

WEEK 43, 2019

THE EPOCH TIMES

OUR NATION

Republicans Take Stance Against Impeachment Process

Lawmakers demanding
'basic standards'
and transparency
for Democrat-led
impeachment inquiry **6**

Sen. Lindsey Graham
(R-S.C.) at the Capitol
in Washington on
Sept. 4, 2018.





Vice President Mike Pence at the White House on Jan. 19, 2018.

Pence Outlines US Space Vision, Working With 'Freedom-Loving' Nations, in Speech

BOWEN XIAO

WASHINGTON—Vice President Mike Pence said that the U.S. Space Force will soon be a reality and positioned it as a key national security priority for safeguarding the rights of the United States and its "freedom-loving" allies in space, among other goals.

Speaking to an international audience at the 70th International Astronautical Congress—a global space advocacy organization—Pence reiterated President Donald Trump's vision for the United States to lead in space once again. He brought up how Trump, in his first year in office, revived the National Space Council to coordinate space activities across the government.

Pence, who is also chairman of the National Space Council, said space plays a critical role in national and international security. He spoke about the soon-to-be-created Space Force, though he didn't give an exact timeline for when it will begin.

"Trump has directed our administration to work with bipartisan leadership in Congress. Soon, we will stand up the sixth branch of our armed forces: the United States Space Force," Pence said.

In August, Trump officially opened the U.S. Space Command, a precursor to the Space Force that Trump first announced in 2018. Air Force Gen. John Raymond will head the new unified combatant command. Raymond is currently the head of Air Force Space Command, a branch of the Air Force responsible for the military's space operations.

"Soon, it will be a reality, and the Space Force will be a vanguard to defending our nation, defending our freedom and defending the rights of all freedom-loving nations in the vast expanse of space," Pence continued.

Trump ordered the creation of the Space Force to strengthen the military's focus on space operations. That includes launching satellites, providing communications, intelligence, missile warnings, and navigation services, as well as counterspace operations.

The weeklong event, hosted by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, invites the space community "to gather and discuss the advancement and progress of space in its various features." The broad theme this year focuses on "the power of the past" and "the promise of the future."

Our vision is to be the leader among freedom-loving nations on the adventure into the great unknown.

Vice President Mike Pence

The flag for the new U.S. Space Command is revealed at the White House on Aug. 29, 2019.



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Moon to Mars

Pence, in a roughly 20-minute speech, spoke about how Trump made it U.S. policy to return to the moon by 2024, to ensure that the next man and first woman on the moon will be U.S. astronauts.

"Not only to plant our flag ... but to establish a foundation for an eventual mission to Mars," Pence told the crowd, as he laid out how the United States plans to achieve this goal.

"In order for us to take this next big leap, we'll develop the technologies to live on the moon for months and even years," he said. "We'll learn how to make use of resources that the moon has to offer."

"That includes mining oxygen from the lunar surface and rocks to fuel reusable landers, extracting water from the permanently shadowed craters of the south pole, and developing a new generation of nuclear-powered spacecraft that will help us fly further and farther and faster than ever before."

Pence also mentioned the power of private enterprise in space exploration. He described how NASA is leading a commercial-friendly effort that would create orbital platforms to one day replace the International Space Station.

In the first half of 2019, there was almost as much invested in space com-

panies as the entire year before, Pence said. In the past decade alone, nearly \$25 billion has been invested in almost 500 different space companies, with the majority going to U.S. businesses.

"Today, thanks to the leadership that President Trump has provided, the United States of America is open for business to all space enterprises," Pence said.

'Freedom-Loving' Nations

A driving theme of Pence's speech was focused on the cooperation between the United States and "freedom-loving" nations, a phrase the vice president used repeatedly.

"To be clear, our vision is to be the leader among freedom-loving nations on the adventure into the great unknown," Pence said.

He said the United States will always be willing to work with "like-minded freedom-loving nations as we lead mankind into the final frontier."

Pence also recognized former astronaut Buzz Aldrin, who was in the audience.

Pence said we must ensure that as more nations start to explore space, we should carry into space "our shared commitment to freedom and the rule of law and private property."

Kudlow: Human Rights Are 'Very Important Part' of US-China Talks

EMEL AKAN

WASHINGTON—White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said that China's human rights violations, as well as the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, are key parts of the ongoing trade negotiations with Beijing.

"Human rights is a very important part of this," Kudlow told Fox Business's Maria Bartiromo on Oct. 21. "That includes the freedom and democracy movement going on in Hong Kong. President Trump has made that very clear."

Kudlow said the Trump administration has been engaged "in a very difficult struggle with China regarding trade, the economy, technology, human rights, [and] national security."

"Now these things may be adjudicated over time. I don't know. We are now having a more realistic view of China and the competition between the two countries," he said.

China faces increased condemnation from the administration in recent months for its detention of more than a million Uyghur Muslims in so-called re-education camps in China's 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," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told reporters during the United Nations General Assembly in September.

The Trump administration blacklisted 28 Chinese organizations on Oct. 7 for their involvement in human rights violations in China.

The list includes eight leading artificial intelligence and video surveillance companies

On Oct. 15, lawmakers passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which requires the U.S. government to review each year whether the city should retain its trading privileges.

We would like to make a deal, but from our point of view, it has to be the right deal.

Wilbur Ross, commerce secretary

that "have been implicated in human rights violations and abuses in China's campaign targeting Uighurs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities," according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

In addition, Beijing's encroachment on Hong Kong's autonomy has been a growing concern for Washington.

The U.S. House of Representatives last week unanimously passed a series of measures to support the ongoing pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong. On Oct. 15, lawmakers passed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which requires the U.S. government to review each year whether the city should retain its trading privileges.

The "one country, two systems" framework that governs the relationship between Hong Kong and Beijing through 2047 allows the city to retain extensive autonomy and freedoms, including a separate legal system. This arrangement has enabled the United States to deal with Hong Kong as a separate entity and offer special treatment in the areas of visas, trade, and investments.

Lawmakers now want to make sure that Hong Kong is sufficiently autonomous to receive special treatment from the United States.

In addition, the House passed the Protest Hong Kong Act, which bans the export of crowd control equipment to the city, where police have been accused of using excessive force against protesters.

The bills still must be passed in the Senate and sent to the president's desk to be signed into law.

Trade Truce

With respect to the recent partial trade deal with China,

Kudlow voiced optimism, saying both sides "made a lot of progress."

"So far, the mood music coming out of Beijing has been pretty good," he said.

On Oct. 11, President Donald Trump announced that the United States reached a "phase one" trade agreement "in principle" with China, on intellectual property, financial services, and agriculture.

As part of the agreement, Beijing agreed to purchase "up to \$40 billion to \$50 billion" in agricultural products from the United States, according to Trump. In return, Washington suspended the tariff hikes on Chinese goods that had been scheduled for Oct. 15.

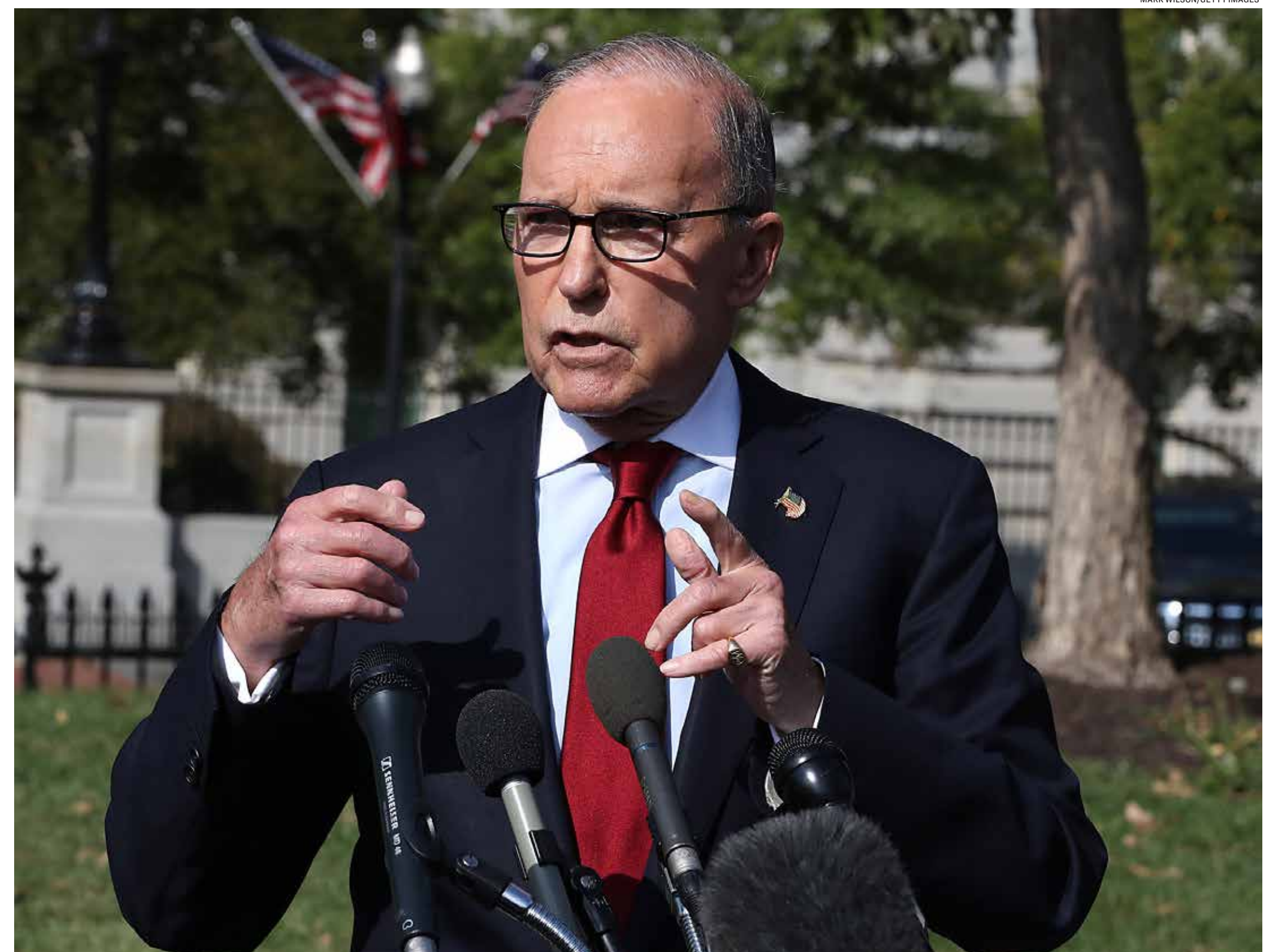
"President Trump has changed the narrative on China," Kudlow said. "I don't think anybody can possibly accuse him of being soft on China."

There's still a lot of work to be done between now and signing of the deal in mid-November, according to Kudlow, but both sides are "very close on opening financial services and the currency stability deal, which is essentially an IMF deal."

Trump said earlier that there could be "a formal signing" with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in mid-November when both leaders come together at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Chile.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross played down the November target, saying the president is more committed to signing a proper deal than to a certain date.

"We would like to make a deal, but from our point of view, it has to be the right deal, and it doesn't have to be in November," he told Fox Business on Oct. 21. "That's what's the president is wedded to."



White House chief economic adviser Larry Kudlow on Oct. 7, 2019.

US Economy a 'Bright Spot' in Global Outlook

EMEL AKAN

News Analysis

WASHINGTON—The annual meetings of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) held Oct. 14–20 in Washington ended with increased pessimism about the global economic outlook.

The U.S. economy, however, is “holding up relatively well,” despite rising trade worries and uncertainty across the globe.

IMF last week warned about a “synchronized slowdown” in the world economy, with nearly 90 percent of the countries now experiencing slower growth. The fund slashed its global growth forecast for 2019 to 3 percent, the slowest pace since the 2008 financial crisis.

The weakness in growth is driven by a sharp slowdown in manufacturing activity and global trade, the IMF said, as a result of heightened trade and geopolitical tensions, including Brexit.

The tariffs imposed and announced so far in the U.S.–China trade conflict would trim the global economy by 0.8 percent by 2020, according to IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

“That is equivalent to the whole economy of Switzerland,” she told CNBC on Oct. 17.

In addition, country-specific factors in several emerging markets, as well as lower productivity growth and aging populations in advanced economies, have been a drag on global growth, according to the fund.

Georgieva said the tentative trade deal reached between the United States and China is welcome news, adding that the truce could reduce the losses from the trade war by 0.2 percent.

“And that, of course, is good news but not good enough,” she said at a press conference on Oct. 17, urging both sides to reach a comprehensive and lasting deal.

But we do think given that the economy is holding up relatively well and the problems abroad in manufacturing have not filtered into the domestic side of the equation, it looks like the United States economy can withstand and still prosper with relatively high rates.

Beth Ann Bovino, chief U.S. economist at Standard & Poor's

The IMF started to cut its global growth forecast in October 2018 due to slowing Chinese economic growth, the U.S.–China trade war, and financial worries in emerging markets. It also announced further downward revisions in January and April this year.

'A Bright Spot'

The U.S. economy continues to be “a bright spot in the overall global outlook,” despite a significant slowdown abroad, according to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

The United States continues to benefit from tax reform and other pro-growth policies, he said at the annual meeting with finance ministers and central bankers.

In July, economic growth in the United States entered its 121st month, marking the longest expansion in U.S. history. And the jobless rate fell in September to a new 50-year low of 3.5 percent, while employers added a modest 136,000 jobs.

According to JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, a recession in the United States in the near term is unlikely as the economy is driven primarily by consumer spending, which is still strong.

“Businesses pay attention to geopolitics,” he said on Oct. 18 during a panel discussion at the Institute of International Finance annual meeting. He added that the U.S.–China trade war led companies to alter their investment decisions.

“But will that cause the United States to go into recession? Probably not,” he said. “Consumer remains quite strong—their balance sheet, their confidence, their spending.”

'Holding Up Relatively Well'

The domestic side of the U.S. economy is “holding up relatively well,” and that’s one of the reasons why the trade dispute with China hasn’t been a significant drag on growth, according to Beth Ann Bovino, the chief U.S. economist at Standard & Poor's.

“About 85 percent of overall economic activity in the United States comes from the domestic economy,” she said, adding that the service sector rather than manufacturing has been key to the economy.

According to Standard & Poor's, the U.S. labor and housing market remain strong, as does consumer spending. However, the escalation of the trade war with China and weakening global growth are downside risks to U.S. economic growth.

The credit rating agency recently downgraded its growth forecasts to 2.3 percent from 2.5 percent for this year, and to 1.7 percent from 1.8 percent for next year.

Bovino said there could be a slight upward revision to forecasts if the trade truce with China lasts longer and the tariffs are suspended.

She expects another rate cut by the Federal Reserve this year to “stabilize the economy.”

“But we do think given that the economy is holding up relatively well and the problems abroad in manufacturing have not filtered into the domestic side of the equation, it looks like the United States economy can withstand and still prosper with relatively high rates,” compared to Europe and Japan, which have negative interest rates, she said.

Bovino noted that the sentiment measures in the United States have been running ahead of actual hard economic data. Weaknesses initially started in sentiment readings such as yield curve, stock market, and business confidence readings, she explained.

“We did not see it in the real economic data. Now we’re seeing a little bit of weakness there.”

This dichotomy between hard data and sentiment readings could be driven by worries over negative headlines or uncertainties about trade and geopolitical tensions, she said, which cause people to believe a recession is about to hit the U.S. economy.



Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton delivers a keynote speech in Washington on Sept. 17, 2019.

State Department Review of Clinton Emails Cites 38 People for Mishandling Classified Information

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

The State Department found 38 people culpable of “failure to safeguard classified information” in the final report on its yearlong security review of thousands of emails sent through the unauthorized email server used by Hillary Clinton during her tenure as secretary of state.

“Instances of classified information being deliberately transmitted via unclassified email were the rare exception and resulted in adjudicated security violations,” according to the report released by the Senate Finance Committee. “There was no persuasive evidence of systemic, deliberate mishandling of classified information.”

The report doesn’t identify any of the culpable people and doesn’t differentiate between current and former officials. The inquiry, conducted by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, wasn’t punitive in nature. Officials who were found culpable received a security violation citation. Those who couldn’t be reached have a letter in their files that allows for an appeal once they learn of the violation.

Clinton handed over 33,000 emails to Congress, the State Department, and the FBI after House Republicans discovered her private email account as part of the inquiry into the deaths of four Americans in Benghazi. The State Department’s review didn’t include the thousands of emails subpoenaed by Congress but deleted by Clinton’s server administrator.

The State Department began its review of the emails in December 2014 but suspended its inquiry at the FBI’s direction in March 2016. The department resumed the inquiry in July 2016 after the FBI completed its investigation. After pausing briefly after the FBI discovered additional emails and reopened the investigation in August, the State Department inquiry proceeded uninterrupted for 38 months.

Clinton and her colleagues were extremely careless in their handling of very sensitive, highly classified information.

James Comey, former FBI director

Then-FBI Director James Comey exonerated Clinton on July 5, 2016, in an unprecedented public statement. Comey concluded that “Clinton and her colleagues were extremely careless in their handling of very sensitive, highly classified information.” The FBI assessed that it was possible that hostile actors gained access to Clinton’s email account.

“Although there is evidence of potential violations of the statutes regarding the handling of classified information, our judgment is that no reasonable prosecutor would bring such a case,” Comey said.

The Department of Justice Office of Inspector General (OIG) reviewed the FBI’s handling of the Clinton-email probe. The OIG issued a final report in June last year, concluding that the pro-Clinton and anti-Trump bias expressed by officials who conducted the inquiry “cast a cloud” over the credibility of the investigation.

Then-FBI agent Peter Strzok led the email investigation. Text messages between Strzok and FBI attorney Lisa Page showed the pair discussed stopping then-candidate Donald Trump from winning the 2016 election and an “insurance policy” in case Trump was elected. Strzok also led the counterintelligence

probe of the Trump campaign, which eventually evolved into the special counsel inquiry by Robert Mueller.

Despite multiple inquiries, questions remain about Clinton’s email server. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) released a batch of documents in August that showed that Clinton’s email server administrator, Paul Combetta, used a Gmail account to sync Clinton’s entire email archive to her server. The FBI discovered 820 emails, some of which were classified, still sitting in the Gmail account more than two years after Combetta used it.

The Gmail address—carter-heavyindustries@gmail.com—ended up in the metadata of all but four of the emails Clinton handed over to investigators. The peculiar name of the account raised an alarm after an Intelligence Community Inspector General investigator, Frank Rucker, looked up the name on Google and came up with results for a Chinese company with a similar name. Grassley’s staff couldn’t find any proof of a connection between Combetta and the Chinese company.

Combetta was granted immunity during the FBI investigation and refused to be interviewed by Grassley’s staff.



SAUL LOEB/AP/GETTY IMAGES



Workers assemble cars at the newly renovated Ford assembly plant in Chicago on June 24, 2019.

JIM YOUNG/AP/GETTY IMAGES



TOM WILLIAMS/CG ROLL CALL, INC VIA GETTY IMAGES

Republicans Take Stance Against Impeachment Process

Lawmakers demanding 'basic standards' and transparency for Democrat-led impeachment inquiry

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

Several weeks into the Democrat-led impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump, some Republican lawmakers are indicating that they will no longer tolerate the process shrouded in secrecy.

On the same day that more than three dozen lawmakers walked into a closed-door impeachment hearing in the basement of the U.S. Capitol on Oct. 23, a spokesperson for Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) confirmed that the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee would "soon" introduce a resolution calling on the Senate to dismiss the House impeachment, unless proper procedures are followed.

They are the most significant steps that Republicans have taken to pressure the Democrats to adjust the process of the inquiry since House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) formally launched the proceedings on Sept. 24. Before entering the hearing in the House Intelligence Committee room, several Republicans criticized Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.)'s approach to the inquiry and demanded that President Donald Trump be granted due process.

"The president is not above justice, but as you know, neither is he below it," said Rep. Mark Walker (R-N.C.). "Facing your accusers, the ability to call rebuttal witnesses, cross-examination, the right to object to evidence and ability to attend hearings, depositions and interviews—these are basic standards that every American should expect, including the president of the United States who is currently being the target of an angry mob, a willing media machine, and a twisted version of an impeachment process that didn't begin two months ago, that began day one of this administration. It is a sham and it's time for it to end."

Some of the Republicans remained in the House Intelligence Committee room for four hours, determined to remain until reaching a resolution with the Democrats.

"I am currently in the SCIF with my colleagues, w/out our phones. We plan on staying here until we negotiate a resolution," Rep. Louie Gohmert told his staff via a secure line, according to his Twitter account.

"Earlier upon our arrival, Schiff grabbed the witness, Laura Cooper, and left. Cooper is a Pentagon official and is subject to oversight by Armed Services Committee. Yet, Schiff is not allowing Armed Services Committee Members to question her!"

"Schiff and the witness are still sequestered away/not in the SCIF, so it is sort of a standoff right now."

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) carried out a similar maneuver less than two weeks ago, when he entered the House Intel-

Any impeachment vote based on this process, to me, is illegitimate, is unconstitutional, and should be dismissed in the Senate without a trial.

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.)

We cannot allow future presidents and this president to be impeached based on an inquiry in the House that's never been voted upon.

Sen. Lindsey Graham

ligence Committee room during an impeachment hearing and demanded to hear the testimony. Gaetz was asked to leave and complied, but the move drew media attention to the proceedings and underscored the limited access to lawmakers outside the three committees conducting the inquiry.

The impeachment inquiry is centered on a request Trump made to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during a July 25 phone call. Trump asked Zelensky to find out more about a server tied to CrowdStrike, the cybersecurity firm that examined the Democratic National Committee server that was allegedly breached by Russian government hackers. Trump also asked Zelensky to look into the Ukrainian business dealings of Hunter Biden, the son of former Vice President Joe Biden.

The inquiry developed from a complaint by an anonymous whistleblower who relayed mostly second-hand allegations about the July 25 call and related events. The central allegation by the Democrats is that Trump's request to Zelensky amounted to election interference, because Biden is the leading candidate for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination. The

Democrats further allege that Trump withheld aid from Ukraine as part of a quid pro quo to pressure Zelensky to investigate Biden and his son.

Publicly available testimony from the witnesses who have appeared before lawmakers so far doesn't support the allegation of a quid pro quo. William Taylor, the charge d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, told lawmakers on Oct. 22 that Ukrainian officials, including Zelensky, weren't aware until more than one month after the July 25 call that military aid to Ukraine was on hold, according to Taylor's opening statement.

"Amazingly, news of the hold did not leak out until August 29," Taylor said, apparently referring to an Aug. 28 article by Politico.

The allegation tying the quid pro quo to an investigation into the Bidens appears to so far be substantiated only by third-hand hearsay from Taylor. He told lawmakers that he heard about a phone call between U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland and Trump, in which Trump spoke about his conversation with Zelensky. Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-N.Y.), who has sat through all the impeachment testimonies so far, ridiculed the dis-

tant hearsay on Oct. 23.

"Y'all making a big deal out of Ambassador Taylor telling that Tim Morrison told him that Sondland told Morrison that the president told Sondland that the president told Zelensky—give me a break!" Zeldin said. "On the process and the substance, this whole thing has been a joke."

Senate Resolution

Republicans in the Senate are also taking steps to pressure the Democrats into following precedent. Graham is planning to introduce a resolution that would call on the Senate to dismiss the House impeachment unless Democrats follow the precedent established in the impeachment proceedings against presidents Bill Clinton and Richard Nixon. In both cases, the full House voted to authorize the impeachment inquiry.

"We cannot allow future presidents and this president to be impeached based on an inquiry in the House that's never been voted upon, that does not allow the president to confront the witnesses against him, to call witnesses on his behalf, and cross-examine people who are accusing him of misdeeds," Graham told Fox News.

"All I'm asking is give Donald Trump the same rights Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton had when it comes to impeachment. And I'm insisting that Donald Trump be given the same rights that any American has when you're giving a parking ticket, to confront the witnesses against you, can't be based on hearsay," he added. "Any impeachment vote based on this process, to me, is illegitimate, is unconstitutional, and should be dismissed in the Senate without a trial."

Graham's spokesperson told The Epoch Times that the senator plans to introduce the resolution "soon," but didn't provide a date.

The House Democrats need a simple majority to impeach Trump. Under the Constitution, impeachment by the House is submitted to the Senate, which then holds a trial, with the chief justice of the Supreme Court as the presiding judge. A two-thirds majority in the Senate is needed to secure a conviction.

The Bidens

In his request to Zelensky, Trump referenced the firing of a Ukrainian prosecutor. That prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, has issued a sworn statement claiming that he was fired due to pressure from Joe Biden, because Shokin refused to drop an investigation into Burisma, a Ukrainian gas giant.

Early last year, Biden, while speaking on a Council of Foreign Affairs panel, bragged about forcing the firing of Ukraine's top prosecutor by withholding \$1 billion in U.S. loan guarantees, while he was the vice president. At the same time, his son, Hunter Biden, was on the board of directors of Burisma.

Hunter Biden's lawyer confirmed that the Burisma board position was paid. It remains unclear what Biden's total compensation was, but bank records for a company controlled by Biden's friend and business associate, Devon Archer, show funds arriving from Burisma at a rate in excess of \$166,000 per month. The bank records for the firm, Rosemont Seneca Bohai, became public as part of an unrelated trial. The funds started arriving in the bank account in April 2014, which is the time when Hunter Biden joined the board, according to a statement from his lawyer.

Joe and Hunter Biden have denied any wrongdoing. Hunter Biden resigned from the board of Burisma in April this year. He also committed to resigning from the board of a Chinese investment firm on or before Oct. 31.



REUTERS/YURI GRIPAS



REUTERS/ERIN SCOTT

(Top) Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) (C), House Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) (L), and other Republican House members in the Capitol Visitor Center on Oct. 23, 2019.

(Middle) Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) enters a secure area as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper testifies in a closed-door deposition as part of the House of Representatives' impeachment inquiry on President Donald Trump, on Capitol Hill on Oct. 23, 2019.

(Bottom) Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper arrives to testify in a closed-door deposition as part of the impeachment inquiry on Capitol Hill on Oct. 23, 2019.

Top US Envoy in Ukraine Testifies in Democrat-Run Impeachment Probe

CARLOS/JASSO



Acting U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bill Taylor arrives to testify at a closed-door deposition as part of the Democrat-run impeachment inquiry on Capitol Hill on Oct. 22, 2019.

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

The top U.S. diplomat in Ukraine testified to lawmakers behind closed doors on Oct. 22 as part of a Democrat-run impeachment inquiry centered on allegations related to President Donald Trump's call with the leader of Ukraine.

William Taylor, the charge d'affaires at the U.S. embassy in Ukraine, didn't answer questions as he walked by journalists on his way to face lawmakers from three House committees leading the investigation.

Taylor is the latest witness to testify in the inquiry. He will likely face questions about a text message in which he called the withholding of aid to Ukraine conditioned on help with a political campaign "crazy."

"As I said on the phone, I think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign," Taylor wrote in a text message on Sept. 9 to Kurt Volker, the State Department's then-special envoy to Ukraine, and Gordon Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union.

Volker and Sondland have already testified before the committees. Volker told lawmakers there was no quid pro quo tying the temporary hold on the military aid to Ukraine and the request by Trump for Ukraine to look into the Ukrainian business dealings of Joe Biden and his son, Hunter Biden. Sondland told lawmakers that Trump specifically instructed him that there is no quid pro quo related to his request to Ukraine.

Taylor's testimony is the latest in a political drama triggered by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's (D-Calif.) announcement of an impeachment inquiry. Republicans have intensified the criticism of the probe in recent days, accusing the Democrats of leading secret, one-sided proceedings. Trump called the inquiry a "lynching" in a Twitter message on Oct. 22.

"So some day, if a Democrat becomes President and the Republicans win the House, even by a tiny margin, they can im-

peach the President, without due process or fairness or any legal rights. All Republicans must remember what they are witnessing here—a lynching. But we will WIN!" the president wrote.

Taylor was tapped to serve as charge d'affaires in Kyiv, where he had served as U.S. ambassador from 2006 to 2009, after Trump in May abruptly recalled Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, who had come under attack from the president's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani.

Yovanovitch, who testified in the impeachment inquiry on Oct. 11, told lawmakers that the Trump administration never brought up the investigations of Joe and Hunter Biden. Her testimony is similar to that of Volker and Sondland. Volker told lawmakers that Joe Biden was never a topic of conversation. Sondland testified that he was unaware of Trump's request about the Bidens until the White House released the transcript of

Some day, if a Democrat becomes President and the Republicans win the House, even by a tiny margin, they can impeach the President, without due process or fairness or any legal rights.

President Donald Trump

the July 25 call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

During the call, Trump asked Zelensky to look into a server tied to CrowdStrike, the cybersecurity firm that examined the Democratic National Committee server after it was allegedly hacked by Russian operatives. Trump also asked the Ukrainian leader to look into the Ukrainian business dealings of Hunter Biden and the removal of a top Ukrainian prosecutor.

Trump's request to Zelensky appears to have referred to the firing of Viktor Shokin, a top prosecutor who was investigating Burisma, a major Ukrainian gas firm. Hunter Biden was serving on the board of directors at Burisma when Shokin was fired. Joe Biden bragged early last year about forcing Shokin's firing by withholding \$1 billion in U.S. loan guarantees. Shokin later wrote in a sworn statement that he was fired due to pressure from

Biden, because he refused to drop the Burisma investigation.

Trump has denied any wrongdoing and accused Democrats of trying to oust him to prevent him from being reelected. He also has called on his fellow Republicans to get tougher and fight harder against the fast-moving impeachment inquiry.

Two other witnesses are expected to give testimony this week in the impeachment inquiry.

A Pentagon official, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Laura Cooper, is due to testify Oct. 23, according to a source familiar with the inquiry. Philip Reeker, the acting assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs, is expected to appear Oct. 26, according to a source familiar with the process.

The White House has vowed to not cooperate with the Democrats unless they hold a formal House vote to authorize the proceedings. Several other executive branch agencies have also defied subpoenas from the impeachment investigators.

The impeachment inquiry was triggered by an anonymous whistleblower who complained that Trump may have abused his office by requesting that Ukraine investigate a political rival. The whistleblower alleged that Trump's request may have amounted to a campaign finance violation. The Department of Justice reviewed the complaint and determined no further action was necessary.

Reuters contributed to this report.

Republicans have intensified the criticism of the probe in recent days, accusing the Democrats of leading secret, one-sided proceedings.



Facebook's Zuckerberg Testifies About 'Virtual Currency' Project

BOWEN XIAO

WASHINGTON—Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg conceded to lawmakers that the company is “not the ideal messenger” for its worldwide cryptocurrency project dubbed “Libra,” which aims to allow users to make payments with their smartphones, and said he supports a delay of the venture until regulatory concerns are adequately addressed.

In a five-hour hearing on Oct. 23 conducted by the House Financial Services Committee, Zuckerberg was increasingly on the defensive as he addressed a wide range of concerns, some outside the scope of Libra, such as “deepfakes” and Facebook’s policy on fact-checking politicians, in his first appearance in Congress since April 2018.

Libra, which was first announced by Facebook earlier this year, is being created with blockchain technology and would involve working with companies such as MasterCard, Visa, and eBay. Recently, a slew of major companies, including the ones mentioned, dropped out amid concern and public criticism that the digital currency would affect national security and would enable money laundering and other financial crimes.

In his prepared remarks, Zuckerberg said the Libra project “is not an attempt to create a sovereign currency. Like existing online payment systems, it’s a way for people to transfer money.”

Zuckerberg promised in the hearing, titled “An examination of Facebook and its impact on the financial services and housing sectors,” that the cryptocurrency project should quell

[Libra] is not an attempt to create a sovereign currency.

Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Facebook

It’s a risky project, and there’s been a lot of scrutiny.

Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Facebook

regulatory concerns.

“Of course, as a big company, we’re not going to do something that’s unregulated or decentralized, we are going to work with the government that gets to the same standard on anti-money laundering and CFT (counter-terrorism financing) that all of the other world-class payment systems have,” he said during questioning.

President Donald Trump has publicly criticized cryptocurrencies, and also directly denounced Facebook’s Libra project, saying the strongest currency in the world will always be the U.S. dollar.

“I am not a fan of Bitcoin and other Cryptocurrencies, which are not money, and whose value is highly volatile and based on thin air,” Trump said on Twitter in July. “Unregulated Crypto Assets can facilitate unlawful behavior, including drug trade and other illegal activity.”

“Similarly, Facebook Libra’s ‘virtual currency’ will have little standing or dependability. If Facebook and other companies want to become a bank, they must seek a new Banking Charter and become subject to all Banking Regulations, just like other Banks, both National and International,” he wrote.

When questioned about the fact that a number of big companies had left Libra, Zuckerberg said the project “is too big for any one company to do on its own, which is why we set up this independent Libra association with a number of companies.”

“It’s a risky project, and there’s been a lot of scrutiny,” he added.

Facebook has been hit with a number of data scandals and fines, recently. On Oct. 22, New York Attorney General Letitia James announced an update of the multistate antitrust investigation into Facebook, which

she said that 47 attorneys general now have joined.

Lawmakers, in their questioning, often talked about how they believed Libra to be a digital currency that would challenge the U.S. dollar and said there were serious concerns that Facebook should be broken up.

At one point, Zuckerberg was asked if he would be willing to stop the project if he saw it couldn’t be moved forward.

“I will certainly stop Facebook’s part of it,” he told lawmakers. “The independent Libra association is a separate thing that exists at this point. If I feel like Facebook can’t be a part of it in keeping with the principles that I’ve laid out, then Facebook won’t be a part of it.”

Lawmakers also pressed Zuckerberg on Calibra, a new digital wallet for Libra that would be used by Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and as a standalone app. They questioned whether the wallets would be anonymous, as that could hide criminal activity.

“Our wallet is going to have strong identity [verification],” Zuckerberg said, adding that he doesn’t speak for the Libra association, but promised commitment from Facebook.

The Facebook CEO’s testimony follows news of a final report from a bipartisan congressional antitrust probe into big technology companies that’s expected to be completed by the “first part” of 2020.

The subcommittee of the House’s Judiciary Committee is investigating Facebook, Google, Amazon, and Apple over potential breaches of antitrust law. So far, the subcommittee has received tens of thousands of documents from the four companies, Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.) told reporters on Oct. 18.



A Chinese flag is seen placed on a mannequin wearing the USA basketball uniform in the NBA flagship retail store in Beijing, China, on Oct. 9, 2019.

Who Doesn't See the China Threat at This Point?

BRIAN CATES



Commentary
Daryl Morey had no idea the tweet he published on Oct. 4 would ignite a firestorm that continues to rage.

But that’s exactly what happened. Daryl Morey is the general manager of the Houston Rockets, in one of the world’s most popular sports leagues: the National Basketball Association (NBA).

The tweet that Morey sent out into the social media world was simple. It contained none of his own typed words; it merely displayed an image:

That simple image, with the words “Fight For Freedom, Stand With Hong Kong,” ignited a firestorm and called attention to a dynamic that had been working quietly beneath the surface.

And that dynamic is how China has been positioning itself for economic and cultural dominance.

China presents a vast market that has many U.S. companies wishing for unrestricted access. The NBA is hardly alone in this regard. But few Western corporations have so solidly joined themselves at the hip with China the way the NBA has.

This is why the American people were treated to the startling sight of prominent NBA players and coaches stuttering and mumbling their way through interviews when asked to comment on China’s atrocious human rights record—something that has taken center stage again recently because of the Hong Kong democracy protests, as well as a video of hundreds of blindfolded Uyghurs being shipped off to a detention facility.

Another big corporation that ended up revealing troubling questions about itself was Blizzard Entertainment, the popular video gaming publisher that makes such games as Hearthstone and World of Warcraft, and is releasing the highly anticipated game “Call of Duty: Modern Warfare.”

Since then, the entire free world has had an eye-opening look at exactly how China intends to use its vast economic leverage outside its borders.

China presents a vast market that has many U.S. companies wishing for unrestricted access.

And what an ugly look it was. The Chinese regime doesn’t have to explicitly demand that Western companies punish its critics for them. Many people who run these companies will leap to censor and oppress their own employees without waiting for the Chinese to demand it.

Many top companies are so determined to keep access to the Chinese market at all costs, they will enforce speech codes inside their own industry just as stringently as the Chinese regime would do themselves if the business were inside mainland China.

This certainly isn’t what we were told to expect when President Richard Nixon “opened” China back in 1972.

The popular theory that was sold for decades was that by engaging China and opening our doors to them, we were going to “democratize” them. Take a good look at what you have seen recently, as U.S. corporate interests bowed the knee to actual tyrants.

The exact opposite happened. China is making full use of its financial clout to force Western corporations into acting like political extensions of itself.

As noted author and historian Victor Davis Hanson stated in a recent column for The Daily Signal:

“U.S. foreign policy toward China seemed to be based on the belief that the more China modernized and the more affluent its citizens became, the more inevitable Chinese political freedom would be.”

“Supposedly, a free-market China would drop its communist past to become a Westernized democracy such as Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan. Once China fully joined the family of successful, law-abiding nations, it would empower Western freedoms and help create a stable international order.”

“None of that came close to happening.” China had accelerated its theft of military, digital, and IP technology during the Obama years. It was poised to take full advantage of the shift to 5G. And, on trade, China had been taking advantage of the United States for years.

President Donald Trump entered the White House in early 2017 faced with

the difficult task of reversing years of political elites in the West allowing this kind of subversive activity. With U.S. politicians, corporations, and think tanks—many of whom have financial ties to China—resisting him every step of the way, Trump has been fighting to restore balance to the U.S.–China relationship.

And The Epoch Times has been playing an important role in warning how China has been positioning itself to take advantage of much of the West.

With the growing NBA and Blizzard scandals, a whole lot of people who had been unaware of how China is deliberately subverting U.S. institutions suddenly were treated to amazing spectacles of financially motivated cowardice in the face of tyranny.

China has been using its vast markets to leverage U.S. businesses into going along with Chinese political policy. The NBA has been shown to be voluntarily censoring its own employees, and also its fans—as recent videos of sign-grabbing incidents demonstrate—to keep the money flowing from China.

The fiasco of watching how the NBA reacted to one Houston Rockets executive making a single tweet in support of the Hong Kong protesters has opened a lot of eyes.

At a time when the Trump administration has been trying to call attention to the subtlety and bad faith of the totalitarian regime in Beijing, Chinese authorities arrogantly have helped the White House make its case.

And so have the many Western corporations and institutions that have allowed themselves to be compromised by eagerly jumping into bed with the Chinese authorities. What has now become crystal clear is that access to the vast Chinese markets comes at a very steep price.

Brian Cates is a writer based in South Texas and author of “Nobody Asked For My Opinion ... But Here It Is Anyway!”

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



Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg testifies at a House Financial Services Committee hearing in Washington on Oct. 23, 2019.



Antifa members march in Charlottesville, Va., on Aug. 11, 2018.

In Socialist Theocracy, Getting 'Woke' Brings Absolution

JOSHUA PHILIPP

Commentary

Double standards are a hallmark of socialist movements.

The infamous "community organizer" Saul Alinsky established their tenets simply: "Accuse the Other Side of That Which You Are Guilty." And in their hypocrisy, they extend this tenet to their cohorts, under Alinsky's rule to "never strike left."

Because of this, a politician can loudly claim to oppose racism in all forms, yet turn a blind eye when a member of his own camp is exposed as a racist. A basketball star can claim to oppose oppression, then defend state oppression in the next breath. They can march in lockstep, crying foul about all the wrongs of the world, while ignoring the wrongs in their own camp.

It all comes down to the sins of the fathers. In Western religion, this goes back to the story of original sin, the temptation in the Garden of Eden, and the curse from the Tree of Knowledge. It holds that man is born into sin, and that through baptism and repentance, we may find redemption.

The socialist religion also holds that people are born into sin, but the extent of this sin is determined by the color of each person's skin, their gender, and how closely they follow the traditions, or "old ideas," that socialism seeks to eradicate.

Rather than believing that people can repent and improve themselves to overcome original sin, socialism holds that white people should be forever guilty of historical slavery, men should be forever guilty of patriarchy, and the wealthy should be forever ashamed of their own gains.

Yet they offer their own form of repentance: getting "woke."

To be forgiven for politicized sin, the socialists must proclaim their hatred of who they are. The white person must proclaim their hatred of "white privilege," the man must proclaim his hatred of "toxic masculinity," and the business owner must announce his opposition to "capitalism."

After being born again through this political baptism, they're no longer held accountable to the narratives of their camp. By proclaiming their weakness to the church of the state, they are granted absolution from all political sins past and present—just as long as they continue to voice their hatred of all they once were.

Socialism is very much a theocratic system. In its destruction of God, it

aimed to replace God; and in its destruction of morals, it has looked to create a new morality. The statist theocracy now rules, and those who sit in its pews can preach to their masses about how they, too, were once lowly sinners in the ever-changing crimes of political correctness.

History is merely repeating itself, regardless of how the adherents to this state belief try to separate their "new" socialism from the tyrannical history of the "old" socialism.

Thomas Molnar explained this principle in his book "Utopia: The Perennial Heresy," saying that in every practical regard, socialism functions as a theocracy. And to guard its forced theocratic rule, it demands that all beneath proclaim their enthusiasm; to speak their weakness, lest the unclean elements of society should rise up in revolt.

Theocracy, Molnar explained, "may never relent, for, as long as danger exists—and the very absence of enthusiasm for theocratic rule is interpreted as danger—the repressive force may not relax. Wielders of such force must be shown proof that their subjects, candidates for perfection, live in a permanent state of enthusiasm."

And because danger to such systems will always exist, he explained, "the elect will insist on regular enthusiastic demonstrations of consensus."

He adds, "Under Communist regimes, for example, the individual may not simply retire into silence; he must enthusiastically speak, write, approve, and proclaim louder than the next fellow."

Of course, socialism has no problem

contradicting its own principles—and this has held true for leaders of its systems and ideology from the get-go. Pol Pot killed the intellectuals but was an intellectual himself. Marx hated the bourgeois class, of which he and his aristocratic wife were a part. Lenin killed the peasants to protect the working man. And Mao destroyed belief to create consensus for his own.

The vague political goal always shines on the horizon, and the socialist tyrant points to it, claiming that we can reach it tomorrow, if only the privileged elements of society could be destroyed today. Tyranny and oppression then become the tools to destroy "oppression," and through their contradictory double-think, the socialists believe that through their own tyranny, they've fought tyranny.

Molnar explains that this contradictory thought—and the demand in socialist regimes that all "true believers" demonstrate their enthusiasm for its principles, lest they fail to be absolved of the past—is part of the ongoing hypocrisy that has always plagued socialist Utopianism.

Molnar explains, "The same paradox characterizes all Utopian thinkers: they believe in unrestrained human freedom; at the same time, they want so thoroughly to organize freedom that they turn it into slavery."

Joshua Philipp is a senior investigative reporter for *The Epoch Times*.

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



Saul Alinsky.



A woman raises her fist near a march in Minneapolis, on Aug. 14, 2017.

Who Stole Greta's Childhood?

MARK HENDRICKSON



Commentary

When 16-year-old Greta Thunberg addressed the U.N.'s Climate Action Summit on Sept. 23, she lashed out at the assembled dignitaries, crying, "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood."

For reasons unfathomable to me, some American pundits mocked or criticized her. While I think the U.N. shamelessly exploited her, I believe her message was 100 percent genuine. Instead of being preoccupied with typical teenage concerns, Greta's happiness fell victim to a deluge of apocalyptic prognostications.

The palpable despair from which Greta suffers is the bitter fruit of modern pagan environmentalism. Not just Greta, but millions of children have suffered varying degrees of anxiety and depression because adults have convinced them that human consumption of fossil fuels is pushing the planet toward catastrophic climate change.

Greta indeed has been robbed of a "normal" childhood—not by fossil fuel companies, as she believes, but by the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). When appearing before a congressional committee, she brandished the IPCC's latest report and essentially said it contained the truth.

She apparently was sadly unaware that hundreds of scientists, some of whom I mentioned in my recent article about climate change ideologues, share the opinion of the eminent physicist Freeman Dyson, who bluntly stated that the climate change models used by the IPCC "do not begin to describe the real world." (Among other deficiencies, the models apparently assume the world is flat.)

While the IPCC is the main culprit, they couldn't have made Greta miserable without the help of sensationalistic media and ideologically slanted teachers and educational curricula. Those all pounded home green gloom and doom while apparently overlooking all the good news and positive developments in the world that would have given her a healthier, more balanced outlook.

Some Good News

Here are a few points I would share with Greta and the millions who share her gloom, despairing view of our world.

The good news includes the immense

Activist Greta Thunberg speaks during the U.N. Climate Action Summit at U.N. headquarters in New York on Sept. 23, 2019.



TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

progress made in reducing war and poverty around the world in the last half-century. While media headlines are once again hyping scary environmental scenarios, the fact is that more people are living in peace and prosperity than ever before.

More good news: Rich nations such as the United States have made great progress in curbing pollution. Cleaner air, cleaner water, reforestation, etc.—the improvements over recent decades have been commendable, and the trends are moving in the right direction. (My preferred priority going forward should be taking better care of the oceans.)

Regrettably, Greta's generation has little understanding of the economics of profit. Profits shouldn't be beemoaned or decry, but celebrated. Profits represent the creation of new wealth and, as the Kuznets curve shows us, once nations achieve a certain level of wealth, pollution declines as the costs of remediation become more affordable.

Another benefit of growing affluence is that the death rate from climate-related catastrophes has plummeted over the past century. We can never prevent destructive weather-related events, but wealth helps us cope with them more effectively. Condemning affluence is ignorant and wrong-headed.

Schoolchildren have been taught to despise fossil fuels. The truth is that those fuels supplied the cheap, reliable energy that propelled the spectacular economic growth of the past two centuries. Fossil fuel consump-

tion correlates tightly with increasing wealth. To condemn fuels that have lifted billions of people out of wretched poverty seems uncompassionate if not unreasonable.

Well, maybe fossil fuels were helpful in the past, but today they are destructive, right? Wrong. Yes, human consumption of fossil fuels has enriched the concentration of CO2 in Earth's atmosphere.

According to a study produced by a multinational team of scientists and reported by NASA, this has produced a marked greening of the planet. "From a quarter to a half of Earth's vegetated lands has shown significant greening over the last 35 years largely due to rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide." That's an area equivalent to two times that of the continental United States.

But aren't increasing concentrations of atmospheric CO2 dangerously heating the planet? They're not. Unlike the known correlation between energy and wealth, the long-term record shows very little correlation between atmospheric CO2 and global temperatures. And since CO2 absorbs infrared radiation (commonly referred to as "trapping heat") on a logarithmic scale, massive additional increases in CO2 will have minimal impact on temperatures.

However, even if the planet warms another degree Celsius, that will only return global temperatures to what prevailed during the Medieval Warm Period; two degrees would replicate the Roman Warm Period of two millennia ago; three would approximate

the Minoan Warm Period of 35 centuries ago. Those three epochs featured impressive growth of civilizations. History shows that warm temperatures aren't so problematic after all.

But won't rising sea levels submerge huge areas of land? Nope. Sadly, the media are getting yet another environmental story wrong. Far from Earth being in danger of turning into a "waterworld" as depicted in the 1995 Hollywood movie, more land is above water now than 30 years ago. There has been a net gain of about 5,200 square miles of unsubmerged territory. Granted, it will require heroic efforts to save land in places like the Chesapeake Bay and the Louisiana Delta, but the problem there is land subsidence, not rising seas.

Finally, Greta's fear of impending mass extinction is based on faulty figures. Extinctions are trending downward, and even pro-global warming entities like the BBC and International Union for Conservation of Nature calculate the post-2000 extinction rate as between one every two years and one per decade.

Greta gave the coordinators of September's U.N. Climate Action Summit the emotional drama they wanted. They were delighted to give this unhappy child a platform from which to blast world governments for being too slow to adopt the U.N.'s grand strategy.

What a travesty that self-serving U.N. bureaucrats have been willing to terrorize innocent children with lurid scare stories to cynically use them as emotional leverage to promote their grand scheme to redistribute global wealth. As I wrote in February 2018, this is tantamount to child abuse.

Those ideologues indeed stole Greta's childhood, and there is no way she can ever get it back. But she and her peers can still salvage their future joy by learning more about the true state of the world. They will find that—problems and challenges notwithstanding—prospects for the human race have never been brighter.

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 and Freedom.

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



Students protest over climate change in Auckland, New Zealand, on March 15, 2019.

Trump Haters, Not Trump, Are the Ones Wrecking America's Institutions, WSJ's Strassel Says

IRENE LUO & JAN JEKIELEK



The anti-Trump "Resistance" has devastated core American institutions and broken longstanding political norms in seeking to defeat and now oust from office President Donald Trump, said Kimberley Strassel, a columnist for the Wall Street Journal and member of the Journal's editorial board.

"And this, to me, is the irony, right? We've been told for three years that Donald Trump is wrecking institutions," Strassel said in an interview with The Epoch Times for the "American Thought Leaders" program.

"But in terms of real wreckage to institutions, it's not on Donald Trump that public faith in the FBI and the Department of Justice has precipitously fallen. That's because of Jim Comey and Andy McCabe. It's not on Donald Trump that the Senate confirmation process for the Supreme Court is in ashes after what happened to Brett Kavanaugh. It's not on Donald Trump that we are turning impeachment into a partisan political tool."

The damage inflicted by the anti-Trump Resistance is the subject of Strassel's new book, "Resistance (At All Costs): How Trump Haters Are Breaking America."

Strassel uses the term "haters" deliberately, to differentiate this demographic from Trump's "critics."

In Strassel's view, all thoughtful critics of Trump—and she counts herself among them—would look at Trump the same way that they have examined past presidents—namely, to call him out when he does something wrong, but also laud him when he does something right.

"The 'haters' can't abide nuance. To the Resistance, any praise—no matter how qualified—of Trump is tantamount to American betrayal," Strassel writes in "Resistance (At All Costs)."

She told The Epoch Times: "Up until the point at which Donald Trump was elected, what happened when political parties lost is that they would retreat, regroup, lick their wounds, talk about what they did wrong."

"That's not what happened this time around. Instead, you had people who essentially said we should have won."

From the moment Trump was elected, this group believed Trump to be an illegitimate president and therefore felt they could use whatever means necessary to remove him from office, Strassel said.

'Unprecedented Acts'

"One thing I try really hard to do in this book is enunciate what rules and regulations and standards were broken, what political boundaries were crossed, because I think that that's where we're seeing the damage," Strassel said.

The "unprecedented acts" of the Resistance have caused the public to lose trust in longstanding institutions such as the FBI, the CIA, and the Department of Justice, and cheapened important political processes like impeachment, she said.

The Resistance fabricated and pushed the theory that it was Trump's collusion with Russia that won him the presidency, not the support of the American people, and lied about the origins of the so-called evidence—the Steele dossier—that was used by the FBI to justify a counterintelligence investigation into the Trump campaign, Strassel said.

"We have never, in the history of this country, had a counterintelligence investigation into a political campaign," she said.

In an anecdote that Strassel recounts in her book, she asked former House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) if there was anything in America's laws that could have prohibited this situation.

Nunes, who had helped write or update many laws concerning the powers of the intelligence community, replied, "I would never have conceived of the FBI using our counterintelligence capabilities to target a political campaign."

"If it had crossed any of our minds, I can guarantee we'd have specifically written: 'Don't do that.'"

In Strassel's view, the Resistance is partially fueled by deep-seated anger, or what others have termed "Trump derangement syndrome"—an inability to look rationally at a man so far outside of Washington norms.

But at the same time, in Strassel's view, much of the Resistance is motivated by a desire to amass political power using whatever means necessary.

"That involves removing the president who won. That involves some of these other



Kimberley Strassel, author of "Resistance (At All Costs): How Trump Haters Are Breaking America," in New York on Oct. 18, 2019.

things that you hear them talking about now: packing the Supreme Court, getting rid of the electoral college, letting 16-year-olds vote," she said.

"These are not reforms. Reforms are things that the country broadly agrees are going to help improve stuff. This is changing the rules so that you get power, and you stay in power."

The impeachment inquiry into the president, based on his phone call with Ukraine's president, is just another example of how the Resistance is violating political norms and relying on flimsy evidence to try to remove him from office, she said.

Testimony in the inquiry has taken place behind closed doors, led by three House committees, and Democrats have so far refused to release transcripts from the depositions of former and current State Department employees.

"[Impeachment] is one of the most serious and huge powers in the Constitution. It was meant always by the founders to be reserved for truly unusual circumstances. They debated not even putting it in because they were concerned that this is what would happen," Strassel said.

In the impeachment inquiries against Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton, Strassel said, American leaders "understood the great importance of convincing the American public that their decision to use this tool was just and legitimate."

"So if you look back at Watergate, they had hundreds of hours of testimony broadcast over TV that people tuned into and watched. It's one of the reasons that Richard Nixon resigned before the House ever held a final impeachment vote on him, because the public had been convinced. He knew he had to go," she said.

But now, instead of access to the testimonies, the public is receiving only leaked snippets and dueling narratives.

"You have Democrats saying, 'Oh, this is very bad.' And Republicans saying, 'Oh, it's not so bad at all.' What are Americans supposed to think?" Strassel said.

Bureaucratic Resistance

Within the federal bureaucracy, there is a "vast swath of unelected officials" who have "a great deal of power to slow things down, mess things up, file the whistleblower complaints, leak information, actively engage against the president's policies," Strassel said. "It's their job to implement his agenda. And

yet a lot of them are part of the Resistance, too," she said.

Data shows that in the lead-up to the 2016 presidential election, government bureaucrats overwhelmingly contributed toward the Clinton campaign over the Trump campaign.

Ninety-five percent, or about \$1.9 million, of bureaucrats' donations went to Clinton, according to The Hill's analysis of donations from federal workers up until September 2016. In particular, employees at the Department of Justice gave 97 percent of their donations to Clinton. For the State Department, it was even higher—99 percent.

"Imagine being a CEO and showing up and knowing that 95 percent of your workforce despises you and doesn't want you to be there," Strassel said.

From the moment Trump was elected, this group believed Trump to be an illegitimate president and therefore felt they could use whatever means necessary to remove him from office

Strassel pointed to when former acting Attorney General Sally Yates, a holdover from the Obama administration, publicly questioned the constitutionality of Trump's immigration ban and directed Justice Department employees to disobey the order.

"It was basically a call to arms," Strassel said. "What she should've done is honorably resigned if she felt that she could not in any way enforce this duly issued executive order."

"It really kicked off what we have seen ever since then: The nearly daily leaks from the administration, the whistleblower complaints," as well as "all kind of internal foot-dragging and outright obstruction to the president's agenda."

According to a report by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, in Trump's first 126 days in office, his administration "faced 125 leaked stories—one leak a day—containing information that is potentially damaging to national security under the standards laid out in a 2009 Executive Order signed by President Barack Obama."



President Donald J. Trump speaks with reporters at the White House on Oct. 3, 2019.

Activist Media

Strassel says the media has played a critical role in bolstering the anti-Trump Resistance.

"I've been a reporter for 25 years," Strassel said. "I've always felt that the media leaned left. That wasn't a surprise to anyone. "But what we've seen over the past three years is something entirely different. This is the media actively engaging on one side of a partisan warfare. It's overt."

Along the way, the media have largely abandoned journalistic standards, "whether it be the use of anonymous sources, whether it be putting uncorroborated accusations into the paper, whether it's using biased sources for information and cloaking them as neutral observers," she said.

Among the many examples of media misinformation cited in Strassel's book is a December 2017 CNN piece that claimed to have evidence that then-candidate Trump and his son Donald Trump Jr. had been offered early access to hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee. But it turned out the date was wrong. Trump Jr. had received an email about the WikiLeaks release one day after WikiLeaks had made the documents public.

"If it hurts Donald Trump, they're on board," Strassel said. And in many cases, the attacks on Trump have been contradictory.

"He's either the dunce you claim he is every day or he's the most sophisticated Manchurian candidate that the world has ever seen. You can't have it both ways."

"He's either a dictator and an autocrat who is consolidating power around himself to rule with an iron fist, or he's the evil conservative who's cutting regulations."

Contrary to claims of authoritarianism, Trump has significantly decreased the size of the federal government. Notably, he reduced the Federal Register, a collection of all the national government's rules and regulations, to the lowest it's been since Bill Clinton's first year in office.

"You can't be a libertarian dictator," Strassel said.

In addition to the barrage of attacks on Trump, the media has actively sought to "de-legitimize anybody who has a different viewpoint than they do, or who is reporting the facts and the story in a way other than they would like them to be presented."

"They would love to make it sound as though none of us are worthy of writing about this story," she said.

"The media is supposed to be our guardrails, right? When a political party transgresses a political boundary, they're supposed to say 'No, that's beyond the pale.'"

Instead, "they indulged this behavior," Strassel said. "We had a media cheerleading the FBI for meddling in American politics. Can you ever imagine a time in American history where the media would have played such a role?"

"In a way, I blame that for so much else that has gone wrong."

Long-Term Consequences

Strassel says the actions taken by the Resistance will have long-term consequences for America.

"I keep warning my friends on the other side of the aisle: Think about the precedent you are setting here," Strassel said. For example, if Joe Biden wins the presidency in 2020 but Republicans take back the House, would the Republican-dominated House immediately launch impeachment proceedings against Biden for alleged corruption in Ukraine?"

"I wouldn't necessarily use the word [corruption], but there's a lot of Republicans who happily would. And if they thought they'd get another shot at the White House, why not?" Strassel said.

It's short-term thinking, she said, just like Sen. Harry Reid's decision in 2013 to drop the number of votes needed to overcome a filibuster for lower-court judges.

"Did he really stop to think about the fact that it paved the way for Republicans to get rid of the filibuster for Supreme Court judges?" Strassel said.

If there's any rule in Washington, "it's that when you set the bar low, it just keeps going lower," Strassel said.

"Donald Trump is going to be president for at most another five years. But the actions and the destruction that's coming with some of this could be with us for a very long time," she said.

"Should anyone allow their deep disregard for one particular man to so change the structure and the fabric of the country?"

"American Thought Leaders" is an Epoch Times show available on Facebook, YouTube, and the Epoch Times website.