

THE EPOCH TIMES

OUR

NATION

President Donald Trump at a press conference in the East Room of the White House on Sept. 20, 2019.



Trump Didn't Pressure Ukraine to Probe Biden, Transcript Shows

Department of Justice determined president did not violate campaign finance law with request to probe potential corruption **7**



Trump Urges Nations at the UN to Stop Religious Persecution

President slams world leaders for 'silencing, shunning, or censoring the faithful.'

EMEL AKAN

NEW YORK—President Donald Trump called on countries to end religious persecution around the world, asking governments to release prisoners of conscience and repeal laws that restrict religion and belief.

World leaders have gathered in New York this week for the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Trump started his meetings by hosting the "Global Call to Protect Religious Freedom" event on Sept. 23 at U.N. headquarters.

In his keynote remarks, the president said that he was the first leader to initiate discussion of religious freedom and persecution at the UNGA high-level meetings. He added that the meeting was long overdue.

"I was shocked when I was given that statistic that I would be the first. That's very sad in many ways," he said. "Today, with one clear voice, the United States of America calls upon the nations of the world to end religious persecution."

Trump urged governments around the world to stop persecuting their citizens, release prisoners of conscience, eliminate laws that restrict religion, and protect oppressed people.

"Our Founders understood that no right is more fundamental to a peaceful, prosperous, and virtuous society than the right to follow one's religious convictions," he said.

Trump noted that the religious freedom enjoyed by Americans is rare in the world, adding that 80 percent of the world's population live in countries where religious liberty is threatened or banned.

"When I heard that number I said, 'Please go back and check it because it can't possibly be correct.' And sadly, it was 80 percent," he said.

I was shocked when I was given that statistic that I would be the first. That's very sad in many ways.

President Donald Trump

(Top) President Donald Trump (C) speaks alongside Vice President Mike Pence (R) and U.N. Secretary General António Guterres (L) at a U.N. event on religious freedom in New York on Sept. 23, 2019.

(Middle) Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (C) in a group photo during the second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom at the State Department in Washington on July 18, 2019.

(Bottom) The meeting on religious freedom at U.N. headquarters on Sept. 23, 2019.

He slammed world leaders saying that too often they "preach diversity while silencing, shunning, or censoring the faithful."

He also said that the United States stands with believers in every country and that protecting religious freedom is one of his top priorities.

During his remarks, the president touted his efforts to free U.S. evangelical pastor Andrew Brunson, who was imprisoned in Turkey for two years. "They'd been trying to get Andrew out for a long time—previous administration. I don't think they tried too hard, unfortunately," he said.

In his speech, Trump condemned both state-sponsored persecution and terrorist attacks against religious targets in the United States and around the world.

"We're also urging every nation to increase the prosecution and punishment of crimes against religious communities," Trump said.

He announced that the United States would form a coalition of U.S. businesses for the protection of religious freedom.

"This is the first time this has been done. This initiative will encourage the private sector to protect people of all faiths in the workplace," he said.

In addition, the Trump administration will allocate an additional \$25 million fund "to protect religious freedom and religious sites and relics."

'Communist Party in China'

Speaking at the event, Vice President Mike Pence singled out countries where the persecution against people of faith is the most severe, such as Iran, Iraq, China, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

"The regime in Iran brutally persecutes Christians, Sunnis, Baha'i, and Jews," he said, adding that Iran-



backed militias slaughtered Christians and Yazidis in Iraq.

"The Communist Party in China has arrested Christian pastors, banned the sale of Bibles, demolished churches, and imprisoned more than a million Uyghurs in the Muslim population," he said.

Religious groups and minorities in China—including Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, Christians, and Falun Gong practitioners—continue to suffer from systematic arrest, unlawful imprisonment, torture, and brainwashing. The government is using various methods of persecution, from concentration camps to forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience, according to researchers.

Falun Dafa Information Center spokesperson Peter Erping Zhang, who was among the guests attending Trump's religious freedom event, said the U.N. and the international community should take a "tough stance and speak up against modern-day atrocities in China," especially in light of the forced organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners.

"It is a good start that such a high-level conference is held at the U.N. where religious freedoms are part of the world discussion. We hope that the worst abuser—the Chinese communist regime—would be publicly shamed for its state-sponsored terrorism against its own people," he said, calling on the international community to take action.

Falun Gong, a traditional Chinese meditation practice, has been brutally persecuted by the Chinese communist regime for 20 years. At any given time, hundreds of thousands of adherents are held in prisons, labor camps, and brainwashing centers, where many have been tortured in an effort to force them to renounce their faith, the Falun Dafa Information Center estimates.

The Trump administration has been pushing for greater tolerance of different faiths by governments around

the world.

To address religious persecution, the U.S. State Department initiated the first Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in Washington last year. More than 1,000 civil society and religious leaders, and more than 100 foreign delegations were invited to the second Ministerial in July, in what has been called the largest religious freedom event in the world.

In July, Trump also met with 27 survivors of religious persecution from 17 countries in the Oval Office at the White House. A practitioner of Falun Gong who was tortured in China for her faith was among the survivors who met with Trump.

"The president's speech is an important and historic moment precisely because religious freedom is too often ignored or downplayed at the U.N.," Kelsey Zorzi, Alliance Defending Freedom international director of global religious freedom and president of the United Nations' NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief, said in a statement.

'Erase Its Own Citizens'

In addition to the "Global Call" for which Trump gave the keynote speech, other events showed how religious freedom has topped his administration's agenda at the UNGA.

And China is the main target. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Sept. 22 held a meeting with the foreign ministers of five Central Asian countries. After his meeting, Pompeo called on other countries to resist China's demands to repatriate Uyghurs to the northwestern region of Xinjiang.

"I want to make clear that China's repressive campaign in Xinjiang is not about terrorism. It's about China's attempt to erase its own citizens," he told reporters.

Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan will host another event on Sept. 24 at the U.N. headquarters on the "human rights crisis in Xinjiang."

GM Strike Enters 2nd Week With No Reports of Progress

PETR SVAB

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Some 46,000 General Motors (GM) employees have refused to work for their eighth day running as their union negotiates with the automaker's leadership over pay hikes and job losses.

Neither side reported any progress over the weekend.

"We continue to talk, and our goal remains to reach an agreement that builds a stronger future for our employees and the company," GM spokesman David Barnas said in an email.

The union, United Automobile Workers (UAW), didn't respond to a request for comment.

The UAW launched the strike on Sept. 15, after its contract with GM expired upon failed negotiations.

The union wants jobs to be preserved for workers affected by GM's decision to shut four facilities in the United States. It also wants workers' salaries to grow faster and to limit the use of temporary workers, among other demands, people briefed on the negotiations told The Wall Street Journal.

GM has offered to invest more than \$7 billion in eight facilities in four states and create 5,400 jobs, which would include hiring at least some of the employees affected by plant closures. It also promised wage increases, "improved" profit-sharing, and other improvements.

Ohio Plant

A major issue is the fate of the Lordstown, Ohio, plant that until six months ago made the Chevrolet Cruze.

Under pressure from President Donald Trump, GM announced talks in May to sell the idled plant to electric truck startup Workhorse. It also proposed building a battery plant nearby.

But the union wants the plant to get another car to build.

The plant used to employ some 4,500, but that dropped to about 1,400 before it closed. Most of those workers have taken transfers to other GM plants, but around 450 workers have not, many because they didn't want to uproot their families.

Even if the Workhorse deal goes through, workers wonder how many people the plant would employ,



We continue to talk, and our goal remains to reach an agreement that builds a stronger future for our employees and the company.

David Barnas, General Motors, spokesman

whether they would still be working for GM, and what kind of pay cut that would entail.

UAW workers at the top of the wage scale earn about \$31 an hour, compared with the \$15-\$17 hourly wage workers are paid at a GM battery plant near Detroit that operates under a side agreement.

"If they made batteries here, it would allow them to lower wages to the bare minimum," said Teresa Oakes, 44, who worked at the Lordstown plant for 10 years. "GM should bring back vehicles they make in Mexico and have them made by U.S. workers instead."

Analysts say neither a Workhorse nor a GM plant would be likely to employ even half the plant's previous workforce.

"Nothing other than vehicle production has even a hope of replacing the jobs and income and economic impact of what was previously there as an automotive assembly plant," said Kristin Dziczek, vice president of industry, labor, and economics at the Center for Automotive Research based in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

But GM needs to cut back underutilized U.S. manufacturing capac-

ity even at current levels, said Sam Fiorani, a vice president with Auto Forecast Solutions.

"There's no chance that GM is going to put a product back into that plant," he said. "They have too much capacity as it is."

GM's capacity utilization rate in its North American plants is about 75 percent, excluding idled assembly plants in Lordstown and Detroit, research firm LMC Automotive said.

'America First'

President Donald Trump has called on companies to move their production to the United States as part of his "America First" policy. He previously called on the company to consider closing one of its plants in China or Mexico rather than the Ohio one.

"I don't want General Motors to be building plants outside of this country. As you know, they built many plants in China and Mexico, and I don't like that at all," Trump said on Sept. 16.

GM has said that it has 33 manufacturing sites in the United States "and just four in Mexico."

Reuters and Associated Press contributed to this report.



General Motors assembly workers picket outside the shuttered Lordstown Assembly plant during the United Auto Workers national strike in Lordstown, Ohio, on Sept. 20, 2019.



DEW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

JEFF KOWALSKY/AP/GETTY IMAGES

Coianne Abant (L), a member of the United Auto Workers Local 598, and others picket outside the General Motors Detroit-Hamtramck assembly plant in Detroit on Sept. 22, 2019.

Trump at the UN Declares ‘Specter of Socialism’ a Serious Threat to the World

EMEL AKAN

NEW YORK—President Donald Trump warned world leaders about the “specter of socialism,” calling it one of the most serious challenges facing the nations.

“It’s the wrecker of nations and destroyer of societies,” Trump said on Sept. 24 in his address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

“Events in Venezuela remind us all that socialism and communism are not about justice, they are not about equality, they are not about lifting up the poor. And they are certainly not about the good of the nation,” he said.

“Socialism and communism are about one thing only: power for the ruling class.”

Leaders of countries around the world have gathered this week in New York for the 74th session of the UNGA. In his address, Trump repeated his pledge that the United States would “never be a socialist country.”

Trump has repeatedly criticized Democrats for embracing “radical socialism” in the United States. He denounced a wide range of proposals by Democrats, such as open borders, Medicare for All, and the Green New Deal, calling them an “extreme, destructive, and dangerous agenda.”

At a closed-door Republican annual conference on Sept. 12, Trump urged GOP lawmakers “to fight like hell” to win the 2020 election and defeat rising socialism in the United States.

Trump said in his speech to the UNGA that socialism and communism killed 100 million people in the last century, and he condemned the “brutal oppression” of people in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela today.

“The dictator Maduro is a Cuban puppet, protected by Cuban bodyguards, hiding from his own people,” he said.

“These totalitarian ideologies combined with modern technology have the power to exercise new and disturbing forms of suppression and domination,” Trump said, defending the recent U.S. policy that requires increased screening of foreign technology and investment in the United States.



DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

(Left and Below) President Donald Trump addresses the United Nations General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York on Sept. 24, 2019.

Socialism and communism are about one thing only: power for the ruling class.

President Donald Trump

‘History, Culture, and Heritage’

Trump also pointed a finger at social media giants, media, and academic institutions.

He accused social media companies of acquiring immense power and silencing people.

“A small number of social media platforms are acquiring immense power over what we can see and over what we are allowed to say,” he said. “Media and academic institutions push flat-out assaults on our histories, traditions, and values.”

Trump defended traditions and customs and asked the leaders to cherish the “history, culture, and heritage” of their countries.

“The free world must embrace its national foundations. It must not attempt to erase them or replace them,” he said.

“If you want freedom, take pride in your country. If you want democracy, hold on to your sovereignty. And if you want peace, love your nation.”

Religious Freedom

At this year’s UNGA, Trump has made the protection of religious freedom a key focus. He hosted an event on Sept. 23 called “Global Call to Protect Religious Freedom,” which sought to gain international support for protecting

religious leaders and religious freedom in the wake of increasing persecution around the world.

“Today, with one clear voice, the United States of America calls upon the nations of the world to end religious persecution,” Trump said on Sept. 23.

Trump drew criticism for scheduling his meeting on religious freedom during a climate change summit hosted by the U.N. secretary-general on Sept. 23.

He attended the climate summit for 15 minutes before leaving for his own meeting booked at a separate conference room at the UN headquarters.

Pastors and a number of Christian nongovernmental organizations throughout the country praised Trump for addressing the “real problem” of religious persecution.

“It is a remarkable thing that this president would skip a UN climate change summit on an imaginary problem to address the very real problem of global persecution of believers,” Robert Jeffress, an American Southern Baptist pastor, told Fox & Friends.

Almost 83 percent of the world’s population live in countries with high or very high religious restrictions, according to a 2018 study by Pew Research Center.



Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.) at the Capitol on April 2, 2019.

Sen. Hawley: Facebook CEO Says ‘We’ve Struggled With’ Bias

PETR SVAB

Facebook Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg acknowledged the company has a problem with political bias, according to Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), who spoke to Zuckerberg on Capitol Hill behind closed doors on Sept. 19.

Bias is “an issue we’ve struggled with for a long time,” Zuckerberg said, according to Hawley’s Sept. 19 Twitter post.

Hawley said he confronted Zuckerberg regarding suppression of content of anti-abortion groups, specifically Live Action, an advocacy group led by Lila Rose.

“Zuckerberg admitted there ‘clearly was bias’ in the @LiveAction @LilaGraceRose censorship,” Hawley said.

Facebook informed Live Action on Aug. 30 that Rose’s Facebook page and links to the group’s website were subject to “reduced distribution and other restrictions” after two Live Action videos made a claim labeled “false” by “an independent fact-checker.”

It turned out the “fact-checker” relied on comments by two abortionists. In response, the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists issued a letter saying the videos were justified in saying that “abortion is never medically necessary.”

On Sept. 11, Facebook temporarily reversed the Live Action restrictions and said that it would investigate the matter, the group said. Zuckerberg said suppressing the group was a mistake, according to Hawley.

“He said that I was right about that, that they had made a mistake,” Hawley told Fox News.

In another tweet, Hawley said he challenged Zuckerberg to have Facebook “submit to an independent, third-party audit on censorship.”



BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on Capitol Hill on Sept. 19, 2019.

“Open Facebook’s books up, open their employees to interviews,” Hawley conveyed the conversation to Fox. Zuckerberg declined, he said.

Hawley also challenged Zuckerberg to address antitrust concerns by selling Facebook-owned social media platform Instagram and WhatsApp messenger.

“If Facebook is serious about privacy, if they’re serious about competition, put their money where their mouth is,” Hawley said.

Zuckerberg declined, he said. Facebook didn’t respond to a request for comment on Hawley’s remarks, but the company previously acknowledged that it’s been under investigation by the Federal Trade Commission for antitrust concerns.

Bias

Conservatives have been consistently accusing big tech compa-

reaching an impasse with its executives on the hate speech policy and other issues.

“Hate speech can’t be defined consistently and it can’t be implemented reliably, so it ends up being a series of one-off ‘pragmatic’ decisions,” he said.

These so-called standards are irreducibly subjective. What is one person’s hate speech ... is somebody else’s cherished loving speech.

Nadine Strossen, law professor and former president of the American Civil Liberties Union

A similar sentiment was expressed by Nadine Strossen, a law professor and former president of the American Civil Liberties Union.

“These so-called standards are irreducibly subjective. What is one person’s hate speech ... is somebody else’s cherished loving speech,” she said in her June 26 Congress testimony.

Facebook not only acknowledged that it can’t draw a clear line between what is and isn’t hate speech, but that it also keeps a portion of its rules secret.

A Facebook spokesperson previously told The Epoch Times that users are partially kept in the dark to prevent them from circumventing the rules, but didn’t respond when asked why the company doesn’t spell out its policies in full and add a rule against circumventing the guidelines.

Trump has reportedly been working on an executive order to address politically biased censorship by social media companies.



DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

United Postal Union Convenes to Negotiate Rates as US Exit Looms

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

With a deadline approaching for the United States to follow through on its threat to quit the United Postal Union (UPU), delegates from more than 100 countries met in Switzerland on Sept. 24 to negotiate a solution which would satisfy Washington and keep the organization intact.

The United States triggered the negotiation on the so-called remuneration rates in 2018 by announcing that it intends to leave the UPU. The U.S. threat to exit was prompted by extraordinarily low shipping rates granted to China on bulky letters and small parcels. The status quo allows Chinese merchants to ship products to the United States at a fraction of the shipping price of U.S. parcels headed to China.

In the event of a consensus, a final decision is expected on Sept. 25. The member nations would then enact an amendment to the UPU charter on Sept. 26.

The remuneration rates being negotiated concern the prices charged by each nation for the last leg of the journey for international parcels that arrive in their territories. The union sets the rates for this last leg with some nations, including China, receiving preferential rates. For example, under the current system, a Chinese merchant pays \$1.40 to ship a counterfeit mug from China to the United States, while a U.S. company producing the original mug is paying four times that

I believe we are at a fork in the road—a crossroads—where the choices we make can set the course for the rest of the century.

Bishar Hussein, secretary-general of the United Postal Union, about the United States' threat to quit the union

amount to ship the package domestically.

The UPU Congress is considering three options for reforming the remuneration rates. Under the first option, the rate increases would accelerate with the pricing methodology unchanged. Under the second option, which was eliminated by a 57-78 vote on Sept. 24, each country would set its own rates. The third option is a blend of the first two. According to UPU spokesperson David Dadge, the United States prefers the second or third option.

UPU's Secretary-General Bishar Hussein told the delegates on Sept. 24 that the forum on remuneration rates is the most important in UPU's 145-year history.

"I call on all of you in the name of this historical Union to find the courage to choose the right path not just for yourselves, but for the entire industry," Hussein said.

"I believe we are at a fork in the road—a crossroads—where the choices we make can set the course for the rest of the century," he added. "The decision taken by you must be the correct one to ensure we stand together to bring the necessary changes to this industry."

While many countries have long complained about the remuneration rates, the United States was the first and only nation to announce its intent to exit the UPU. The formal announcement triggered a yearlong withdrawal process that's set to conclude on Oct. 17.

According to Dadge, while there's an overwhelming understanding that the UPU's framework is no longer fit for the purpose, enacting change in an organization of more than 100 nations is not an easy task.

"I think you will have by late [Sept. 25] some kind of idea of either acceptance of one of the proposals or perhaps the countries have been unable to agree, although, obviously, the Universal Postal Union is doing everything possible to try and ensure with this forum that there is some kind of consensus agreement at the end of the Congress," Dadge told The Epoch Times.

The United States delegation is being led by Peter Navarro, an adviser to the president and the director of the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy. Navarro, a China hawk, wrote in an op-ed on Sept. 24 that "unless the rules stop favoring China, the U.S. will quit the global union in October."

Hussein told reporters on Sept. 24 that if the United States quits the union, the postal systems around the world would see parcels pile up as they attempt to determine how to send mail to the United States.

"[The] departure of the United States from the Union would mean a total destruction of the service. Because the moment any country leaves the treaty, that country does not exist. So that means that we cannot exchange any letters, packets, or parcels with [the United States Postal Service,]" Hussein said.



White House trade adviser Peter Navarro (C) during a break at the Extraordinary Congress of the Universal Postal Union in Geneva on Sept. 24, 2019.

Trump Didn't Pressure Ukrainian Leader to Probe Biden, Call Transcript Shows

Justice Department Found No Violation



IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

President Donald Trump didn't exert pressure or offer anything in exchange when he asked Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky to probe the dealings of former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden, according to a transcript of a call between the two leaders released by the White House on Sept. 25.

During the call, which took place on the morning of July 25, Zelensky was the first to bring up Rudy Giuliani, the Trump attorney who had looked into the Ukrainian business dealings of Hunter Biden. In response, Trump noted that Giuliani is a "respected man" and told Zelensky that he would like to have Giuliani call him.

Trump then referred to videotaped comments, in which Joe Biden describes how—while serving as vice president—he forced the termination of a top Ukrainian prosecutor by threatening to withhold U.S. loans. The prosecutor was allegedly investigating Burisma, the gas company where Hunter Biden served on the board of directors.

"The other thing, there's a lot of talk about Biden's son, that Biden stopped the prosecution and a lot of people want to find out about that, so whatever you can do with the attorney general would be great," Trump said. "Biden went around bragging that he stopped the prosecution, so if you can look into it ... It sounds horrible to me."

Trump asked Zelensky to work with Attorney General William Barr and Giuliani to look into the matter. The White House released the transcript the morning after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) announced the start of an impeachment inquiry into Trump. Pelosi's announcement was triggered largely by allegations surrounding the content of Trump's call with the Ukrainian leader. Pelosi made the announcement before reviewing the content of the transcript.

The key allegations about the call were debunked by the transcript, including the claim that Trump made a promise to Zelensky and the claim that Trump repeatedly pressured the Ukrainian leader to investigate Biden.

According to Pelosi and other Dem-

ocrats, Trump's request for an investigation is inappropriate, since Biden was officially running for president at the time of the call. Pelosi claimed that the request didn't need to feature a quid pro quo in order to be inappropriate.

In a statement responding to the release of the transcript, Pelosi accused Trump, without evidence, of shaking down Ukraine "for the benefit of his campaign."

"Either the president does not know the weight of his words or he does not care about ethics or his constitutional responsibilities," Pelosi said.

"The transcript and the Justice Department's acting in a rogue fashion in being complicit in the president's lawlessness confirm the need for an impeachment inquiry," she added. "Clearly, the Congress must act."

In a press conference later in the day, Trump said Pelosi has been "taken over by the radical left."

House Democratic committee leaders fell in line with Pelosi. Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), and Foreign Affairs Chairman Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) said the call was

a "betrayal."

The Department of Justice (DOJ) determined that Trump didn't violate campaign finance law when he asked Zelensky to look into Biden and his son.

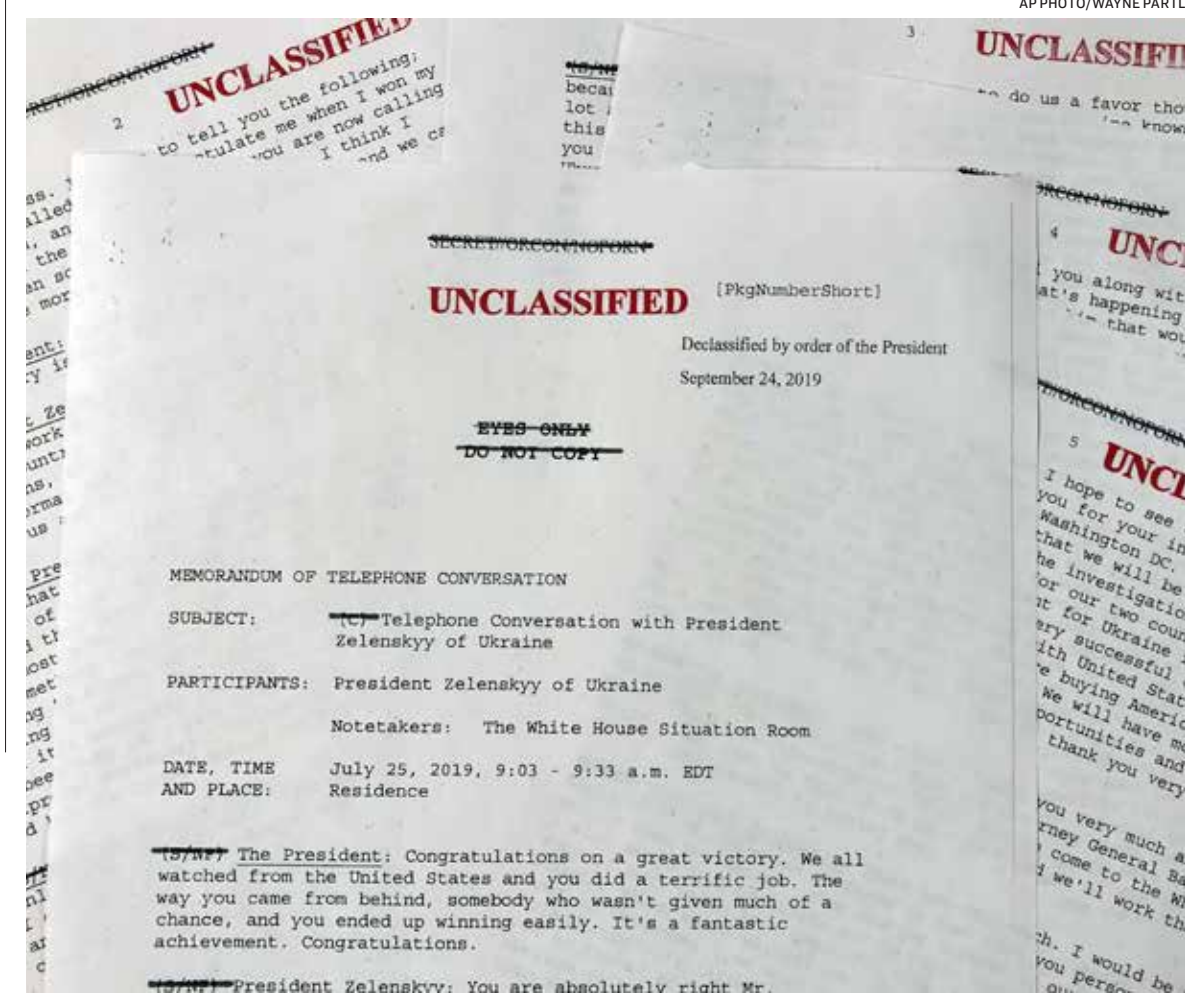
The DOJ received a referral about the Trump-Zelensky call, which referenced a letter from the Intelligence Community Inspector General (ICIG) addressed to the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). The letter cited the conversation between Trump and Zelensky as a potential violation of campaign finance law, but acknowledged that neither the complainant nor the DNI had firsthand knowledge of the call.

"[The] Department's Criminal Division reviewed the official record of the call and determined, based on the facts and applicable law, that there was no campaign finance violation and that no further action was warranted," Justice Department spokesperson Kerri Kupec said in a statement. "All relevant components of the department agreed with this legal conclusion, and the Department has concluded the matter."

The Trump-Zelensky call is the subject of an anonymous whistleblower complaint sent to the ICIG. The complaint stirred up controversy because

(Above) Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) walks to a meeting with the House Democratic caucus, one day after announcing that Democrats will start an impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump, in Washington, on Sept. 25, 2019.

(Below) A declassified phone transcript, released by the White House, of a conversation between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on July 25, 2019.



the ICIG notified Congress that the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) failed to forward the complaint to lawmakers. The ODNI consulted with the Justice Department, which issued an opinion determining that the complaint did not constitute an "urgent concern" and did not have to be forwarded to Congress.

Trump met with Zelensky at the United Nations summit in New York hours after the White House released the transcript. Zelensky told reporters that he didn't feel "pushed" to investigate Biden, and said he didn't give special instructions on the Biden matter to the country's top prosecutor.

"You know there was no pressure," Trump told the reporters. "All you have to do is see what went on in the call."

Asked if Zelensky should investigate Biden, Trump said the Ukrainian president should investigate corruption.

"Now when Biden's son walks away with millions of dollars from Ukraine, he knows nothing and they're paying him millions of dollars. That's corruption," Trump said.

DNC Server

In addition to discussing the Biden investigation, the two leaders also mentioned two other inquiries. Trump asked Zelensky about a server in possession of a wealthy Ukrainian citizen. Trump provided little detail but referenced CrowdStrike, the information technology company that examined the Democratic National Committee server after it was allegedly hacked by Russian operatives.

"I would like you to do us a favor though because our country has been through a lot and Ukraine knows a lot about it. I would like you to find out what happened with this whole situation with Ukraine, they say CrowdStrike ... I guess you have one of your wealthy people ... The server, they say Ukraine has it," Trump said.

Ambassador to Ukraine

Trump and Zelensky also discussed former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch; Zelensky thanked Trump for flagging Yovanovitch as a "bad ambassador."

"Her attitude towards me was far from the best, as she admired the previous president and she was on his side. She would not accept me as a new president well enough," Trump said.

The exchange suggests that both the United States and Ukraine may be examining Yovanovitch's conduct. Zelensky asked Trump for assistance in the matter and Trump said that he will have Giuliani and Barr call the Ukrainian leader.

The Justice Department clarified that Trump didn't speak to Barr "about having Ukraine investigate anything relating to former Vice President Biden or his son."

The President has not asked the Attorney General to contact Ukraine on this or any other matter. The Attorney General has not communicated with Ukraine on this or any other subject. Nor has the Attorney General discussed this matter, or anything relating to Ukraine, with Rudy Giuliani," Kupec said in a statement.

Kupec added that U.S. Attorney John Durham is probing the extent to which several countries, including Ukraine, contributed to the counterintelligence investigation of the Trump campaign. Barr didn't contact Ukraine regarding Durham's inquiry, but Durham has received information from private Ukrainians who aren't members of the Ukrainian government. Durham is evaluating the information, according to the DOJ.

Republicans who reviewed the transcript stood by Trump.

"I think it was a perfectly appropriate phone call. It was a congratulatory phone call," said Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.). "The Democrats continually make these huge claims and allegations about President Trump, and then you find out there's no there there."

Flynn's Former Partner Acquitted of Illegal Foreign Lobbying



PETR SVAB

Bijan Rafiekian, a former business partner in Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn's now-defunct consultancy firm, has been acquitted of acting as an agent of the Turkish government without informing the U.S. government and two related charges. U.S. District Judge Anthony Trenga said in a Sept. 24 opinion that "the evidence was insufficient as a matter of law for the jury to convict Rafiekian." He also conditionally granted Rafiekian a new trial if his acquittal is later vacated or reversed, "because the verdict was against the heavy weight of the evidence and because of other issues pertaining to the conduct of that trial."

Rafiekian was convicted July 23, but continued to fight the verdict, claiming multiple issues, including weak evidence, prejudice, and a flawed indictment. His lawyers have also argued that the prosecutors have been interpreting the law too broadly.

(Above) President Donald Trump's former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn leaves the E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse in Washington on June 24, 2019.

(Below) Turkish businessman Ekim Alptekin, Chairman of the Turkey-U.S. Business Council, at the Trump International Hotel in Washington on May 22, 2017.



Trenga's opinion, which sided with the defense on multiple points, may have significant consequences, as it pushed back on the prosecutors' broad interpretation of who is an "agent of a foreign government."

The statute used to charge Rafiekian—Section 951—stipulates that "an individual who agrees to operate within the United States subject to the direction or control of a foreign government or official" will face up to 10 years in prison unless he or she first informs the Attorney General.

The prosecutors argued, in substance, that "direction or control" means somebody "agrees or is willing to do something the foreign principal requests," even in cases where the foreign principal has no "control over how that person goes about performing a contractual undertaking" or where the person is under no obligation "to follow the directions of the foreign principal," Trenga said.

But such a reading of the law is "unwarranted," he said, as "the word 'agent' has a well-established common-law meaning" that includes "the power of the principal to give

directions and the duty of the agent to obey those directions."

He went on to say that "there is no substantial evidence that ... the Turkish government [or its alleged intermediaries] exercised the requisite direction or control" over Rafiekian.

Phone Call and Op-ed

Flynn, a former national security adviser to President Donald Trump, founded his consultancy firm, Flynn Intel Group (FIG), in 2014 after he left the post of the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Rafiekian, a former board member of the U.S. Export-Import Bank, was his partner.

In 2016, FIG was hired by Ekim Alptekin, a Turkish businessman and former chair of the Turkey-U.S. Business Council, to do research and lobbying focused on an Islamic cleric living in exile in Pennsylvania named Fethullah Gulen, who runs a group that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan blamed for an attempted 2016 coup.

The lobbying job, in the end, produced two things: One phone call by Rafiekian to then-Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) and an op-ed published in *The Hill* on Nov. 8, 2016, arguing for Gulen's extradition. Rafiekian said the op-ed was unrelated to the job, while the prosecutors said otherwise.

FIG first registered under the Lobbying Disclosure Act, which covers lobbying for foreign commercial clients. After some prodding from the Justice Department because of the op-ed, FIG also registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), which requires more thorough disclosures and covers lobbying for foreign governments or lobbying that principally benefits a foreign government.

Rafiekian acknowledged that he and others from FIG met with Turkish officials to discuss Gulen, but his lawyers said that "there is no evidence that Turkey gave any binding direction to Rafiekian or FIG."

On the contrary, both the defense and the judge cited examples where Rafiekian and FIG rejected Alptekin's requests.

"Alptekin wanted FIG to get 'dirt'

on Gulen, conduct video and audio surveillance on Gulen and his associates, and prove that Gulen was a "terrorist," the defense said in a Sept. 20 filing, referring to the testimony of one of the government's witnesses, Brian McCauley.

The evidence was insufficient as a matter of law for the jury to convict Rafiekian.

U.S. District Judge Anthony Trenga

All of those requests were rejected by FIG, the court was told by McCauley, a former deputy assistant director for international operations at the FBI who left the bureau in 2015 and later consulted FIG on the Gulen job.

Consequences

Trenga's opinion isn't a binding precedent for higher courts or those in other jurisdictions. It may be, however, cited in future cases to convince judges that the common-law definition of agent applies to Section 951.

On one hand, that may curb the government's power to punish stealthy foreign interference. On the other, it may lower the chance that Americans are thrown in prison for innocent political speech based on informal contacts with foreign officials.

It may also make it harder for the government to spy on Americans.

Former prosecutor Sidney Powell, who is now Flynn's lawyer, suggested that the government has been using its broad definition of an "agent of a foreign government" under the Section 951 to obtain spying warrants under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), which allows the government to obtain the electronic communications of anyone the secret FISA courts determine to be an "agent of a foreign power."

How Climate Change Pseudoscience Became Publicly Accepted

NIR SHAVIV



Commentary

Political and corporate leaders gathered for the climate week in New York City have urged significant action to fight global warming. But, given the high costs of the suggested solutions, could it be that the suggested cure is worse than the disease?

As a liberal who grew up in a solar house, I have always been energy-conscious and inclined toward activist solutions to environmental issues. I was therefore extremely surprised when my research as an astrophysicist led me to the conclusion that climate change is more complicated than we are led to believe. The disease is much more benign, and a simple palliative solution lies in front of our eyes.

To begin with, the story we hear in the media, that most 20th-century warming is anthropogenic, that the climate is very sensitive to changes in CO₂, and that future warming will, therefore, be large and will happen very soon, simply isn't supported by any direct evidence, only a shaky line of circular reasoning. We "know" that humans must have caused some warming, we see warming, we don't know of anything else that could have caused the warming, so it adds up.

However, there is no calculation based on first principles that leads to a large warming by CO₂—none. Mind you, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports state that doubling CO₂ will increase the temperatures by anywhere from 1.5 degrees to 4.5 degrees C, a huge range of uncertainty that dates back to the Charney committee from 1979.

In fact, there is no evidence on any time scale showing that CO₂ variations or other changes to the energy budget cause large temperature variations. There is, however, evidence to the contrary. Tenfold variations in CO₂ over the past half-billion years have no correlation whatsoever with temperature; likewise, the climate response to large volcanic eruptions such as Krakatoa.

Both examples lead to the inescapable upper limit of 1.5 degrees C per CO₂ doubling—much more modest than the sensitive IPCC climate models predict. However, the large sensitivity of the latter is required in order to explain 20th-century warming, or so it is erroneously thought.

In 2008, I showed, using various data

In fact, there is no evidence on any time scale showing that CO₂ variations or other changes to the energy budget cause large temperature variations.



Teen activist Greta Thunberg joins crowds of children who skipped school to take part in the Global Climate Strike march in New York on Sept. 20, 2019.

sets that span as much as a century, that the amount of heat going into the oceans, in sync with the 11-year solar cycle, is an order of magnitude larger than the relatively small effect expected simply from changes in the total solar output. Namely, solar activity variations translate into large changes in the so-called radiative forcing on the climate.

Since solar activity significantly increased over the 20th century, a significant fraction of the warming should be then attributed to the sun, and because the overall change in the radiative forcing due to CO₂ and solar activity is much larger, climate sensitivity should be on the low side (about 1 to 1.5 degrees C per CO₂ doubling).

In the decade following the publication of the above, not only was the paper uncontested, more data, this time from satellites, confirmed the large variations associated with solar activity. In light of this hard data, it should be evident by now that a large part of the warming isn't human, and that future warming from any given emission scenario will be much smaller.

Alas, because the climate community developed a blind spot to any evidence that should raise a red flag, such as the aforementioned examples or the much smaller tropospheric warming over the past two decades than models predicted, the rest of the public sees a very distorted view of climate change—a shaky scientific picture that is full of inconsistencies became one of certain calamity.

With this public mindset, phenomena such as that of child activist Greta Thunberg are no surprise. Most bothersome, however, is that this mindset has compromised the ability to convey the science to the public.

One example from the past month is my interview with *Forbes*. A few

hours after the article was posted online, it was removed by the editors "for failing to meet our editorial standards." The fact that it's become politically incorrect to have any scientific discussion has led the public to accept the pseudo-argumentation supporting the catastrophic scenarios.

Evidence for warming doesn't tell us what caused the warming, and any time someone has to appeal to the so-called 97 percent consensus, he or she is doing so because his or her scientific arguments aren't strong enough. Science isn't a democracy.

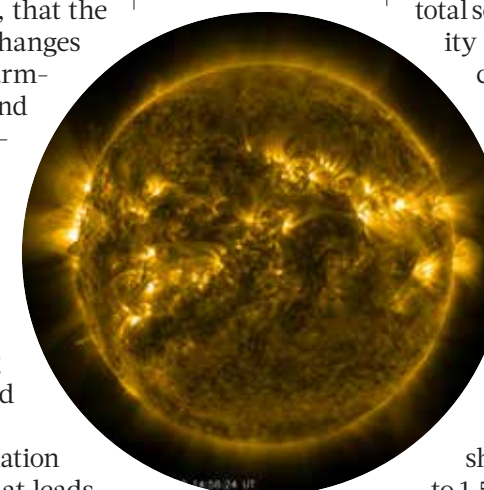
Whether the Western world will overcome this ongoing hysteria in the near future, it's clear that on a time scale of a decade or two, it would be a thing of the past. Not only will there be growing inconsistencies between model and data, a much-stronger force will change the rules of the game.

Once China realizes it can't rely on coal anymore, it will start investing heavily in nuclear power to supply its remarkably increasing energy needs, at which point, the West won't fall behind. We will then have cheap and clean energy-producing carbon-neutral fuel, and even cheap fertilizers that will make the recently troubling slash-and-burn agriculture redundant.

The West would then realize that global warming never was and never will be a serious problem. In the meantime, the extra CO₂ in the atmosphere would even increase agriculture yields, as it has been found to do in arid regions in particular. It is plant food after all.

Professor Nir Shaviv is the chairman of the Racah Institute of Physics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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



Bright spots and illuminated arcs of solar material hover in the sun's atmosphere, highlighting what's known as active regions on the sun, in this image from NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory, captured on April 20, 2015.



Climate change protesters march in New York, on Sept. 20, 2019.



Protesters occupy the center steps of the U.S. Capitol after breaking through barricades to demonstrate against the confirmation of Supreme Court nominee Judge Brett Kavanaugh on Oct. 6, 2018.

(Don't) Speak Your Truth

SCOTT JOHNSTON

Commentary

Has anyone else noticed the rapidity with which this bit of rhetoric—"speak your truth"—has crept into the cultural firmament? I first took note of it last year, and now, like the proverbial buzzing of a light fixture, I can't stop hearing it.

Apparently, it was Oprah who first popularized it, saying that speaking one's truth was the "most powerful tool we all have." By we, I am quite certain she didn't mean me, as I don't fit the demographic profile of those allowed to have their own version of the truth, i.e., I have a Y chromosome.

Allow me to explain. The phrase rose from the heady, shambolic early days of the #MeToo movement, when our culture moved decades in a matter of weeks. Women everywhere were telling their stories, and let's face it, a lot of this was overdue. But like most cultural swings, this one also went too far, including its attendant rhetoric.

Oprah, at the 2018 Golden Globe Awards, said the following:

"... it is the insatiable dedication to uncovering the absolute truth that keeps us from turning a blind eye to corruption and to injustice. To tyrants and victims and secrets and lies. I want to say that I value the press more than ever before as we try to navigate these complicated times, which brings me to this; what I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have."

In a nutshell, Oprah finds "your truth" more powerful than "absolute truth"? Does anyone else find this disturbing?

OK, this is where I'll represent the counterpoint, which is that "tell your truth" simply means "tell your story." Writing for the Huffington Post, Claire Fallon wrote:

"The words have been used to urge people to be true to themselves, to figure out what they really believe and feel, but also to give people the confidence to be honest about their experiences, even if their words aren't received kindly."

Translation: If you have been abused in some way (presumably by a male, likely white), or you have been generally oppressed (again, by white males and the patriarchy), "speaking your

truth" is having the courage to give testimony to your experience.

I'm all for people telling their story, truth to power, and all that. I'm all for those who have long not had a voice to find (and use) theirs. But I'm a writer, and words matter. The language matters. Here's what's really happening here: Truth and feelings are being conflated.

In 2018, we heard Sen. Cory Booker use the "speak your truth" phrase to describe Christine Blasey Ford's Senate testimony. Her truth was that Brett Kavanaugh tried to rape her in the early 1980s.

I have two problems with all this. First, let's say, for the sake of argument, that Blasey Ford was telling the whole truth. That would mean it was the truth, would it not? Not her truth. Calling it her truth implies there could be other truths. Isn't there only one truth? That's what I was taught. Not only does the phrase undermine Blasey Ford's position, it undermines our language. Again, words have meaning.

Aly Raisman, the gymnast, was in fact abused by the abominable former Olympic team physician Larry Nassar. It was the literal truth. Why undermine it by calling it "her" truth? Don't

Your feelings are not unimportant, but they don't supplant facts.

Oprah Winfrey accepts the 2018 Cecil B. DeMille Award at the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif., on Jan. 7, 2018.



PAUL DRINKWATER/NBCUNIVERSAL VIA GETTY IMAGES

let Nassar off the hook like that.

Let's now say Blasey Ford was not telling the truth about what happened, or more to the point, was telling a story that speaks to her broader life experiences. Not truth, but truthiness. This is where I have an even bigger problem.

Perhaps Blasey Ford was abused by someone at some point, someone who wasn't Kavanaugh. She certainly seemed troubled by something. Projecting onto Kavanaugh could have been an outlet for her anguish or maybe a bogus recovered memory—who knows? In that case, what she was doing was making Kavanaugh guilty by association. The left has gleefully accepted this approach, basically because Kavanaugh was a man and they didn't like his politics. (His Catholicism didn't help, either.)

Facts didn't matter. What mattered was Blasey Ford's anguish, whether real or manufactured. It hardly mattered which. Other women certainly had been abused, so Blasey Ford's feelings validated their own.

I explore our rhetorical decline and the rise of feelings in my new novel "Campusland." In this scene, Eph

Russell, an English professor at the Ivy-like Devon University, complains about one of his students:

"Since when do feelings trump everything else? I had a student the other day tell me that something was wrong—something that was an historical fact—simply because he felt it was wrong. No supporting evidence. He had on a T-shirt that said always speak your truth. Isn't there only one truth? Since when are we entitled to our own? This kid thought it was history's obligation to validate his feelings. He then went on with all this Descartes drivel about how you can only know yourself, and therefore the only objective reality is what you perceive. It wasn't the first time a student has served that up."

Yes, you can blame the French philosophers. Descartes, Foucault, and the rest. They were big on feelings, which has caused a collective swoon on modern college campuses. The general idea is that you can't really prove anything about the nature of existence. The only thing you can know that exists for sure is your feelings.

This, as it turns out, is a remarkably convenient philosophy for the modern left. No need to bother with facts, logic, or reason. No need to debate or argue, or give the slightest credence to those with differing views. Your feelings are your facts. They are your truth.

I have a character in "Campusland," a student called Gala, who begins every sentence with the words I feel like. Have you noticed how this phrase is everywhere? It's almost a verbal tick. Most people can't offer an opinion without leading with it. "I feel like it's too hot in here." I, myself, succumb now and then when I'm not careful.

It wasn't always thus. Personally, I feel like ... ugh!, I believe the phrase had little place in the rhetorical landscape even two decades ago.

Your feelings are not unimportant, but they don't supplant facts. As George Orwell said, "If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought." So don't feel like you need to tell us your truth. Stick to the facts. They are the foundation of reason.

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The Invisible Thread



Then-FBI Director James Comey and then-CIA Director John Brennan at the 2016 Intelligence and National Security Summit in Washington on Sept. 8, 2016.

DIANA WEST



Commentary

I have suddenly realized that my early summer appearance on Sean Hannity's radio show makes a nice bookend to a short passage I find in Andy McCarthy's late-summer release, "Ball of Collusion."

My three-way radio conversation with Hannity and Gregg Jarrett demonstrated what I have found to be a perplexing dynamic in Trump-Russia narratives; namely, an ever-present force field against the notion, even the evidence (as laid out in my book "The Red Thread") that the intellectual history of the anti-Trump conspirators, from James Comey to Nellie Ohr, from John Brennan to Christopher Steele, and on and on, reveals open affinities for Marxist ideology—clear connections to communist movements and activities—which bind them all together in a skein of "red threads."

The preferred consensus—ideology-free—is succinctly expressed in the Hannity interview by Jarrett, who, in answer to the question that guided my research (what motivated these top Washington officials to risk all in their lawless efforts to stop Trump?), stated that their motivation was personal, visceral, job-related. Had I one more soundbite, I think I would have replied that none of these assuredly plausible motivations cuts the conspirators' troubling ties with what old Soviet agitprop called "the socialist camp."

I plan to read the McCarthy book. We write about the same events, but it seems we regard them with very different eyes. What I unravel in "The Red Thread" as an ideologically motivated conspiracy by subverters (if not "occupiers") of our constitutional republic against a strongly—yes, viscerally—anti-communist president, McCarthy defines as a more conventional if "scandalous abuse of power" by the Obama administration.

He writes: "Invocations of the deep state by Trump votaries are overkill. ... This was a scandalous abuse of power. That's bad enough. There is no need to hyperbolize what happened into a deep state coup, or trivialize what life in an authoritarian society with a real deep state is like."

What actually drew me to mention the McCarthy book, however, and what twinned it with my Hannity interview, is a short passage whose endnote mentions my own earliest investigation into the red thread through the anti-Trump conspiracy.

This essay, "Nellie Ohr: Woman in the Middle," appeared in The American Spectator in early 2018. It includes an extensive analysis of a school of academic "revisionism," with origins in

The anti-Trump thread, no matter how red, simply must remain invisible.

KGB disinformation as promulgated by so-called New Leftists and Marxists, which had successfully captured much of the American academy by the 1980s when Nellie Ohr was a Soviet history student at Harvard; indeed, her mentors are prominent in this same revisionist school.

The American Spectator essay also features a series of perfectly blood-curdling quotations from Ohr's published writings, which reveal her own affinity, not for some theoretical abstractions of Marxism, but for what she has called, for example, "the terror and excitement" of the Stalin era, or "the agonizing paradoxes of the Stalinist state, one which was building a legal structure, yet tortured and executed innocent citizens." It also includes an excerpt from Ohr's doctorate thesis on the aftermath of Stalin's forced collectivization of agriculture.

Ohr styles this period following the Ukraine Terror Famine, Stalin's state-engineered famine that killed in excess of 6 million people, as "the stabilization of the kolkhoz [collective farming] order."

"Excesses," she writes (mass starvation? mass deportations?) "sometimes represented desperate measures taken by a government that had little real control over the country," while "policies such as dekulakization and the purges of the later 1930s had some social constituency among aggrieved groups."

More: "The purges represented to some degree a center-periphery conflict in which the 'state-building' central government tried to bring headstrong local stragglers under control."

All of which is to say, as Ohr does in her own academic language, in order to make that exciting Stalinist om-

lette, you have to break a few million eggs. Welcome to the "red" anti-Trump conspiracy.

This research into Ohr's academic work was for me an unexpected education. Having found this one thread, I wondered if there might be more to unravel among Ohr's anti-Trump comrades. The results, to date, make up the rest of "The Red Thread: A Search for Ideological Drivers Inside the Anti-Trump Conspiracy."

Which brings me to the passage I have flagged in "Ball of Collusion."

About Ohr, McCarthy writes: "She graduated from Harvard in 1983 with a degree in history and Russian literature, studied in Russia in the late eighties (shortly before the U.S.S.R. fell), earned a doctorate in Russian history at Stanford in 1990, and taught Russian history at Vassar. She was also a staunch Hillary Clinton supporter."

The endnote reads: "Nellie Ohr, House Judiciary and Oversight Committees Testimony (Oct. 19, 2018) p. 105. See also Diana West, Nellie Ohr: Woman in the Middle (American Spectator, Feb. 22, 2018)."

Sincerely, I can't imagine why. When it comes to the punditry, the anti-Trump thread, no matter how red, simply must remain invisible.

Diana West is an award-winning journalist and author, whose latest book is "The Red Thread: A Search for Ideological Drivers Inside the Anti-Trump Conspiracy."

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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Takeaways From Three Mile Island

JEFF FUSCO/GETTY IMAGES

MARK HENDRICKSON

Commentary

On Sept. 20, the notorious Three Mile Island (TMI) Nuclear Generating Station in Middletown, Pennsylvania, generated its last kilowatt of electrical energy. Exelon Generation, the operating company, closed TMI for economic reasons.

The closing received widespread media coverage. After all, TMI was, as the media have repeatedly reminded us, the site of “the worst nuclear accident in U.S. history.”

In March 1979, a series of mechanical malfunctions and human errors caused a partial meltdown in reactor No. 2. People panicked. Thousands fled the area, putting as much distance as possible between themselves and TMI.

The incident had profound long-term consequences. As reported by Ledyard King in USA Today, “Public confidence in nuclear energy ... declined sharply following the Three Mile Island accident,” according to the World Nuclear Association, a pro-industry group. “It was a major cause of the decline in nuclear construction through the 1980s and 1990s.”

A closer look at how the media reported this incident—both then and now—is instructive.

Safety

It’s ironic and a little strange that millions of people adamantly oppose nuclear energy, when “the worst nuclear accident” in our history had not a single fatality. The few fatalities that have occurred at U.S. nuclear power facilities over the decades have been an occasional electrocution or workplace accident—tragic, to be sure, but none were due to radiation.

Even when reporting TMI’s closure on Sept. 20, journalists couldn’t resist perpetuating the myth that TMI was somehow dangerous.

Indeed, the nuclear power generating industry has had a remarkable safety record. Workplace injuries have been relatively rare. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in one recent, typical year, injuries were more than 500 times more likely in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, and almost 2,000 times more likely in construction, than in the nuclear energy industry—but you would never know that from watching TV or reading newspapers. Isn’t such a safety record worthy of admiration and gratitude rather than condemnation?

When the partial meltdown happened in 1979, people near TMI were tormented by two fears—fear of a nuclear explosion and fear of nuclear radiation. While the lethality of nuclear explosions and radiation are indisputable, there was no need to fear either at TMI. The one was a physical impossibility, the other a million-to-one long shot. Allow me to explain.

The threat of a bomb-like explosion was nonexistent. The late Czech engineer Petr Beckmann trenchantly wrote that the odds of the fuel rods in a nuclear power plant exploding were equal to the odds of your chewing gum exploding.

The key factor is the concentration of the uranium isotope U-235 that is needed to make a nuclear bomb. In nature, U-235 has an approximate purity of 0.7 percent. A difficult and highly technical process is needed to enrich it to 3.5 percent to 4.5 percent purity—the concentration needed in nuclear fuel rods to generate electricity.



To make a nuclear bomb requires a much more advanced and challenging process that enriches U-235 to a concentration of 85 percent or 90 percent. Fuel rods in nuclear power plants, in short, fall far short of containing U-235 that is sufficiently enriched to make a bomb.

The other threat—the threat of lethal radiation affecting the people near TMI—was minuscule.

There was a simple but all-im-

The Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Middletown, Pa., on March 28, 2011.

were no structures to contain the radiation.

The radiation level right outside TMI after the accident measured less than 100 millirems. The average exposure to the population living near the plant was 1.2 millirems. To put that in perspective, the walls of Grand Central Station constantly emit more than 100 millirems of radiation. The safety level stipulated for U.S. astronauts in outer space is 25,000 millirems.

very cooling towers that unfailingly protected human lives represent some grim threat. If anything, those towers are (admittedly homely) monuments to prudent foresight and scientific excellence. They’re fitting reminders that ours is a society that values and protects human life.

Takeaways

There are two important takeaways from the TMI story that have nothing to do with nuclear energy itself. The first is what a poor job our media have done in reporting this story over the course of four decades.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “Fear always springs from ignorance.” One of the dirty little secrets of the media is that fear sells—people “consume” a lot more media product when something scary is happening. So, the media could have mercifully spared a lot of people the anguish of fear about TMI back in 1979 and in the years since if they had dispelled ignorance by reporting scientific facts, but they didn’t even try. Instead, they found it more profitable to feed popular fears by keeping people in the dark and hyping frightening but unrealistic scenarios.

The exact same dynamic is in place today the way most media outlets play along with scary climate change stories. Guess what, people? You are in no more danger of being victimized by global warming today than the residents of Middletown were in danger of being nuked in 1979.

The other takeaway pertains to democratic socialism and the Green New Deal.

As the nuclear tragedy at Chernobyl illustrated, when the state is in charge of an economy, strange things happen to production. Centrally planned economies become discombobulated, uncoordinated, and prone to shortages. There isn’t enough to go around, so the planners start cutting corners.

The corners cut by U.S. planners might not be as ghastly as the Soviet decision not to build proper containment structures for nuclear power plants, but they will still be costly. Be careful about overestimating government competence.

Mark Hendrickson, an economist, recently retired from the faculty of Grove City College, where he remains a fellow for Economic and Social Policy at the Institute for Faith & Freedom.

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JEFF FUSCO/GETTY IMAGES



(Middle) Four anti-nuclear power protestors hold a banner on Three Mile Island near Harrisburg, Pa., in 1979.

(Above) Activist Gene Stilp of No Nukes Pennsylvania at the 32nd annual vigil in remembrance of the disaster at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Middletown, Pa., on March 28, 2011.

portant difference between the TMI accident and the 1986 accident at the Soviet nuclear power plant at Chernobyl, where approximately 54 people (tabulations differ) perished in the short run and perhaps several thousand more victims succumbed later on. Here in the United States, where individual life is valued, there were massive concrete containment buildings housing the nuclear fuel rods at TMI.

By contrast, in the Soviet Union, with its ideology of the expendability of individual lives, there

It requires 100,000 millirems to have any sort of detectable effect. Half of the people exposed to 450,000 millirems of radiation from the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki survived.

The only way people near TMI could have been at risk from radiation would have been if an earthquake or bomb had damaged the containment buildings or if saboteurs deliberately released the radioactive air or water inside it.

Even though the local population was at virtually no risk from harmful levels of radiation, the media, by and large, have steadfastly neglected to report this good news for more than 40 years. Even when reporting TMI’s closure on Sept. 20, journalists couldn’t resist perpetuating the myth that TMI was somehow dangerous.

One reported, “The plant’s four cooling towers will remain part of the landscape for now, foreboding concrete tombstones that seem out of place in the bucolic Susquehanna Valley ...” Another article included this photograph caption: “A cooling tower of the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant menacingly looms behind an abandoned playground ...”

How perverse to write that the