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OUR NATION

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Border Patrol agent Jose Garibay stands next to the new fence on the U.S.-Mexico border east of San Luis in Yuma, Ariz., on Nov. 27, 2019.

‘Game Changer’ for Border Agents

Agents are back on patrol after ‘Remain in Mexico’ policy sharply cuts family crossings that were pulling agents into managing transport, housing, and child care **8**

Trump Announces Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum From Brazil, Argentina



A worker monitors the operation as steel is melted at the NLMK Indiana steel mill in Portage, Ind., on March 15, 2018.

EMEL AKAN

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump announced on Dec. 2 renewed steel and aluminum tariffs on Brazil and Argentina, a measure aimed to defend U.S. producers and workers.

The recent devaluation of the Brazilian and Argentine currencies prompted him to take action, the president said.

Brazil's real dropped to an all-time low against the U.S. dollar last week; since July, it's been devalued by more than 10 percent.

Argentina's economic crisis significantly weakened the value of the country's currency. The Argentine peso has lost half of its value against the dollar since August 2018.

Brazil accounted for the largest share of U.S. imports of steel this year, followed by Canada and Mexico, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The import volume from Brazil increased by about 50 percent in the first six months of this year compared to the same period last year. However, the volume of U.S. imports from other top sources such as Russia, Canada, and Mexico have dropped significantly.

"Brazil has been stepping in and taking advantage of the decline of imports from other countries," said Robert Scott, senior economist and director of trade and manufacturing policy research at the Economic Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank.

Both Brazil and Argentina were exempted from 25 percent steel tariffs last year. And deepening bilateral relations benefited both countries, particularly Brazil.

This year through September, Scott said that the "total imports are down about 3.3 million tons and yet, imports from Brazil are up about 3.4 million tons. So they really have had a significant impact on total steel imports."

However, Argentina isn't a large source of metals for the United States and hence, the tariffs won't have a significant impact on the country's economy. It accounted for less than 1 percent of total imports this year through September, Scott said.

The tariffs are an "effective strategy," particularly when industries are hurt by unfair trade practices and excess capacity, according to Scott.

Countries such as China, Brazil, India, South Korea, and Japan have been illegally subsidizing their industries and producing far more metal than global demand. The excess capacity in steel and aluminum has been a

Brazil and Argentina have been presiding over a massive devaluation of their currencies, which is not good for our farmers.

President Donald Trump

chronic problem for decades and created a destructive ripple effect on U.S. producers and workers.

'Lower Rates & Loosen'
Trump announced his decision to restore the metals tariffs on imports from Brazil and Argentina with an early morning tweet.

"Brazil and Argentina have been presiding over a massive devaluation of their currencies, which is not good for our farmers," Trump wrote.

"Therefore, effective immediately, I will restore the Tariffs on all Steel & Aluminum that is shipped into the U.S. from those countries."

Trump also called on the U.S. central bank to lower interest rates to tackle currency manipulations by other countries.

"The Federal Reserve should likewise act so that countries, of which there are many, no longer take advantage of our strong dollar by further devaluing their currencies. This makes it very hard for our manufactures & farmers to fairly export their goods. Lower Rates & Loosen - Fed!"

Trump has been implementing or threatening tariffs against a number of countries in an attempt he describes as rebalancing an unfair global trade imbalance.

Trump has repeatedly said that other countries have been unfairly exploiting the United States for years, and the tariffs are a way to combat that.

"It's a political decision," Scott said. "He uses tariffs as central to his strategy," he said, adding that through tariffs, Trump wants to preserve his

electoral standing in states, particularly in the upper Midwest, where there has been intensive production of steel and aluminum.

Brazil Responds to Tariffs

In response to Trump's tweet, Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro said on Dec. 2 he had an "open channel" to discuss tariffs with Trump.

He told reporters that he would discuss Trump's decision first with Economy Minister Paulo Guedes.

"I'll talk to Paulo Guedes now. If it's the case, I talk to Trump, I have an open channel with him," he said.

When the tariffs on steel and aluminum were first announced in March 2018, the Trump administration exempted several countries, including Brazil and Argentina. The administration reached an agreement with both countries to cap their metal shipments to the United States under a quota system.

"On mid-2018, Brazil and Argentina were able to negotiate a quota to their steel exports that exempts both countries from the 25 percent import tariff," a Goldman Sachs report stated. "It is not clear if this measure would represent a reduction/removal of this quota or another further measure."

"The news is marginally favorable for U.S. steelmakers and marginally negative for Brazil," a Citi report said.

According to Citi, the main impact is on the slab (a semi-finished steel product) market, as the United States represented 55 percent of Brazil's slab production.

Zachary Stieber contributed to this report



President Donald Trump and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro shake hands after a joint news conference at the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington on March 19, 2019.



President Donald Trump and leaders of historically black universities and colleges pose for a group photo at the White House on Feb. 27, 2017.

Growing Black Support of Trump May Signal Electoral Upheaval

MARK TAPSCOTT

News Analysis

Democrats have relied on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's coalition to control the White House and Congress for much of the past eight decades, with black voters being the most reliable bloc in the alliance.

But three recent national polls may signal big changes ahead in America's political balance of power.

Rasmussen Reports announced Nov. 22 that 34 percent of blacks in the latest survey said they now support President Donald Trump. Shortly thereafter, Emerson Polling said it found that 34.5 percent of blacks back the president.

Since only 8 percent of black voters supported Trump in the 2016 election, such a shift in the Democratic Party's most loyal constituency quickly sparked glee among conservative commentators and derisive outrage among liberals.

Typical of the latter was CNN analyst Ana Navarro's quip that the pollsters must have only interviewed prominent black Trump supporters Kanye West; his wife, Kim Kardashian; former Wisconsin Sheriff David Clarke; and YouTube stars Diamond and Silk.

But then the latest Marist poll showed 33.5 percent of "non-whites," including both blacks and Hispanics, were in favor of the president.

In fact, growing support among blacks for Trump is not a new thing. When Kanye West met with Trump in the Oval Office in 2018 and proclaimed his enthusiasm for the president, Hoover Institution professor Victor Davis Hanson described the potential for a shift in black electoral allegiance:

"Even 20 percent African American support for Trump would all but dismantle Democratic Party presidential hopes for 2020. ... A small drop in African American turnout or anything less than the usual 85 percent to 90 percent supermajority for a Democratic presidential candidate on Election Day can prove fatal."

Democratic Confidence and Trepidation

Democratic strategist Robin Biro also saw a threat, telling The Epoch Times on Dec. 2 that he was initially "a little leery" of the Rasmussen numbers, until he read the polling numbers from the Marist Poll.

Biro, a U.S. Army Airborne Ranger veteran and former regional field director for President Barack Obama,

At the same time that he is breaking the mold on issues like sentencing reform, trade, and aid to historically black colleges and universities, he is presiding over an economy that just plain works well for minority communities.

Tim Chapman, executive director, Heritage Action

recalled the Trump-West Oval Office confab, saying, "While my peers on my side of the aisle were having a good time poking fun at Trump for meeting with Kim Kardashian, I was concerned because she and Kanye West have a vast sphere of influence."

Biro credited Trump for planting seeds with black voters and warned that the three polls "should serve as a cautionary tale to my Democratic peers to not take anything for granted in politics, be it wild celebrity endorsements, meetings, etc.—this is not your grandfather's game of politics."

"There has not been nearly enough said on the Democratic presidential debate stages about what we plan to do to help communities of color, and the frustrations are palpable among these communities for that," he said.

Other Democratic campaign strategists interviewed by The Epoch Times, however, were less pessimistic about the three polls.

Boots Road Group Managing Partner Spencer Critchley, for example, pointed to Gallup surveys as a more realistic snapshot of the electorate.

"As is so often the case with polls President Trump likes, the Rasmussen and Emerson results appear to be outliers. For example, the straight-down-the-middle Gallup poll finds black support statistically unchanged over the past three years: 10 percent in 2017, 11 percent in 2018, and 10 percent so far this year (to Nov. 20)," Critchley said.

Critchley also cited GOP pollster Frank Luntz's warning that a week before the 2018 elections, Rasmussen showed 40 percent of blacks going with Trump, but then only 8 percent voted Republican.

Jim Manley, former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's (D-Nev.) communications director, told The Epoch Times that he sees nothing in the three polls to warrant a particular response from Democrats.

"Look, we as a party can't afford to take anyone for granted this cycle, but, given the economy is doing okay, it's kind of surprising that [Trump] hasn't been able to pick up additional support from the African American community. He can't pull it off because most of them see right through his cheap talk and Kanye-type moments," he said.

Republican Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm about the polls remains strong among Republicans. Jennilee Brown, vice president for operations at California-based Thomas Partners

Strategies, told The Epoch Times on Dec. 2 the leftward surge among Democratic presidential candidates may account for more blacks moving to Trump.

"I don't anticipate Trump will win the majority of African American and minority support," Brown said, "but even small gains spell trouble for the fractured Democrat field that's moving further to the left. African American voters are no longer the furthest left among Democrats, which could be why the 2020 candidates' economic message is overreaching with this group."

Similarly, Kevin Sheridan, a Washington-based strategist who was a senior adviser to Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign, told The Epoch Times on Dec. 2 that increased black support is especially key in battleground states such as Pennsylvania and Ohio.

"You can't fall off the floor. Republican nominees have been rock-bottom for 30 years with African Americans, so any bump in those numbers makes battleground states look better for Trump," Sheridan said.

"If Democrats nominate a Liz Warren or Pete Buttigieg, they are signing away the Obama coalition. Hillary could barely build a crowd with Jay Z and Beyonce."

Americans for Tax Reform President Grover Norquist told The Epoch Times that conservatives have long wondered "why African American and Hispanic support for parental choice in education, church attendance, and strong pro-life views hadn't yet translated into stronger support for Republican candidates."

"Democrats have long made it clear they vote with the teachers unions, not with parents ... not families hoping for paved streets, low crime, and good schools."

Heritage Action Executive Director Tim Chapman told The Epoch Times "the trend line is moving in the right direction."

"I think a lot of this is attributable to Trump's insistence on breaking Republican orthodoxies of the last three decades," he said.

"At the same time that he is breaking the mold on issues like sentencing reform, trade, and aid to historically black colleges and universities, he is presiding over an economy that just plain works well for minority communities."

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DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES



Gun safety advocates rally in front of the U.S. Supreme Court before oral arguments in the Second Amendment case NY State Rifle & Pistol v. City of New York, in Washington on Dec. 2, 2019.

Challenge to New York's Restrictive Gun Laws May Fail Due to Passage of New Law

MATTHEW VADUM

WASHINGTON—The outcome of a Trump administration-backed challenge to New York City's uniquely restrictive gun laws that make it burdensome for law-abiding gun owners to transport their weapons is in doubt after the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case on Dec. 2.

Critics have long complained about what they say are the tough, inflexible licensing rules for guns in New York City. They say many rules seem petty, enforced with undue rigidity, and calculated to inconvenience, or even harass, gun owners in an effort to discourage them from using their Second Amendment rights in a city known for its hostility to private firearms ownership.

The hearing came at a time of heightened tensions about gun rights. Some Democratic presidential candidates espouse crackdowns on gun ownership, including confiscation. In August, five Democratic senators filed a brief in the case threatening unspecified retaliation against the court if it failed to "heal" itself by embracing a restrictive view of gun rights.

Although this was the court's first gun rights case in nine years, raising expectations among gun-rights activists that the Supreme Court was poised to expand the reach of the Second Amendment, it is unclear if the justices will actually reach the merits of the case, which is cited as *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. City of New York*.

That's because the hearing was dominated by debate about what lawyers call "mootness," that is, whether there was still an active controversy remaining for the court to adjudicate after the legal landscape recently changed.

On Jan. 22, the Supreme

[The city took the] quite extraordinary step of trying to moot the case after we granted review.

Associate Justice Samuel Alito

Court granted three gun owners' petition for certiorari, agreeing to review a 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that upheld the city law that prevents holders of a "premises" license—which allows the possession of a handgun at home—from transporting their unloaded, locked-up weapons outside city limits. The gun owners argued the law violated the Second Amendment, the Commerce Clause, and the fundamental right to travel.

The city claimed the transport ban—which Trump administration lawyer Jeffrey Wall told the court is condemned by "text, history, and tradition"—promotes public safety by limiting handguns on city streets. The petitioners wanted to practice shooting at target ranges outside the city or transport their firearms to second homes elsewhere in the state, but the city wouldn't let them do what they wanted with their property.

New York City asked the Supreme Court to indefinitely suspend the legal challenge because it was in the process of amending its law, but was rebuffed by the court on April 29.

In what critics saw as an effort to dodge review by the court, the city then suddenly modified the premises-license law to allow a license holder to transport a handgun to another residence, whether inside or outside the city, provided that the holder was authorized to possess the handgun at the second residence. The new law also allowed holders to transport handguns to shooting ranges and competitions outside the city. At the same time, state law was amended to allow premises-license holders to transport their handguns, overriding the city's law.

Justice Samuel Alito told the attorney for New York, Richard Dearing, that the city had taken the "quite extraordinary step of trying to moot the case after we granted review."

Liberal justices questioned the petitioners' attorney, Paul Clement, at length, suggesting developments had rendered the case moot.

"So what's left of the case?" Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said. "The petitioners have gotten all the relief that they sought."

Justice Sonia Sotomayor accused Clement of flogging a dead horse.

You are pushing, she told him, "a case in which the other side has thrown in the towel and completely given you every single thing you demanded ... and you're asking us to opine on a law that's not on the books anymore."

Clement said the petitioners hadn't obtained all the relief they sought, for example, "unrestricted access to gun ranges and second homes." It was also still unclear, he said, whether his clients could suffer adverse consequences at the hands of city prosecutors.

Clement argued the "voluntary cessation" exception to the mootness rule.

This principle, Joseph C. Davis and Nicholas R. Reaves wrote in the *Yale Law Journal*, "prevents gamesmanship and preserves judicial resources by requiring defendants who change their conduct mid-litigation to prove that"—in the words the Supreme Court used in *Friends of the Earth v. Laidlaw Environmental Services* (2000)—"it is 'absolutely clear' they will not restart their conduct if the case is dismissed as moot."

Clement said a regulation the city enacted "specifically to try to moot this case" made it clear "the kind of transport they were allowing ... had to be continuous and uninterrupted."

"I don't know what 'continuous and uninterrupted' means ... if it means that you can make stops for coffee."

Justice Neil Gorsuch suggested the case was still very much alive "despite Herculean, late-breaking efforts to moot" it.

US Has First Full Month as Net Oil Exporter for First Time in 70 Years

TOM OZIMEK

The United States has hit another milestone in the Trump administration's quest for energy independence, becoming a net exporter of crude and petroleum products for a full month for the first time in 70 years, according to government data.

U.S. monthly oil exports surpassed imports by 89,000 barrels per day in September, making the country a net exporter on a monthly basis for the first time since the government started tracking relevant data in 1949, according to figures published by the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

The EIA data shows that U.S. oil exports in September rose 18 percent year-over-year to about 8.76 million barrels per day, while imports over the same period fell 12 percent to about 8.67 million barrels.

About a decade ago, the U.S. ran a negative oil trade balance of more than 13 million barrels per day.

The new figures confirm the trend forecast in the Short-Term Energy Outlook published by the EIA earlier this month.

"Based on preliminary data and model estimates, EIA estimates that the United States exported 140,000 b/d more total crude oil and petroleum products in September than it imported," the agency said on Nov. 13.

"If confirmed in survey-collected monthly data, it would be the first time the United States exported more petroleum than it imported since EIA records began in 1949."

Further, the EIA "expects total crude oil and petroleum net exports to average 750,000 b/d in 2020 compared with average net imports of 520,000 b/d in 2019."

Last year, the United States became a net oil exporter for a given week for the first time in almost 75 years. In the final week of November 2018, weekly U.S. net imports of crude oil and petroleum products fell to minus 211,000 barrels per day, meaning the country became a net exporter of that amount, according to data from the EIA.

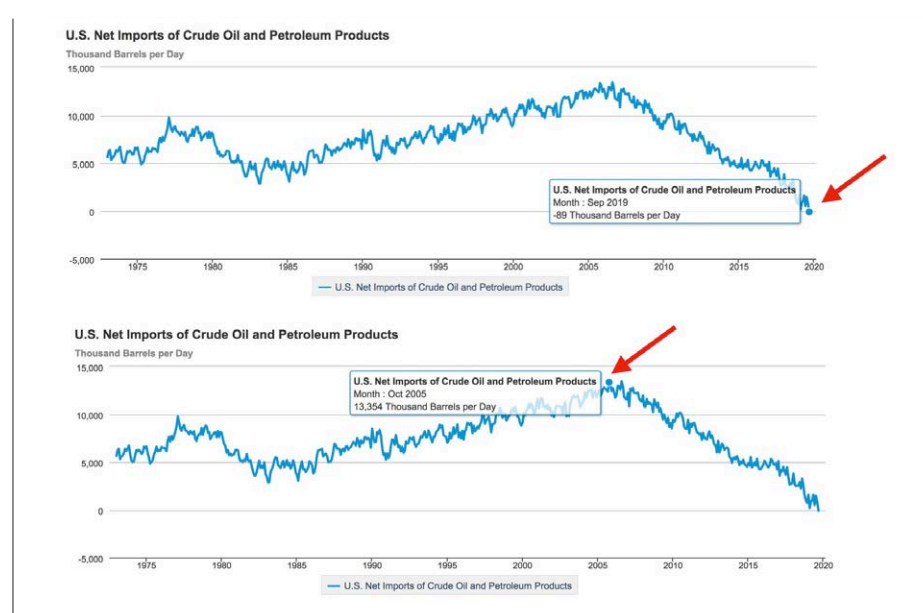
U.S. oil exports have expanded rapidly in recent years as a result of many factors, including increased domestic production of crude oil and hydrocarbon gas liquids.

In the past half-century, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting

Iran is seizing cargo ships in the Straits of Hormuz and oil is at \$52 a barrel. That's extraordinary. It should be at \$150. It was 10 years ago when we were in these conflicts. Why is it not? Because America is energy independent. And your groceries are getting cheaper, your cars are getting cheaper.

Daniel Turner, founder and executive director, Power the Future

An oil well in the Permian Basin in Garden City, Texas, on Feb. 5, 2015.



EIA
U.S. net imports of crude oil and petroleum products.

Countries (OPEC), led by Saudi Arabia, had typically dictated oil markets. The rise of U.S. shale production, however, has changed that dynamic.

Economy That 'Undergirds Our Entire Civilization'

As the United States becomes a net energy exporter, it gains the ability to contribute one of the foundational needs for economic prosperity in developing countries—reliable energy, Jason Isaac, senior manager at Life: Powered, told The Epoch Times.

"Ten years ago, we had over 18 percent of the world in severe poverty. Today, 10 years later, do you want to know who wins the 10-year challenge? It's humanity. Just over 8 percent of the world's population is in severe poverty. And we've done that by getting people access to energy," Isaac said.

He dismisses claims that increased fossil fuel production has led to greater environmental degradation in the United States.

"According to the EPA, that couldn't be further from the truth. It's getting cleaner. The United States actually leads the world in clean air," he said. Isaac said providing reliable, affordable energy to developing countries is an opportunity to lift millions of out poverty and save lives.

"They burn fuels such as wood or animal dung to heat and cool their homes," he said. "Almost a million people a year die around the world from lung illness caused by indoor air pollution because they don't have access to energy. So they use what they do have available and so that's trees, animal

and things like that to eat and cook their food. We should want those people to get access to our energy and our energy resources and our technology that helps reduce pollution."

Daniel Turner, founder and executive director of Power the Future, an advocacy organization for U.S. energy workers, echoed Isaac's views.

"What I think the left gets wrong is I think they don't have faith in American entrepreneurialism and in American technology," he told The Epoch Times. "There is no doubt we used to be a dirtier country. Coal has gotten cleaner. Oil and gas has gotten cleaner. They don't have the faith that as time goes by, these technologies get better, they get smarter."

Turner says critics of U.S. fossil fuel-based energy production dismiss its benefits and disregard the people who rely on those jobs for their livelihoods.

"Instead, they just denigrate them," he said, and "make them sound like they're bad guys, but what they're doing is providing this economy that undergirds our entire civilization."

"Things are cheap. Gas is cheap," Turner said. "Iran is seizing cargo ships in the Straits of Hormuz and oil is at \$52 a barrel. That's extraordinary. It should be at \$150. It was 10 years ago when we were in these conflicts. Why is it not? Because America is energy independent. And your groceries are getting cheaper. Look at the quality of life we have."

"Things are good, things are cheap, things are inexpensive. And instead of celebrating any of that, they just look at it as bad, wrong, evil, destroy—socialism."

SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES





OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY SHEALAH CRAIGHEAD

President Donald Trump participates in an expanded bilateral meeting with President Emmanuel Macron of France, at Winfield House in London on Dec. 3, 2019.

Trump Praises, Defends NATO Alliance at Summit

ELLA KIETLINSKA

At the 70th-anniversary NATO summit in London President Donald Trump praised the organization's leadership and defended it against criticism from the president of France.

In the morning Trump met with the Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at a Working Breakfast. Speaking after the meeting Trump praised Stoltenberg for "doing a fantastic job."

Trump said that the contribution of NATO allies to the alliance's budget had been decreasing over the last 20 years and that a continued decrease would have had a detrimental effect on NATO.

He also said that the United States was spending much more on defense than other allies and it amounts to between 4 to 4.3 percent of its GDP, the largest GDP in the world. By contrast, "Germany is paying 1 to 1.2 percent ... of a much smaller GDP." However, Trump said, NATO protects all regardless how much they pay.

In 2014 all NATO members reached an agreement that each of them should spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense, but not all members have complied with this

NATO is the most successful alliance in history because we have been able to change when the world is changing.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg

OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY SHEALAH CRAIGHEAD

requirement. Stoltenberg said that since "2016, Canada and European allies have added \$130 billion more to the defense budgets, and this number will increase to 400 billion U.S. dollars by 2024," which makes NATO stronger.

New Directions for NATO

NATO today is stronger and able to adapt to the changing world and "address a wide range of other issues, including the fight against terrorism, arms control, our relationship with Russia, the rise of China," Stoltenberg said. "NATO is the most successful alliance in history because we have been able to change when the world is changing."

Stoltenberg also said, "historically, NATO has been focused on the Soviet Union and Russia," and although it is not new, the impact of the rise of China on NATO's security has to be addressed as well. "China is now the second-largest defense spender in the world, after the United States," Stoltenberg said. "[China] recently displayed a lot of new advanced military weapons systems, including new intercontinental ballistic missiles able to reach the whole of Europe and the United States ...

and they also deployed hundreds of intermediate-range missiles that would have violated the INF Treaty, if China had been part of that treaty," Stoltenberg said.

NATO does not plan moving into the South China Sea, but the fact that China is getting closer to the NATO region cannot be ignored, he said. China is present in Arctic, Africa, cyberspace, and heavily in European infrastructure.

When speaking about Russia, Trump said that "NATO should always be in dialogue with Russia ... [and] can have a very good relationship with Russia."

Stoltenberg added that "we will strive for a better relationship with Russia. But we do that based on what we call the dual-track approach by NATO. We have to be strong and we have to provide a credible deterrence and defense, combined with dialogue."

Both Trump and Stoltenberg see the importance of focusing on Arms Control and would like to see its progress on it with Russia as well as find a way to include China in arms control agreements.

Is NATO Suffering 'Brain Death'?

In the afternoon Trump met with France's President Emmanuel Macron. In Early November Macron criticized NATO and described it as suffering from "brain death" in his interview with the Economist.

In responding to a reporter's question, Trump said Macron's comment was unfair to "a lot of different forces, including the man that does a very good job in running NATO."

Macron stood by his statement but agreed with Trump that "that the U.S. overinvested, decade after decade, and it is number one, by far [in defense spending]."

France is investing 1.9 percent of its GDP in defense and is increasing its spending.

Macron said of NATO that he needs "strategy clarification."

"We have to put money, we have to put soldiers. We have to be clear on the fundamentals of what NATO should be. And this is not the case today. What about peace in Europe? I want clarification about that," said Macron.

He also expressed his concern about the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, that put at risk Germany, France, and a lot of European countries, that are now exposed to "new missiles coming from Russia."

Macron also directed criticism at NATO member Turkey.

He said that the Alliance objective is to "protect our partners against external threats. And France will do it, and we will have full solidarity vis-à-vis eastern and northern states in Europe."

However, Turkey is now "fighting against those who fight with us, who fought with us, shoulder to shoulder, against ISIS. And sometimes they work with ISIS forces. This is an issue, and this is a strategic issue," said Macron.

Trump said "we have a very good relationship with Turkey... We pulled our soldiers out. We said you can patrol your own border now... We put some of our soldiers around the oil, where we have captured the oil."

Macron also said, that they "have a lot of cooperation with Turkey, on security, trade, migration," but "we need clarification from "from the Turkish side."

"How it is possible to be a member of the Alliance to work with our office, to buy our materials, to be integrated, and to buy S-400 [missile systems] from Russians? Technically it is not possible," said Macron.

Macron added that Turkey would like to "block all the declarations of this summit if we do not agree about their definition of terrorist organizations—qualifying [the Kurdish] YPG and the others as terrorist groups, which is not our definition."

Trump answered that he would meet with Turkey's President to discuss this and also the United States is looking into sanctioning Turkey for purchasing s-400 missile system.

(Left) President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump arrive at number 10 Downing Street for a reception at the NATO Summit in London, on Dec. 3, 2019.

GOP Report: Impeachment Case Built on 'Hearsay, Presumptions, and Speculation'

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

The case built by Democrats running the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump currently rests entirely on second-hand evidence, assumptions, and speculation, according to a report released by House Republicans on Dec. 2.

Republicans released the 123-page report one day before House Intelligence Committee Democrats released a report of their own on Dec. 3. The Democrat report is expected to soon be presented before the House Judiciary Committee. Trump said he read the Republican report during his flight to the United Kingdom.

Republicans assess that the Democrats have so far failed to substantiate the allegation at the core of the impeachment inquiry: that Trump sought to boost his reelection chances by pressuring Ukraine to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden, a potential political rival.

While Democrats assert that the allegation has been proven, during the past several weeks, no witness has offered firsthand evidence of Trump exerting pressure or conditioning any official act on Ukraine's compliance with his request.

"The evidence does not support the accusation that President Trump pressured President Zelensky to initiate investigations for the purpose of benefiting the President in the 2020 election," the report stated.

"The evidence does not support the accusation that President Trump covered up the summary of his phone conversation with President Zelensky. The evidence does not support the accusation that President Trump obstructed the Democrats' impeachment inquiry."

House Republicans have long denounced the impeachment probe as an attempt by Democrats to undo the outcome of the 2016 election. The report—prepared by Republican staff for Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), and Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas)—reasserts this claim.

"The Democrats' impeachment inquiry, led by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, is merely the outgrowth of their obsession with re-litigating the results of the 2016 presidential election," the report stated. "The evidence does not establish any impeachable offense."

Democrats say impeachment is the only constitutional tool designed to counter corruption by an elected official. Some have suggested that direct evidence is lacking because the Trump administration has refused to comply with subpoenas for documents while some of the key witnesses—including the president, his personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, and former Energy Secretary Rick Perry—have refused to testify.

Schiff wrote on Twitter on Dec. 3 that the stonewalling by the White House amounts to "obstruction of Congress."

"Evidence of Trump's obstruction of Congress is overwhelming," Schiff wrote, without offering evidence. "If we allow it

The Democrats' impeachment inquiry, led by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, is merely the outgrowth of their obsession with re-litigating the results of the 2016 presidential election.

GOP report



Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) on Capitol Hill on Nov. 21, 2019.

The evidence does not establish any impeachable offense.

A report released by House Republicans



SAMUEL CORUM/GETTY IMAGES

House Intelligence Committee Ranking Member Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), minority counsel Steve Castor, and Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) confer during testimony before the House Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill on Nov. 20, 2019.

to succeed, it will mean future presidents can simply ignore Congressional subpoenas & oversight, fundamentally altering the balance of power and paving the way for unchecked corruption and malfeasance."

The Republican report counters the obstruction charge by suggesting that the White House is within its rights to assert executive privilege, especially amid a hyperpartisan impeachment process in which the president hasn't been granted due process to defend himself. Schiff conducted closed-door impeachment hearings for nearly a month before the full House of Representatives authorized the inquiry in a party-line vote.

"President Trump's assertion of longstanding claims of executive privilege is a legitimate response to an unfair, abusive, and partisan process, and does not constitute obstruction of a legitimate impeachment inquiry," the report stated.

In addition to the central allegation that Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate Biden, Democrats claim the president withheld aid to Ukraine and dangled the prospect of a White House meeting as leverage to force Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to comply with his request. Both Trump and Zelensky have repeatedly said there was no quid pro quo or pressure.

The report points to witness testimony that suggests Trump was skeptical about Ukraine due to its history of corruption long before he ordered a hold on security aid. The Republicans also argue that Trump had a valid concern about Hunter Biden's role on the board of Ukrainian gas company Burisma Holdings while his father, Joe Biden, served as the vice president of the United States.

Trump brought up Hunter Biden during the July 25 call with Zelensky, which is now at the core of the impeachment inquiry. Trump asked Zelensky to "look into" the firing of Ukrainian Prosecutor General Viktor Shokin.

In early February 2016, Shokin's office seized the assets of Mykola Zlochevsky, the owner of Burisma. At the time, Hunter

Biden had held a paid position on the board of Burisma for nearly two years. Weeks later, Shokin was forced to submit his resignation. Joe Biden has bragged about forcing Shokin's ouster by withholding \$1 billion in loan guarantees from Ukraine. State Department official George Kent testified that he flagged his concerns about Biden's role in Burisma in early 2015.

In addition to assessing that the evidence collected so far doesn't substantiate key claims by Democrats, the Republican report also underlines the lack of evidence behind some of the secondary claims put forth by Democrats.

The Republicans concluded there is no evidence to establish that the president orchestrated a so-called "irregular channel" to implement Ukraine policy. The three officials who were part of the alleged "irregular channel"—Ambassador Gordon Sondland, Special Envoy Kurt Volker, and Secretary Perry—all had official responsibilities tied to Ukraine and reported regularly to the National Security Council and the State Department, the report stated.

The report also noted witness testimony that contradicted a claim in the anonymous whistleblower complaint that triggered the impeachment inquiry. The complaint stated that the White House sought to fence off the transcript of the Trump-Zelensky call, in a bid to shield the president, by moving the document to a classified system. But Tim Morrison, an adviser to the president, testified that the move to the classified system was the result of an administrative mistake.

The White House released the official transcript of the July 25 call one day after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) announced the beginning of the impeachment inquiry. Trump and his supporters have pointed to the transcript as the ultimate evidence that no wrongdoing took place.

"At the heart of the matter, the impeachment inquiry involves the actions of only two people: President Trump and President Zelensky," the report stated. "The summary of their July 25, 2019, telephone conversation shows no quid pro quo or indication of conditionality, threats, or pressure—much



SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the U.N. General Assembly in New York on Sept. 25, 2019.



LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES



A Border Patrol truck drives along a canal road near the U.S.-Mexico border in Yuma, Ariz., on April 12, 2019.

Border Agents Freed Up for Patrol as Asylum Changes Take Effect

Remain in Mexico policy sharply reduced family crossings, which were pulling agents into managing transport, housing, and child care

CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON

YUMA, Ariz.—Border agents in Yuma are back on patrol after months of being inundated with floods of illegal immigrants that peaked in May.

The illegal traffic in the Yuma sector almost tripled in fiscal 2019 with more than 68,000 aliens apprehended. Agents arrested some 450 people per day in May.

The sector's two detention facilities— with a combined capacity of 410—were overrun. Vehicle bays became temporary holding facilities as more than 1,100 people had to be crammed in for processing at one point in late April. In early July, Congress approved a bill to allocate supplemental funds for humanitarian assistance. Yuma was thus able to construct a temporary tent facility to house 500 people and the pressure was alleviated.

Now, due to a combination of the Migrant Protection Protocols, the Mexican National Guard deployment, and new wall construction, Yuma's numbers have plunged.

Agents in Yuma are currently arresting 30 people on a busy day—a far cry from the 450 a day in May. The detention facility held 70 people on Nov. 27.

“Just being able to patrol the border is the biggest thing,” Yuma Border Patrol agent Jose Garibay said about the drop in numbers. In May, with at least

[The Remain in Mexico policy] took away that 100 percent chance of them getting released into the country just because they have a child.

Jose Garibay, Yuma Border Patrol agent

half of the sector's agents tied up with transporting, processing, and looking after families and children, patrol time was severely limited.

Garibay said although the number of single adults from Mexico has been fewer than 10 percent of the apprehensions, among them were “a lot of murderers, child rapists, child molesters.” “We were catching a lot of violent criminals and recidivists who were trying to come into the country and had been caught two, three, four, five times in the past,” he said.

He said of the 68,000 deportable aliens apprehended in the Yuma sector this fiscal year, only about 7.5 percent claimed fear of return to their home country, which would start asylum proceedings.

“Many people claim that these people are running for their lives and they have no other choice,” said Garibay. But, he said, in Yuma, that's not the case.

“It's all economic. It's the same type of reason that the people [have always come] here for, the only difference is that these individuals are bringing kids with them and using them as shields to pull the heartstrings of America and the rest of the world.”

He said the vast majority of the aliens traveled from their home country—predominantly Guatemala—up to the border in air-conditioned buses or vans.

“So by the time they leave Guate-

mala, or wherever, on Monday, by Wednesday or Thursday, they're here at the border, and by Friday or Saturday they were out on the streets of the United States,” he said.

“That's how streamlined this process was for them, especially during the height of the crisis.”

Many of those crossing into Yuma were headed for one of four common destinations: Homestead, Florida; Charleston, South Carolina; Houston, Texas; or Oakland, California.

Illegal immigrant adults with children were released into the United States with ankle monitoring bracelets and court dates for their immigration hearings.

Garibay said a study undertaken by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Charleston found that 90 percent of families that were released with ankle monitoring bracelets cut them off.

“Imagine how many across the whole border,” he said.

Mexico Steps Up

Garibay attributes the implementation of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) and Mexico's deployment of its National Guard on its northern border as the major factors in turning the tide.

Also known as “Remain in Mexico,” the MPP is an agreement between the United States and Mexico, under which those who cross the U.S. border illegally will likely be housed by Mexico, instead of being released into the United States while they await court proceedings.

The program doesn't yet run across all sectors along the southwest border, but in Yuma it does, and it has proven effective. Asylum-seekers and others who cross into Yuma are processed by Border Patrol and sent to Mexicali, Mexico, to await proceedings.

“That was a huge deterrent for them, because it took away that 100 percent chance of them getting released into the country just because they have a child,” Garibay said.

However, the MPP doesn't yet operate for the neighboring Tucson, Arizona, border sector, and it's clear the numbers there are rising as smugglers divert the illegal border traffic from Yuma.

During the first six months of 2019, Yuma's apprehension numbers were higher than Tucson's. However after May when MPP started kicking in for Yuma, its apprehensions declined from almost 7,200 in June to 795 in October. In Tucson, apprehensions hit

5,500 in June, then dipped to 4,000 in August, before rising again to more than 6,350 in October.

“Once we get MPP across the whole southwest border, that'll be a huge game changer because it won't allow them to take advantage of that loophole,” Garibay said.

Checkpoints Back Open

Yuma had to close all three of its highway checkpoints during March, April, and May as more than half of the sector's Border Patrol agents had been diverted to deal with the humanitarian crisis.

“We don't know what is getting through,” said Yuma Sector Border Patrol Chief Anthony Porvaznik on April 17. “Last year ... we had just under 1,800 pounds of methamphetamine seized at our checkpoints. This year, we're far below that because we don't have our checkpoints open all the time. So, that's hundreds and hundreds of pounds of methamphetamine, dangerous drugs getting into the communities all across America, because it doesn't stay in Yuma.”

As with ports of entry, highway checkpoints are a boon for finding illicit narcotics hidden in vehicles.

Over two days in October, agents discovered more than 100 pounds of methamphetamine with an estimated value of \$240,000 at the Yuma checkpoints. A further \$450,000 in methamphetamine, cocaine, and fentanyl was seized over a weekend.

New Wall

Construction finished right before Thanksgiving on a new 22-mile stretch of wall just east of the San Luis port of entry. Much of the steel bollard wall is 30 feet high, and it replaces the old landing mat fence from 1990, which was essentially 13-foot sheets of corrugated iron.

“It's a huge upgrade from what we had in the past,” Garibay said.

The fence has an anti-climb plate at the top, and the steel slats are reinforced with rebar and concrete. It isn't impenetrable, but Garibay hopes it'll stop or slow down the majority of illicit crossings.

“It's going to make a huge difference for people that are working out here,” he said. “This is a huge game changer for us.”

A further 31 miles of barrier is slated to go up east of the new fence, as well as a 5-mile stretch up beside the Colorado River, where much of the family-unit traffic was crossing.

Grateful for Resistance

BRAD JOHNSON



Commentary

Speaking on a panel at an event hosted by George Mason University, former acting CIA Director John McLaughlin said he was grateful for the “deep state”

pushing for the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump.

Specifically, the moderator, CBS News' Margaret Brennan, asked: “There is something unique, you have to agree, that now that the impeachment inquiry is underway, sparked by a complaint from someone within the intelligence community, it feeds the president's concern, an often-used term about a ‘deep state’ being there to take him out?”

McLaughlin answered, “Well, you know, thank God for the ‘deep state.’”

This refers to a subject near and dear to my heart that I have been speaking and writing about for some time.

There are still a few political extremists who will at least pay lip service, suggesting there's no such thing as the “resistance” or “deep state,” but it's at the very least tacitly recognized to exist by pretty much everyone and isn't seriously debated by anyone of consequence. Some are pleased by the fact, such as McLaughlin.

The breakdown is that for the liberal mainstream media, the Democratic Party, and the never-Trump faction of the Republican Party, the deep state is something they agree with and are glad to see happening. McLaughlin underscores this state of affairs with his comments; they're united by their hatred of the president.

On the other side of the coin, there are groups of people deeply alarmed by the existence and activities of the deep state. They're the true American patriots who believe in and revere the U.S. Constitution, and those who support Trump and his policies and successes, or those who are just plain tired of the effluent that flows so prodigiously from Washington.

The lines are drawn and will play out in next November's presidential elections. All the smart money from both parties say that Trump is going to win, and win big. However, this doesn't

delve into why so many people view the deep state with so much alarm.

Look at what the deep state represents: a group of nameless, unelected bureaucrats who don't like the legally elected president of the United States and are dedicated to stopping him from doing pretty much anything and getting rid of him, if possible.

This state of affairs has evolved into an effort to actually impeach a sitting president, in what looks like a planned operation drawing from the ranks of the deep state willing to participate in such a thing.

There's a growing body of information that suggests coordination between Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), several of Schiff's staff members, the whistleblower, and others, long before the whistleblower complaint took place. The resulting implication is that the group decided in advance to use whistleblower laws as a method to attack Trump and were waiting for any sort of excuse to justify a whistleblower complaint. If that is indeed the case, Schiff, several of his staffers, and the whistleblower, and perhaps others, may be guilty of sedition.

Personal Ambitions

The resulting impeachment inquiry has demonstrated some other interesting elements of what is going on. Trump's most trusted adviser, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, is, for the first time, being looked at critically by the president.

Many of the high-level officials whom Pompeo put into those influential positions at the State Department are the very same individuals who have been testifying against the president during the inquiry.

Under questioning by Republicans, each and every one of the officials admitted that the president did nothing wrong or illegal. Their willingness to try to damage Trump in spite of no factual basis for doing so by their own admission is exactly the deep state. They prefer to stop Trump rather than uphold their oath of office to support the Constitution.

While Pompeo is a good person and a genuine supporter of the president, he did support, promote, and allow the deep state to prosper at both the CIA and State Department. Pompeo suffers

from what ails almost every politician in Washington: he has personal onward political ambitions.

It's widely recognized that Pompeo wants to run for president himself in 2024, which is not a bad thing in and of itself. However, as the head of the Department of State and earlier the CIA, it made no sense for him to make any attempt to get rid of the political extremists who control both agencies and bring in honest people because of the firestorm it would have created.

All politicians recognize that political firestorms of that nature would put them at the center of so much controversy that it would damage future political hopes. Trump now sees this for what it is, and it's why he is so critical of Pompeo at this juncture.

Similarly, the U.S. military is largely controlled by its deep state cadre, as we have seen from the recent resignation of the secretary of the Navy over the president's decision to pardon Navy SEAL Edward Gallagher.

Until recently, Trump held out hope that the Washington elites and critics would recognize and appreciate that he sincerely wants to do what is best for the United States. Now, it's clear for the president and everyone to see, that's not going to happen.

The leadership in all of our federal agencies is dominated by the deep state and is part of that famous swamp that Trump needs to drain.

My suggestion is to start draining the swamp that lives and thrives within the leadership of the Intelligence Community. Everyone at those levels has a full top-secret clearance and must take a polygraph exam. Immediately implement the inclusion of a question that asks if the individual believes his or her personal political beliefs are more important than supporting the U.S. Constitution.

Pull the clearance of anyone who can't pass that question and that swamp will get much smaller. Something must be done.

Brad Johnson is a retired CIA senior operations officer and a former chief of station. He is president of Americans for Intelligence Reform.

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

Their willingness to try to damage Trump in spite of no factual basis for doing so, by their own admission, is exactly the quality of the deep state.



Rep. Doug Collins (R-Ga.) (C) speaks with Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) as constitutional scholars testify before the House Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill on Dec. 4, 2019.



A Border Patrol truck drives long a canal road near the U.S.-Mexico border in Yuma, Ariz., on April 12, 2019.

The Budget Deficit Must Be a Conservative Cause

GARY L. GREGG



Commentary

The United States has faced many problems during the past few years, and many continue to plague the nation and the world.

The media tends to focus on sensational stories and not long-term issues. Through all the battles about the southern border wall, immigration, foreign policy, tariffs and trade, climate change, and impeachment hearings, the ballooning national debt has been all but lost.

It's just been a few years since the Tea Party movement rose from obscurity into a formidable political force that disrupted the U.S. political landscape with concerns about the size of government and the mounting national debt. Today, that movement is all but dead, and so are concerns with its agenda. But what could be more of a conservative issue than the problem of saddling future generations with debt?

Growing Debt

It feels like we have always had budget deficits to fight about. I grew up in the 1980s, and the battles over deficits seem never to have ended. As hard as it is to believe, though, we actually entered the 21st century with an annual surplus. In fiscal year 2001, for instance, the federal government had a surplus of \$128 billion.

Let that sink in for a moment—less than 20 years ago, our federal government was taking in more revenue than it spent. This year, on the other hand, it will spend \$1 trillion more than it realizes in revenue.

What happened? First, we had two rounds of tax cuts in 2001 and 2003 that weren't offset by either the projected high economic growth or spending cuts. Second, the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, reset the United States' political priorities. Trillions of dollars were spent fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that then spread to other nations as "the war on terror," while more money was spent domesti-

Less than 20 years ago, our federal government was taking in more revenue than it spent.

cally to defend the homeland. And it was all done without raising taxes to pay for the spending or cutting other programs as an offset.

Then came the Great Recession of 2008, with its plummeting tax revenue and the Obama-era spending spree that followed. Once the economy began to grow, there was no reset to our priorities and the government just kept spending and kept growing. In the past few years, we have cut taxes again and let spending rise as well.

The result is that we are now \$23 trillion in debt and adding another trillion dollars a year. Indeed, the past four years have seen budget deficits rise each year, the first such prolonged rise since the early 1980s, and those deficits are bigger than any in history, except for the four years following the Great Recession. Almost no one is talking about it.

And this atrocious record is coming at a time of record-low unemployment and strong performances in the U.S. economy. During times like these, our tax revenues should be rising, our need for domestic spending should be reduced, and we should be paying down the debt we owe to other countries.

A Moral Issue

What got us here? We can all share the blame, and should. Republicans have become ideological when it comes to tax cuts, never seeing one they didn't like. On the other hand, Democrats have never seen a domestic problem that couldn't be solved with more spending.

Foreign wars and a race to be more patriotic than the next guy has risen defense spending to nearly \$1 trillion a year. Entitlement spending is exploding, with almost no one having the courage to discuss it.

The spectacle of daily political and social outrages has come to dominate the news and distract our attention. And of course the United States faces other serious issues that demand our attention and concern as well.

How can we return to a focus on the debt and deficits? We must stop treating debts, deficits, taxes, and spend-

ing as merely economic or political issues. They have profound economic impacts, it's true, and come with political consequences for those making decisions in Washington. However, they should, at the core, be considered moral issues.

What is moral about profligate spending? What is moral about saving our own political hide by saddling future generations with debt? What is moral about serving our own immediate economic interests and passing the bill to our children? Deficit spending is profoundly immoral as it takes from future generations to serve our own. It's unethical as it robs Peter to pay Paul (without Peter even being around to know about it and be able to account for the theft).

The next time a proposal comes up on taxes, the economists and political consultants need to stay home. Those who have sold us a bill of goods telling us that every tax cut pays for itself and those who have never seen a program they don't want to fund need to step aside. Our political leaders, rather, need to start thinking morally and making bold moral decisions.

If we want to spend the money, we must raise the revenue. If we want to cut taxes, we must also cut spending. Like we do in our own home economies, we must work for and spend our own money and not take from the bank accounts of our children and grandchildren.

The great Edmund Burke once described society as a contract between the dead, the living, and the yet unborn. To the degree that we saddle future generations with debt to serve ourselves, we have broken that eternal contract—and there is nothing conservative about that.

Gary L. Gregg is the host of the podcast Vital Remnants and is author of a number of books on America's founding principles.

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



President Donald Trump speaks during a working lunch at the NATO summit at the Grove hotel in London on Dec. 4, 2019.

Under the Constitution the President, Not Unelected Bureaucrats, Makes Foreign Policy

ROB NATELSON



Commentary

Impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump are

unprecedented in that they center on foreign policy rather than alleged domestic abuses.

Congressional testimony has focused on Trump's wiring around professional foreign policy bureaucrats and his reliance on outside agents such as his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani. Witnesses have been outraged that Trump's opinions and actions are "inconsistent with the consensus views of the interagency," to use Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman's phrase.

These witnesses and their congressional sponsors apparently believe the consensus of professionals should control foreign policy. Furthermore, they seem to think the president's rejection of professional consensus is ground for impeachment.

But the Constitution squarely repudiates this "foreign policy by committee" approach. During the period leading up to the 1787 Constitutional Convention, prominent founders such as James Madison, John Adams, and John Dickinson carefully studied political history. They examined governmental structure throughout the Western world. They found that most monarchies had a unified executive (the king or queen), with the notable exception of ancient Sparta, which had two, largely co-equal, kings.

By contrast, most republics had plural executives. Some republics featured co-equal magistrates, such as the Roman consuls. Others, among them the Swiss cantons and the republics of ancient Greece, lodged executive authority in larger assemblies. The American states as then constituted each had a single governor or president, but granted him only a portion of the executive power, dividing the remainder between the legislature and an executive council.

A few republics featured a unitary executive, most notably the United Provinces of the Netherlands, which at the time was a federal republic.

The founders examined how plural and unitary executives conducted foreign relations. They found that unitary executives worked well, but that experience with plural executives was frequently disastrous.

The founders who did this

Until the Trump administration, the president's foreign affairs leadership was recognized universally, and both courts and Congress usually deferred to it.

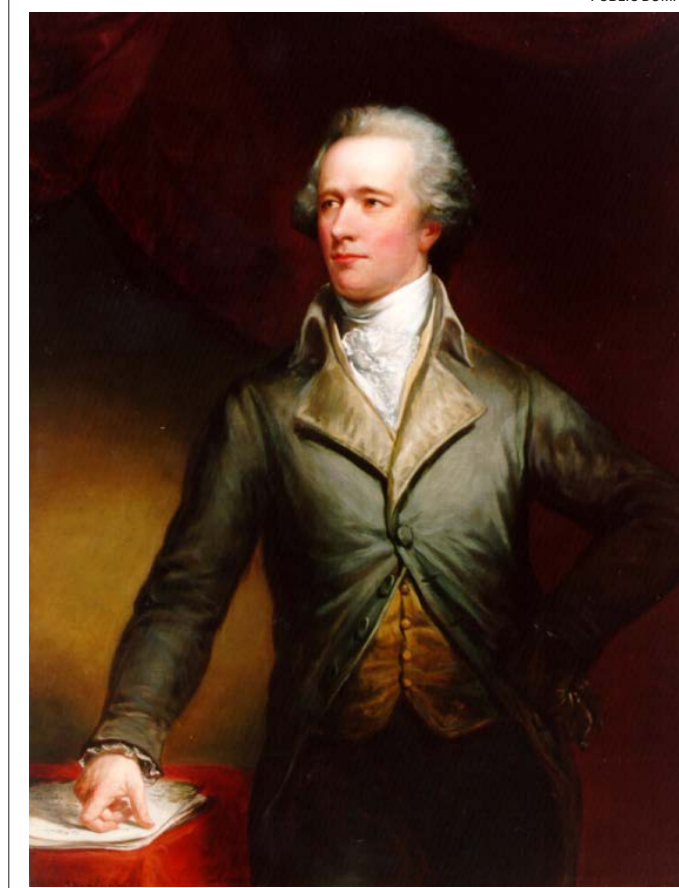
research shared it with others. Madison, for example, provided the highlights to other convention delegates. Adams, then U.S. ambassador in London, published a book about his findings.

Thus, it was no surprise that the Constitution's drafters, while opting for a large legislature, favored a unitary executive. Early in the convention, James Wilson of Pennsylvania announced that he "preferred a single magistrate, as giving most energy dispatch and responsibility to the office." After considerable discussion, his view prevailed. In Federalist No. 70, Alexander Hamilton explained some of the reasons to his New York audience:

"Energy in the Executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. The ingredients which constitute energy in the Executive are, first, unity; secondly, duration; thirdly, an adequate provision for its support; fourthly, competent powers. ... Decision, activity, secrecy, and despatch [sic] will generally characterize the proceedings of one man in a much more eminent degree than the proceedings of any greater number."

In other words, a single executive officer could act more decisively, more secretly, and more quickly than a committee. In addition, as Constitutional Convention delegate William Davie pointed out during the ratification debates in North Carolina, committee decision-making allowed each member to dodge responsibility for his actions. When the

Alexander Hamilton.



executive was a single person, everyone knew where the responsibility lay.

So the Constitution created a single executive magistrate—the president—and gave him wide authority over foreign affairs. Among the president's powers, the document listed authority to make treaties, appoint and commission diplomats and other officers, "receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers," serve as commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed."

This is an impressive list, but if you examine 18th century law and diplomatic practice it becomes even more impressive. The items on the list signal more than they first appear, because each item conveyed additional implied authority over foreign affairs.

The president's power to appoint foreign service officers included power to remove them. His power to "commission" officers included authority to instruct them. The power to "receive Ambassadors" encompassed dismissing them and extending, refusing, or breaking diplomatic relations. The president's duty to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed" empowered him to decide how to enforce statutes relevant to foreign affairs, such as laws on immigration and trade with other nations. The president's position as commander-in-chief gave him certain diplomatic prerogatives, particularly in time of war.

(Some scholars and jurists also find foreign policy powers in a constitutional provision called the Executive Vesting Clause, but I find this view unpersuasive and unnecessary.)

Admittedly, the Constitution didn't make the president's authority over foreign affairs absolute. The Senate may reject treaties and major appointments, and only Congress may declare war and fund federal activities.

Still, in foreign affairs, the Constitution dictates that the president leads.

This system usually has served America well, even when presidents have the temerity to disregard "the consensus of the interagency." Indeed, presidential political instincts sometimes are truer guides than diplomatic professionalism. President Ronald Reagan, for instance, adopted confrontational policies toward the Soviet Union first suggested by Sen. Barry Goldwater. Those policies made the foreign affairs establishment cringe, but the policies turned out to be correct:

Whereas the establishment had been gradually losing the Cold War, Reagan won it.

Until the Trump administration, the president's foreign affairs leadership was recognized universally, and both courts and Congress usually deferred to it.

All this changed when Trump assumed office. Since his inauguration, judges have peppered him with restraining orders on subjects traditionally within presidential discretion, such as immigration enforcement and national security. Now, committees of the House of Representatives are considering impeachment based on his conduct of foreign policy.

Trump's critics should recognize the dangers of proceeding in this direction. We don't need presidents who hesitate to act in the nation's best interest because some bureaucrat may leak information to a hostile congressional committee. Moreover, we don't want foreign leaders to become reluctant to speak frankly with the president for fear their words will embarrass TV screens worldwide.

Most importantly, these proceedings may endanger the Constitution's successful plan of executive unity and independence.

Of course, one might argue that the president has so many responsibilities these days that it's unrealistic to expect him to master the details of foreign policy. Since the mid-20th century, the president has become as the country's chief health officer, education commissioner, policeman, rescue worker, land use manager, and nanny. But these "responsibilities" have no constitutional basis. The Constitution assigns them to the states, not to the federal government. Presidential interference in these areas is the product of political usurpation facilitated by judicial malpractice.

It's legitimate to criticize Trump for not receding from activities the Constitution assigns to the states. But it's wrong to impeach him for exercising authority the Constitution does assign to him.

Rob Natelson is a former constitutional law professor who is now senior fellow in Constitutional Jurisprudence at the Independence Institute in Denver. He is the author of "The Original Constitution: What It Actually Said and Meant."

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



The Federal Reserve Building on Oct. 29, 2008.

KAREN BLEIER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

PUBLIC DOMAIN

In the Face of Continuing Protests, Mullahs Reload

MICHAEL LEDEEN



Commentary

We only have approximate figures concerning the recent bloodbath in Iran. According to recent data, 900 Iranians were killed by security forces, and many thousands, more than 10,000 total, were thrown into prison. Regime leaders have announced the imminent public execution of many prisoners, an obvious effort to cow the people into calling off the ongoing demonstrations.

Thus far, these have been the most intense anti-regime demonstrations in the country's history, not at all limited to a handful of towns and cities, but spread out across the map. Moreover, the protests have spread throughout society, from the well-to-do neighborhoods in the major cities to the smaller, poorer towns and villages in the agricultural domains. The regime treats them all the same, and political officials now routinely order the demonstrators shot, whatever their age.

So far, the uprising has continued, and both sides are preparing for further violence, in Iran and in neighboring states. Lebanon has had some of the most boisterous protests, as has Iraq, now without an effective government. And, as editors of the Free Iran Herald detail in their invaluable daily summary of current events carried in the Gateway Pundit, workers' organizations are not backing down at all:

"The Defenders of Labor Rights Association released a statement in support of the Nov. 15 uprising, which reads, in part: 'These protests, which took place in almost all cities across the country, reflect the widespread discontent with the current political and economic system.'"

According to The Gateway Pundit, "A strike continues at the Haft-Tappeh sugar growing and refining complex in city of Shoosh, in Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan, with picketing workers holding a large rally on Monday to show their refusal of a deal offered by the company's CEO. The strike has intermittently started and stopped as management has repeatedly promised to pay the owed back wages, and then always refused to honor their commitment. The picketers say they will not resume working until they are given all the wages they are owed, the regime frees their imprisoned union leaders, and the union is allowed to look at the company's accounting records."

So far, the uprising has continued, and both sides are preparing for further violence, in Iran and in neighboring states.



Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei delivers a speech in Tehran on Jan. 8, 2007.

This is replicated all over Iran, as workers demand payment for services long since rendered. The bulk of big businesses are owned either directly by the government or by the regime institutions that oppress the hard-working but almost never paid laborers who were the first to launch the recent demonstrations. Few recognize the substantial segment of Iranian enterprises owned and run by the Revolutionary Guards Corps, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and his cohorts, and top levels of the clergy.

It thus becomes easier to understand why the proximate cause of the recent demonstrations was a sudden increase in the cost of gasoline. The country has been wrecked, there has been a dramatic drop in the availability of fresh water, even nominally employed people aren't paid the salaries owed to them, the cost of living increases daily, and the slightest grumbling brings out the security forces. The protests are now endemic throughout the Iranian sphere of influence, and the Tehran regime is unable to contain them.

In the past week, the Iranian consulate in Baghdad has been torched three times, and the beltway around Beirut was shut down by protests. It was only recently that it was commonly believed that Iran was the dominant force in the region, but today, more and more people are wondering how much longer the regime can hold onto its own power, let alone expand its hold over neighboring areas.

Even efforts to expand Iranian sway over West European governments are coming up short. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif just canceled a trip to Rome after the Italian human rights federation wrote an impassioned letter to the government

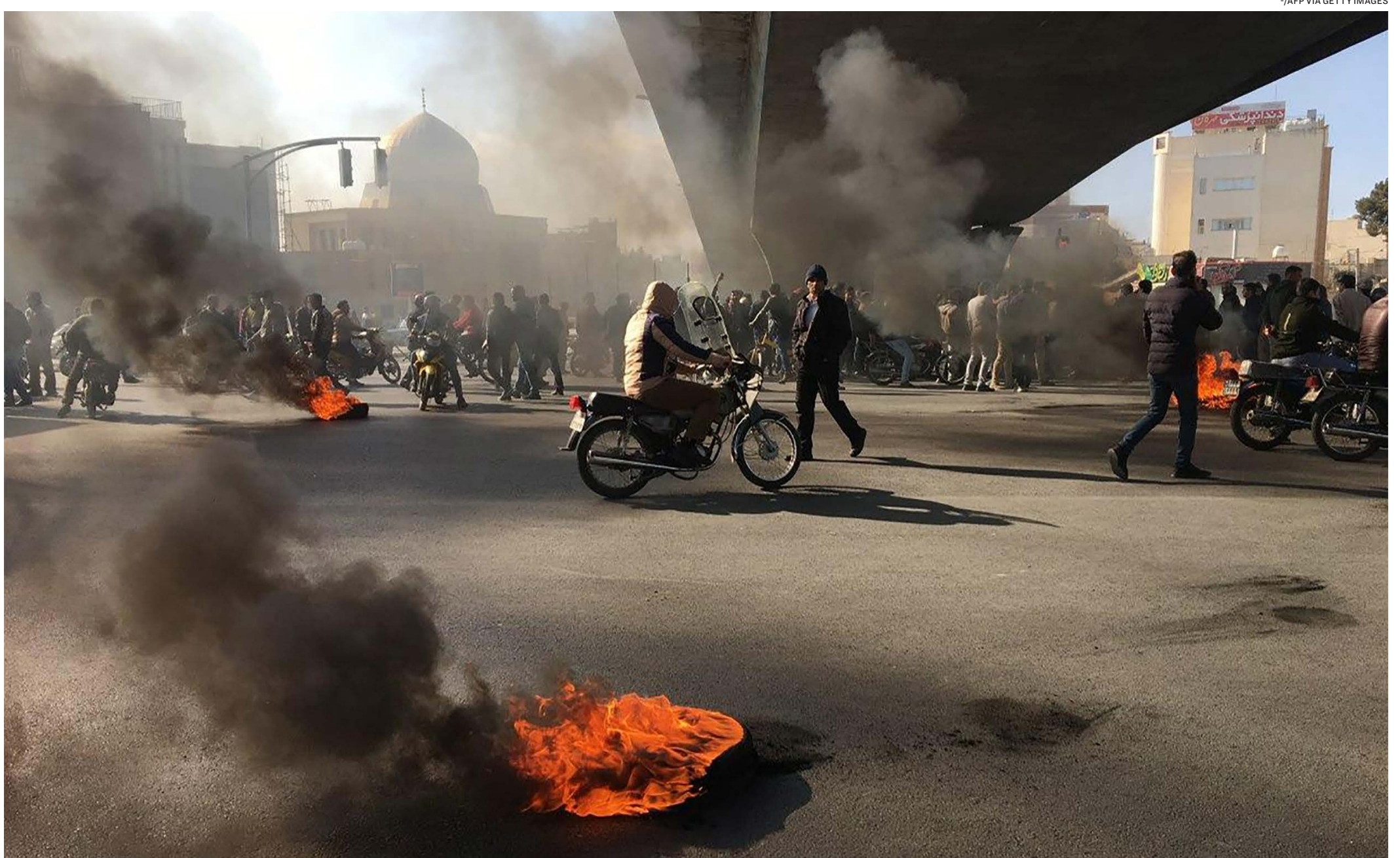
decrying the harsh measures against Iranian protestors. Italy has long advocated "normal" relations between the two countries, but Zarif's behavior shows that the repression of the demonstrations is having a corrosive effect. Given the weight of Italian trade unions, Zarif was undoubtedly warned away from the visit.

The question remains: What is the best strategy for the Trump administration? As Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Trump prepare for new sanctions, it is long since time for Trump to address the Iranian people directly, and to provide the demonstrators with the revolutionary technology they need to coordinate efforts all over the Middle East. Words are not enough, all they do is expose the United States as a believer in sanctions. The Iranian regime can find ways to elude the crush of sanctions.

Khamenei will fight on, but if the United States enters the fray, along with whatever European countries are prepared to join in support of the ongoing revolt, we may yet win this thing.

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

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



Iranian protesters rally amid burning tires during a demonstration against an increase in gasoline prices, in the central city of Isfahan on Nov. 16, 2019.