly responsible to the people, not anonymous members of the



U.S. President George W. Bush (L) greets troops at Fort Drum Army base in New York. Fort Drum is the home of the 10th Mountain division, a light infantry rapid-deployment force that was deployed to Afghanistan shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the United States.

“interagency consensus” or the intelligence “community.”

Tallying Up the Score

The Afghanistan Papers also show, though, that the “experts” aren’t very expert at all. The Washington Post has thoroughly uncovered and highlighted abuses and absurdities noted in the Afghanistan Papers that resulted in a disgraceful waste of precious blood and treasure.

Mind-boggling sums of money were wasted. The Pentagon at one point couldn’t account for \$1.41 billion. A single contractor was required to spend \$3 million daily on civil projects in an area the size of a U.S. county. Since the start of the war, three agencies alone—the Defense Department, State Department, and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—have spent or appropriated as much as \$978 billion. A representative from USAID admitted that 90 percent of what that agency was forced to spend was superfluous.

The Post’s exposé also includes staggering numbers of casualties from the war: 2,300 American soldiers are dead and another 20,000 wounded; 64,000 Afghan security forces have been killed, while only 42,000 Taliban and other insurgency fighters have been killed, and an embarrassingly higher number (43,000) of Afghan civilians have lost their lives as a result of the war.

These numbers are bewildering. While it’s not always clear who is piloting this ship, it’s clear that they are no experts.

In 1964, Ronald Reagan gave a speech criticizing the ambitious exploits of the burgeoning welfare state under the policies of the New



Sgt. Jason Johnson (L) and Sgt. Eric Abelar from the U.S. Army 3rd Platoon 108 MP company play with a local Afghan child near the Kandahar airfield in southern Afghanistan while on patrol as part of Operation Enduring Freedom on May 12, 2002.

Deal and the Great Society. “If government planning and welfare had the answer,” he said, “and they’ve had almost 30 years of it—shouldn’t we expect government to read the score to us once in a while? Shouldn’t they be telling us about the decline each year in the number of people needing help? ... But the reverse is true. Each year the need grows greater; the program grows greater.”

Yet, he observed, “The more the plans fail, the more the planners plan.” The same is true in Afghanistan.

Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis dismissed the Post’s reporting by saying that the Afghanistan Papers are not “revelatory.” “If you read [the articles],” he said, “you’d almost think it’s a total disaster, and it’s not that at all.” He explained that there have been “other gains as well, including an

In the midst of [the House impeachment hearing, the Horowitz Report, and the election in the United Kingdom], perhaps the biggest story of the decade broke last week, and many people missed it.

increase in the number of educated Afghan women and populations that have received better access to medical care,” according to The Hill.

After 18 years and counting, after all the blood and treasure spilled, all they have to show are higher numbers of educated Afghan women and better access to medical care? What on earth do these things have to do with American interests, and how could they ever begin to compensate for the price we’ve paid?

President Donald Trump may not have the military expertise of a Clausewitz, and perhaps his desire to end “endless wars” is simplistic, but, as the Afghanistan Papers demonstrate, it’s less simplistic than the idea that we can remake Afghanistan in our own image if we just spend enough blood and treasure.

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



An Afghani squats on a wall while a group of U.S. Army soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division secure an area during the inspection of a local bazaar in the town of Yayeh Kehl, Paktia province, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Nov. 14, 2002.

Do We Now Have Social Classes of Hate Killers?

BARBARA KAY



On Dec. 10, religious fanatics Francine Graham and David Anderson went on a bloody rampage in Jersey

City, New Jersey. It began in a cemetery, where they opened fire on Detective Joseph Seals, a father of five who had been investigating the murder of an Uber driver the day before, to which Graham and Anderson's stolen U-Haul had been linked.

When Seals approached them, they shot him dead, then drove to the nearby JC Kosher Supermarket. There they began shooting with long assault rifles, with surveillance footage indicating a small yeshiva next door with about 50 children inside as the first target. The racket attracted two police officers in the neighborhood to the scene, and Graham and Anderson barricaded themselves in the store. A two-hour gun battle with police and SWAT teams ensued. Breaching the door with an armored car, the police found the killers dead along with three of their innocent victims.

Inside the U-Haul, police found a pipe bomb and a short, rambling manifesto. Both killers identified as members of the Black Hebrew Israelites, a 100-year-old movement the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated as hateful.

Black Hebrew Israelites believe they are the descendants of the biblical Hebrews. They see the Africans enslaved in the Americas as Israelites severed from their heritage. In their eyes, Jews are imposters, so their hatred for Jews is justified. Anderson kept a YouTube playlist of anti-Semitic material. In one video, a Black Hebrew Israelite preacher shouts "Satan is in you" at a Jewish man. "You stole our history. You are pretending to be us. The messiah, who is a black man, is going to kill you."

Yet strangely, reaction to the crime from politicians and celebrities on the left ignored this elephant in the room. Indeed, "ignored" is a euphemism for the response of Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), who wrote on Twitter, "White Supremacy kills!" (deleted after well-deserved mockery erupted). ABC talk show host Joy Behar blamed "white nationalists" and President Donald Trump, America's "liar-in-chief," for the massacre without bothering to wait for confirmation of the killers' identities. She, too, was subjected to derisory scolding.

It is instructive, although deeply troubling, that these two highly public figures were so robotically inclined to blame a hate crime on whites that they didn't even wait to learn the facts before bruiting



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

an allegation that might—and did—turn out to be false.

But most startlingly, Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) issued a statement to his constituents about the massacre, without a word about the victims being targeted as Jews, or anti-Semitism as the motive. Was it because the perpetrators were black that Booker referred to the victims only as neighborhood "residents" and their deaths as "tragedies"? It is certainly fair to ask, because if the perpetrators had been neo-Nazis and the victims black, Booker would have been keen to tell it like it was: a hate crime—even an act of terrorism—by vicious white supremacist racists, and moreover proof that racism continues to run rampant in the United States.

Some commentators were quick to see a parallel between this glaring omission and then-President Barack Obama's remarks following the January 2015 Charlie Hebdo journalists' massacre in Paris, referring to the jihadi terrorists who went on to murder Jews in a kosher supermarket as "zealots who behead people or randomly shoot a bunch of folks in a deli in Paris." "Zealots," not Islamists? "Randomly" in a kosher supermarket? "Folks," not Jews? His words demonstrated an instinct for deference to "all" Muslims at the expense of truth about a recognizable hate pattern.

These reflexive impulses in the corridors of power to "disappear" black and Islamist Judeophobia are an insult to the intelligence of ordinary citizens, but a balm to the progressive mindset, which cannot comfortably process news of victimizing behavior in designated victim groups.

The casket for New Jersey Detective Joseph Seals is brought out of a church during his funeral in Jersey City, New Jersey, on Dec. 17, 2019. Detective Seals, a father of five, was killed last week at a cemetery after approaching two suspects in a vehicle who later went on to target a kosher supermarket and killed three others.

When a white anti-Semite, Robert Gregory Bowers, massacred 11 members of Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue in October 2018 and injured four police officers, the progressive media eagerly covered the incident, "likely the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the history of the United States," in lavish detail, dwelling on Bowers's hatred of Jews.

RICK LOOMIS/GETTY IMAGES



Recovery and clean up crews work the scene in the aftermath of a mass shooting at the JC Kosher Supermarket in Jersey City, New Jersey, on Dec. 11, 2019. Six people, including a Jersey City police officer and three civilians were killed in a deadly, hours-long gun battle between two armed suspects and police on Tuesday in a standoff and shootout in a Jewish market that appears to have been targeted.



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

Family members watch as the casket for New Jersey Detective Joseph Seals is brought out of a church during his funeral in Jersey City, New Jersey, on Dec. 17, 2019.

The left's collusion in the pretense that ethnic identity is a sidebar when hate crimes are committed by blacks cannot be indefinitely sustained. The Jersey City incident isn't an anomaly, but part of a disturbing trend. In a July article in Tablet Magazine titled "Everybody Knows," Armin Rosen chronicles a "typhoon of violence" against religious Jews in New York boroughs by blacks and Hispanics.

So, much as progressives might wish it to be so, white nationalism is not the story here. Yet, rather than face the music, Tlaib, Behar, Booker, and others on the left have on one occasion or another effectively chosen to provide cover for black anti-Semitism, something nobody on the right of the political spectrum would ever dream of doing for actual white supremacists.

For example, when a white anti-Semite, Robert Gregory Bowers, massacred 11 members of Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue in October 2018 and injured four police officers, the progressive media eagerly covered the incident, "likely the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the history of the United States," in lavish detail, dwelling on Bowers's hatred of Jews. But so did the right-wing Fox News.

On the other hand, consider the brouhaha over January's "Covington" affair. In an out-of-context video clip, a student from Covington Catholic High School in Kentucky, who was visiting Washington with his peers for its annual March for Life, seemed to be baiting a chanting, drum-beating Native American protester. The entire left-wing mainstream media, meaning virtually all media apart from a handful of exceptions like The Epoch Times and Fox News—which waited until the facts were in—immediately

came after the student for his presumed racism with the fervor of a torches-and-pitchforks medieval mob.

Only later, when the full video was released, was it made clear that the native activist was the aggressor. It also showed that the real bigots at the scene were Black Hebrew Israelites. They were captured on the full video insulting Native Americans as "savages" and hurling disgusting anti-Catholic, homophobic insults at the Covington boys such as "faggots," "crackers," and "pedophiles"—vile bait the boys maturely refused to take.

Yet even after the contextualized material vindicated the boys, many of their most virulent media accusers refused to apologize. Don Lemon of CNN even argued that the MAGA hats the boys were wearing carries a connotation that can provoke a "conditioned reaction," especially from "marginalized people."

Todd Byrd, who teaches race and culture at UCLA, says many black people consider the Black Hebrew Israelites "a harmless part of their communities." Tom Metzger, founder of the neo-Nazi organization White Aryan Resistance, calls them "the black counterparts of us." Between them, which one is infantilizing black supremacists, and which is granting them moral agency?

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

SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



President Donald Trump shakes hands with North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un before a meeting at the Sofitel Legend Metropole hotel in Hanoi, Vietnam, on Feb. 27, 2019.

That was his instinct: You've got a problem with somebody? You call him. And that's what he did with Kim Jong Un.

Doug Wead, presidential historian

Doug Wead on Writing an Official Record of Trump's Presidency

CONTINUED FROM A7

From the time that Ivanka Trump was a little girl, her father was ripping out pages of *The New York Times* lamenting what America's elites—both Republican and Democrat—were doing to America, Wead said.

All this time, “he’s hoping that somebody’s going to come along and run for president and clean this up and nobody ever does,” Wead said.

Trump watched as Republican and Democratic presidents welcomed communist China into the World Trade Organization and gave China most favored nation status. They paved the way for the rise of communist China and enabled “the largest transfer of wealth in human history, outside of the Middle East, of America’s wealth to China,” Wead said.

“Imagine how much money it’s taken to pull China out of poverty. And the American middle-class has done that,” he said.

“The president knows that the decisions he has to make vis-a-vis China are the toughest decisions he will make,” Wead said. And he understands that the American people won’t fully appreciate his decisions, such as placing hefty tariffs on Chinese products, Wead said.

Untold Stories

Trump is the sixth U.S. president Wead has interviewed; he’s also conversed with six first ladies and 30 siblings and children of different presidents.

In his interviews with the presidents, he says the only common denominator was that they were all great listeners.

“When I found that with Trump, I was surprised because on TV, you only see him talking, you don’t see him listening,” Wead said. “My whole perspective on the president changed immediately when I met him.”

During one of Ivanka Trump’s interviews with Wead, she told him, “he is really very compassionate.”

Wead details in his book: “All her life, even in her teens, Ivanka would be called into his office, where he would tear off a piece of the morning newspaper and say, ‘Ivanka, find this person.’ It might be a person whose apartment had burned, destroying everything he had owned. Once, it was a young woman whose father had been murdered in the Bronx, and prosecutors would not make the arrest.”

Ivanka eventually found the woman, who had been left impoverished, and her father offered to help her and give her a job, Wead wrote.

One of America’s most shameful secrets was the many U.S. hostages held abroad, Wead told *The Epoch Times*. Previous administrations had failed to secure their

I told Ivanka, you know, in 100 years from now, there are still going to be books written and dramas performed about the Trump family.

Doug Wead, presidential historian

release.

“I’ve spoken with the families of these hostages. Democrat, Republican—they don’t care. They had loved ones that they cared about who were beheaded and who were tortured and raped,” Wead said.

“They were told by the American government, keep quiet,” Wead said. He says the rationale was that if they increased the publicity surrounding a hostage, it would increase the value of the hostage, and make it harder to free that person. And more Americans abroad would likely be imprisoned to blackmail the United States.

“There was this period of darkness, a shameful period where nothing could be said about the hostages,” Wead said.

“If it’s your son or daughter, your only hope is the federal government. And they won’t keep you informed? They won’t tell you what’s going on? They won’t let you use your money or your abilities to try to bring them home?”

Trump “was outraged by that,” Wead said. Since taking office, he has successfully freed 22 hostages.

Trump refused to offer money in exchange.

“He did the reverse: We’re taking their money, and we’re going to squeeze them until they let them go” was his rationale, Wead said.

In his book, he highlights the case of Pastor Andrew Brunson, who had been imprisoned in Turkey for alleged links to the Gülen movement, a designated terrorist organization in Turkey. The government in Ankara had produced no evidence, so Brunson couldn’t refute any of the charges against him.

The Trump administration made several agreements with Turkey to secure Brunson’s release, but the Turks backed out of them, Brunson told Wead later in an interview.

Trump pressured Turkey by putting

Pastor Andrew Brunson, freed after a two-year detention, arrives with his wife Norine Brunson at Izmir Adnan Menderes Airport in Turkey, on Oct. 12, 2018.



BULENT KILIC/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

sanctions on two of its officials, doubling tariffs on steel and aluminum from Turkey, and engaging Congress and the European Parliament to exert pressure as well. The Turkish lira tumbled, and on Oct. 12, 2018, Trump welcomed Brunson and his family to the White House.

Trump “brought the Turkish economy to the brink over one man, and he got him home,” Wead said.

Death Threats

Before the book was published, Wead said he began receiving death threats against him and his family from different IP addresses in an attempt to stop him from releasing his work.

“They named my family members and details about their life that would only come from a great deal of research,” Wead said.

“These are unusual times,” he added.

Wead believes the anti-Trump resistance wanted to impeach Trump as soon as he won the election.

“So it had nothing to do with Russian collusion, because that came later; it had nothing to do with the phone call to Ukraine because that came later,” Wead said.

“The national media and the establishment,” are still reeling from the humiliation that U.S. voters didn’t vote how they were told to, Wead said.

As Wead highlighted in his book, Trump’s victory defied all expectation:

“He had been opposed by Hollywood, academia, Wall Street, and the national media. Every living president, Republican and Democratic, had voted against him. Two-hundred-and-forty newspapers had endorsed his opponent, Hillary Clinton. Nineteen had supported him. Billionaires had voted against him 20 to one.”

In addition, right after the election, economist Paul Krugman wrote, “We are very probably looking at a global recession, with no end in sight.”

But contrary to the predictions of economic fallout, the economy boomed, and now boasts more than 7 million job openings.

“That’s the entire population of the state of Indiana in unfilled jobs,” Wead said.

Wead said Trump’s son-in-law, Jared Kushner—who plays a much larger role in the Trump administration than people think—once remarked to Trump that it was thanks to the media’s total fixation with the Russia collusion narrative that the Trump administration was able to deregulate.

“The cutting of regulations could have been big stories. Instead, they were blind to what we were doing, and we were able to jump-start the economy,” Kushner told Wead.

In writing his book, “What I wanted to do was get accurate stories, real stories down on paper—truth on paper,” Wead said.

“I told Ivanka, you know, in 100 years from now, there are still going to be books written and dramas performed about the Trump family. But whether they’re viewed hatefully as the Borgias or as the Medicis or as grandly as the Kennedys or the Rockefellers or some great family, all of that depends on what is written and said about them now,” he said.

“Not the hearsay, but the primary sources.”

This full interview can be viewed on American Thought Leaders, an Epoch Times show available on Facebook and YouTube.

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

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We report respectfully, compassionately, and rigorously.

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

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

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

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

Chapter Eight (Cont.)

4. Violence and Lies: The Primary Methods of Control in Communist Politics (cont.)

c. How Communist Lies Confuse the West

Communism has a terrible reputation in the West, so lying is its only means of expanding its influence.

Communist and left-wing groups use slogans like “freedom,” “progress,” and “the public interest” as a pretext for winning public support. In fact, their goal is to carry out their plan of advancing socialism. Their tactics mirror the communist promises of creating “heaven on earth.” Some parties promote policies that are basically communist but come packaged under another name. For instance, the establishment of a socialized health care system isn't called socialist, but instead “people's health care,” or they justify it as being based on public opinion. When they want to force employers to pay a minimum wage, they call it a “living wage.” All the while, Western governments get more powerful and intervene in people's lives more and more.

Pro-communist politicians and interest groups make empty promises to get elected, something very similar to what communist parties did to win approval when they were just getting started. These politicians promise higher social welfare, or say that everyone will get a job and medical insurance. No one cares to talk about who will pay, or how the system will work out in the long term. They often don't even plan to fulfill their promises in the first place.

Benito Bernal, a congressional candidate on the U.S. West Coast, formerly on the left side of politics, recently disclosed that a political party once built a political organization with members that included federal departmental secretaries, federal senators and congressmen, and state and city council members. He says that they came up with a 25-year plan to manipulate different levels of government in order to campaign for the future presidency. Bernal discovered that the organization claimed to dedicate its resources to help communities resolve problems such as gang violence, school dropouts, teenage pregnancy, illegal immigrants, and social injustice. But its actual goal was to have all these people rely on the government. Bernal described this as a “system of slavery,” and said:

“When I questioned people in the organization, they asked me three questions instead. ‘First, if all the problems were solved, what would the next presidential candidate propose to help? Second, do you have any idea how much capital has come into our city to solve these problems? Third, do you know how many jobs are created to solve these problems?’ At the time, I wondered if these people were clearly telling me to profit from people's pain, gang violence, and children killing each other.”

Bernal said that if someone took the time to look at that party's voting record, they would realize that the party wanted people to be disappointed, suppressed, and impoverished, so that it could profit from their misfortune. This is why he later decided to leave the party.

In the 2008 U.S. presidential election, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), a liberal group started in 1970, was found to have registered thousands of fraudulent voters.

In 2009, the group was again involved in a nationwide scandal. In the name of upholding justice and fighting for low-income households, it had received a large amount of government subsidies and federal bailout money, which were meant to be used to help those families with medical care and housing needs. Two investigators disguised as a prostitute and a pimp went to ACORN's offices in several major cities to seek advice on how to operate their business, while secretly videotaping the interviews. Their videos show ACORN employees advising them on how to operate a brothel with a phony company and identity, and showed them how to launder money, hide the cash, avoid investigation, lie to the police, and evade taxes. Though ACORN repeatedly defended itself, its reputation was devastated and its funding withdrawn, forcing it to shutter a year later.

Many political pledges seem tempting on the surface, but once carried out, result in ruin for people's future. This is known as “the Curley Effect,” as studied by two Harvard professors.

Pro-communist politicians and interest groups make empty promises to get elected, and no one cares to talk about who will pay, or how the system will work out in the long term. They often don't even plan to fulfill their promises in the first place.

Forbes summarizes the Curley Effect thusly: “A politician or a political party can achieve long-term dominance by tipping the balance of votes in their direction through the implementation of policies that strangle and stifle economic growth. Counterintuitively, making a city poorer leads to political success for the engineers of that impoverishment.”

Specifically, politicians use warped and redistributionist fiscal and tax policies—such as giving tax incentives to trade unions, government programs, and minority enterprises—while increasing taxes on other enterprises and the wealthy. The result is that the beneficiaries of those policies (including the poor, trade unions, and so on) become reliant on the politicians who favor them, and then support them in elections. These “soak the rich” and high-tax policies are used to support governmental projects that encourages the wealthy and entrepreneurs (who don't want their money taken and squandered) to leave the city, with the result that the opponents of the policies are fewer. Such politicians then have a stable, long-term

hold on that area, and can build their political machine. At the same time, the taxation and job opportunities in the city decrease year by year, and eventually the city goes bankrupt.

The Forbes article points out that the influence of the Curley Effect is widespread, affecting the top ten poorest cities with a population of more than 250,000 in the United States. Today, one rich Western state, which has been mostly controlled by politicians on the Left, is facing the consequences of these policies.

The Left also changes the meaning of words. For example, for conservatives “equality” means, roughly speaking, having equal opportunities. In this way, people will be able to compete fairly, and a natural meritocracy is formed. For leftists, however, the term means equal outcomes—meaning that whether or not people work hard, they receive the same outcome as others who don't.

Conservatives believe that tolerance is inclusive of different beliefs and opinions; when personal interests are harmed, people should be broad-minded and generous. The Left often understands tolerance to mean tolerance of sin. Their understanding of freedom and justice differs quite markedly from the traditional concepts. Social-engineering policies, like celebrating homosexuality, having men and women use the same bathroom, legalizing marijuana, and other policies that undermine human ethics are all dubbed “progressive,” as if they were somehow moral advancements. In reality, all these policies undermine the moral laws laid down by God for man. This is how the policies on the left-wing of the political spectrum end up undermining morality. The communist evil specter uses this style of politics for its own ends.

In the past, people believed that the United States had a truly free society and was the last bastion against communism. But today, people see clearly that high taxation, a highly developed welfare state, collectivism, big government, social democracy, “social equality,” and the like—all derived in one way or another from socialist and Marxist-Leninist ideological DNA—are enshrined in policies and put into practice. In particular, the younger generation simply isn't aware of the history of brutality in communist countries. They yearn for and pursue an illusory ideal, and are deceived by the new guise that communism has taken on. The result is that they unknowingly walk on a road to ruin.

5. Totalitarianism: The Consequence of Communist Politics

It's widely known that communist totalitarian countries control all aspects of the personal lives of their subjects. The nonviolent forms of communism gradually and continually expand government power, increasing control over social life and eventually moving toward an authoritarian system. In countries where communist totalitarian power has not yet been established, people are also in danger of losing their freedoms at almost any time. Even more frightening is the fact that modern totalitarianism uses science and technology to carry out personal surveillance and extreme control of life, something never seen before.

See next edition for the next installment.

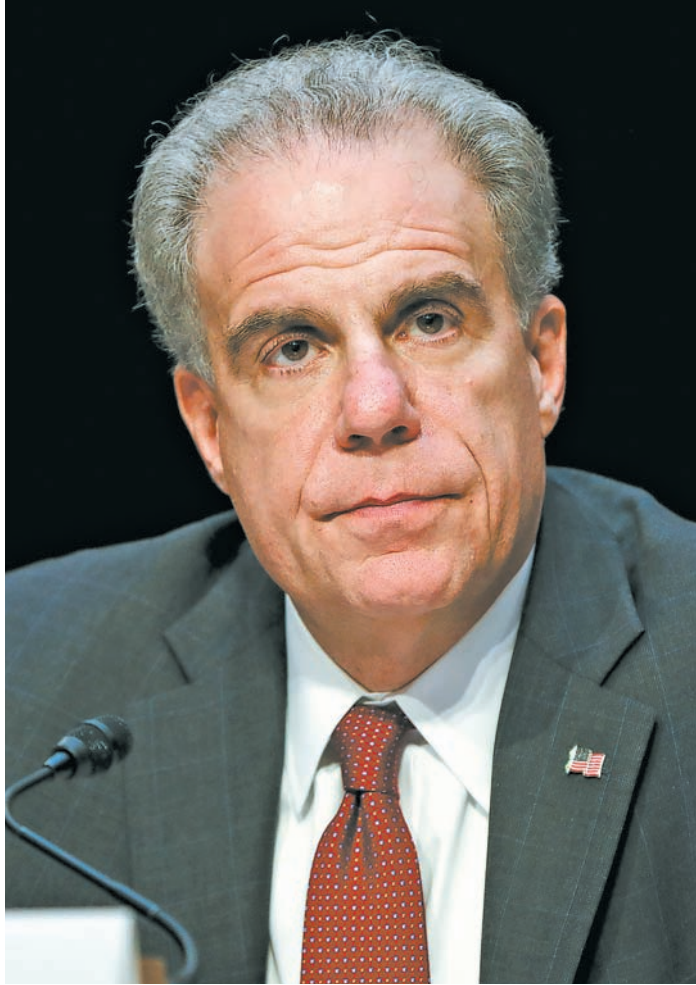
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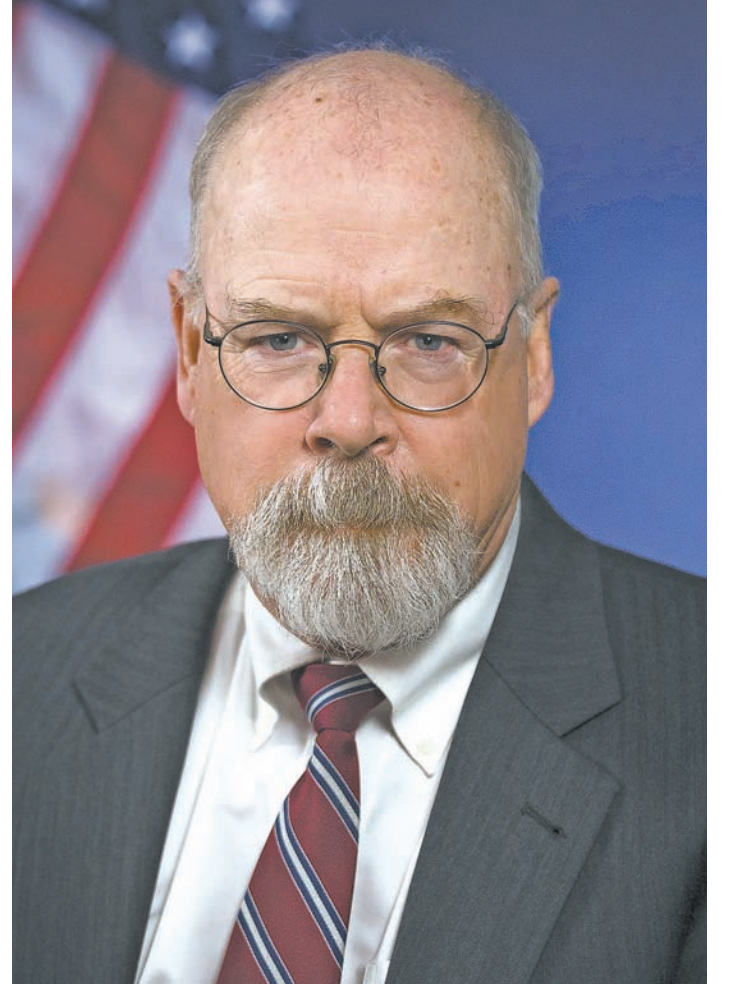
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE



Former special counsel Robert Mueller testifies before Congress in Washington on July 24, 2019.



Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz testifies before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Washington on Dec. 11, 2019.



John Durham, U.S. Attorney for the District of Connecticut.

OPINION

The Three Steps to Justice for the Spycgate Scandal

BRIAN GATES



Just over a year and a half since Department of Justice Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz began his review of serious questions regarding the FBI's surveillance of the Trump presidential campaign during the 2016 election, his final report was publicly released on Dec. 9, and he appeared before Congress on Dec. 11 to discuss it.

After reading the report myself, I can confidently state that this report hammered the final nail in the coffin of more than three years of a massive hoax that was perpetrated on the country by corrupt officials in the federal agencies and irresponsible reporters in many of the major news media outlets.

The story told by this FISA Abuse report is a sad and infuriating one: how top DOJ-FBI officials got caught red-handed faking their probable cause to get legal electronic surveillance on a presidential campaign during an election.

A key part of faking that probable cause meant taking false allegations from a paid Hillary Clinton political operative, namely, Christopher Steele.

The goal of the hoax was to prevent the election of Donald J. Trump as president of the United States, and failing in that, to essentially paralyze the country and sabotage the new administration until Trump could be removed from office.

As you can see, if you look around, these people utterly failed. Trump not only survived the sabotage attempt, but he's also stronger and his presidency is more robust than ever.

Despite the recent impeachment farce in the House of Representatives—which is now wrapping up as I write this—the needle failed to move at all when it comes to public support for impeaching this president. In fact, recent polls now show Trump is gaining support, not losing it. Several polls now show Trump leading all his Democratic challengers in several of the key swing states, less than a year from the 2020 election.

But as President Trump himself has often said, steps need to be taken to make absolutely sure this kind of hoax is never tried on a president and the country ever again.

That's why it's a good thing that two of the necessary steps to ensure this kind of fraud is never tried again have already been completed.

All expectations turn to Durham as the country waits to see what he has found when his investigation ends.

The Three Steps to Justice

It helps to think of this unfolding Spycgate drama in three separate and distinct acts, each one carried out by a different person.

1. Special counsel Robert Mueller: Kills the RussiaGate hoax by revealing there never was any evidence for it.
2. Inspector General Michael Horowitz: Performs an internal FBI autopsy on the RussiaGate hoax to learn how a fiction based on no evidence was used by the FBI to obtain a FISA warrant and

three renewals on Trump campaign aide Carter Page.

3. U.S. Attorney John Durham: Buries the dead RussiaGate hoax as he brings accountability to those who perpetrated this fraud on the country.

Step One

A nonpartisan independent icon of the law enforcement community, a former director of the FBI itself, Robert Mueller, was hand-picked by former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to run a special counsel investigation that was given a historic and ever-expanding scope for his search for any evidence whatsoever establishing Trump campaign collusion with the Russian government during the 2016 election and afterward.

Step Two

Because Mueller definitively demonstrated that evidence of the Trump presidential campaign colluding with Russia didn't exist, this immediately raised the important question of how the FBI came to claim to the FISA Court that there was sufficient probable cause to start counterintelligence investigations of four U.S. citizens associated with the Trump campaign, and how at least one surveillance warrant on one of these citizens kept being repeatedly renewed, despite that exculpatory evidence kept being discovered by the FBI's own continuing investigation.

Even before the Mueller special counsel's office completed its investigation in March, it became evident that the DOJ officials involved had perpetrated a massive fraud on the court by withholding and even hiding the exculpatory evidence for Page that

their own investigation was discovering, as well as hiding damaging information concerning the credibility of the confidential human source who had provided the allegations they were using as their probable cause in the surveillance warrant. Horowitz announced in a review of these FISA issues in March of 2018.

Step Three

Building on the foundation of what the Mueller investigation had revealed, and upon what the inspector general's investigation was finding, nonpartisan and independent U.S. Attorney for Connecticut John Durham was tapped by Attorney General William Barr to begin an investigation into the issues uncovered by Mueller and Horowitz.

That criminal investigation led by Durham is now well underway. Barr has said in recent interviews with both NBC News and The Wall Street Journal that he expects Durham to finish sometime in the late spring or early summer of 2020.

Horowitz's final report was absolutely crucial in unveiling the final bits of evidence that proved the Steele dossier was a fraud and that the Spycgate scandal is very real.

Now, all expectations turn to Durham as the country waits to see what he has found when his investigation ends.

Brian Gates is a writer based in South Texas and the author of "Nobody Asked For My Opinion...But Here It Is Anyway!"

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



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How Changing My Diet Changed My Life

Three chefs share their stories of eating their way back to better health.

See B10



Street Food, Ocean Views, and Memories of Gold

The former mining town of Jiufen, tucked into the mountains, offers an alluring taste of old Taiwan.

See B11

DECEMBER 19 - DECEMBER 25, 2019 B1

LIFE

THE EPOCH TIMES

MYTHS: MAPPING OUR WAY HOME

The 'Why' of Christmas

SHUTTERSTOCK



JAMES SALE

In this series, Myths: Mapping Our Way Home, James Sale revisits why myths—all but discounted today—remain crucial to understanding our place in the universe, if not to our very survival.

The jolly season is with us. Those of a nonreligious disposition will probably go “bah humbug,” note that Christ wasn’t really born on Christmas Day, and that this is all one great fantasy; or perhaps, and more hopefully, shrug their shoulders and enjoy the festivities as much as anyone else might. Why, then, exactly, does Christmas matter, as in, really matter?

Certainly, “Christmas” seems to have been celebrated long before Christianity. The Roman god Saturn had his celebrations on the 25th of December. And the fact that the date preceded Christ does not invalidate it as our Christmas Day, for that would be to fall prey to a dreadful literalism that would mean we were not reading it properly.

On the contrary, the fact that Saturn was worshiped on this day only tends to make its importance greater. Why? Because it points to something deep within the human psyche that persists and is made manifest on the 25th of December.

According to the Last Trumpet Ministries, the Romans noticed that three days after the shortest day of the year (which varies in the Northern Hemisphere between Dec. 20, 21, 22, or 23), the sunlight started increasing! So the god had died and three days later had risen from the dead and begun to light the world again. Surely, a reason to celebrate. For how could this be understood other than that light had overcome darkness, and that chaos had been defeated by ... by what exactly? By the god Saturn, of course!

The First, Second, and Third Lessons

The first lesson of psychic importance, then, is that life triumphs over death.

Secondly, how life triumphs over death is miraculous; it is not something a human being can devise to do. It happens of its own accord and by its own divine power. We do not set the laws that regulate when our days are long and when they are short. As the “Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead” states: “All the world which lies below has been set in order and filled in contents by the things which are placed above; for the things below have not the power to set in order the world above.”

Third, we owe thanks and gratitude for this wonder of life, and bizarrely, as we exercise thanks and gratitude, we feel even better and see even more wonder in life.

This wonder of life! Wonder of human life. What is it about, and why is Christmas important? Is it just so that we can express gratitude and share with one another? What if there were even more to it than that?

Questions by Man and Beast

When I consider the life forms nearest to us, the mammals, I ask myself: “What do animals ask themselves?” and I come up

The baby Jesus is depicted with the same cast of light as those in heaven. The painting of the Nativity by Pietro Dufour, 1689, in Chiesa di San Lorenzo in Turin, Italy.

In the Christian tradition, light and meaning became identified with the birth of Christ.

Continued on B4

10 Ways to Indulge and Stay Healthy This Holiday Season

Getting through the holidays without extra pounds might be impossible, but there are tricks that can help

MELANIE GREGG & DANIELLE DEFRIES

Often we feel that if we can't stick to our regular routine, then why bother? As researchers in nutrition and physical activity behaviors, we know that maintaining wellness over the holidays is easier than starting over again in the new year.

Going into the holidays with a plan to overcome adversity—like the dessert tray—is more effective than no plan at all. Indulge a little, while still feeling good about yourself.

Before the holidays ruin your wellness plan and make you turn as green as the Grinch, try these 10 ways to help you stay on track and keep your festive spirit.

1. To Start, Cut Yourself Some Slack!

Exercisers who show self-compassion after an interrupted routine do better at getting back on track with their exercise goals. If you over-indulge at a holiday party, give yourself a break, and plan to regain control the next day.

2. Plan (and Make a Backup Plan)

Planning is key to healthy eating and staying active. If the great outdoors inspire you, plan a few outdoor activities each week, but have a few indoor activities as a backup should Mother Nature have plans of her own.

If numerous parties threaten to derail your healthy eating habits, plan on a small, protein-rich snack before heading out. It may seem silly to eat before an event, but a pre-party snack will keep you satisfied and less likely to overeat when you're there.



TOA HEFTIBA/UNSPLASH

▲ The holidays are a time of indulgence. But don't give yourself too much grief over breaking your diet or exercise routine because that can make it harder to get back on it.

Eating is enjoyable, but overdoing it can leave us feeling less than cheerful.

3. Choose Wisely at the Food Table

Using a small-sized plate for snacks may actually trick your brain into thinking you're eating more and leave you feeling fuller compared to using a large plate.

If there's only one size of plate available and it's huge, don't despair! Pick four or five foods you'd really like to try, and take the smallest portion necessary to satisfy your cravings.

4. Get Creative About Exercise

Be creative about sneaking in some ways to add activity time to your festivities.

Being active doesn't have to mean counting reps at the gym—go sledding and run back up the hill or plan an indoor scavenger hunt if the weather is too cold. Get the whole family involved and off the couch.

5. Stick With a Routine

Interruptions to routine make it easy to abandon all good intentions. It's hard to regain healthy behaviors once we've taken a hiatus and enjoyed the good life.

Stick with a few elements of your routine to make getting back into the swing of things easier after the holidays.

6. Try Mindful Eating

Eating is enjoyable, but overdoing it can leave us feeling less than cheerful.

To keep your stomach connected with your brain as you eat, try mindful eating—the practice of being fully present while savoring each bite.

Experiencing food this way forces you to focus on feelings of fullness and satisfaction, and may even help control how much you eat.

7. Choose Activities That Feel Good

By picking activities and healthy foods that you enjoy, you're more likely to stay active and eat healthy. When you choose activities that make you feel good, you're more likely to come back for more. So even if you do some intense exercise, build in some time for a relaxing cooldown

8. Know What You're Drinking

Raising a glass goes hand-in-hand with the holidays but can quickly sabotage plans for healthy holiday living. Cocktails often contain hidden calories and can cause us to overeat and make it harder to be active the next day.

To stay on track while enjoying some holiday cheer, familiarise yourself with actual serving sizes for alcoholic beverages, and follow each alcoholic drink with sparkling water or another non-alcoholic beverage.

9. Make Your Own Festive Foods

While the holiday season can be a whirlwind, take time to prepare your own foods as much as possible. By doing DIY meals, you can create healthy alternatives to holiday favorites.

And while you're at it, get the kids involved in whipping up the holiday feast—kids who learn how to cook gain skills beyond food prep that they carry into adulthood.

10. Crank Up the Music

Music can help motivate you to persist in and enjoy exercise, so crank up the Boney M. Christmas tunes while you run on the treadmill. Find music you like and you'll find it easier to get moving.

No matter which of the 10 ways you choose to help you on your wellness journey, we wish you a happy, active holiday season with friends and family.

Melanie Gregg is a professor of sport and exercise psychology at the University of Winnipeg in Canada and Danielle Defries is an associate professor of nutritional sciences at the University of Winnipeg. This article was first published on The Conversation.

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How to Infuse Your Family With the Spirit of Generosity This Christmas Season

Teaching children how to be generous can be a holiday tradition for the whole family

SHERI MADIGAN

Around this time each year, many children have made a Christmas wish list that includes items like toys, games, crafts, and electronics. While children may express gratitude and joy in response to receiving gifts, the concept of generosity of spirit has certainly changed over the years.

It was St. Nicholas's legendary status of generosity that gave rise to the modern-day tradition of Santa Claus. As the story goes, as a young boy, St. Nicholas was left with a substantial amount of inheritance when his parents died, which he then used to help others, primarily the poor.

St. Nicholas was generous. Generosity is defined as the quality of being kind and giving time, attention or gifts to others without conditions or the expectation of getting something in return. Being generous is seen as a positive virtue in people and has links with other emotions such as empathy and compassion.

One study of charitable giving by children shows that boys and girls give equally. Research also shows that by the age of nine most children have a good understanding of generosity. As with all aspects of development, as the child ages, greater understanding and mastery of generosity will unfold.

What role do parents play in socialising children to be more generous? One way is by showing generosity themselves. Research shows that a parent's level of generosity and charitable behavior is correlated with their child's display of the same behaviors.

Modelling generosity makes an impression on children and is thus a great first step to fostering this behavior. Siblings can also effectively role model empathy and compassion, and by extension, generosity.

Another way is to talk with children about generosity. Studies have shown that having family discussions about generosity had a stronger influence on children's charitable behavior than parent role modeling alone.

Modeling generosity makes an impression on children.

Parental Behavior Matters

The roots of generosity, such as empathy, compassion, and prosocial behavior, begin to develop in the toddler years.

The roots of generosity, such as empathy, compassion, and prosocial behavior, begin to develop in the toddler years.

experiences are also opportunities to discuss the value of family connection and making memories.

- 2. Give to those in need.** Discuss the legend of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) and his spirit of giving to those who are less fortunate. Encourage children to add a gift to someone in need to their Christmas or birthday wish list, or to give used or unused material possessions (such as toys, books, or clothing) to those without.
- 3. Give without expecting anything in return.** The core concept of generosity is to give without conditions. Show children that being charitable is unconditional. Several reputable local,

national, and international organizations have charitable gift giving programs for children in need (for example, providing water purification tablets and school supplies).

4. Give the gift of time. With your children, make a list of ways they could give their time to someone else. This could be shoveling someone's driveway, weeding a neighbor's garden, or cleaning up the local park. They could also give their time to an organization in need of volunteers, like a soup kitchen.

5. Give year round. Generosity and kindness shouldn't just happen over the holidays. Make these concepts part of your everyday family life and try to schedule acts of kindness together. At the dinner table, ask your children: "Can you tell me a time today you showed kindness?" You can also talk about how, as a parent, you showed kindness or generosity to someone in your professional or personal life that day.



Giving gifts is certainly part of being generous, but as we all know, the holidays can also be a time of stress and panic about getting the right gift, navigating the shopping mania in stores, and frankly, just paying for everything. All is not lost, however, there are other narratives that parents can use around kids when it comes to generosity.

Sheri Madigan is an assistant professor and Canada Research Chair in determinants of child development at the Owerko Center at the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute at the University of Calgary in Canada. This article was first published on The Conversation.

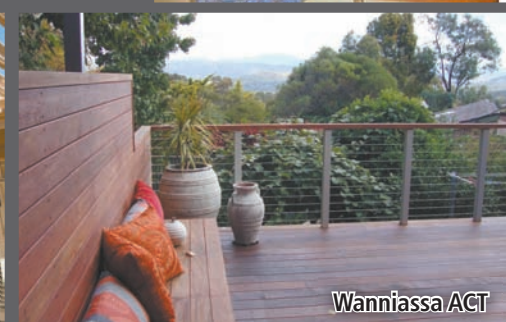


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MYTHS: MAPPING OUR WAY HOME

The 'Why' of Christmas

Continued from B1

with a surprising answer. Unselfconsciously, animals ask themselves two simple questions: What? and How?

They say, what is that I see coming toward me? Cat, dog, vacuum cleaner? Answer: run, freeze, attack! Or they ask: How do I get to that little sparrow chirping in the hedge? And at some instinctive level, their next movement is an answer to their own question.

So far, so good. But what question do they never ask?

They never ask "why." Why are things as they are? Why does cork float, water boil, or why does the universe exist at all? Why is there being, and not not-being? This last question almost gets us to thinking about our own existential angst.

The icecaps may be melting, and polar bears are attempting to survive, although not by experiencing existential angst about their status on the planet. And, of course, once "why" has truly been removed from the reasoning of a human being, then he or she only asks "what" and "how."

To limit one's questions to "what" and "how" is, for a human, to be in hell. Sisyphus in hell cannot ask why he is rolling the stone up the hill perpetually, for if he could ask that question, he would stop.

Yes, we see people living in hell, and a sure sign of it is the repetitive task that need not be done, but constantly is being done. In hell, one never gets to the root of any issue or problem, or sees why it is as

it is. Indeed, as Ingmar Bergman observed: "Hell is a place where no one believes in solutions anymore."

Effectively, to be in hell is to be subtracted, as it were, from the total reality. Usually when humans ask only the "what" and "how" questions, they cannot accept reality as it is and prefer the false self-images that they have created, which become a protective physical and emotional shell.

The Logos at the Center

So why is "why" important? Because the "why" questions point to the reason human beings are different and unique, because "why" points to the centrality of meaning in our lives. No meaning, no real life.

What is it that has defeated the darkness and the chaos? Light and meaning. What we are celebrating at the profoundest level on Christmas Day is the advent of meaning in our lives; meaning, of course, gives purpose, and purpose presupposes destiny, and destiny, unlike fate (where we are trapped), involves greatness.

So, in the Christian tradition, light and meaning became identified with the birth of Christ. For one reason, a baby symbolizes every family's hopes; and more specifically, this baby is—as all babies potentially are—destined for greatness. But there is more: The meaning at Christmas is personal, since the baby is a person.

Thus, meaning involves light, personhood, and an answer to the question "why?" Meaning and the question "why" are a hand-and-glove combi-

What we are celebrating at the profoundest level on Christmas Day is the advent of meaning in our lives.

nation, as one layers the other. We have "why," and covering it is the meaning. This the ancient religious traditions recognized. Perhaps the most famous example of all is the opening to John's Gospel, where we read: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Importantly, "Word" in Greek is "logos," and this not only means "word," but also "meaning" or "reason"; we can see its etymological root in our word "logic" today. Logic suggests rationality, coherence, consistency, and order. So we have: In the beginning was the meaning, who was with God and the meaning was God.

How extraordinary, and how abstract—if it weren't for the fact that on Christmas Day we also have the baby!

Christmas requires us to believe that meaning and order are at the root of life, not chaos and disintegration; that personhood and light overcome the animal in us, and the darkness; and that—if you will—one person transcendentally represents this epic battle.

And here's the thing: Meaning, or reason, cannot be proved by reason; it can only be accessed by faith. As G.K. Chesterton observed: "In so far as religion is gone, reason is going. For they are both of the same primary and authoritative kind. They are both methods of proof, which cannot themselves be proved."

How stunning; we in the modern world like to think that reason dictates our behaviors. But reason is as irrational as faith is perceived to be, in the sense that reason cannot prove itself we have to believe in reason. And so in an important way, the foundation of science is faith, just as it is the foundation of religious beliefs.

Christmas invites us to celebrate not just a belief in a person, which may be optional for many, but also a belief in the order, the rationality, the meaning of the cosmos, and so of the meaning of our lives.

No matter how some troubles may bring darkness into our lives, and no matter how fleeting our lives may individually be, there is a massive meaning at the heart of it all. And this meaning wildly celebrates life and invites us to give thanks for it.

James Sale is an English businessman and the creator of Motivational Maps, which operates in 14 countries. He has authored over 40 books from major international publishers, including Macmillan, Pearson, and Routledge, on management, education, and poetry. As a poet, he won First Prize in The Society of Classical Poets' 2017 competition.

DAVID BJORGEN/CC BY 2.5



A Greek Orthodox mural in the John the Baptist Church in Jordan.



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PUBLIC DOMAIN

(Above) The main source of light in "Nativity at Night" is the baby Jesus. By Geertgen tot Sint Jans, circa 1490, after a composition by Hugo van der Goes. National Gallery.

(Left) A traditional Nativity scene, in the Netherlands.

Certainly, 'Christmas' seems to have been celebrated long before Christianity.



PUBLIC DOMAIN



PUBLIC DOMAIN



PUBLIC DOMAIN

(Clockwise from Above)

The Nativity in the center of a late 10th-century ivory panel, in Constantinople. Musée du Louvre.

The Nativity, circa 1350, by Master of Vyssi Brod.

A German illuminated manuscript with two scenes of the Magi, circa 1220.

Adoration of the Magi on the central panel of a sarcophagus in the cemetery of St. Agnes in Rome, fourth century A.D.

"Adoration of the Magi," circa 1530, Albrecht Altdorfer.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

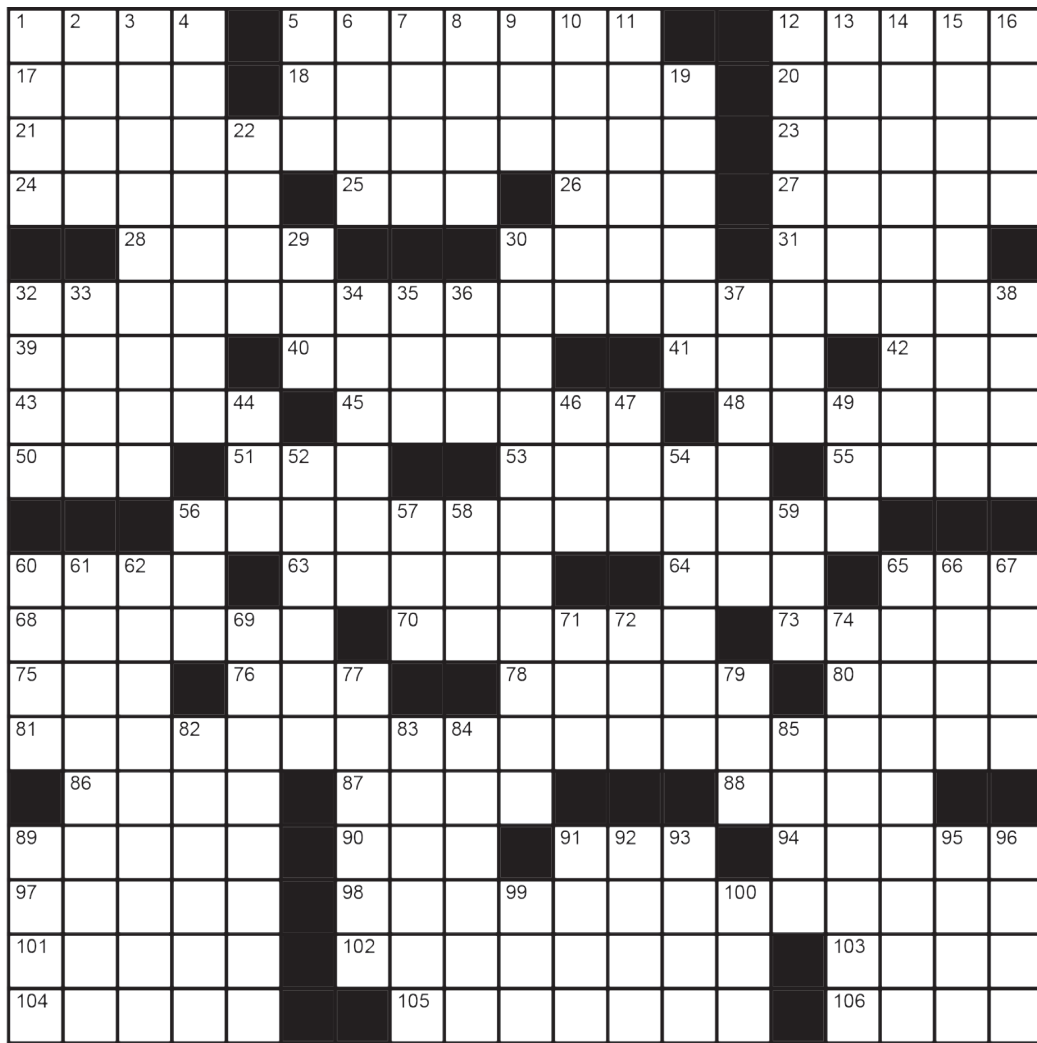


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CROSSWORD

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Across

- 1. Chairs a meeting?
5. "...___ restaurants with oyster-shells": Eliot
12. About
17. Tooth trouble
18. Aphrodisiacs
20. Crosswise, on deck
21. Nordic
23. Part of MGM
24. Straight-billed game bird
25. Roadie's load
26. Some forensic evidence
27. Asses

- 28. Feudal estate
30. Clap
31. Missile housing
32. AT&T offering
39. Big story
40. Wed
41. Partially harden
42. "Pat, can I buy ___?"
43. People person
45. Worrywart's words
48. Put in order
50. Crack, so to speak
51. Supped
53. Propelled a boat
55. Abandon.
56. Arizona sight

- 60. Cheese on crackers
63. Leaf opening
64. Supporting
65. And so forth
68. Pants measure
70. Cores
73. Tree with pods
75. Andean stew vegetable
76. Incense
78. "Canterbury ___"
80. Electric unit
81. "Blue Wall" or "Blue Shield"
86. Healthy energies
87. Cashew cover

- 88. Novice: Var.
89. Invoice word
90. Round Table title
91. Satiated
94. Bambino watcher
97. Be bombastic
98. End time theologies
101. Hack runner
102. Establish in a new place.
103. University founder Cornell
104. Urge
105. Accepted a raw deal
106. Heavy

Down

- 1. Bordeaux's "without"
2. Religious artifact
3. Using fiscal prudence
4. Bit of stage scenery
5. Depression
6. Plane measure
7. Crawl
8. Eyesore
9. Olympics chant
10. Letter getter
11. Doc additive
12. Firepit area
13. Candytuft
14. To return like for like
15. Stan Lee's occupation
16. Biblical prophet
19. Balance
22. Replaceable shoe part
29. Winter woe
30. Prehistoric flyers
32. "The Joy of ___" (Simpsons episode)
33. Copycat
34. Tab

- 35. Lash
36. Penn Station posting
37. Peddler
38. Emergency CB channel
44. Meadow sound
46. "Spy vs. Spy" magazine
47. Prior to, to Prior
49. "Gong Show" entrant
52. Yom Kippur's month
54. Spots
56. Dowel
57. Heavy weight
58. Down Under bird
59. "Arabian Nights" menace
60. Voting group
61. Repo dude
62. Like a rock
65. Be frugal
66. Toiletry item
67. ___ d'Azur
69. Horse followers
71. ___-tzu
72. Little toy maker
74. Amounted to.
77. '96 Arnold Schwarzenegger film
79. Rest
82. Pounds
83. Crops up
84. Gang
85. Car with a bar
89. Walkover
91. Alternative ___
92. List-shortening abbr.
93. Spoil, with "on"
95. Only
96. "And step on it!"
99. Radioactive
100. Preceded

4NUMBERS

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Use the four numbers in the corners, and the operands (+, -, X, and ÷) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle.

Hard 1 - 1 Solution: 14, 27, 28, 9, 20. Operations: +, -, X, ÷

Hard 1 - 1 Solution

Hard 2 - 1 Solution: 11, 34, 48, 7, 26. Operations: +, -, X, ÷

Hard 2 - 1 Solution

Easy 1 - 2 Solutions: 5, 8, 17, 3, 7. Operations: +, -, X, ÷

Easy 1 - 2 Solutions

Easy 2 - 1 Solution: 3, 6, 22, 2, 6. Operations: +, -, X, ÷

Easy 2 - 1 Solution

WORDSEARCH

CONSTRUCTED BY TOM HOUSTON EPOCH TIMES STAFF

Help with Today's Crossword Puzzle?

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

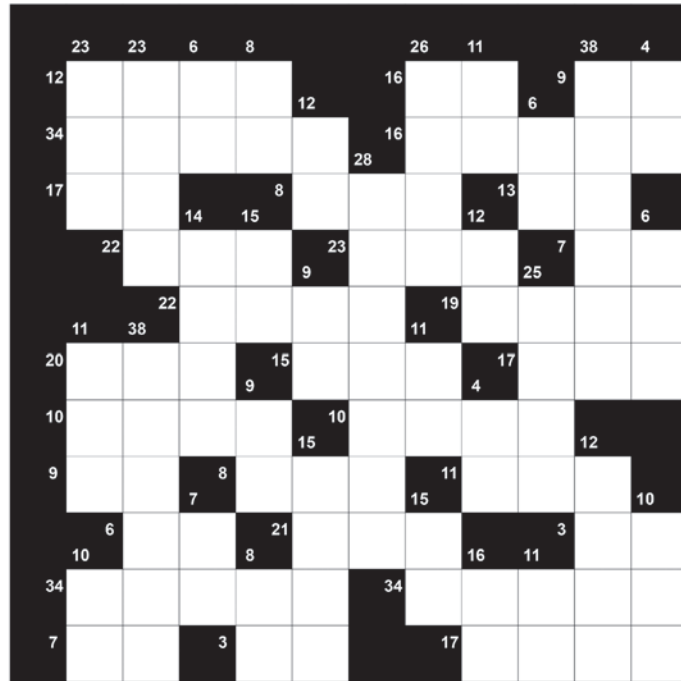
- AVERAGED, CACAO, CAMPSITE, CELEB, CIRCA, CIRCLE, ESPIES, IBERIS, INANIMATE, INDENT, LENGTH, MAMMA, METER, METRO, NEATEN, NUCLEI, OARED, ORATE, PRATS, PRESS, RECOVERER, REMIT, RETALIATE, SCALES, SETTLED, SNIPE, STOMA, TALES, TRINAL, UNITE, VENDER, ABEAM, ARISES, AROUSERS, CARTOONED, ERASER, SAWDUST

KAKURO

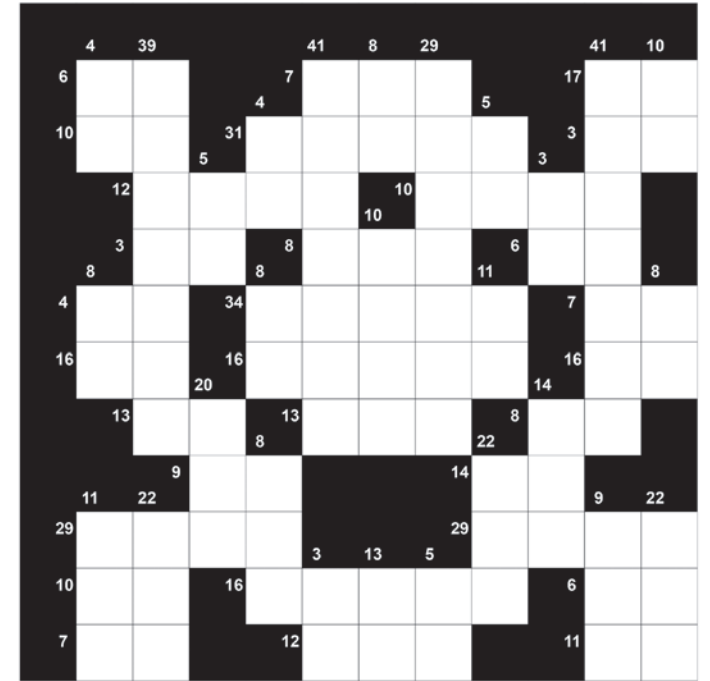
CONSTRUCTED BY EPOCH TIMES STAFF

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: Hard



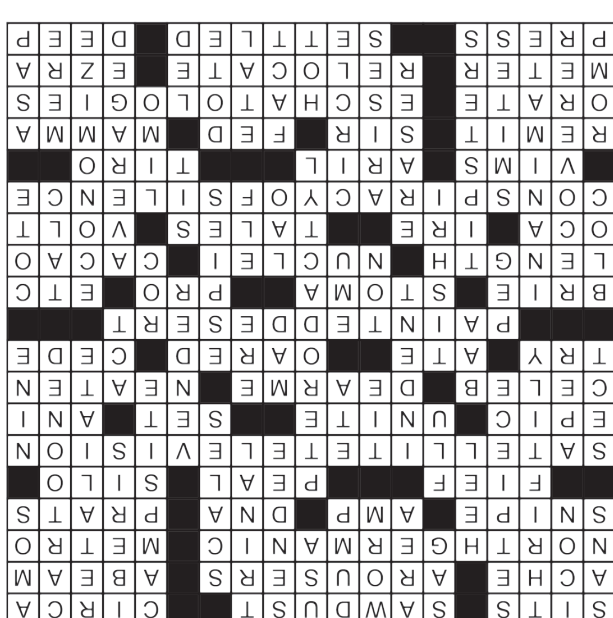
Large: Easy



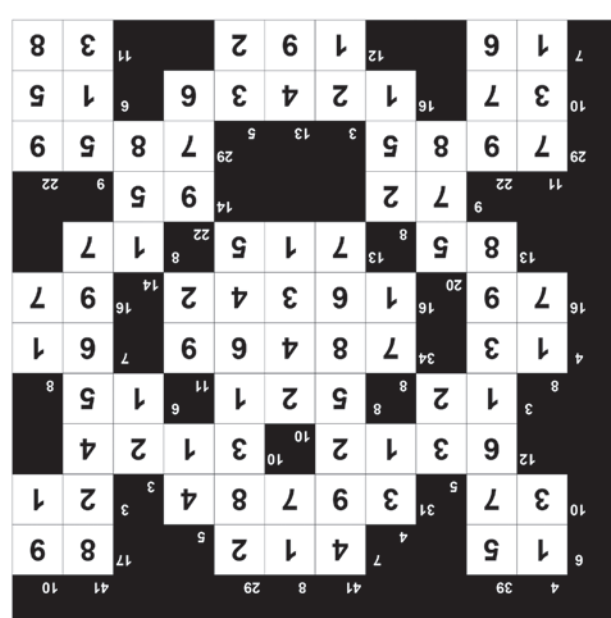
WORK SPACE

SOLUTIONS

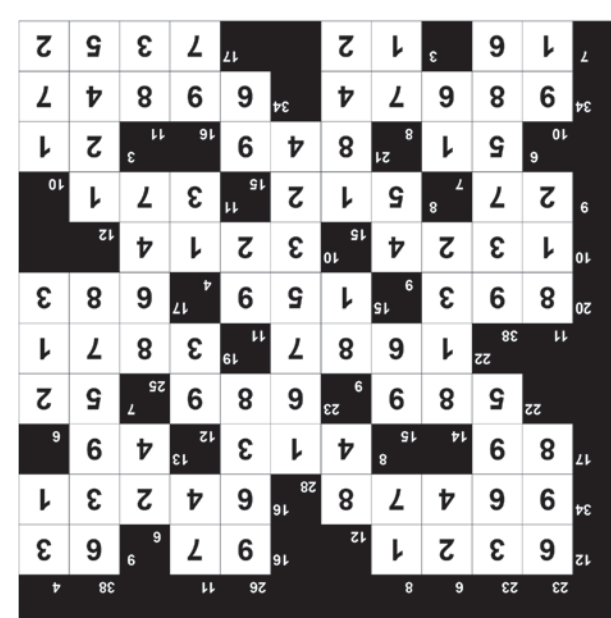
CROSSWORD



KAKURO LARGE: EASY



KAKURO LARGE: HARD



4NUMBERS

- HARD 1: 20 + 9 - 9 = 14
HARD 2: 26 + 11 - 11 = 7
EASY 1: 8 + 7 + 5 = 3
EASY 2: 6 x 3 + 6 = 2

RELATIONSHIPS

Compassion and Validation: A Salve to Heal Damaged Relationships

MICHAEL COURTER

Throughout the years of my helping people repair relationships with their spouses, friends, parents, and children, one tool stands above the rest to heal the damage: validation.

What is validation? Validation can be defined as recognition or affirmation that a person or their feelings or opinions are valid or worthwhile.

Why Does Validation Work?

Relationship injuries become sealed in place when one or both parties in a conflict believe that the other one refuses to accept that their opinions or experiences have any merit. Have you ever had the experience of trying to explain something to someone over and over again, only to have that person reject or dismiss what you are trying to tell them?

How does it feel to experience that?

Having this experience with someone causes a gap in the relationship, and the gap can turn into a gulf when the process is repeated or if the issue is experienced as vitally important. Having these repeated experiences with someone causes us to stop reaching out to them or telling them important things. This even happens in our closest relationships, with spouses, parents, and children.

Perhaps an argument or a conflict can be boiled down to: I refuse to acknowledge your perspective.

How Does Validation Work?

Validation works as the antidote to the invalidation, dismissal, minimization, or refusal to acknowledge important communication. It reverses this process and makes the other person believe that you really want to know them and understand them. It makes them want to tell you more, open up to you, and eventually share more and more important things with you. We all want to be listened to valued and cared about.

Why Don't We Validate Each Other More?

Often we don't validate each other because we believe that telling the other person that their opinions are valid is the same thing as canceling or invalidating our own opinions or agreeing with something that we don't believe is



Validation can be defined as recognition or affirmation that a person or their feelings or opinions are valid or worthwhile.

true. It's not the case. Acknowledging that someone else's perspective is valid doesn't mean that ours is not, and it doesn't mean that we necessarily agree with it. It means communicating that the person has a reason to feel or believe the way they do, even if we don't agree.

In close or damaged relationships, we may have to tolerate the other person's negative emotions or beliefs about us, and maybe we don't agree or think what they are saying about us is fair or true.

Maybe we can't tolerate the negative feelings that brings up in us, such as guilt or anger at the ways we believe the person has hurt us. Or their opinion of us challenges a strong belief that we have about ourselves, such as I am a good and kind person, how could I have hurt you like this? That's the hardest part. We have to be able to tolerate all of this discomfort to get to the other side. However, my repeated experience tells me that when someone believes that we are truly trying to listen to and understand them, they will be willing to listen to us.

Once both parties in a conflict feel this way, the relationship can be healed. Truly listening and understanding is the key. Don't expect that to happen with just a few words. You really have to work on it conscientiously, with determination, and when it really happens,

you can see a shift on the person's face and a change can be felt in the air. It won't always be easy, but it's powerful and the discomfort can be worth it if we can bring our loved one closer, reconnect a cut-off relationship, or save a marriage.

How Do You Do It?

Listen intently.

1. Kindly communicate back to the person what you understand about their position, opinion, or perspective and ask if it's accurate. If necessary, take the feedback and reformulate your understanding again, incorporating the new information added until they agree you have stated it accurately.
2. Even if you don't agree with the person's conclusions, see if you can comprehend or imagine how they came to their opinion or perspective and communicate that to them. "I can see why you feel that way because ..." Remember to do this with compassion, even if what they are saying is hard to hear. It is important to keep in mind that they are more likely to listen to you and accept your opinions or advice if they believe you are genuinely understanding them.

If you can't understand or comprehend the person's opinion or they continu-

ously disagree with your understanding, simply tell them that you are really trying to understand but you can't: "I'm really trying to take in what you are saying, but I can't understand why you feel that. Can you help me?" Your kind demeanor and tone and your genuineness will carry the day if you can show that you really care about this person.

3. The power move! If you can expand on this person's perspective, communicate to them how it relates to other ideas, thoughts, or behaviors of theirs, you are hitting a home run. "Oh, now it makes sense why you never wanted to sit next to me at dinner, you were worried I was going to criticize you!" "I understand why you never felt the same way toward me since that day!"
4. Fix it: Communicate that you want to fix any damage. "Now that I understand, I really want to make it better. I can't stand what this has done to our relationship!"
5. Now, share your opinion. "Would you be willing to listen to what I have been thinking about this?"

Give it a try.

Is there anyone you want to have a closer relationship with? Try offering them more validation. You don't have to try it first with someone you have a big conflict with. Try it with a friend or your grandchild. Notice how they want to tell you more and more, as they feel like you are really taking in what they are saying. See if you can sense a change in how they feel toward you.

As you get some practice and feel more comfortable, try it in closer or more challenging relationships. Notice your own emotions as you listen to the other person, but try and stay with their experience until you sense the shift or softening in the way they feel about you and then see if you can tell the other person your feelings and thoughts.

Michael Courter is a therapist and counselor who believes in the power of personal growth, repairing relationships, and following your dreams. He can be reached at mc@CourterCounsel.com. His website is CourterCounsel.com

A Legacy of Love: The Memories We Leave Behind

JEFF MINICK

"Death leaves a heartache no one can heal,

Love leaves a memory no one can steal."

—From an old Irish headstone

In Carlos Ruiz Zafón's novel "The Labyrinth of the Spirits," a mysterious writer, Julian Carax, writes these words in a last note to a young friend: "Never forget that we exist so long as someone remembers us."

When we die, we may leave behind worldly possessions for those we love—property, money, a brooch, an antique Mercedes, a breakfront passed from generation to generation, albums of photographs, an attic filled with the broken toys of childhood, and clothing out of fashion for 40 years. Except for the impoverished, the homeless, and the truly lonely, we bestow on those closest to us the trap and clutter of our lives, some of it valuable, some inconsequential but shot through with personal meaning, some bound for the Goodwill store or the dump.

But the most precious gifts we can give to the living are memories.

For years, I worried that growing old might turn

me a curmudgeon, cynical, pessimistic, embittered, and that after my death, others would recollect me as a sour, sarcastic grump. My grandfather became such a man, often ready with some snarky comment, some verbal cut that left wounds on the heart. Another older man of my acquaintance, retired from the military, was so vile to others, including his wife, that he made Grandpa look like Pollyanna. It sounds ridiculous, I know, but the possibility of being remembered as a grouch like these two, or other old guys I had met, frightened me.

One early morning, I was drinking coffee on the porch of my apartment, when this familiar apprehension once again returned. A black mood descended on me as I looked down onto Asheville's Cumberland Avenue, brooding on the possibility of whether old age might transform me into a killjoy. Then, this thought hit me: "Hey, you're over 60. You're old, and you haven't become a grouch." Readers may laugh, but the joy and relief brought by that revelation spangled the rest of my day. I was walking on air.

Of course, like many

For years, I worried that growing old might turn me a curmudgeon, cynical, pessimistic, embittered, and that after my death, others would recollect me as a sour, sarcastic grump.

of us, I have done harm to others, sometimes committing irreparable wrongs, transgressions that allowed for no means of direct reparation. In these cases, I could only learn from my mistakes, find my way back onto the right path, and strive to become a better person.

So some may hate me after I die, some may mark my ignoble deeds, but never, I think, will I live on in the minds of others as a grump.

Which brings me to the self-addressed question that prompted this article: How can we bless our loved ones, particularly the young, with good memories? How can we offer them those gifts that might bring them comfort

when they are in need of comfort, laughter when they are in need of laughter? How can we impart fragments of ourselves to others that might inspire and guide them?

Attitude, presence, and effort strike me as vital to that attempt.

Our attitude toward the world at large can leave an indelible stamp on the memories of others. We have all known older people who exude a sense of delight in life and who share that delight. We have also known older people whose pessimism is as bitter and black as a bad cup of coffee.

For me, the worst are those who say, "I would never want to raise a child in today's world." There's an attitude I can't afford, not with four children, their spouses, and a growing platoon of grandchildren.

No—for these offspring, for the students I once taught, and for the young employees in my local coffee shop, I prefer to rebut the pessimism so prevalent in our culture, particularly in our media, with a modicum of good cheer, particularly about the future. We needn't become wild-eyed optimists to

offer others encouragement and to point out the pleasures of living, even the small delights such as a cup of green tea, a good movie, a well-prepared chicken soup.

As we face the pain and sorrow of old age, ranging from stiffened joints to the loss of beloved friends and family members, we may find our stock of good cheer dwindling at times. Those are the occasions when we put on a mask, offering others light instead of darkness, hope instead of despair, while we face the tough task of replenishing our depleted interior supplies.

To leave echoes of who we were also requires presence. I know a woman who spends part of her week visiting her centenarian mother in an assisted living home and another two days of that week babysitting grandchildren. In the first instance, she becomes the repository of her mother's memories; in the second, whether she realizes it, she passes along those memories and her own to her grandchildren. The toddlers exhaust her, but each day when she goes home, she leaves behind a piece of her soul in those

little ones, music that will reverberate in them long after she has become dust.

Finally, we must make the effort to create memories. We may live in Oregon and our children in South Carolina, but we can overcome these hindrances of geography through phone calls, emails, texts, and written letters. We can send presents when they least expect it. We can plan annual get-togethers. By these gestures, we maintain those lines of communication that build recollection.

At ClassicalPoets.org, we find these lines from T.M. Moore's "In Mad River:" "For him it will suffice if there remains a legacy, known by a few, who see in him what they themselves might like to be."

If we endeavor to make it so, we can bequeath such a legacy, a gift to sustain and uplift those we have loved.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

Dusting Off the Old Words

Let's tell our young people the words they need to hear about truth, honor, courage, and virtue

JEFF MINICK

Recently, I was visiting my daughter and her family. They live in a rambling old house on the grounds of Saint Gregory the Great Academy, a Catholic boarding school in Pennsylvania, where my son-in-law teaches geometry and carpentry, and oversees the care of the buildings and grounds.

The 60 young men enrolled in this school follow a rigorous schedule: academics, chapel, prayers, sports, and what the academy calls guilds, extracurricular activities where the students receive training in everything from wilderness survival to animal husbandry, from cooking classes to juggling. Singing is also taught and encouraged.

One evening, we watched a soccer game between St. Greg's and a local high school, during which the Saint Gregory boys not on the soccer field stood together in the bleachers and sang Latin hymns, Gaelic songs, and chants throughout the entire game. It was an impressive feat.

Having taught various seminars to homeschooling students for 25 years, I remain an old warhorse of a teacher and am always looking for the opportunity to encourage our young people, so I asked my son-in-law if I might speak for 10 minutes to his class. He was kind enough to humor me. Below are the five main points I delivered to the class:

1. 'You've Already Won the Lottery'

Recently, a friend, Franklin, and I were discussing money when, he said, "Yeah, people are always telling me, 'Franklin, you need to play the lottery.' I told them, 'I already won the lottery. I was born in the middle of the 20th century in the United States of America.'"

His comment about the lottery was new to me—Franklin and I only recently met—but I had for years explained to my students that they are living in a veritable paradise, compared to many other places on earth. Instead of sitting in a heated classroom, they could be standing up to their knees in a rice paddy or walking five miles to some school in Africa just to obtain a rudimentary education. I told them they have advantages others only dream of—clean drinking water, a variety of foods, clothes and shoes, hot showers, computers, and books—and that it was up to them to take advantage of their advantages and someday to pass on in some manner the gifts they were given.

The lesson here is gratitude.

2. You Cannot Win If You Do Not Play

That line came to me long ago from songwriter and musician Steve Forbert, and is another piece of advice I have frequently imparted to my students. For the Saint Gregory boys, I referenced the previous night's soccer game, pointing out that all of them, both those playing on the field and those singing in the stands, had participated in the game and that this same passion for engagement will carry them far in life.

To live fully, I told them, to take part in the grand adventure of life, means step-



We should encourage young people to strive, starting at this very moment, for what the ancient Greeks called *arête*—excellence and moral virtue.

ping onto the playing field, taking the hits, and assuming responsibility for your actions. Here I brought up the film "Rocky Balboa," which some of the boys had seen, and Rocky's speech to his son: "It ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward, how much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done!"

Accept responsibility for your actions, I told them. Take the hits and keep moving forward.

3. Strive for Excellence

Despite an injunction by a Master Teacher to "Be ye perfect even as I am perfect," most of us will fall far short of perfection. But we can push ourselves, I told the boys, and seek to be and do our best in whatever we undertake. The ancient Greeks called it *arête*, meaning both excellence—to fulfill one's potential—and moral virtue.

Here I emphasized immediacy. Start now, I told them. Start today. All of us, I said, and especially young people, often regard the present as a mere stepping stone to the future: Saint Gregory's is but a prelude to college, and college an overture to law or medicine or some other pursuit. "There at last," some of us think, "I will find happiness and fulfillment." Wrong, I said. Your destiny and your happiness lie in this day, this very hour. Here I followed up with another movie line, this one from "Gladiator": "What we do in life echoes in eternity."

Start now to strive for excellence, I told those boys. Start now.

4. Memento Mori

Remember, I told the boys, someday you are going to die—a cold, hard fact that should inspire us to live life to the hilt. I mentioned some of the pictures of saints with which the boys were familiar, paintings in which a skull sits on a shelf or desk, an object kept by those venerable men and women to remind themselves that life is short. I then told them a story of an Eton headmaster, who when asked by a mother what in a word he was preparing the Eton boys for, replied, "In a word, madam. Death." By that remark, I explained, he meant they were preparing young men to live as fully as possible, that we die well when we have lived well.

I then asked the average age of the young men and found it was 15 to 16. After pointing out that most of them would probably live another 70 years, I then pointed to myself and said that with any luck, I would live another 15 years. For me, time has become a precious commodity.

Look at every day, even the most difficult ones, as a gift.

5. Keep Alive a Sense of Wonder

We concluded my 10 minutes with an exercise I have employed in other moments of teaching. "Look at your classmates," I said. They did so. "Now," I said, "look out the

windows behind you." They turned in their desks and looked through the windows at a beautiful October morning: blue skies, red, yellow, and brown leaves, a touch of frost on green grass.

"You're looking at a wonderful mystery," I said. "Your classmates, this day—and you're a part of that mystery, swirling through space on a tiny planet, breathing air, dreaming dreams. So often we forget we're living in this mystery, this miracle, but if we just stop every once in a while to take it in, we can keep our sense of wonder alive and well."

I then thanked them for listening and left the room.

A final note to my readers: Some of you may find what I had to say to the boys that morning hackneyed, cheap, old hat, and trite.

I would disagree.

Our young people need to hear the old words, those dusty, all-too-often neglected antiques like excellence, gratitude, truth, honor, courage, and virtue.

They need those words. Desperately.

And it's up to the rest of us to see that they get them.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

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HOW CHANGING MY DIET CHANGED MY LIFE

Three chefs share their stories of eating their way back to better health

MELANIE YOUNG

Lossing weight is the second most common New Year's resolution people make, after "saving money," but sticking to a healthy regimen can be hard for many. Studies show that following a healthy diet and regular exercise regimen can reduce your risk for major illnesses, such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and many cancers, and how you eat can also help manage symptoms from chronic conditions, like autoimmune illnesses. This should provide plenty of incentive, but sometimes it takes a health setback to put you back on track permanently.

The best investment in your health starts with what you eat and

how you care for your body. Three professional chefs who each faced a life-altering illness share how they changed their relationship with food and ate their way back to better health. Each offers tips to help you get started.

Why wait for a health setback to set you back on track? Putting your health first with a better diet and regular exercise will help keep you healthy from the get-go. It's a smart investment to live a longer life.

Melanie Young is a longtime food professional who ate her way back to better health after battling breast cancer in 2010. A Certified Holistic Health Coach, she is the author of "Getting Things Off My Chest: A Survivor's Guide to Staying Fearless & Fabulous in the Face of Breast Cancer." Follow her on Twitter @mightymelanie



COURTESY OF MIND BODY FORK

DEBBIE LEE
chef and founder, Mind Body Fork

Confronting Obesity and Prediabetes

A finalist on season five of "The Next Food Network Star," in 2011 Los Angeles chef Debbie Lee was juggling running her Korean fast-casual restaurant, Ahn-Joo, and promoting her cookbook, "Seoultown Kitchen." She'd achieved national acclaim, but the grueling pace impacted her health.

In 2012, at age 43 and weighing 216 pounds, the five-foot three-inch-tall Lee was diagnosed as prediabetic. "I have always battled my weight, since I was 8-years-old, and never thought I would have to battle my health in this manner," she said. "It was more of a sense of denial, as I did not want to admit I had a food problem."

Being overweight, even 10 to 15 pounds, is a leading risk factor for Type 2 diabetes, as well as stroke, cardiac disease, and high blood pressure, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Since Lee's mother has type 2 diabetes, she understood the disease's long-term health impact, including the need for regular monitoring of one's glucose levels. "I have a fear of needles; the thought of having to lance myself every morning or end up injecting insulin was enough to get myself on track," Lee said.

On Jan. 1, 2013, Lee committed to changing her diet and lifestyle. She tossed out the processed foods in her cupboard and focused on buying fresh, whole foods. Lee also began exercising regularly. "It started as a brisk 30-minute walk on the treadmill five days a week, and then hiring a personal trainer to get my body to challenge itself."

Now 49, Lee hopes to shed another 20 pounds but said she is happy with what she has accomplished so far. In 2015, her personal health awakening also inspired her to start a sustainable meal delivery service utilizing farm-fresh ingredients, called Mind Body Fork.

TIPS FROM DEBBIE LEE

Start slowly to adapt to changes. Try eliminating foods week by week. Start with processed foods and anything sugary, both high in calories. Review how you did that first week and start paring down.

Buy fresh, locally grown food at your local farmers' market.



JOSH HUSKIN

STEVE MCHUGH
chef and owner, Cured

From Cancer to Cured

For many, it's a cancer diagnosis that sounds the wake-up alarm. As chef Steve McHugh put it, "Nothing kicks you into gear to change your life than a diagnosis that threatens it."

McHugh and his wife were planning a move from New Orleans to San Antonio to open a new restaurant when he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a type of blood cancer.

"I went on a chemotherapy regimen every 10 days that gave me insomnia, dizzy spells, and constipation. If you put that much poison into your body, you're going to have to make some changes to try to repair yourself," McHugh said.

"I adopted an unadulterated and natural diet where I only put in food where I understood its source. That did good for my body, rather than destroy it."

According to the American Institute of Cancer Research, following a healthy diet can help lower your cancer risk, especially since 90 percent of all cancers are lifestyle-related. For cancer patients, following a nutritious whole foods diet is essential to keep the body strong and can help improve treatment outcomes, the American Cancer Society notes.

Now in remission, McHugh is on top of his game. In 2013, he opened Cured in San Antonio; the name is a nod to getting back his health. "My culinary foundation relies on the purity of natural regional ingredients and the hands-on, unadulterated methods that enhanced my own healing process," McHugh said.

TIPS FROM STEVE MCHUGH

Eat more fermented foods. Probiotic-rich foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, and pickles can increase the body's ability to absorb nutrients.

Use more black pepper, legumes, and nuts [e.g., pecans], which contain anti-inflammatory properties.

Try eating mussels, which are a lean source of protein with roughly 18 grams of protein per serving. Garlic, onions, and shallots [commonly used in mussel dishes] each contain anti-inflammatory properties.



CHRISTINE HAN PHOTOGRAPHY

SEAMUS MULLEN
chef and owner, Tertulia and El Colmado

Managing Rheumatoid Arthritis Through Diet

Seamus Mullen was diagnosed with the autoimmune disease rheumatoid arthritis in 2007. The disease is usually managed with prescription medication, but Mullen said the meds alone were not working to alleviate the pain, and they were also lowering his resistance to infections. He was also exhausted from logging long hours running his restaurant, Tertulia, in New York City.

"I hit a severe breaking point in 2012 when my disease caused a near death experience," Mullen said. "I was in the ICU with a 106-degree fever after the immunosuppressant medication meant my body couldn't fight off infection. When I was finally released, I made the decision to completely rethink my relationship with food."

Mullen had already tried reducing his sugar intake and eliminating nightshades, a category of vegetables (e.g., eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes, and peppers) that contain the chemical solanine, which can aggravate arthritis and inflammation, according to natural healthcare practitioners.

"These small changes had little to no effect," Mullen said. "When I made the decision to fully revamp my diet, I slowly began to see changes. My first steps were avoiding all processed foods, cooking whole foods, and focusing on things like omega-3s and eating fresh, seasonal vegetables."

Changing his diet improved Mullen's health considerably. "Previously, I felt severe pain in my joints every morning, with fingers so swollen I couldn't tie my shoes, but after about six months of my new diet, I began to see real changes. Things as simple as being able to walk from my bed to the kitchen in the morning without pain were huge signifiers to me that this new diet was having real effects. Within a year, I was entirely off medication and symptom-free." Mullen shares his approach and recipes in his cookbook, "Real Food Heals."

Mullen's renewed energy also allowed him to start bicycling again, a favorite activity he'd given up due to his chronic pain. Now, he bikes every day.

"Having little to no pain and feeling more energy meant I could put my best self forward in both work and my personal life," he said.



COURTESY OF SEAMUS MULLEN

COCONUT ROASTED CAULIFLOWER WEDGES WITH CILANTRO AND LIME

Fat wedges of cauliflower stay meaty when roasted. I really like this with orange or yellow cauliflower. If you happen to have pickled chiles, use them in place of the fresh chiles here.

SERVES 4 TO 6

1 head cauliflower, leaves discarded, bottom trimmed

1 tablespoon coconut oil, warmed just until liquid

Jacobsen flake finishing sea salt

2 tablespoons ground coriander

1/2 red finger chile, sliced

1/2 lime

Cilantro sprigs

Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Cut the cauliflower in half from top to bottom. Cut each half into four wedges. Put the wedges in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet.

Spoon the coconut oil all over the cauliflower, letting it run down the sides. Sprinkle with salt, then dust with the coriander.

Roast until the cauliflower is very browned on top and bottom, about 30 minutes. Divide it among 4 to 6 serving plates.

Top with the chile and squeeze lime juice all over. Top with cilantro and season with salt and pepper. Serve hot or warm.

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TIPS FROM SEAMUS MULLEN

Start by setting yourself up for success. Eliminate sugary snacks and pre-made sauces and marinades. Try almond butter instead of peanut butter; use olive oil instead of canola oil; and [gluten-free] tamari instead of soy sauce.

Instead of adding sugar to your coffee, try drinking it black. Trade the double caramel macchiato for espresso or drip coffee.

Replace starchy vegetables like [white] potatoes with resistant starches like yucca, green plantains, or sweet potatoes. Resistant starches hit your system more slowly and don't give a sugar blast to your blood.

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Jiufen, a town tucked into the mountains.

CULINARY TRAVEL

Jiufen, Taiwan: Street Food, Ocean Views, and Memories of Gold

CRYSTAL SHI

JIUFEN, Taiwan—The picturesque town of Jiufen, nestled in the green, perennially fog-shrouded mountains that hug Taiwan's northeastern coast, once pulsed with the promise of gold. At the height of the region's gold rush, this was the center of the action.

But on a recent visit, I joined crowds of tourists in search of other riches: stunning ocean vistas, legendary local eats, and a sort of nostalgic charm that permeates every narrow, lantern-lit cobblestone street. The days of gold mining have long gone, but the former mining town has since struck a new kind of gold: tourism.

At the height of the region's gold rush, this was the center of the action.

Golden Days

The story begins in the early 1890s, when a group of railroad construction workers, in the midst of washing their rice bowls, found specks of the precious mineral in the Keelung River. The unexpected discovery triggered a gold rush, and crowds of hopeful prospectors descended upon the riverbanks to try their luck.

In 1894, the source of that gold was traced to a huge deposit in the mountains around Jiufen. The region's gold mining era soon took off in earnest—spearheaded by the Japanese, who colonized the island the following year—and as the industry boomed, the mountain towns at its center swelled with miners and newfound riches. By the 1930s, Jiufen had gone from an isolated farming village to a mining hub so prosperous it earned the nickname “Little Shanghai.”

When the mines were closed in 1971, following a steady decline in activity after World War II, residents left en masse. The once bustling streets were largely abandoned and forgotten.

Jiufen owes much of its revival to cinematic fame: The 1989 Taiwanese film “A City of Sadness” was filmed in the defunct town, and its success brought Jiufen back to life as a tourist attraction. Retro-style cafes and souvenir shops soon popped up to meet the crowds.

Then a new wave of attention came with the 2001 release of Japanese animated film “Spirited Away,” when rumors swirled that Jiufen—with its traditional Japanese-era architecture and labyrinthine alleyways hung with red paper lanterns—was the inspiration for part of the film's spirit-world setting. (The steep cobblestone steps of

Shuqi Road, which pass by tea houses and end in the Japanese-era Shengping Theater, feel especially otherworldly by that red lantern light.) Director Hayao Miyazaki has since denied the connection, but that's done little to abate the influx of fans, especially from Japan.



Jiufen's famed taro balls.

A Stroll Down Jiufen Old Street

Whatever brings you to Jiufen, a meander down its historic “old street,” its food-and-souvenir-stall-lined main drag, is mandatory. Just be warned that you'll be shoulder-to-shoulder with throngs of other tourists with the same idea.

But the slow, shuffling pace will give you plenty of time to take in the barrage of sights, sounds, and smells from all sides: great vats of steeping tea eggs and sizzling sausages on the grill, shiny lacquered pineapple cakes and oolong samples galore, handcrafted owl ocarinas at one stall and gaudy “Spirited Away” memorabilia at the next, and every now and then, a whiff of the unmistakable funk of stinky tofu.

Your main objective is to eat; Jiufen is famed for being a street food mecca. First, settle into a table at the back of Zhang Ji Traditional Fish Balls, to slurp up remarkably springy (or, as the Taiwanese call that texture, “Q”) fish balls in a savory broth, and meltingly tender lu rou fan (braised pork belly over rice).



Red yeast meatballs.

At Jin Zhi Red Yeast Taiwanese Meatballs, test your palate with a bit of an acquired taste: The spot's namesake meatballs are made with red yeast rice, which gives them an herbal, medicinal heat that warms you from the pit of your stomach. They come encased in a slippery, translucent skin made from sweet potato starch.

Also worth seeking out is the Ah Lan Hakka Glutinous Rice Cake stall, to try a traditional snack of the Hakka people, Taiwan's second-largest ethnic group. Freshly steamed and served still warm, the cakes are soft, sticky, and just the right amount of chewy, yielding to fillings that range from sweet red bean to savory preserved turnip.

But perhaps Jiufen's most famous snack of all is its taro balls: chewy bite-sized dumplings made from a dough of mashed taro or sweet potatoes and sweet potato flour. Energy-dense, quick to cook in bulk, and made from locally grown tubers, they were a favorite miners' snack back in the day.

You can enjoy them cold over shaved ice or hot in a syrupy soup, mixed with a nutritious medley of boiled nuts and beans. Several stalls sell the treat, but for the locals' favorite, head up a flight of stairs to find Ah Gan's, where you can watch workers peeling sweet potatoes and kneading the dough in the back, and enjoy your bowl with a breathtaking ocean view.

Hidden Gems

When you tire of the crowds, seek refuge in one of the town's charming tea houses. Or better yet, leave the town center entirely to wander its quiet backstreets and hilly outskirts, where a hidden crafts shop or scenic vista awaits at every turn.

Consider stopping by the unassuming Gold Ore Museum, tucked at the bottom of a hillside path; you'll likely have the place to yourself. The museum was founded in 1989 by one of the last of Jiufen's gold miners, and has been continued by his family since his passing to carry on his legacy. A short tour will guide you through its two-story collection of gold ore, old excavation tools, and black-and-white photos of Jiufen in its heyday.

Then walk a bit further to reach the serene Songde Park, a small memorial park dedicated to a key figure in Jiufen's mining history. You'll find some of the best views of the ocean, the surrounding mountains, and the rest of the town, with its buildings clustered on the hillsides like tiny Lego blocks. The tourists lining up for photos in the distance will look like ants.

Just be sure to make it back there by nightfall: That's when the red lanterns that seem to line every street and hang from every awning glow to life, transforming Jiufen into something that truly looks like a scene from a movie.

A world away from Taipei's high rises and bright city lights, this little mining town in the mountains is an alluring reminder of an era gone by.

The writer was a guest of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau.



(Top) A-Mei Tea House, on Shuqi Road.

(Above) Steep stairs and narrow alleyways, lined with lanterns, thread through the town.

A DETOUR TO JINGUASHI

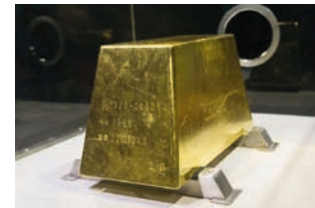
For a deeper dive into the area's history, take a 10-minute bus ride from Jiufen to the much-quieter Jinguashi, another former prosperous mining town famed for its gold and copper.

The main attraction is the Gold Museum (formerly known as the Jinguashi Gold Ecological Park), a Japanese-era mining business complex turned sprawling, open-air museum. Among its many facilities are old Japanese-style wooden homes open for touring, and an elegant chalet and Japanese garden custom-built for Japan Crown Prince Showa (though his planned visit was never made).

At the Gold Building, you can learn about mining history, try your hand at panning for gold, and don a hard hat and walk through Benshan Tunnel No. 5, an old mining tunnel now widened and augmented with educational wax figure exhibits. It's part of what once was an extensive, 370-mile-long system threading through the surrounding gold-veined mountains.

Also of note is the 485-pound pure gold ingot on display. You can touch it through a hole in the display case and, a guide might joke, take it home—all \$10.5 million's worth—if you can carry it. www.Gep-en.ntpc.gov.tw

CRYSTAL SHI/THE EPOCH TIMES



(Left) A 485-pound gold ingot on display at the Gold Museum.



(Right) The Japanese Crown Prince Chalet at the Gold Museum.

GETTING THERE

Jiufen is readily accessible from Taipei via public transportation. The easiest route is a 40-minute train ride followed by a 20-minute bus ride. From Taipei Main Station, catch any of the trains headed to Ruifang, then transfer to a bus that will drop you off right at the entrance of Jiufen Old Street. The mountain roads are steep and winding, so be sure to hold on to something.

As a popular day trip from Taipei, though, Jiufen's narrow streets can get uncomfortably crowded. Go on a weekday if you can.

DRINKS

How Taiwan Became a Global Powerhouse in Whisky Production

Having only started producing whisky this century, the small island is making millions of bottles and scooping up top industry awards

MARTIN QUINN

Whisky (or whiskey if you're Irish or American) has a 1,000-year long history. According to legend, Irish monks traveling to Mediterranean countries encountered the fundamentals of distilling and introduced the technique on their return. The Irish and Scots have both staked claim to whisky's origins, but certainly the Scots were the first to produce it in large volumes from the 19th century onward.

Distillation techniques have been taken up around the world, famously in the United States and Japan. But now Taiwan is making its mark on the industry. Having only started producing whisky this century, the small island is making millions of bottles and scooping up top industry awards.

The global whisky market, like any, can be subject to booms and busts. Right now it is enjoying a boom and many smaller craft producers have appeared in the last decade or two. These smaller producers occupy a relatively small portion of the overall market, with bigger names like Britain's Diageo, Japan's Suntory, and Brown-Forman (which owns Jack Daniels) in the United States taking the lion's share. Overall, the market was valued at about \$58 billion in 2018.

No Mean Feat

To produce and sell whisky is no mean feat. Selling it requires a strong brand, often involving a story or myth. Craft producers often build a story of their uniqueness or natural origins, whereas larger producers often build on family or other names (think Jameson, Jack

Daniels, Johnnie Walker).

The fundamental process of making whisky has not changed for centuries and poses a problem for all producers—the time it takes to mature. For example, both Irish and Scotch whiskies must be aged for at least three years, and many are aged for much longer. This means, in comparison to other industries, a relatively large amount of cash is tied up in inventory.

To give an example, according to their recent annual reports, Suntory had about 242 billion yen (about \$2.2 billion) worth of maturing spirits, Diageo 3.2 billion pounds (about \$4 billion) and Brown-Forman \$950m. That's around 15 percent to 20 percent of the annual turnover of these companies.

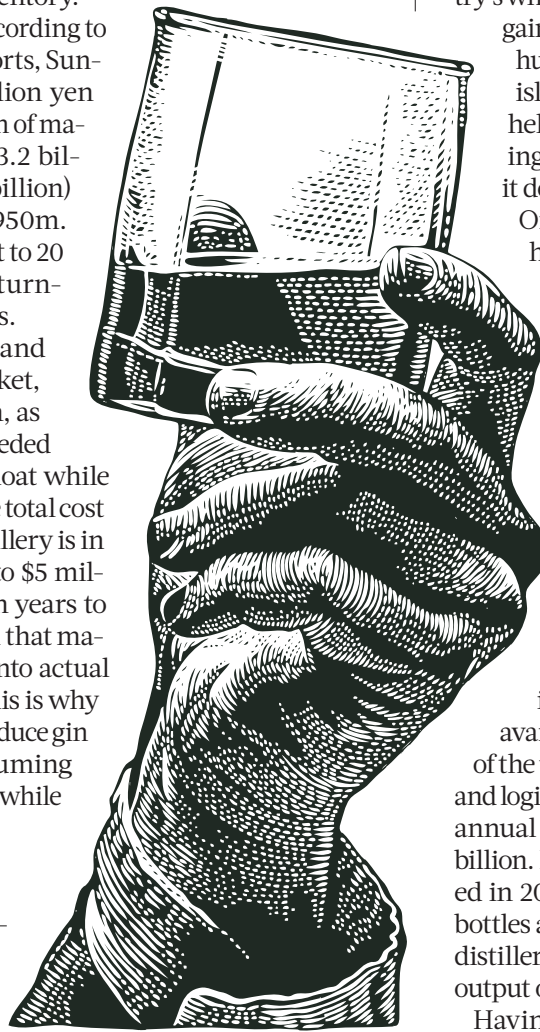
For craft producers and newcomers to the market, this is a serious problem, as adequate financing is needed to keep the business afloat while the whisky matures. The total cost of setting up a craft distillery is in the order of \$3 million to \$5 million and it may take ten years to turn a profit, waiting on that maturing whisky to turn into actual sales and cover costs. This is why some craft producers produce gin or other less time consuming white spirits to earn cash while their whisky matures.

Eye-Catching Growth

The success story of Taiwanese whisky is an interesting one. You might not associate

The global whisky market is enjoying a boom.

JUMPINGSACK/SHUTTERSTOCK



the small island with the drink, but its whiskies have won dozens of prestigious awards in the drinks world in recent years. The island's proximity to large Asian markets, which have a growing taste for the drink, is of course an advantage, but the pace of its growth is still eye-catching.

The first Taiwanese distillery only opened in 2006 and since then the country's whisky producers have managed to gain success, despite the investment hungry nature of the industry. The island's subtropical climate has helped, with the whisky maturing two to three times faster than it does in Scotland or Ireland.

On the downside, the warm and humid climate means a higher evaporation loss of about five percent to 10 percent, compared to two percent to three percent for Scotch and Irish whiskies. But the faster aging means the whisky is turned into cash (and profit) faster, and less cash is tied up in inventory.

For the country's two big producers—Kavalan and Taiwan Tobacco & Liquor Corporation (TTL)—the necessary investment has been readily available. Kavalan Whiskey is part of the unlisted King Car Group, a food and logistics business with an estimated annual turnover of \$500 million to \$1 billion. Its distillery, which was founded in 2006, can produce nine million bottles a year, well above that of a craft distillery, which would have a typical output of 10,000 to 20,000 bottles.

Having a large group to bankroll the

investment certainly helps attain higher levels of capacity and sales. TTL similarly has financial backing, as it is state owned. It commenced distilling in 2008 and previously had a monopoly on tobacco and liquor products in Taiwan.

Having only started producing whisky this century, the small island is making millions of bottles and scooping up top industry awards.

Thus TTL already had some distillery operations, with its Nantou distillery converted from producing other spirits to produce its Omar single malt. Both Kavalan and TTL also had an established distribution and marketing infrastructure for their products prior to entering the whisky market.

So the rapid success of both these Taiwanese whiskies can, in part, be put down to this available financial support and favorable climate. It meant both were well positioned to cash in on the global boom in whisky sales, as well as a well-established local market. All that's left now for the rest of us is to try one.

Martin Quinn is a senior lecturer in accounting at Queen's University Belfast. This article was first published on The Conversation.

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