

WEEK 1, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

OUR NATION

Members of the Jewish community gather outside the home of Rabbi Chaim Rottenberg in Monsey, N.Y., on Dec. 29, 2019.



Jewish Leaders Raise Alarm Over Growing Trend of Anti-Semitism

With more than 13 anti-Semitic attacks in New York state alone in December, leaders call for drastic measures to address the threat **6**



North Korean soldiers (top) look toward the South as a South Korean soldier (bottom) stands guard at the truce village of Panmunjom inside the Demilitarized Zone separating the two Koreas on Aug. 28, 2019.

US Will ‘Take Action’ if North Korea Tests Missiles, Official Says

BOWEN XIAO

A White House official has said that Washington will “take action” if Pyongyang tests a long-range or nuclear missile, adding that the United States would be “extraordinarily disappointed” if that took place.

The United States has “a lot of tools” in its toolkit to deal with North Korea, White House national security adviser Robert O’Brien said in a Dec. 29 interview with ABC News. Washington is concerned over Pyongyang’s recent threats of a “Christmas gift,” he said, noting that they’re still monitoring the situation closely.

“We will reserve judgment, but the United States will take action, as we do in these situations,” O’Brien said. “If Kim Jong-un takes that approach, we will be extraordinarily disappointed, and we will demonstrate that disappointment.”

In early December, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un threatened the United States with a possible “Christmas gift,” saying that the Trump administration was running out of time to salvage nuclear negotiations. Recently, the United States and South

If Kim Jong Un takes that approach, we will be extraordinarily disappointed and we will demonstrate that disappointment.

Robert O’Brien, White House national security adviser

Korea have conducted drills simulating the infiltration of an enemy facility amid tensions with North Korea over its unilaterally set year-end deadline.

Both Republican and Democratic administrations have attempted to deal with North Korea without success over the years, O’Brien said, adding that the current leadership is taking a new approach.

“President [Donald] Trump took a different tack, with personal diplomacy. And, so far, we have had some success,” he said. “Kim Jong-un promised to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. We want to hold him to that commitment.”

“But, if he doesn’t, we have other tools in the toolkit, as the United States, and we will use those as necessary.”

Weeks ago, Stephen Biegun, the U.S. special envoy for North Korea, said the United States won’t accept Pyongyang’s unilateral deadline, as the communist regime has sought concessions in nuclear talks. Biegun said Washington is open to talks on denuclearization and urged Pyongyang to return to the negotiating table.

Nuclear talks between the United

States and North Korea have been stalled since a February summit ended with no agreement reached. Kim and Trump have met three times since June 2018.

The current administration isn’t giving North Korea the concessions it demands, Peter Huessy, a senior defense consultant and director of strategic deterrent studies at the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, told The Epoch Times previously.

“The North is playing the game of, ‘Let’s see if we can beat up the United States and get concessions,’ because that is what they do,” he said. “They are like a bully or kind of a criminal gang that extorts people. We [the United States] are just not playing the extortion game anymore.”

Last week, Trump dismissed North Korea’s Christmas gift threat, saying that the United States will “deal with it very successfully.”

Meanwhile, several satellite images taken on Dec. 19 by Planet Labs show the completion of a new structure at the March 16 Factory near Pyongyang, where North Korea is believed to be developing and manufacturing vehicles used as mobile launch-

ers for long-range ballistic missiles.

O’Brien said Trump has laid out a path for North Korea if it gives up its nuclear program, in that “they can have an extraordinarily bright future with a great economy.” He also said the United States can inflict “a lot of pressure” on Pyongyang.

We will reserve judgment, but the United States will take action, as we do in these situations.

Robert O’Brien, White House national security adviser

“There’s a real opportunity for North Korea,” he said. “Now, whether they take that opportunity or not, we’ll have to see. And if they don’t take it, the United States is still the leading military power in the world.”

China and Russia recently proposed that the U.N. Security Council lift some of its sanctions on North Korea, in what the countries said was an attempt to break the current deadlock. But it remains unclear whether Beijing can convince Seoul and Tokyo to break ranks with Washington, which has made its opposition against lifting such sanctions clear and can veto any resolution.

There are some “channels of communication” between Washington and Pyongyang “that are open,” O’Brien said, but he didn’t elaborate.

“[Kim] has two paths in front of him; he’s got a glorious path for the people of North Korea where they could become like South Korea and be a very prosperous, very wealthy country, or there’s another path that takes them down the road of sanctions and isolation and being a pariah state,” he said.



National security adviser Robert O’Brien at the White House on Oct. 23, 2019.

Most Likely Voters Say Senate Won’t Convict Trump on Impeachment Charges

MARK TAPSCOTT

Seventy-three percent of respondents just before Christmas said they think it’s “unlikely” or “not at all likely” that two-thirds of the Senate will vote to convict President Donald Trump on either of the two impeachment charges approved by House Democrats.

“Three-out-of-four voters (73 percent) say Trump is unlikely to be forced out of the presidency, with 47 percent who feel it’s ‘not at all likely,’” according to Rasmussen Reports, which interviewed 1,000 likely voters on Dec. 22 and 23.

The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points, with a 95 percent confidence level. Surveys of likely voters are typically considered more accurate than polls based on registered voters or adults.

“Sixty percent of Democrats see Trump’s removal from office as unlikely, although that compares to 81 percent of Republicans and 78 percent of voters not affiliated with either major political party,” Rasmussen said.

Even among voters who strongly disapprove of Trump’s job performance since he upset former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election, only 28 percent expect him to be removed from office by the Senate.

Party loyalty among congressional Republicans is seen among most Democrats (69 percent) as the biggest obstacle to that outcome, according to Rasmussen. But an almost identical 67 percent of Republicans told Rasmussen that “the bigger roadblock is a lack of convincing evidence” supporting the House case for impeachment.

Three-out-of-four voters (73 percent) say Trump is unlikely to be forced out of the presidency, with 47 percent who feel it’s ‘not at all likely.’

Rasmussen Reports

Younger voters are significantly more likely to expect a Trump conviction, with slightly less than half of blacks, 47 percent, seeing that outcome as likely, according to Rasmussen. Only 17 percent of whites and 33 percent of other minorities think the president’s removal is likely.

Overall, support for the House impeachment votes in the survey was 48 percent, compared to 46 percent who opposed the votes.

In a related Rasmussen survey of 1,000 likely voters conducted Dec. 18 and 19, Trump appeared

to be winning the public debate about the legitimacy of the House Democrats’ impeachment drive.

Fifty-one percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that “this impeachment represents an unprecedented and unconstitutional abuse of power by Democrat lawmakers unequalled in nearly two-and-a-half centuries of American legislative history.”

Forty percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement, which was taken from Trump’s Dec. 17 letter to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.).

A slightly smaller percentage of respondents, 48 percent, agreed with the statement that “our democracy is what is at stake ... the President has engaged in abuse of power, undermining our national security and jeopardizing the integrity of our elections.” Forty-six percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement, which was taken from a Pelosi news conference.

Rasmussen didn’t tell respondents that Trump and Pelosi were the sources for the quotes.

Jim Manley, former communications director for then-Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), told The Epoch Times on Dec. 30 that “the fact there are doubts out there will have no impact on the Senate.”

Americans for Limited Govern-



President Donald Trump walks on the South Lawn to board Marine One at the White House on Dec. 18, 2019.

ment President Richard Manning told The Epoch Times that the Rasmussen survey “confirms what most people know anecdotally about impeachment, it is highly partisan and both sides believe the other is wearing political blinders.”

The most surprising result in the survey is the “astounding revelation” that “27 percent of the American public believes that President Trump is likely to be convicted,” Manning said.

He said the 27 percent is “likely

their most ardent presidential caucus and primary voters, which explains why their contenders continue to lurch to the left, abandoning any pretense of caring about the former base of their party, the blue-collar worker.”

Trump has a 46 percent approval rating in Rasmussen’s latest daily tracking poll, compared to 53 percent disapproval.

Contact Mark Tapscott at Mark.Tapscott@epochtimes.nyc.

US Senators Raise Alarm About China’s New Encryption Law

EMEL AKAN

WASHINGTON—U.S. lawmakers are increasingly concerned about China’s new cybersecurity rules that put U.S. companies at risk of losing sensitive data.

In October 2019, China passed a law that took effect on Jan. 1 to regulate cryptography in the country. The new legislation is the latest in a series of cybersecurity measures that Beijing has been rolling out in recent years to control data and communications within the country.

The new rules are potentially alarming, as foreign companies operating in China won’t be able to keep their data secret from the Chinese communist regime.

Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) who is closely watching recent moves by Beijing, urged U.S. companies to stop working with the regime.

The new law is the latest instrument the Chinese regime is using “to steal U.S. technology, intellectual property, and personal data,” Scott’s office told The Epoch Times in an email.

“Senator Scott has been clear that American businesses, hospitals, and universities must be vigilant and proactive when it comes to the threat of Communist China, and should stop doing business with the regime.”

Companies use encryption technology to protect the confidentiality of information transmitted and stored on networks. No foreign company, however, will be able to encrypt its data or communication if China enforces the new rules.

Scott, who’s an outspoken critic of the Beijing regime, earlier warned that Communist China’s goal is “to control the entire world.”

“I think all of us have to understand if we give data to China, they can use it against us,” he told CNBC on Nov. 18, 2019.

“We have to be absolutely clear we are not going to do business with China and let them have our information,” he said, calling for a wider decoupling—loosening of trade and economic ties—of the United States and China.

According to author and China expert Gordon Chang, Beijing’s goal is to control all communications, data, and other information stored in electronic form that belong to foreign companies.

No information would be kept secret if China enforces the new rules, he said, as the companies would have to turn over encryption keys and might be prohibited from using virtual private networks (VPNs) to

circumvent the rules.

In addition, the Chinese regime may freely share the trade secrets of those foreign companies with China’s state-controlled enterprises, he warned.

Chinese law allows the Communist Party to seize data from American companies operating in China whenever it wants.

Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.)

Chang believes that a bill introduced by Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) will help counter the new threat.

If Hawley’s bill becomes law, he said, it would mean that U.S. companies would effectively have to leave China.

In November 2019, the Missouri Republican introduced the measure, the National Security and Data Protection Act of 2019,

which prevents U.S. firms from transferring user data or encryption keys to China. The proposed bill also prohibits U.S. companies from storing data in China.

Others who have signed on to the bill are Sens. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Tom Cotton (R-Ark.).

“Current law makes it far too easy for hostile foreign governments like China to access Americans’ sensitive data,” Hawley said in a statement. “Chinese companies with vast amounts of personal data on Americans are required by Chinese law to provide that data to Chinese intelligence services.”

Hawley raised concerns about Beijing’s potential influence because of the popular Chinese-owned TikTok social media platform that allows users to share videos, and Apple’s decision regarding iCloud encryption keys in China, calling them national security threats.

To comply with new Chinese laws, Apple announced in 2018 that it would transfer management of its Chinese iCloud data

to a local state-owned firm in China. The tech company also stated it would store iCloud encryption keys for Chinese users within China, raising concerns about government access.

“Chinese law allows the Communist Party to seize data from American companies operating in China whenever it wants, for whatever reason it wants,” Hawley stated. “This legislation takes crucial steps to stop Americans’ sensitive data from falling into the hands of hostile foreign governments.”

Beijing has been implementing policies to govern data, including data localization, which forces both foreign and Chinese entities to store their data locally. The latest encryption law now governs how the data can be accessed by the regime.

U.S. firms don’t know exactly how these laws will be implemented and enforced. If the rules are enforced to the maximum extent, it will have significant repercussions for companies operating in China, experts warned.



U.S. Senator Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) in Washington on Dec. 11, 2019.

Jewish Leaders Raise Alarm Over Growing Trend of Anti-Semitic Attacks

With over 13 anti-Semitic attacks in New York state in December, leaders call for drastic measures to address the threat

BOWEN XIAO

NEW YORK—The spate of anti-Semitic acts carried out over the past few months across the New York metropolitan area is unprecedented, Jewish leaders say, with one calling the violent nature of the incidents “fundamentally alien to the American experience.”

In interviews with The Epoch Times, Jewish leaders shared what they believe the attacks have stemmed from, and why they are occurring. They noted the increasing degree of polarization within our society and spoke about strengthening hate crime laws to deter targeted acts, as well as community and government responsibility to ensure safety.

A former Israeli justice minister says that she’s “deeply concerned” over the “rise in anti-Semitic attacks in New York and around the world.”

“All people of conscience must be outraged by the fact that 75 years after the Holocaust, Jews are once again being targeted at prayer and in the streets,” former Israeli Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked told The Epoch Times.

Meanwhile, lawmakers are urging New York’s governor to declare a state of emergency over the string of anti-Semitic crimes and to deploy the National Guard to patrol Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods.

On Dec. 30, a man was charged with federal hate crimes for stabbing five people who were celebrating Hanukkah at a rabbi’s home north of New York City, in the Orthodox Jewish community of Monsey in Rockland County, New York. Authorities said they found handwritten journals containing anti-Semitic references in the home of the suspect, who was identified as 37-year-old Grafton Thomas.



Suspect Thomas Grafton, 37, leaves the Ramapo Town Hall in Airmont, N.Y., on Dec. 29, 2019.

Thomas, who has pleaded not guilty to five state charges of attempted murder and one count of burglary, is facing five counts of obstructing the free exercise of religious beliefs by attempting to kill with a dangerous weapon and causing injuries. He was arrested in New York City within hours of the attack.

The rampage, carried out with a machete, was just the latest in a flurry of attacks in the New York area. Earlier in December, a shooting at a kosher supermarket in New Jersey left two Hasidic Jews dead, and in a separate incident in November, a man was stabbed while walking to a synagogue in the Monsey area.

“In my own recollection, I cannot recall a time in America where we’ve seen as many acts of violent anti-Semitism that we have seen,” Allen Fagin, executive vice president and chief professional officer of the Orthodox Union (OU),

told The Epoch Times.

OU, one of the largest Orthodox Jewish organizations in the nation, is headquartered in New York. Roughly a third of the population of New York’s Rockland County is Jewish, including a large enclave of Orthodox Jews who live in secluded communities.

There’s been anti-Semitism for thousands of years and that is almost a permanent condition of the Jewish people.

Allen Fagin, executive vice president and chief professional officer, Orthodox Union

“There’s been anti-Semitism for thousands of years and that is almost a permanent condition of the Jewish people,” Fa-

gin said. “But what we’ve seen in the last period of months is an increase in violent criminal activity.”

Fagin added that there is something that has “loosened those bonds of constraint.”

According to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, there have been 13 anti-Semitic attacks in New York since Dec. 8, 2019.

On Dec. 27, the New York City Police Department said it would step up patrols in heavily Jewish neighborhoods in the borough of Brooklyn, following at least eight anti-Semitic incidents in two weeks. In an official statement, Cuomo also said that he’s directing state police to “increase patrols and security in Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods across New York State.”

Targets, Again

The shocking nature and the sheer number of anti-Semitic attacks has also caught the attention of top Israeli officials, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netan-

yahu on Dec. 30 condemning the recent displays of anti-Semitism.

Shaked, via text message, said “we must combat all forms of anti-Semitism, whether from the far-right, far-left, or radical Islamists,” adding that it is inconceivable these kinds of attacks are still taking place today and are increasing around the world.

She called on all governments and municipalities to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism, “as President Donald Trump did through his recent Executive Order.”

Adopting the definition would “provide physical security to Jewish communities, and ... swiftly prosecute all anti-Jewish hate crimes to the full extent of the law,” Shaked said.

All people of conscience must be outraged by the fact that ... Jews are once again being targeted at prayer and in the streets.

Ayelet Shaked, former Israeli justice minister

The State of Israel, she added, “will always stand with Jewish communities and democratic governments around the world in the fight against anti-Semitic hate.”

Cuomo, meanwhile, called the Monsey rampage “an act of domestic terrorism that sought to incite hate and generate fear.”

A ‘Different Kind of Ferocity’

Jewish leaders said they haven’t seen such levels of violent anti-Semitic acts before, and in such quick succession. The president’s daughter, Ivanka Trump, who is Jewish, wrote on Twitter, “Attacks on Jewish New Yorkers were reported almost every single day this past week.”

“In prior cases of hate crimes, individuals often copy the behavior of others, but there are more complicated and “pervasive underlying causes” that need to be examined, Fagin said.

“Why these attacks? Why now? And why with a fundamentally different kind of ferocity than we have seen previously,” he said. “It’s one thing to scrawl a swastika on a sidewalk ... another to walk into a place of worship and kill people.”

“This is something that is so fundamentally alien to the American experience that I think everyone is trying to under-

stand—where does this come from?”

Over the past few years, hate crime incidents overall have steadily increased, according to data from the FBI.

In 2015, 5,850 hate crime incidents were reported to law enforcement agencies. In 2016, the number increased to 6,121, and in 2017—the bureau’s latest data report—there were a recorded 7,175 hate crime incidents.

Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, executive vice president at the New York Board of Rabbis, told The Epoch Times there is a general lack of civility and lack of respect for people deemed different, calling it a “disease has spread into too many places and too many people.”

“There is intolerance for difference, and unfortunately, the Jews have been on the front lines of these attacks throughout history,” Potasnik said in a previous interview. “We are often depicted as being on the other side, we walk on a different path than everybody else, and because of that, we are subjected to this hatred that doesn’t go away.”

Combating Hate

In wake of the string of attacks, four Orthodox Jewish lawmakers signed on Dec. 29, 2019, a joint letter to Cuomo, urging the governor to declare a state of emergency and to “deploy the New York State Police and the New York National Guard to visibly patrol and protect Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods throughout our state.”

In the letter, the lawmakers wrote that anti-Semitic hate crimes have risen to “frighteningly high numbers” in the past few months and that Orthodox Jews have been targeted “with a rash of violence unseen in modern history.”

They also asked Cuomo to appoint a “special prosecutor for purposes of investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of anti-Semitic violence.” Lawmakers said that the prosecutor should “immediately assume control of cases already under the jurisdiction of local district attorneys.”

“Simply stated, it is no longer safe to be identifiably Orthodox in the State of New York. We cannot shop, walk down a street, send our children to school, or even worship in peace,” they wrote. The letter was signed by New York state Sen. Simcha Felder, New York state Assemblyman Simcha Eichenstein, New York City Councilman Chaim Deutsch, and New York City Councilman Kalman Yeger.

According to Fagin, part of the solution to ending the attacks is more police protection and stronger laws that make hate crimes the “first priority in how they’re



Jewish people try to reach the area where five people were stabbed at a Hasidic rabbi’s home in Monsey, N.Y., on Dec. 29, 2019.



Orthodox Jewish men carry Moshe Deutsch’s casket following his funeral in New York on Dec. 11, 2019. Deutsch was killed the day before inside a kosher food market in Jersey City, N.J.

dealt with and how they are prosecuted, as well as the punishments given to perpetrators.”

Potasnik, meanwhile, cast some of the blame on new bail reform laws passed in April 2019, noting that some of the perpetrators in the recent spate of attacks have been quickly released without bail. The legislation was estimated to cause at least a “40 percent reduction overall in the state’s pretrial jail population,” according to the Vera Institute of Justice.

“I don’t think that was the purpose of the legislation,” Potasnik said, referring to the quick catch and release of the perpetrators.

While there is a role for the government to play in increasing security and protection, Fagin said the Jewish community also has an obligation to do “everything possible to protect ourselves.”

That includes, for example, making sure their institutions have the physical surroundings and equipment necessary to secure physical premises. Those attending services should also have training in how to deal with emergency situations, including training on active-shooter situations, he said.

“This is the responsibility of not just the government, but the responsibility of our communities as well.”

Organization Provides Pregnant Women Alternative to Planned Parenthood

NATHAN SU

A small reproductive health organization in the Bay Area is providing alternatives to abortion near some Planned Parenthood locations.

RealOptions Obria Medical Clinics has a mission “to help you understand all of your options so that you can make an informed decision.”

They have two facilities in San Jose, both located within 500 feet from the nearest Planned Parenthood. An additional RealOptions is located in Union City only 15 minutes from the Hayward Planned Parenthood.

While both RealOptions and Planned Parenthood offer reproductive health care, they have radically different missions and services. PlannedParenthood.org prominently displays an “Abortion Care Finder,” and RealOptions.net shows multiple services, including preventive reproductive health care, STD (sexually transmitted diseases) testing and treatment, pregnancy testing, ultrasound imaging, prenatal care, and abortion pill reversal.

“Women deserve the truth and full information,” said RealOptions CEO Valerie Hill during an Epoch Times interview at her facility in the central San Jose area. The facility is only three doors away from the nearby Planned Parenthood.

“Women who don’t have their insurance yet can come. We keep them in our clinic through the sec-



Expecting mothers wait at a birth clinic in Carolina, Puerto Rico, on Sept. 2, 2016.

ond trimester and we offer them prenatal care,” said Hill when describing their low-cost to no-cost model of service.

For women without health insurance, most services from RealOptions are free, while a minimal fee of \$30 will be charged for lab tests.

“We want them [pregnant women] to feel support and caring to make them strong to choose hope,” Hill said.

In its December newsletter, RealOptions stated that its three clinics in the Bay Area “rescued and saved over 6,200 people from the danger or harm of unknown or silent sexually transmitted diseases, and we preserved over 1,600 parents and over 800 pre-born children from abortion” in this past year.

The newsletter also stated, “Since

2011 when we started our patient outreach marketing and strategically relocated our medical clinics near Planned Parenthood clinics, we have saved 12,550 parents and 6,275 children from abortion.”

Hill said that women going to Planned Parenthood often have second thoughts, and placing RealOptions clinics near Planned Parenthood clinics can provide pregnant women easy access to their services.

A video put online by RealOptions presents the personal story of Toma, a woman who received service from the organization.

Toma grew up in an American family that adopted her from Russia. She was a flight attendant before she found out she was seven-months pregnant through a casual relationship. Being single, she didn’t feel she had the neces-

sary means to raise her daughter and was afraid of being put in the situation of receiving welfare.

Through the adoption support service offered by RealOptions, Toma was able to choose an adoptive family for her daughter.

She’s been able to visit her daughter after the adoption. “Every time I see her, there’s not a second that goes by where I’m regretting it. She’s a happy baby. She’s loved by everyone, and by me. It’s one of the best situations that I could have found for my daughter,” Toma said in the video.

When asked why RealOptions provides STD tests, Hill said that some STDs such as gonorrhea and chlamydia are silent. If women receive abortions without knowing they’re being affected, they may become vulnerable to secondary infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease.

We want them [pregnant women] to feel support and caring to make them strong to choose hope.

Valerie Hill, CEO, RealOptions Obria Medical Clinics

In a storage room of the RealOptions facility, Hill showed The Epoch Times shelves of stored supplies used to help new moms. Things ready to be distributed included diapers, wipes, baby clothes, and toys.

Hill said they conduct donation

drives in churches and receive financial help and materials donated by people who support the mission of her organization. She also said that doctors at her facilities all work there out of compassion, and nurses only get half of what they would get from standard hospitals such as Kaiser or other health care facilities.

RealOptions was established in 1981. Hill started working as a part-time volunteer for the organization in 1989 and became a full-time executive director in 2007. This year marks her 30-year anniversary dedicated to serving her beloved organization.

Many advocates working at RealOptions are just like Hill.

Donna Hecke is the vice president of Community Outreach and Business Development. She learned of RealOptions 20 years ago from her church. Hecke was an adopted child. Her mom was pregnant when she was 15 and was in no situation to raise Hecke, and she was raised by an adoptive family.

Hecke shared with The Epoch Times why she originally got involved with RealOptions. “What a great opportunity to honor women like my mom to help them [pregnant women] through their difficult times, and to honor my parents who adopted me.”

One unique service provided by RealOptions is called the abortion pill reversal. Hill said that women who take pills for abortion do it through a two-step process. There are 48 hours between taking the first pill and the second pill for the process. If women change



Valerie Hill standing in front of baby supplies at San Jose RealOptions office.

their minds within the 48-hour window,” “we provide mid-abortion rescue.” Hill said. Since 2017, they’ve helped deliver 17 healthy babies from 15 mothers through the rescue process, she said.

Hill said that they serve their patients in a non-coercive way. “We’re not here to give them our opinions. We’re just here to ask very good questions to our patients so that they can take this safe space and time to think about this decision. They’re making a life-altering decision.”

Women deserve the truth and full information.

Valerie Hill, CEO, RealOptions Obria Medical Clinics

She said that RealOptions advocates help their patients explore their moral code and their spiritual backgrounds. “Are they Buddhists? Are they atheists? Are they Christians? Are they Catholics? Are they Hindu? How is this decision going to affect their moral codes, maybe not tomorrow, but five years from now?” Hill said.

While most pregnant women visiting RealOptions have abortion on their minds, Hill said that 90 percent of their patients have chosen life for their children. “We want to be the safety net of the life-affirming health care for women so that they can get full information and hopefully make decisions that they can live with.”

Hundreds of Counties Across America Have Declared Themselves ‘2nd Amendment Sanctuaries’

BOWEN XIAO

NEW YORK—Hundreds of local counties, cities, and towns across America are declaring themselves “Second Amendment sanctuaries” or “constitutional counties” as part of an ever-expanding movement over the past few years that has surprised even those who enacted the sanctuary resolutions in the first place.

Local officials in these counties generally state that they won’t follow new gun laws they believe are unconstitutional. The movement has increasingly gained momentum since 2018 after one of the first sanctuaries was enacted in Effingham County, Illinois, in response to newly elected Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who had vowed to push new gun control legislation in the state.

Pritzker was one of a dozen Democratic governors who penned a letter in September asking President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to “pass sensible gun legislation.” The governors want the administration to authorize new “red flag” laws, require universal background checks, and outlaw “assault weapons” and high-capacity magazines, among other proposals.

They say enacting such proposals will “break the cycle” of gun violence.

In interviews with The Epoch Times, county officials who passed Second Amendment legislation said the new proposals infringe upon the rights of law-abiding citizens, and called the strength of the growing sanctuary movement a direct message to state Democrats, though some noted that the measures were largely symbolic. County sheriffs said much the same in interviews.

David Campbell, a member of the Effingham County Board, whose county was one of the first to pass Second Amendment legislation, in April 2018, said he was surprised to see the movement take off so fast.

“We were actually the first ones to pass it with the word ‘sanctuary,’” Campbell told The Epoch Times.

“It all started right there, and then it just blossomed. I think we are into 15 states now. I get calls constantly from other states and from other counties wanting a copy of our resolution and a map of how we did it.”

In Illinois, Campbell said it took less than two years for 70 of the 102 counties in the state to pass some form of sanctuary resolution.

“It’s sending a message to those legislators, letting them know that they better be paying attention,” he said. “They took an oath to support the Constitution of the United States. If they fail to do that, I think a lot of people are going to get voted out. You’re going to see a huge turnout in our next election cycle.”

Meanwhile, in Virginia, 87 out of 95 counties in the state have passed measures affirming their support for Second Amendment rights. Local leaders and an increasing number of sheriffs in the state similarly argue that gun reform measures that could be approved by their state legislature early this year are overreaching.

“They did it in almost two months,” Campbell said, referring to Virginia’s counties. “It’s just amazing.”

Dick Saslaw, the top Democrat in Virginia’s state Senate, has proposed similar gun control legislation to Illinois Democrats, with the addition of raising the minimum age to buy a rifle or shotgun from 18 to 21.

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was first passed by Congress on Sept. 25, 1789, and was ratified on Dec. 15, 1791. The text reads that “a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

Despite the new sanctuary laws being largely symbolic, Campbell



EMILY KASKIAFF VIA GETTY IMAGES

said that his county’s state attorney and sheriff have said they “will not prosecute or go after anybody if they are law-abiding citizens.”

‘We Are Afraid’

In early December, Culpeper County’s Board of Supervisors in Virginia voted 7-0 to affirm itself as a “constitutional county,” prompting a standing ovation by residents present for the vote.

Like many other local officials, Sue Hansohn, a former member of the Culpeper County board who served from 2016 until November 2019, believes the focus should be on mental health problems and on enforcing existing gun laws, not creating more.

She said residents in Culpeper are concerned that the state will ban certain guns or restrict what they can use. She said taking away the firearms of law-abiding citi-

Edward Wilks, owner of Tradesmen Gun Store and Pawnshop helps Lauren Boebert with a firearm at his store in Rifle, Colo., on April 24, 2018.

zens will cause a black market to immediately open up.

“We are afraid, and residents feel like they would be left defenseless if they won’t be able to have their guns,” she told The Epoch Times.

Hansohn said she understands the fear generated from mass shootings but thinks there’s a deeper underlying issue that’s not being addressed.

“There’s a lot of mental health problems, and our state is not looking at that at all,” she said. “I don’t think passing all these bills is going to make a difference because if anybody wants a weapon they’re going to get one.”

A lot more can be done on this front, she said, suggesting that the state open more treatment centers and work with professionals such as psychologists and counselors to figure out how to help troubled people. She said officials need to

I don’t think passing all these bills is going to make a difference because if anybody wants a weapon, they’re going to get one.

Sue Hansohn, former Culpeper County board member



JOSHUA LOTT/GETTY IMAGES

Illinois gubernatorial candidate J.B. Pritzker in Chicago on Oct. 1, 2018.



ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

A man carries a rifle on his back during the Nation’s Gun Show at Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly, Va., on Nov. 18, 2016.

really address why so many people are out there committing these crimes, noting that a lot of them are young adults.

President Donald Trump has previously talked about reforming mental health laws and enacting the death penalty for those who commit serious hate crimes and mass murders.

Hansohn said she knows many people who collect guns and would never harm anyone. She gave the example of a 92-year-old Culpeper resident she knows who still buys guns.

“I think people across the United States are all alike—they just fear their rights are being taken away,” she said about the gun sanctuary movement. “People don’t want to allow it to happen if they can stop it ... they feel threatened by these bills.”

Campbell also said there needs to be more focus placed on addressing mental health, noting that the man who recently shot up a Dallas-area church in Texas most likely had “some kind of mental problem” to go into a place of worship and just start shooting people.

Jack Wilson, a church security member, shot the active shooter within seconds. Wilson was a reserve deputy who at one point had his own shooting range.

‘Our Forefathers Fought for That Right’

Meanwhile, a coalition of 21 state attorneys general is asking the Supreme Court to expand the scope of protection afforded to gun-ownership rights and to strike down a Maryland law that denies concealed carry permits unless applicants can convince local officials they have a “good and substantial reason” to be granted one by local authorities.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, a Republican, and the other state officials filed the friend-of-the-court brief with the Supreme Court on Dec. 18.

The Supreme Court, in the 2008 case District of Columbia v. Heller, held that the “Second Amendment protects an individual right to possess a firearm unconnected with service in a militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home.”

In Virginia, former Wise County Sheriff Ronnie Oakes told The Epoch Times that he wholeheartedly supports the Second Amendment. “I do support it, and I feel that our forefathers fought for that right,” Oakes said. “I encourage everybody to have some type of protection as far as a firearm.”

Oakes retired from his position on Dec. 31 after two decades of service. Wise County officially became a Second Amendment sanctuary on Dec. 12.

The end game, according to Campbell, is for legislators to take note that they should not prosecute law-abiding citizens, though he noted it remains unclear just how much impact these sanctuary counties will have overall.

“I really think in the long run, it’s going to take some time and take some education,” he said. “But I think if we stay vigilant and work together, we will see the majority of these legislators follow the Constitution.”

As most of Virginia’s counties have declared their support for the Second Amendment, one sheriff went further, saying he would “deputize citizens” as auxiliary deputies, if need be, to protect their constitutional right to bear firearms.

Culpeper County Sheriff Scott Jenkins told The Epoch Times that local officials are becoming “fully awake” on the goal of stopping what he described as “government overreach and restriction of our constitutional rights.”

“These [gun] restrictions will do nothing to stop a person that is hellbent on evil, and killing innocent people,” Jenkins said in a previous interview.



Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang speaks during the Democratic presidential primary debate at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, on Dec. 19, 2019.

America’s Real ‘Freedom Dividend’: Hard Work and Pro-Business Policies

LARRY ELDER



Commentary
Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang is on to something:

Americans could use a big “freedom dividend”—that is, a guaranteed source of income on which they can rely month after month, free from the uncertainties of the job market and employment. But like many Democrats’ ideas, Yang’s otherwise brilliant insight is corrupted by an ideology that strangely sees the government as the engine of wealth creation and distribution.

Yang’s plan to provide a universal basic income of \$1,000 per month to every American over age 18 sounds pretty good. All that money could go toward education, health care, job retraining, or even housing assistance for everyday Americans. It also could be wasted with mindless consumer spending on things like clothing, electronics, or even drugs.

Yes, average American families need more money. But what they don’t need is yet another government bureaucracy that will tax and administer this so-called dividend, which would really be a loan. The United States is sinking under the weight of financial obligations that have burgeoned over the years from a commonsense approach to helping aging citizens—Social Security and Medicaid—into a gargantuan system of bureaucracy and debt our nation no longer can afford.

In fact, entitlement spending has become so politically sacrosanct that even modest attempts to reform the system by, for example, enacting sliding age requirements to Social Security based on the increasing life expectancy of retirees, have been met with howls of opposition. Once someone believes the government “owes” them something, it creates a sense of ownership and entitlement—and, ultimately, dependency—that prevents

Once someone believes the government ‘owes’ them something, it creates a sense of ownership and entitlement—and, ultimately, dependency.

them from making rational choices about how to work, how to save, and how to make healthier choices that ultimately could reduce the need for catastrophic health care.

A better idea would be for Americans to create their own dividend by working hard, saving, and ultimately investing their money in a way that provides them with a constant income. For example, about \$240,000 invested at a relatively “safe” rate of 5 percent per year—achievable without incurring undue investment risk—would provide a dividend of about \$12,000 per year. But more importantly, the work and discipline it would require for the average person to save that amount would provide far more personal security than a government handout. Furthermore, the productive capacity that it would take to earn more than \$200,000 would greatly aid our nation in terms of overall economic growth.

Contrary to popular belief, and even current Federal Reserve policy, government money doesn’t grow on printing presses. It comes from taxes paid by workers and businesses on their earned income. If people are disincentivized to work because of a guaranteed handout from the government, there will be fewer people available to actually pay the tens of billions of dollars in new taxes it would take to fund this new entitlement Yang envisions.

Proponents claim that guaranteeing basic income would create an economic multiplier that could grow GDP.

“Overall, the cost of the freedom dividend will be offset by new revenue, fiscal savings, and economic growth. Areas where we’ll see fiscal savings include the reduction of health care costs, lower incarceration rates, reduced homelessness, and bureaucratic downsizing. Additionally, the freedom dividend will boost GDP, increase consumer spending, create jobs, and lead to more tax revenue,” said S.Y. Lee, national press secretary for the

Yang campaign.

It’s obvious that Lee’s argument rests on a sleight of hand. What proponents of universal basic income claim is that when the government actually gives people money, it saves what it would have to spend down the line curing the ills of poverty—bad health, incarceration, and government assistance in other forms. But this rests on a major assumption: that the government should be in the business of providing expensive social services in the first place.

Government health care, for example, has proven to be a major fiasco in this country. Despite spending more on health care than any other country—more than \$1 trillion in 2018—U.S. health outcomes, including life expectancy, have declined in recent years. More importantly, our “health span,” or the amount of time people can maintain healthy, productive lives, has declined in the age of massive health care bureaucracies fed by government spending.

A real American freedom dividend would involve putting in place pro-business policies, such as deregulation and lowering taxes, and labor market policies, such as reducing illegal immigrant labor competition. These policies don’t require the government to spend a thing—or require it to spend less—while at the same time removing barriers to employment and economic growth.

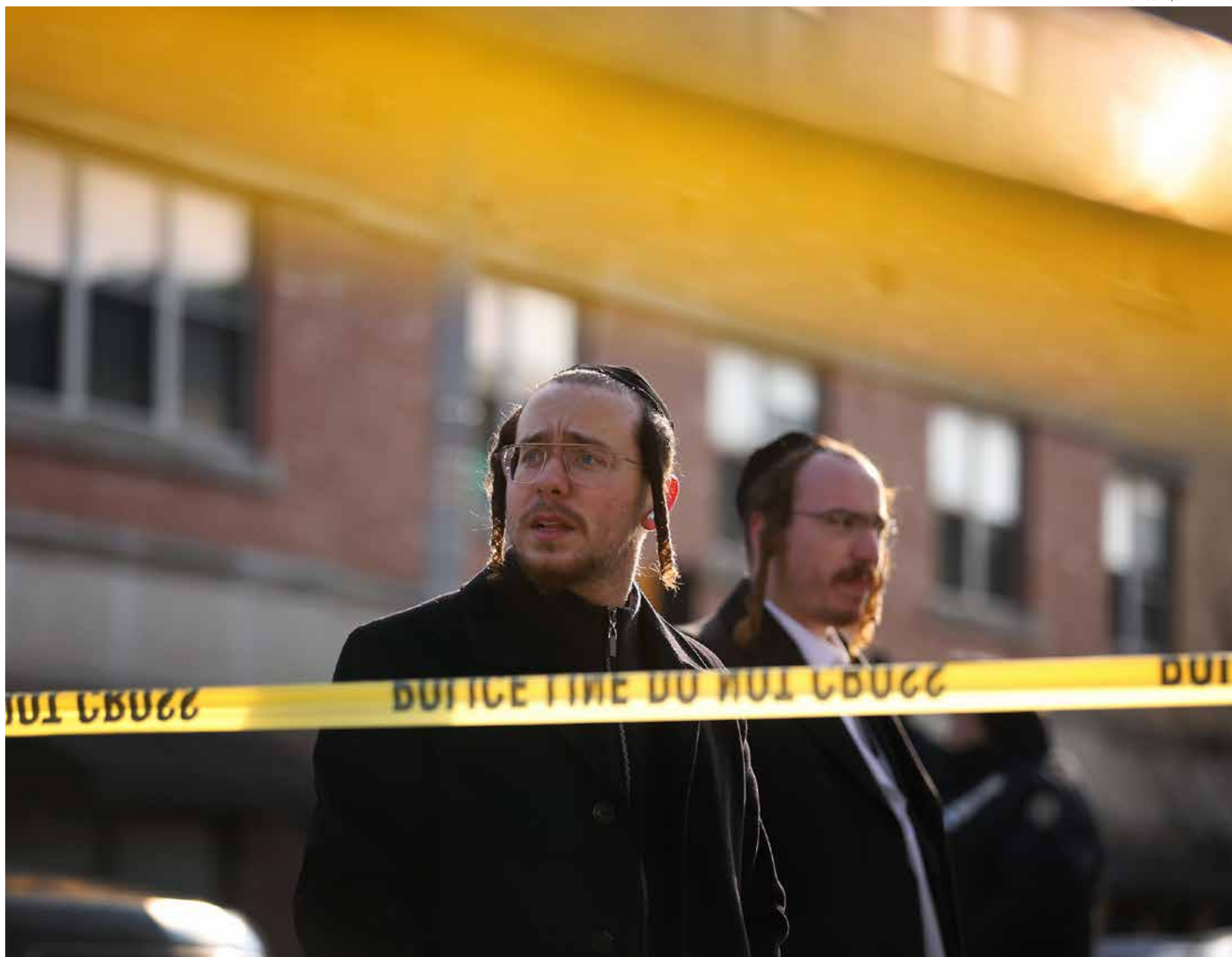
Investing in business and job growth produces actual dividends, not, like Yang’s proposal, tens of billions of dollars of new government debt.

Larry Elder is a bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio talk show host. To find out more about Larry Elder, or become an “Elderado,” visit LarryElder.com

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

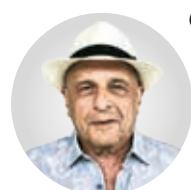
Diversity Obsession Partly to Blame for Rise in Anti-Semitism

RICK LOOMIS/GETTY IMAGES



Members of the Jewish community gather around the JC Kosher Supermarket, where six people were killed in a standoff and shootout, in Jersey City, N.J., on Dec. 11, 2019.

ROGER L. SIMON



Commentary
The horrible attack on a Jewish shul in Monsey, New York, on the seventh

night of Hanukkah isn't directly connected to the atmosphere on U.S. campuses or in certain quarters of the U.S. Congress. But they are of a piece spiritually and psychologically.

Something is drastically wrong.

The canary in the coal mine (Jews first, others later) is back. It's permissible to slur Jews and to beat or stab them (five different violent incidents during this Hanukkah alone in the New York City area). Jewish students on college campuses are hiding their religious affiliation as they cross the green to class.

Why now? What has caused all this?

It's not the sole reason, but I am going to say something outrageous to some. It's the worship of diversity. Note that word—worship.

Diversity is by itself a good thing. We are a diverse society. As many have said, that's part of our strength.

What has developed in recent decades, however, is the elevation of diversity above all. The slogan "E pluribus unum" (out of many, one) has

Something is drastically wrong. The canary in the coal mine (Jews first, others later) is back.

Where you worship diversity, there will always be winners and losers in that diversity.

virtually disappeared from our country, the "unum" pushed to irrelevance.

Everywhere we go these days, diversity is counted and measured ad nauseam. How many of this group? How many of that group? It's an obsession.

Where you worship diversity, there will always be winners and losers in that diversity. Like it or not, it creates a pecking order. And these pecking orders are reinforced, consciously and unconsciously, by our media, entertainment, and the academy.

And, naturally enough, out of pecking orders, hatreds (or old hatreds, as in the case of anti-Semitism) emerge.

Today's Democratic Party—with its devotion to and reliance on identity politics—fans these hatreds, deliberately or not.

The rise (and domination) of the concept of intersectionality in our colleges and universities is also a leading factor in this. In this theory, groups are virtually ranked according to their levels of supposed victimhood. Sometimes, only members of those deemed most disadvantaged are even allowed to speak.

How absurd and morally and psychologically damaging this is, when we are all humans with nearly identical DNA. It's a reactionary and proto-fascist idea masquerading as progressive. It is, in essence, a new form of

segregationism.

Yet, it has spread and been transmogrified to many aspects of our society. Identity is everywhere. Even the recent killings at the New Jersey kosher market were motivated by some people thinking they were the real Jews and the other people weren't. How crazy is that!

Plenty. But it's instigated in part by our culture.

Even though some guy in the Williamsburg neighborhood in the New York City borough of Brooklyn wears payus (ear locks) and doves (prays) when he gets up in the morning, the differences between you and him are minuscule.

You and he are homo sapiens. Get it?

If you're looking for genuine "diversity," go to the zoo. Human beings and giraffes are indeed separate species. But please don't shoot or stab the animals.

And, meanwhile, STOP worshipping diversity. It's a fact, not a religion.

"E pluribus unum."

Roger L. Simon is The Epoch Times' senior political analyst. His most recent novel is "The GOAT."

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

Fixing Our Environment—Without Big Government, Socialist Policies

ADRIAN NORMAN



Commentary
Boyan Slat is the 24-year-old founder and CEO of The Ocean Cleanup, a company that

has deployed innovative technology to remove plastic from the world's oceans. He founded the initiative in his home country of The Netherlands at the ripe old age of 18.

In October, Slat gave a presentation demonstrating his company's groundbreaking machine called The Interceptor, a catamaran-style barge designed to sit on rivers and "intercept" plastic before it spills into the ocean.

This development is a technical marvel: It operates completely off the grid, is 100 percent solar-powered, stores energy in lithium-ion batteries for nighttime use, directly measures the amount of extracted debris, and can measure local weather conditions.

Once operational, a single Interceptor can remove about 50,000 kilograms (about 55 tons) of plastic per day from a river. That's the equivalent of 1 million plastic soda bottles.

Slat's enterprise was largely funded by donations, receiving more than \$31.5 million as of 2017.

These days, there's no short supply of concern over the effects we are having on the planet. Most of us agree that more could be done to reduce any negative environmental consequences of human action. Where contention breeds is in solutions.

Being scoffed at by a 16-year-old Nordic girl, whose most visible climate activism resulted in the same amount of carbon

Climate alarmism is the new religion of the political left. And the real inconvenient truth is that we don't need socialism, the Green New Deal, or U.N. mandates to fix our Earth.

Repressive policies—such as the Green New Deal—that siphon up to three-quarters of a nation's income and redirect it toward politicians who are completely inept at delivering solutions on environmental issues aren't the answer.

emissions as those she derided in a speech at the United Nations, is hardly the answer.

Repressive policies—such as the Green New Deal—that siphon up to three-quarters of a nation's income and redirect it toward politicians who are completely inept at delivering solutions on environmental issues, aren't the answer, especially when that money won't even cover the costs of those programs, which are oriented more toward socialism than sustainability.

Slat's achievement is a vivid demonstration that the world doesn't need intrusive, big-government, socialist policies to make good on a commitment to maintaining a healthy environment.

He was roughly the same age as climate activist Greta Thunberg when he took note of the need to address these issues. Yet, rather than condescendingly lecture the world about how it needs to adapt to his vision of how the planet should look, he took action and is initiating the change he wants to see in the world.

Slat's team conducted research and determined that 80 percent of the plastic going into Earth's oceans comes from only 1,000 rivers in the world. His company is focused on them and hopes to tackle those rivers by the year 2025.

Interceptors are already collecting trash in Indonesia and Malaysia, and a third is being prepared for deployment in Vietnam. A fourth device is going to be sent to the Rio Ozama in the Dominican Republic.

The Ocean Cleanup project also deploys systems designed to capture and remove plastic that has already made its way into the ocean.

According to its website, there are more than 5 trillion pieces

of plastic littering the world's oceans. Most of it "accumulates in five ocean garbage patches, the largest one being the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, located between Hawaii and California."

The systems are designed to supplement—rather than replace—existing waste management structures. Slat's company estimates being able to remove 50 percent of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch in only five years, and is projected to do so at a fraction of the cost of traditional cleanup methods. Deploying these systems globally would deliver a huge win for planetary ecosystems.

Climate alarmism is the new religion of the political left. And the real inconvenient truth is that we don't need socialism, the Green New Deal, or U.N. mandates to fix our Earth.

In a crushing blow to the false prophets who suggest that bloated, intrusive government, higher taxes, more regulatory burdens, and less national sovereignty are the only way to save our planet, The Ocean Cleanup project is proof positive that private enterprise is the most effective and morally superior way to address our environmental challenges.

As we head into the third decade of this century, we should all be inspired by examples of leadership from the private sector that have demonstrated real promise in achieving a cleaner, healthier Earth.

Adrian Norman is a writer and political commentator.

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



Boyan Slat, the Dutch founder and CEO of The Ocean Cleanup, presents in Rotterdam the new barge system called The Interceptor, which will be used for the expansion of its river and ocean cleaning campaign, on Oct. 26, 2019.

Spies Keep Secrets and, With Them, Their Own Power

MICHAEL LEDEEN



Sometimes it takes decades before we get the facts about our past, because our intelligence agencies don't want the facts known. According to the

UK's Sun newspaper:

"[The CIA has] the only surviving record of the defunct East German spy service's list of foreign informants, collaborators, and targets.

"It is believed the huge swathe of 280,000 index cards—known as the Rosenholz files—were sold to American spooks for \$1m by a Stasi officer when East Germany collapsed in 1989.

"The CIA have kept it under lock and key at its Langley HQ ever since, after sharing it with their British counterparts."

That was 30 years ago, and nobody outside the intelligence community knows what's in the files of the Stasi. We do know that the East German intelligence service—headed by Markus Wolf—was perhaps the most sophisticated and ruthless of Soviet services, and Wolf was a master of espionage.

In the final phase of the Cold War, those of us who followed the activities of the East Germans were fascinated by their ability to recruit high-ranking West Germans, such as Willy Brandt's chief of staff. Thus, the Rosenholz files are unusually valuable, and the East German archives remain under lock and key.

That's part of a wider picture. For years, I've tried unsuccessfully to obtain a similar set of KGB documents, passed to the UK's Secret Intelligence Service, more commonly known as MI6, by the man in charge of the records of Soviet foreign intelligence for many years, a man named Vasili Mitrokhin.

The Brits got them—and later, Mitrokhin himself—because the CIA wasn't interested, and when the Cold War ended, the documents were made available to the separate countries where the KGB had recruited their agents. Mitrokhin maintained ongoing records on espionage agents and agents of influence in the press.

The Italian government decided to make public its documents, and for the weeks leading up to their publication, a large number of journalists wrote op-eds preannouncing their imminent outing as Soviet collaborators. The op-eds revealed the authors had frequently wined and dined with officials of the Soviet Embassy, and therefore, the officials could claim them as



Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, former national security adviser to President Donald Trump, departs the E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse in Washington on July 10, 2018.

The repeated pattern, according to which the past—the true past—is known only to a small number of people, gives the knowers an immense advantage over the rest of us.

reliable sources.

But guess what? With rare exceptions, the journalists' names weren't on the KGB lists. The Mitrokhin lists were not, as the self-confessed sources claimed, merely people who frequented Soviet officials; the KGB had a wide range of contacts, and didn't claim most of them as agents.

The CIA has Mitrokhin's revelations, but refuses to make them available to researchers. I have filed several Freedom of Information Act requests, but the CIA won't release them.

Nor will they declassify the records of a major CIA informant from the Italian Communist Party delivered to CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, shortly after World War II. The source of the documents was a high-ranking member of the Party who gave the United States the secret history from the early 1920s, including the ways in which the Italians communicated with the Soviets.

Like the Stasi files and the Mitrokhin records, these documents provide rare insights into the ways in which our communist enemies operated. The source is long since gone, and the events of which he speaks are, in some cases, a century old. Why on earth does the intelligence community continue to hoard these secrets? Indeed, when I was in the Reagan administration, I read these files, and the CIA made me swear to keep the information secret.

I have, even though I believe strongly that it should be made public.

The repeated pattern, according

to which the past—the true past—is known only to a small number of people, gives the knowers an immense advantage over the rest of us.

So why hold onto the secrets? It all goes to the source of the power of the intelligence community, which is knowledge. By preserving the secrets, the spooks maintain control over the past, and, to a certain extent, the present as well.

As we now see, in that way, the spooks can invent the "facts" about their political enemies. Just ask Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, who was determined to carry out a detailed audit of the intelligence community, and threw the spooks into a tizzy.

Did you know it's been decades since there was an audit? And did you know there has been no accounting for all the billions spent on secret missions?

It's a heck of a story.

Michael Ledeen is a freedom scholar at Foundation for Defense of Democracies. He has served as a consultant to the National Security Council and the departments of State and Defense, and as a special adviser to the secretary of state. He is the author of 35 books, most recently "Field of Fight: How to Win the War Against Radical Islam and its Allies," co-authored with retired Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn.

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



A man crosses the Central Intelligence Agency seal in the lobby of the agency's headquarters in Langley, Va., in this file photo.