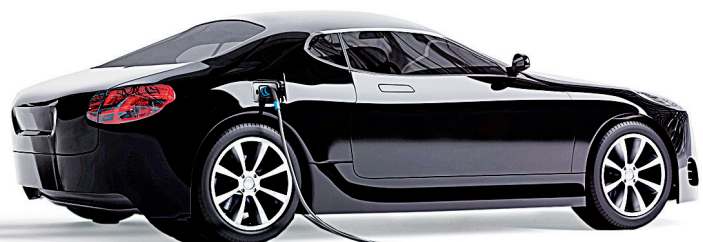


EPOCH INSIGHT

LIFTING THE CURTAIN

*on the Electric
Car Revolution*

BY KEVIN STOCKLIN



The Push for Electric

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION IS going full speed ahead to replace hundreds of thousands of gas-powered cars and trucks in the United States with electric vehicles in the name of slashing carbon dioxide emissions.

President Joe Biden has directed that half of all new passenger cars and trucks be zero-emission vehicles by 2030.

But are electric vehicles (EVs) as environmentally friendly as advertised?

Many of the environmental comparisons between gas-powered and electric vehicles are made post-production. But taking into account the entire lifecycle of the vehicle, including its components, dramatically decreases the “green” value of EVs.

Epoch Times reporter Kevin Stocklin examines the environmental impacts of both types of vehicles, as well as the whole cost of manufacturing them, their effects on the power grid, and their affordability for consumers.

“The problem with this [electric vehicle transition] is that it’s all driven by government policy more than consumer demand,” said Peter Hartley, an energy economist at Rice University.

Read more about what experts and analysts are predicting about Biden’s EV push, in this week’s cover story.



ON THE COVER

Analysts are challenging claims made by the Biden administration’s automotive industrial policy favoring electric vehicles.

ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES, GETTY IMAGES, SHUTTERSTOCK



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CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

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SPOTLIGHT

Fresh Graduates

ARMY CADETS CELEBRATE
after their graduation ceremony
at the Officers Training Academy
in Chennai, India, on April 29.

PHOTO BY R. SATISH BABU/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



The Week



An explosive ordnance technician operates robotic equipment during a military exercise.

PHOTO BY U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND GARY GRANGER JR./RELEASED

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As U.S. farmers head toward retirement, there's a lack of replacements in line. 52

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“The crisis at our Southern border is among the gravest threats to U.S. national security in our history.”

Rep. Mario Díaz-Balart (R-Fla.), about introducing H.R. 2, dubbed the “Secure Border Act of 2023,” in a statement



\$10 MILLION

The IRS has spent **\$10 million on guns, ammunition, and combat gear since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020**, according to the nonprofit Open The Books.

\$2 MILLION

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) has earmarked **\$2 million for the Universal Hip Hop Museum in the Bronx borough of New York** in the latest omnibus spending bill.

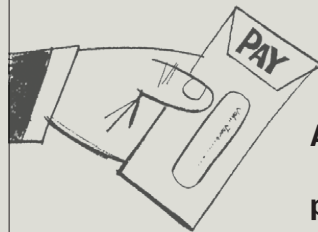
“[We] set a very ambitious goal of 65,000 new recruits this year, and we are not going to make that goal.”

Christine Wormuth, secretary, U.S. Army, during a Senate hearing



27 STATES

Financial officers from 27 states have sent a letter to President Joe Biden protesting a new policy from the Federal Housing Finance Agency that increases mortgage fees for some higher-credit borrowers while lowering them for more risky borrowers.



73%

Nearly three-quarters of American millennials live paycheck to paycheck, a PYMNTS and LendingClub survey shows.

\$500,000 GRANT — The Biden administration is offering a \$500,000 grant to help teach the English language in Pakistan, in part by providing “intensive professional development courses for Pakistani transgender youth.”

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The Department of Veterans Affairs in Washington on Sept. 19, 2017.

ECONOMY

Federal Reserve Raises Interest Rates by 25 Basis Points

THE FEDERAL RESERVE has raised interest rates by 25 basis points, lifting the benchmark federal funds rate to a range of 5 percent to 5.25 percent, the highest level since September 2007.

The vote to raise rates by a quarter-point was unanimous, according to a statement from the Federal Open Market Committee.

The post-meeting statement opened the door to a rate pause because the FOMC removed previous language that “the Committee anticipates that some additional policy firming may be appropriate.”

VACCINE MANDATE

Major US Agency to Keep COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Despite WH Announcement

A MAJOR FEDERAL AGENCY is keeping its COVID-19 vaccine mandate in place even as most agencies are ending their vaccination requirements.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is retaining its mandate, Secretary Denis McDonough said in a message to employees that was reviewed by The Epoch Times.

The White House’s announcement that many mandates are ending “will not impact” the VA, McDonough wrote. “To ensure the safety of Veterans and our colleagues, VA health care personnel will still be required to be vaccinated at this time.”

The VA is the second-largest federal agency, employing nearly 400,000 people. It was the first U.S. agency to mandate vaccination for its workers.

Most of the administration’s mandates are ending on May 11, the White House said.

FLORIDA

Florida Approves Bill Shielding Travel Records of DeSantis

FLORIDA HAS APPROVED A BILL that would shield the records of the publicly funded travel of Gov. Ron DeSantis and other elected officials from being published.

Senate Bill 1616, also known as the “Public Records/Transportation and Protective Services” Act, passed the Republican-controlled Florida House on May 2 after clearing the Senate last month.

The bill provides an exemption from public records requirements for records held by a law enforcement agency relating to certain security or transportation services for DeSantis and other elected officials.

It also would retroactively block the release of many records of DeSantis’s past travel.

NEW YORK

New York Becomes 1st State to Ban Gas Stoves

NEW YORK HAS become the first state in the country to ban gas stoves after the state Legislature approved a new state budget that includes a prohibition on fossil fuel combustion in most new buildings starting in 2026.

The \$229 billion state budget includes a ban on gas stoves, furnaces, and propane heating in favor of appliances such as heat pumps and electric stoves.

The measure prohibits the installation of fossil fuel equipment in new buildings below seven stories by 2026 and by 2029 for taller buildings, effectively requiring all-electric heating and cooking.

There are exemptions for places such as hospitals, manufacturing facilities, and restaurants. Existing buildings are also exempt from the ban.



State senate Republican say the ban would drive up utility bills and housing costs.



Japanese telecom giant Softbank's humanoid robot during a demonstration in Tokyo on April 30, 2020.

ECONOMY

14 Million Jobs Will Be Slashed Globally by 2027: WEF

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF) has warned that the employment landscape will change drastically over the next five years, with a loss of 14 million more jobs than those created. That net loss represents 2 percent of current employment.

The WEF's "The Future of Jobs Report 2023" attributes the figure to the increasing use of artificial intelligence, the transition to green energy, slower economic growth, and other factors.

The WEF expects that about 69 million jobs will be created by 2027, while 83 million jobs will be eliminated.

Clerical or secretarial roles, including bank tellers, cashiers, ticket clerks, data entry clerks, postal service clerks, and administrative and executive secretaries, will likely see the fastest decline over the next five years.

Meanwhile, certain tech roles, including those focused on AI and machine learning, sustainability specialists, business intelligence analysts, information security specialists, and fintech engineers, are expected to see an increase in employment.

CCP THREAT

US, Philippines Call for Peace Across Taiwan Strait in Joint Statement

THE UNITED STATES and the Philippines have reaffirmed the need for peace across the Taiwan Strait amid the Beijing regime's intimidating actions against the self-ruled island.

President Joe Biden and his Philippine counterpart, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., issued a joint statement in connection with their meeting at the White House that reaffirmed their commitment to deepening the U.S.-Philippines security alliance.

Marcos's visit to the United States marked the first by a Philippine president in more than a decade.

ASIA

Japan, South Korea Resume Economic Talks After 7 Years

JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA have agreed to resume finance ministers' talks that had been stalled for seven years, in the latest sign of thawing ties between the two nations strained by wartime disputes.

South Korean Finance Minister Choo Kyung-ho and his Japanese counterpart, Shunichi Suzuki, met on the sidelines of the annual Asian Development Bank summit in Incheon, South Korea.

Choo suggested that South Korea and Japan expand cooperation in semiconductors, space, and biotechnology. He also said the nations could cooperate to address low birth rates.

Suzuki said he intends to enhance bilateral financial relations with South Korea so that the nations can work together to address global economic challenges.

MIDDLE EAST

Leaders of Syria, Iran Meet in Damascus

IRANIAN PRESIDENT EBRAHIM RAISI and his Syrian counterpart, Bashar al-Assad, signed a series of bilateral agreements in Damascus on May 3, during the first trip to Syria by an Iranian head of state since 2011, according to Syria's SANA news agency.

On the eve of his trip to Damascus, Raisi described Iran-Syria relations as "deep and strategic" and stressed Tehran's readiness to help rebuild Syria's shattered infrastructure following more than a decade of conflict.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad speak in Damascus, Syria, on May 3.

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A MUST-SEE DOCUMENTARY FROM THE EPOCH TIMES

'THE FINAL WAR': A FILM ABOUT THE REAL EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES

It's not climate change. It's not raging inflation or even the national debt. The real threat to the United States and to the world is the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) 100-year plan to defeat America and establish world domination. There's no urgency in the mainstream media. That's why "The Final War" had to be made. Anchored by senior investigative reporter Joshua Philipp, and one-and-a-half years in the making, "The

Final War" is a film that is so relevant to current events and so important that we're offering it to EVERYONE for free. It will answer your questions about the pandemic, the impending invasion of Taiwan, and how the CCP works to keep the United States occupied with at least four global adversaries.

See the film. Know the danger. Be prepared. The final war is already underway.



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The Week in Photos

(Right)
A man looks at a rainbow on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, France, on May 1.



(Left)
A worker pours water on an elephant on a hot day at the Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Udyan and Zoo in Mumbai, India, on May 2.



(Above)
Boys swim along the coast in Qeshm, Iran, on April 29.



(Above) A participant competes in the men's singles quarter-final match of the Mutua Madrid Open at La Caja Magica in Madrid on May 3.

(Right)
Cows run to their pasture for the first time this year after spending the winter inside in Karsta, Sweden, on April 29.

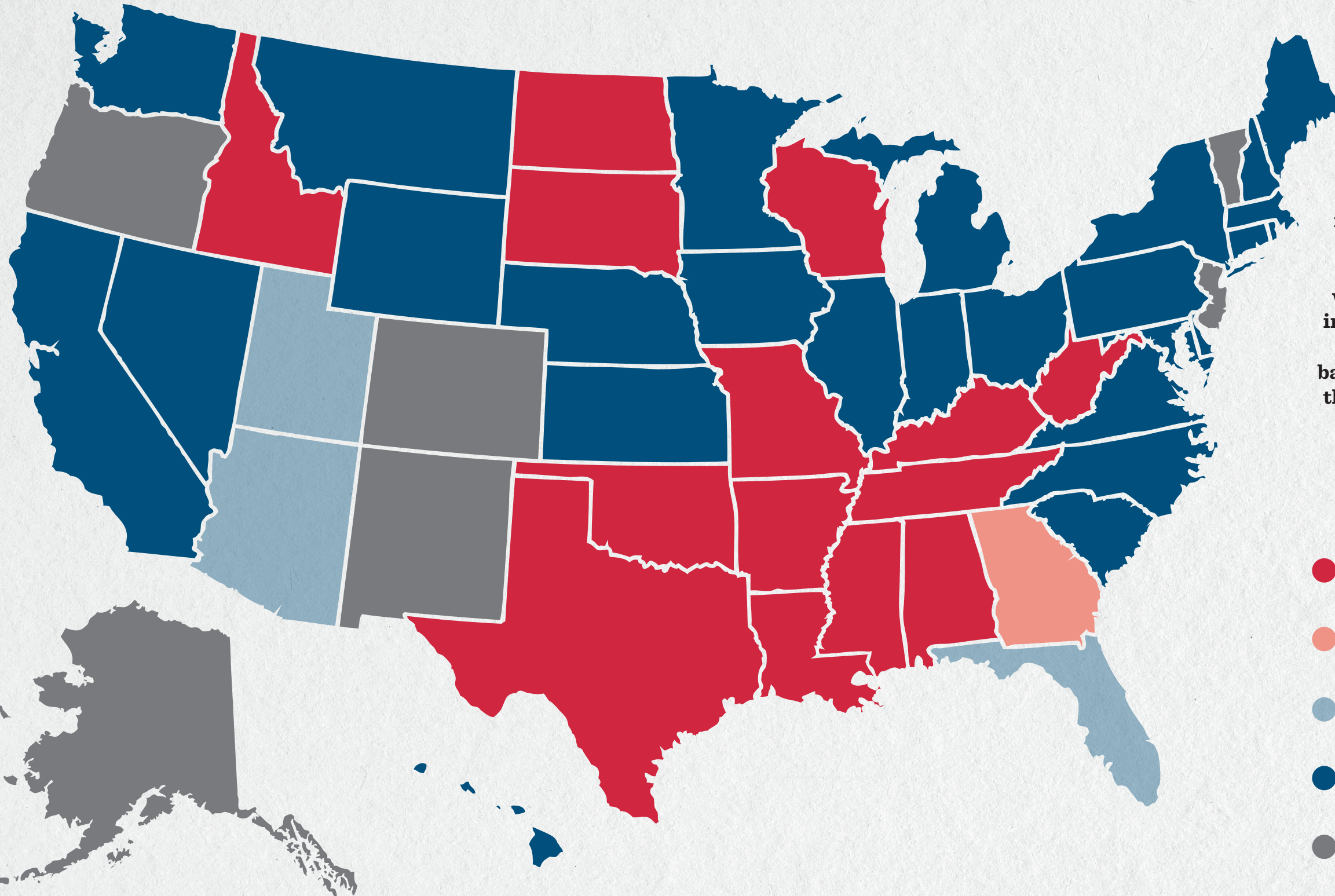


(Right) Participants play traditional drums during a festival in the Higashi-Ginza area of Tokyo on May 3.



COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: VALERY HACHE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; JONATHAN NACKSTRAND/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; RICHARD A. BROOKS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; JULIAN FINNEY/GETTY IMAGES; ATTA KENARE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; PUNIT PARANJPE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES



Since the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, a flurry of new laws, lawsuits, and trigger bans has made it difficult to determine which laws are actually in effect in each state. As of May 5, the following bans on abortion—or lack thereof—were in place in the states indicated.

- Near-total ban (with exceptions)
- Ban starts from 6 weeks of gestation
- Ban starts from 16 to 20 weeks
- Bans starts from 20 to 27 weeks
- No restrictions on abortions

WHERE EVERY STATE

Almost a year after the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*,

STANDS ON ABORTION

many continue to aim for a nationwide ban

By Jackson Elliott

MARK MINCK'S MOTHER WAS in a prime demographic for having an abortion—she was young, single, and pregnant. But her choice in the 1960s was to place her son up for adoption. And he grew up with loving parents, who made him feel chosen and proud to be adopted, Minck told *The Epoch Times*.

“You were just born in your family—they had to bring you home,” he recalled thinking as a child about other children. “Well, I was adopted. I thought it was something extra special.”

“She made the most important decision, at that moment, that she could make for my life. If she had made the other decision, I wouldn't have had a life. And not only would I not have had a life, if she had made a different decision, but my three children also wouldn't have existed, and never could have in the history of the world.”

He and his mother were miraculously reunited more than 50 years later by a DNA test, he said. It was then that he thanked her and introduced her to her grandchildren. The reunited mother and son shared joyful holidays, love, and laughter until her passing.

Today, Minck is the state chairman of the pro-life group Protect Human Life Florida, which aims to change the state's constitution with an amendment to protect unborn human life. It's a mission his birth mother embraced alongside him, one that made her “thrilled, extremely proud,” he said.

The amendment would recognize “the God-given right to life of the preborn individual,” outlawing abortion in the state.

And that effort puts Minck in a group of activists and legislators struggling to ban abortion state by state, nationwide.

New Political Battleground

The June 2022 Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* created a new political battleground, giving power back to state governments to ban or protect abortion.

In 1973, the Supreme Court had decided in *Roe v. Wade* that the Constitution includes a “right to privacy” that allows women to get an abortion. At that time, the justices acknowledged



The co-owner of the Hope Clinic for Women looks at an ultrasound machine inside an exam room in Granite City, Ill., on June 27, 2022.

three parts—or trimesters—of pregnancy.

For the first trimester, the *Roe v. Wade* decision allowed for no governmental abortion restrictions. The decision to terminate pregnancy was left solely to the discretion of the pregnant woman.

For the second trimester, justices ruled that states could “regulate,” but not outlaw, the procedure. For the third trimester, *Roe v. Wade* allowed states to restrict abortions.

Everything changed on June 24, 2022, when the Supreme Court overturned that 49-year standard in deciding a new case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

And since then, there's been a complicated cascade of new state laws addressing abortion.

With the *Roe v. Wade* decision no longer guaranteeing the legality of abortions in the United States, old laws—some predating the Civil War—have become part of the debate. Some believe those old laws call for an outright ban of abortion in their state.

In other states, lawmakers have passed laws

restricting abortion, then judges have blocked those new abortion bans.

And some states are strengthening legal protections for abortion.

Experts told *The Epoch Times* that much of current state abortion law is confusing, as a flurry of new laws, lawsuits, and trigger bans has made it hard to tell which laws are actually in effect.

Online searches for current abortion law often return contradictory information.

For example, Wisconsin currently has an almost total ban on abortion because an 1849 law went back into effect after the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. Before this law returned, Wisconsin banned abortions after 22 weeks. As of press time, a case to overturn the pre-Civil War law was before the Dane County court and awaiting a decision by the judge.

Laws in Transition

Walter Weber, senior counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, predicted that

the first round of victories in fights over new abortion laws likely will go to the well-funded pro-abortion lobby.

“The abortion lobby, if I'm gonna call it that, has a lot of power and a lot of money,” he told *The Epoch Times*. “And that often translates into electoral victories.”

Well-funded fighters can hand pro-abortion activists victories even in states where most people support pro-life measures, he said.

But as medical technology increasingly shows Americans that unborn babies are human, and as women open up about how abortion has hurt them, public opinion will swing back toward the pro-life movement, Weber predicted.

“After the dust settles on that, then I think we're going to start seeing a rollback. But it's going to probably take some time,” he said.

Minck called the resulting mix of current laws a “crazy hodgepodge.”

And as a result, pro-life leaders have been confused about what to do after the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, he said.

For years, pro-life leaders proposed legislation that attempted to ban some abortions, despite *Roe's* existence, or create laws that would be a “test case” for *Roe*, Minck said.

But with *Roe* overturned, these strategies no longer have a use, he said.

Pro-life leaders have been so focused on testing the waters that they haven't realized they can jump into the pool, Minck said.

“The focal point has been, ‘We've got to reverse *Roe*. We've got to reverse *Roe*. We've got to reverse *Roe*.’ Well, here we are.”

Where the Laws Stand

Most states ban abortion at different points in pregnancy. Some states don't ban abortion at all.

How states measure the dates is important. Some start counting weeks from the time of fertilization. Others start counting weeks since a woman's last menstrual period. This difference can add or subtract a few weeks from an abortion ban's start date.

Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia have almost total bans on abortion.

Alaska, Colorado, the District of Columbia, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, and Vermont all have no restrictions on when abortions can occur.

California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wyoming ban most abortions after “viability.”



“Many lawmakers don't want to touch [abortion].”

Mark Minck, state chairman, Protect Human Life Florida

FROM L. COURTESY OF MARK MINCK; ANGELA WEISS/AP/WIA GETTY IMAGES



Several states ban abortion after a certain week of pregnancy.

Georgia is currently the only state that prohibits abortion from the moment when a fetal heartbeat can be detected—about six weeks into pregnancy.

Nevada has legalized abortion “within 24 weeks after the commencement of the pregnancy” and continues to allow abortion afterward if a doctor has “reasonable cause to believe that an abortion currently is necessary to preserve the life or health of the pregnant woman.” This rule also allows abortion for mental health reasons.

Most state laws currently restricting abortion allow the procedure if it’s determined to be necessary to save the life of the mother.

Several states also allow abortion in cases of rape and incest.

But the number of states with either allowance could change, as lawmakers around the country reevaluate abortion laws during their first post-Roe legislative sessions.

No Big Drop in Abortion

Many activists who protested against the overturn of Roe v. Wade said they feared legal abortion would end with the court’s decision.

Yet many states continue to keep abortion legal up to halfway through pregnancy.

“Many lawmakers don’t want to touch [abortion] unless they live in safe, bright red districts where it’s popular with their base,” Minck said of the pro-life cause.

“It just gets relegated to a bullet point or a talking point in a campaign, rather than an actual ‘let’s take this on and do something about this’ issue.”

Because so many states don’t fully ban abortion, the end of Roe v. Wade has barely reduced the number of abortions in the United States. The number has only dropped by about 7 percent, according to a report by the pro-abortion Society for Family Planning.

Before the Dobbs v. Jackson decision, there were about 82,270 abortions performed in the United States every month, the report said. Now, it’s down to 77,073 abortions monthly.

If the rate stays the same, that would mean the changes triggered by Dobbs v. Jackson will move the United States from 987,240 abortions per year to 924,876.

There’s also evidence that women are traveling to get abortions, the report notes. States with fewer restrictions on abortion have seen

Demonstrators rally in support of abortion rights at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington on April 15.

FROM L: ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; OLIVER DOULLERY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

7%

BECAUSE SO MANY STATES don’t fully ban abortion, the end of Roe v. Wade has only reduced abortion by about 7 percent, a report shows.

23-24 WEEKS

UNBORN BABIES are considered viable at 23 to 24 weeks of pregnancy. But now some babies are surviving after being born even earlier.

6 WEEKS

GEORGIA IS CURRENTLY the only state that prohibits abortion from the moment when a fetal heartbeat can be detected, about six weeks into pregnancy.

overall abortion numbers increase.

Experts within the pro-life movement are unsure of how accurate those figures are, according to Kristi Hamrick, vice president of media and policy for Students for Life Action.

“What we know about the number of abortions is what Corporate Abortion tells us,” she said in an email.

Either way, a long-term division between “abortion states” and “life states” won’t work well, Minck said.

“We’ve got governors of states putting up billboards saying, ‘Hey, come to our state! We’ll welcome you with open arms so you can come and kill your preborn baby,’” he said.

“And corporations are going to build [abortion] into their [human resources] benefits package.

“Come to New York, take in a show, see Central Park, and abort your preborn child two days before your due date!”

“How does that work long term in our country?”

With abortion’s current legal status, a woman who wants an abortion will be able to get it, Minck said.

To end abortion, pro-life activists would need to get pro-life laws or constitutional amendments on the federal level, he said.

Although it’s important for pro-life activists to fight abortion’s cultural acceptance, settling the debate in the law is the long-term solution, he said.

“I would love it if abortion was unthinkable. I would also love it if theft was unthinkable. Or drunk driving was unthinkable. Or rape, human trafficking and home invasion, or assault and child abuse. People still do that kind of stuff,” he said.

He said he suspects that the Supreme Court eventually will rule on whether an unborn baby is a human life.

Meanwhile, many continue to work with the aim of a nationwide ban on abortion.

Hamrick’s group is working to pass legislation on the state and national levels against the abortion pill. They also hope to pass a “national heartbeat ban,” a law prohibiting abortion after

a fetal heartbeat is detectable.

“We want to see life protected as early as possible, as soon as possible, and we want to see services increase to provide support for families,” Hamrick wrote to The Epoch Times.

Her group also has petitioned the U.S. Food and Drug Association (FDA) to limit the use of the abortion pill to prevent environmental harm.

According to the complaint, waste from the abortion pill goes straight into the sewage system.

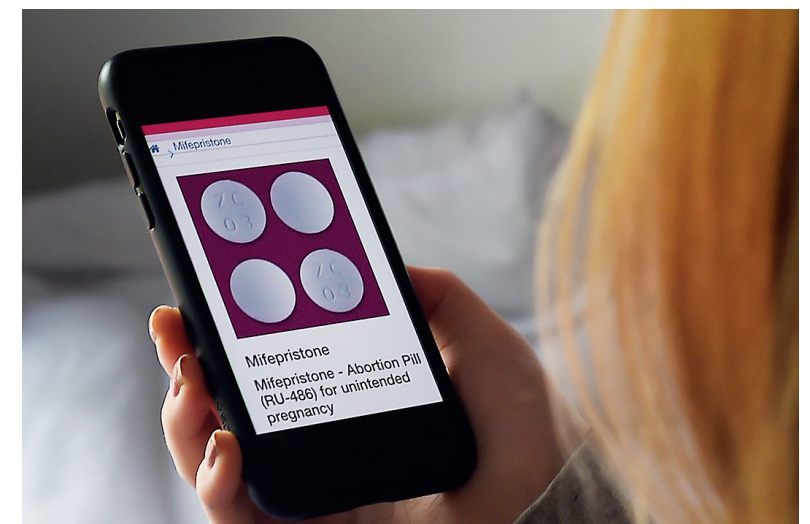
From there, the chemicals that cause abortion can harm pregnant animals or cause birth defects. Furthermore, the remains of dead babies are also flushed into the water supply from which we all drink.

“It is likely that the nation’s drinking water is contaminated in some appreciable amount by the increasing abundance of Mifepristone and human remains—as of February 2022, 54% of all abortions were performed via Mifepristone usage, up from 39% in 2017—being flushed into the system,” the complaint reads.

Students for Life Action has asked for a temporary pause on abortion pills while the FDA studies the potential environmental effects of chemical abortions.

Planned Parenthood, the nation’s lead- ❖

The U.S. Supreme Court has blocked new restrictions on Mifepristone set by lower courts.





ing provider of abortions, didn't respond by press time to a request by The Epoch Times for comment.

Triggers and Blocks

Before *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, some states created "trigger laws" designed to snap into effect immediately if the landmark federal case were to be overturned. As long as *Roe v. Wade* was upheld, those measures would be considered unlawful.

But when the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, trigger laws restricting abortion quickly went into effect in several states.

But pro-abortion activists were ready with lawsuits.

After these lawsuits, some judges have blocked pro-life states, at least temporarily, from restricting abortion.

In most states, judicial blocks have since ended, and those laws were allowed to go into effect.

But in other states, the blocks have proven more robust.

In Wyoming, a state constitutional amendment from 2012 reads, "Each competent adult

shall have the right to make his or her own health care decisions."

Now that wording is being used to block an abortion ban passed by lawmakers.

In court, the state has argued that legislators added the amendment in the hopes of counteracting potential overreach from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly known as Obamacare.

But Teton County District Court Judge Melissa Owens said the amendment's wording also allows abortion in the state.

Conservative Wyoming legislators have argued that abortion isn't health care; it's the taking of a human life.

A final decision in the case hasn't been made.

Abortion Availability

Judicial action blocking laws can have massive effects on abortion availability.

Wyoming law allows abortion up to viability, the point at which a baby could survive outside the womb. Unborn babies are considered viable at 23 to 24 weeks of pregnancy. But babies now are surviving after being born even earlier. At

Pro-life supporters attend the 50th annual March for Life rally on the National Mall in Washington on Jan. 20.

FROM L. ANNA MONE-YWAKER/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF WALTER WEBER

least one baby has been born at 21 weeks and survived.

The new state law would ban all abortions, except in cases of rape, incest, or severe risk of death or injury to the mother. But it's been challenged and blocked.

Utah, Indiana, Ohio, South Carolina, North Dakota, and Iowa also have passed abortion ban laws that judges have blocked.

In Utah, Indiana, Iowa, and Ohio, there are ongoing legal battles over these judicial blocks.

In South Carolina and North Dakota, the courts struck down the states' abortion bans.

But North Dakota has just passed another law banning abortion, except in the case of rape and incest, before the six-week mark.

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* has caused legislators in other states to increase protections for abortion.

In the past four years, California, New York, New Jersey, Minnesota, Colorado, Michigan, Illinois, Maryland, Rhode Island, and Delaware have passed laws protecting abortion access. The laws function in various ways.

In California, Kansas, Michigan, Vermont, Hawaii, Alaska, and Michigan, the state constitution makes abortion a right. Pro-life fighters in those states know that removing that right would be challenging.

All of those states require a vote by two-thirds of the legislators and a statewide referendum to amend their constitutions.

In Maryland and Rhode Island, legislators codified the federal *Roe v. Wade* decision into state law.

Old Laws

The overturning of *Roe v. Wade* also resurrected laws that had largely vanished from memory.

In Wisconsin and Arizona, laws dating back to the Civil War or earlier offered some of the strongest pro-life protections in the nation. These laws ban all abortions, with exceptions only to save the mother's life.

These laws have resulted in fierce court battles to determine abortion's legality.

Other old laws may have national effects.

An 1873 federal law against the mailing of obscene or crime-inciting matter bans the mailing or receiving of "every article or thing designed, adapted, or intended for producing abortion."

This sweeping ban could include abortion pills, surgical tools, and any other items used

in the procedure, Weber said. Even in states where abortion is legal, receiving by mail the tools to perform an abortion could be against the law, he said.

"If we're right in our interpretation that the Comstock Act means what it says, and you can't mail abortion pills, that does not mean that abortion is illegal everywhere nationally—it just means it can't be mailed," Weber said.



Walter Weber, senior counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, predicts the first round of victories in fights over new abortion laws likely will go to the well-funded pro-abortion lobby.

The town of Eunice, New Mexico, has sued for the enforcement of this law nationwide.

Federal enforcement of the 150-year-old law could have its greatest effect on the distribution of abortion pills, he said. Today, a majority of abortions happen by pill, he said.

"Normally, you're not mailing suction machines. You're mailing the pills," Weber said.

Abortion advocates have often described the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* as a "return to the past."

But it's likely that few imagined the past could return so powerfully to possibly put abortion at risk.

For Minck, his battle to end abortion started with his mother's decision to "choose life," he said. As an adult, he learned she'd never been "abortion-minded" and made the decision to place him up for adoption so he might be a blessing for a couple who couldn't conceive.

Women are traveling to get abortions, so that states with fewer restrictions on abortion have seen overall abortion numbers increase, a report says.

"She would specifically tell me she was proud of me for wanting to protect the preborn, more so than 'ending abortion,'" he said.

"It's a subtle distinction, but it kind of ties in with our proposed [Florida constitutional] amendment that affirms life, rather than denouncing abortion.

"I think ultimately she just found it providentially amazing that her decision to choose life was having an impact over half a century later through my efforts to protect all preborn life in Florida." ■

Nanette Holt contributed to this report.

Tesla electric cars at a charging station in Corte Madera, Calif., on Feb. 15.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

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INDUSTRY

NEIGHBORS

LITHIUM BATTERY

UNITE AGAINST

LITHIUM BATTERY BOOM

Local groups are challenging proposals to build manufacturing factories, storage plants

BY JOHN HAUGHEY



PROPOSALS TO BUILD LITHIUM-ION battery manufacturing factories and battery energy storage system (BESS) plants are being debated before local planning boards across the country, with most being enthusiastically endorsed by state and federal officials, including, in at least one instance, President Joe Biden himself.

But although the factories and plants are key components in meeting Biden's green energy goal of a 100 percent decarbonized electrical grid by 2035, the proposals face mounting opposition in some areas from prospective neighbors concerned about the "environmentally dirty process" required to build lithium batteries and to store energy, which critics say emits toxic chemicals that degrade ambient air quality, causes fires, and presents a high risk of explosion.

"Li-ion batteries have the potential to create pressurized explosions within explosion-proof or flameproof battery enclosures," a 2018 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health research brief reads.

As battery storage projects grow larger, fears about their explosive potential are growing correspondingly in residential areas near proposed development sites.

In April 2019, an internal failure within a lithium battery cell in an Arizona lithium-ion battery BESS exploded, severely injuring four firefighters. A September 2022 fire at a California BESS caused a daylong shelter-in-place advisory for the nearby community.

Residents say the carcinogenic chemicals and flammable liquids used to make lithium-ion batteries make the factory hazardous to their health and to the environment.

In addition to the environmental and safety risks, opponents say the technologies involved in building electric vehicle batteries actually require more energy and electricity than manufacturing internal combustion engines.

Nevertheless, battery factory and BESS plant building proposals are being proposed and approved nationwide with increasing frequency.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration



Factories and plants are key components in meeting President Joe Biden's green energy goal of a 100 percent decarbonized electrical grid by 2035.

reported in December 2022 that at least 23 large-scale battery projects, ranging from 250 megawatts to 650 megawatts, have been approved nationwide and will be operating by 2025.

Meanwhile, BESS plants are on the planning board in California, West Virginia, Arizona, and New Mexico, with one in New York and two in Alberta, Canada, having been withdrawn or denied since January.

Local groups in Colorado and Arizona are challenging zoning and other permits necessary for battery manufacturing plants, and grassroots opponents in Maryland are battling to stop a utility BESS project. Staten Island residents, with help from state lawmakers and congressional representatives, forced another BESS proposal to be withdrawn.

Colorado: Opponents Use Nextdoor App

The same day, March 6, that a faulty lithium-ion battery fire in the Bronx in New York demanded the efforts of approximately 200 firefighters, Amprius Technologies announced plans to build a \$190 million, 775,000-square-foot lithium-ion battery plant in Brighton, Colorado.

Brighton neighbors are speaking out against the California-based company's plans to create what would be Colorado's largest battery factory, but their opposition is unlikely to derail a deal that drew bipartisan applause when it was announced.

Colorado legislators, Democratic Gov. Jared Polis, and Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-Colo.), a former governor, all support the proposed factory, which Amprius Technologies stated will create more than 330 jobs that will pay an average salary of more than \$65,000.

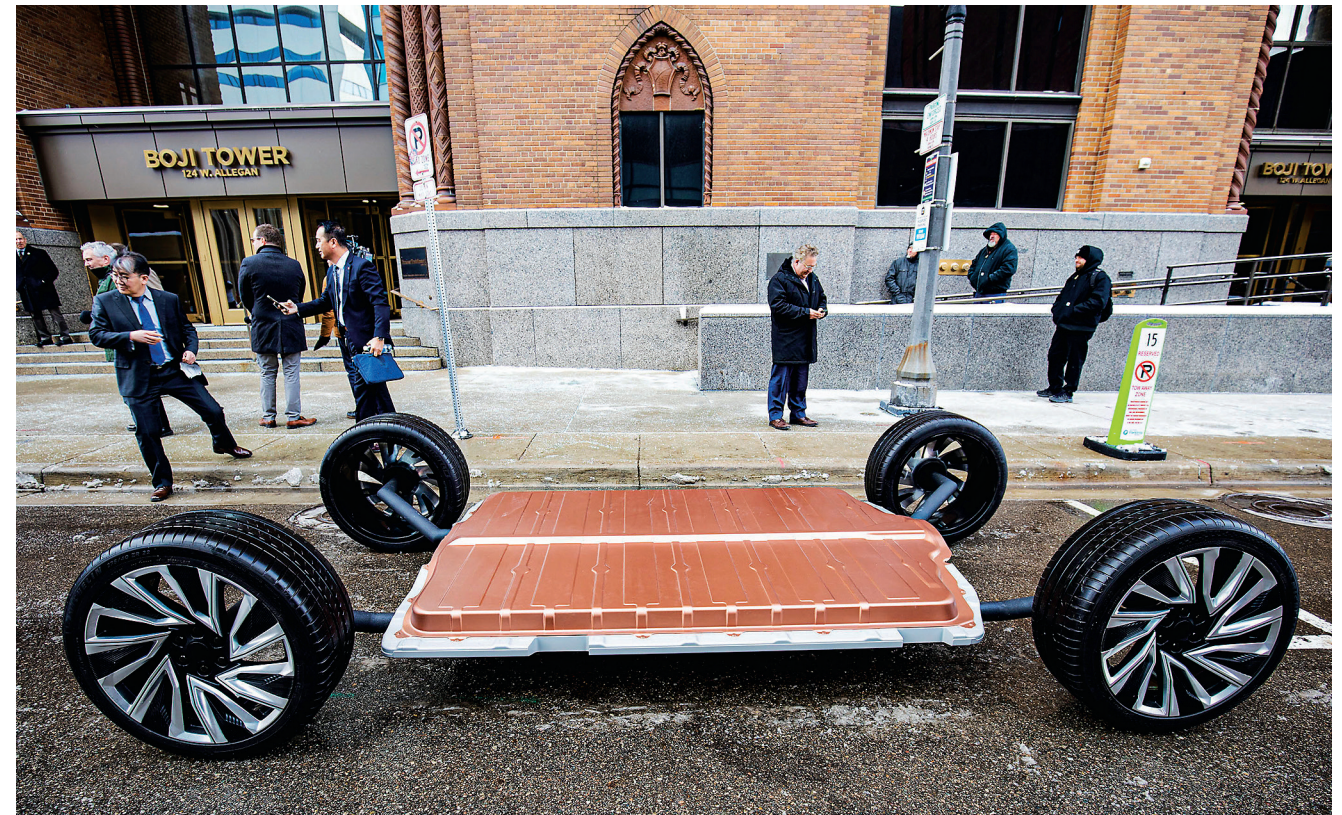
But prospective neighbors have noted that the factory, set to open by 2025, is across a road from a residential neighborhood and within a mile of multiple schools, the Platte Valley Medical Center, and the city's water plant.

Residents have said that carcinogenic chemicals and flammable liquids used to make lithium-ion batteries make the factory hazardous to their health and to the environment.

Using the social media app Nextdoor, neighbors have rallied opposition to the proposed factory, filing a petition signed by 300 residents urging the Brighton City Council to deny a precursor zoning change that Amprius Technologies needs to begin building batteries.

Neighbor opposition is unlikely to stop the project. Adams County has provided the company with a slate of incentives, and the Brighton City Council has approved \$929,000 in use and

FROM L: DREW ANSENER/GETTY IMAGES; BILL PUGLIANO/GETTY IMAGES



property-tax rebates.

Amprius stated that it chose Brighton over sites in Texas and Georgia because it already has a 1.3-million-square-foot building on it with "a structural layout ideal for a gigawatt-hour scale lithium-ion battery factory."

It stated that fears about potential health hazards emanating from the plant are unfounded and that it will "comply with all federal, state, and local environmental, health, and safety regulatory requirements."

Amprius Technologies CEO Dr. Kang Sun said the company coordinated extensively with the Colorado Economic Development Commission, Adams County, and the city "to meet the substantial market demand for [the company's] breakthrough silicon anode lithium-ion technology."

The plant will have the build-out manufacturing capacity of 10 gigawatt hours of energy.

Amprius's \$190 million investment includes a \$50 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Manufacturing and Supply Chains made available under 2021's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

"We need more batteries to power the future, and now we will be manufacturing more of them right here in Colorado," Polis said in a March statement. "We are excited to welcome

A General Motors Hummer electric vehicle chassis sits outside of an event in Lansing, Mich., on Jan. 25, 2022.

Amprius to Colorado, bringing over 300 new good-paying jobs, and joining Colorado's innovative and collaborative business community."

It's uncertain when the proposed zoning change will go before the city council. On April 15, Amprius signed a formal lease with the landowner contingent on securing a zoning change by July 1, 2024.

Arizona: Neighbors Make a Pitch

Residents near a proposed 1 million-square-foot LG Energy Solution lithium-ion battery manufacturing plant near Queen Creek, Arizona, have filed a petition calling on local officials to deny the project, which would be the largest stand-alone battery factory in North America.

"The creation of electric car batteries is an environmentally dirty process. Activities generally produce emissions from particulate matter and air pollutants from fossil fuel combustion such as greenhouse gases and nitrogen oxide. Lithium batteries and their production entails high CO2 emissions," reads the petition, which had nearly 4,000 signatures as of April 23.

"Emissions of greenhouse gases, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter from [lithium battery] production is almost double compared to the emissions from internal combustion production. This is largely ❖



due to the high energy demands required for battery production.”

After receiving approval of a precursor development agreement between the company and the city of Queen Creek and Pinal County on April 19, South Korea-based LG Energy Solution announced it would build its \$5.5 billion manufacturing plant that will employ 2,800 on a 650-acre site southeast of Phoenix–Mesa Gateway Airport.

“Our decision to invest in Arizona demonstrates our strategic initiative to continue expanding our global production network, which is already the largest in the world, to further advance our innovative and top-quality products in scale and with speed,” LG Energy Solution CEO Kwon Young Soo said in a statement.

LG Energy Solution’s proposal was lauded by Biden, who praised it as “the largest investment in a single battery facility in North America,” made feasible by his economic plan.

He said in a prepared statement: “For far too long, we outsourced jobs and manufacturing, and imported goods, while the future was made elsewhere. Because of my Investing in America

A bank of lithium-ion batteries at the University of California–San Diego in La Jolla, Calif., on Sept. 16, 2022.

agenda, we’re finally making the future in America and Arizona again—and tackling the climate crisis at the same time.”

Despite the presidential endorsement, local opponents aren’t backing down. Spearheaded by the group Concerned Citizens in San Tan Valley, they met April 25 at a Baptist church and planned to attend the Pinal County Board of Supervisors meeting on April 27.

Maryland: 2-Year Battle Won’t Stop BESS Plant

Utility company Pepco plans to build a 1-megawatt energy storage plant that will include lithium batteries near Oxon Hill, Maryland.

Nearby residents have unsuccessfully lobbied the Prince George’s County Board of Supervisors to deny permits and approvals for the project for more than two years.

Opponents maintain that the county and Pepco haven’t addressed their concerns about the safety of the operation’s “untested technology” and that federal, state, and local officials appear more interested in checking “clean

energy boxes” than in addressing effects on nearby communities.

Neighbors noted that a day care center and schools are within a short distance of the plant, that local fire departments are ill-equipped to deal with lithium battery fires and chemical explosions, and that Pepco hasn’t provided a transparent hazard mitigation analysis.

In a statement, Pepco maintains that it considered alternate sites that also faced opposition from prospective neighbors. It chose the Livingston Road site for its Battery Energy Storage Project in 2021 because it houses an existing substation that “is expected to exceed its capacity in 2027.”

The plant “will allow Pepco to defer the need to build a new substation in the area, which helps keep customer rates affordable,” Pepco said. It “exceeds current Prince George’s County and Maryland codes and will help ensure the highest level of safety.”

The utility company stated that it will establish a training program for fighting lithium fires with local fire and rescue agencies. The Prince George’s County Fire/EMS Department stated that it has discussed “implementation of a training plan” with Pepco but that no start date has been set.

Despite opposition, the project is pushing forward. Former Maryland comptroller Peter Franchot, who was defeated by Gov. Wes Moore in the 2022 Democratic gubernatorial primary, in a March letter to the Maryland Public Service Commission said residents have valid concerns that should be addressed.

“The research remains inconclusive on the safety, environmental, and health impacts of this clean energy technology, especially when such a facility is built near residential or high-traffic communities,” Franchot said. “As the residents and businesses who will be directly impacted by this project—none of whom will directly benefit from the energy stored at this facility—it would be unconscionable for this project to proceed until the concerns have been adequately addressed.”

New York: A Win for the Neighbors

In January, New Leaf Energy officially withdrew its plans to build a 120-megawatt lithium-ion BESS plant in Bulls Head on Staten Island in New York, after residents and community leaders raised objections.

New Leaf’s BESS plant was to include six large-scale rechargeable lithium-ion battery systems manufactured by Tesla, each one capable of storing up to 20 megawatt-hours of electricity. It would store energy during periods of low

23 PROJECTS

THE U.S. ENERGY Information Administration reported that at least 23 large-scale battery projects have been approved nationwide and will be operating by 2025.

demand that Con Edison could tap into during peak hours.

Bulls Head residents were alarmed by its placement, in the parking lot of Our Lady of Pity Catholic Church, close to six schools.

State Assemblyman Sam Pirozzolo spearheaded residents’ opposition to the BESS operation and said state lawmakers would look at state land-use statutes to ensure such operations are allowed in residential areas.

“Although these facilities are beneficial to our distribution grid, due to risk of fire and exposure to toxic chemicals, this has no place in school or residential zones. This project lacked concern for public safety and common sense, and my office will always stand up to protect their children and neighborhoods. I will move forward with introducing legislation at the state level to prevent these situations from occurring in sensitive zones in the future,” he said.

Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-N.Y.) said in a statement that “while the battery storage facilities may be the future of energy infrastructure, they don’t belong in residential communities.”

“The plan to place one at Our Lady of Pity’s parking lot was inappropriate. I’m pleased New Leaf has rescinded its proposal and I will continue to support Assemblyman Pirozzolo’s efforts to stop others from potentially hazardous placement in our community,” she said.

New Leaf Energy’s operation would have been Staten Island’s third lithium-ion BESS plant. There is one in Eltingville, and NineDot Energy is building one in Great Kills that will be operational by year’s end.

Local planners in 2022 denied a proposed BESS operation in Great Kills because the 6,878-square-foot fenced-in site was adjacent to homes and retail businesses, including a bakery. ■

Two people ride an electric scooter (L) next to others riding bikes along Venice Beach in Los Angeles on Aug. 13, 2018.



FROM L: SANDY HUFFER/AN/PVA/GETTY IMAGES; MARIO TAMIA/GETTY IMAGES

In Boki, where both Sunday and Angela Abang are based, one elephant was killed in 2015. But because of the strong conservation awareness, some of the farmers involved in killing the elephant were ostracized, and some people's properties were destroyed.

PHOTO BY STEEVE JORDAN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

WILDLIFE

CONFLICTS INCREASE AS FARMERS EXPAND INTO WILDLIFE TERRITORY

Competition for limited space and resources in Nigeria is leaving small farmers destitute

BY EKPALI SAINT

AT 6 A.M. EVERY DAY, 55-YEAR-OLD Sunday Abang hops on a motorcycle at his house in Boki, a farming community in Cross River state in south-east Nigeria.

It takes him at least two hours to reach his destination, his cocoa farm, where he spends most of his day carefully cutting down pods and collecting them in baskets.

This was his typical day until one Monday morning in March, when he arrived at his farm and found his crops damaged by wildlife.

"What I saw made me weak," he said. "The animals destroyed everything in my farm."

Abang, just like every other farmer in Boki, relies on farming to meet his fami-

ly's daily needs and pay for the education of his children. Now that his livelihood has been destroyed, meeting those needs is his greatest concern.

"We don't have food, and some of my children schooling outside [the community] have returned home because there is no money [to pay their fees]. We are dying in silence," the father of 11 told *The Epoch Times*.

The Cross River gorilla is the most threatened ape species in Africa, with a population of fewer than 300 surviving individuals.

Cross River state is also home to several other endangered primate species, including the Nigerian-Cameroonian chimpanzee and the drill, as well as forest elephants, forest buffalos, duikers, and

birds including the grey-necked rock-fowl. All these are found in Afi Mountain Wildlife Sanctuary, Mbe Mountain Community Sanctuary, and the Okwangwo division of Cross River National Park in Nigeria, and in protected areas in neighboring Cameroon.

In search of food, these creatures come out of their natural habitats and raid crops cultivated by local farmers. And elephants also destroy farmlands each time they are migrating from the Mbe Mountain to Takamanda Forest Reserve in neighboring Cameroon.

Environmentalists blame these encounters, which global agencies term as "human-wildlife conflicts," primarily on the expansion of farmlands near the protected areas. ❖



A boy stands while his cattle graze near some farms on the outskirts of Sokoto, Nigeria, on April 22, 2019. Residents and wildlife are competing for space and resources, making conflict inevitable.

The conflict, which occurs mostly in regions where rural communities border protected areas, often leads to people killing animals in self-defense, or as preemptive or retaliatory killings, which can drive species to extinction, according to the U.N. Environment Programme (UNEP).

Before now, wildlife's natural habitats used to be miles away from people's residences, says Peter Bette, a Boki-based environmentalist.

But things have changed, now that agriculture, which is an important part of rural people's livelihood, is making people encroach into the natural habitat.

The encounters are increasing as both humans and wildlife compete for space and resources, making more conflict inevitable.

"We have moved closer to their habitat because of human activities, especially as farms are expanding. Their habitats have been tampered with, [and] they are competing with human beings," Bette, team leader of Biakwan Light Green Initiative, a local nongovernmental organization

promoting primary environmental care and natural resource conservation, told The Epoch Times.

Samuel Odunlami, a senior lecturer at the University of Port Harcourt's Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, agrees. "We are very close to where they normally get their food. Where they live and go about their natural activities have been reduced," he said.

A Global Concern

Globally, conflict-related killing affects more than 75 percent of the world's wild cat species, as well as many other terrestrial and marine carnivore species

300
INDIVIDUALS

THE CROSS RIVER GORILLA is the most threatened ape species in Africa, with a population of fewer than 300 surviving individuals.

such as polar bears and Mediterranean monk seals, and large herbivores such as elephants, according to a report by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and UNEP.

The report, "A Future for All: The Need for Human-Wildlife Coexistence," notes that human-wildlife conflict is escalating around the world, on land and under water. One of the direct impacts of this conflict is a loss in annual yields, which in turn affects the income of local farmers.

A 2011 study that assessed the human-wildlife conflict in Filinga Range of Gashaka Gumti National Park, Nigeria's largest reserve, revealed that out of 853 bags' worth of crops (about 93,800 pounds) expected from a planting season, 379 bags, or 44 percent, were destroyed by primates—mainly tantalus monkeys and baboons.

This affects the long-term financial health of farmers, especially as they sometimes borrow money to farm.

"So farming is like [an] investment, [but] because animals are looking for food, they destroy it. Harvest is always

poor, so farmers don't get returns from their investment," Odunlami told The Epoch Times.

Angela Abang cultivates taro and banana. She's one of the farmers in Boki complaining of poor harvest since the wild animals raided her crops.

Until April 2022, she cut bananas from her farm every two weeks to sell. One banana bunch earned 800 Nigerian nairas (\$1.73). Sometimes, she cut 18 bunches or more.

"For now, I am at home doing nothing. If I see someone to give me a job, I will accept," the 41-year-old mother of two said.

Just like Angela Abang, Sunday Abang always had a bountiful harvest, sometimes up to 30 bags or more, with each bag fetching \$119.43.

Experts are concerned that the increasing invasion of farmlands by wildlife will eventually result in retaliation, a major threat to conservation given that the conflict exposes the wildlife, most of which are endangered, to extinction.

In 2019, 121 people were killed by wild elephants in Sri Lanka. In the same year, 405 elephants were also killed in the country due to human-wildlife conflict.

In Indonesia, 292 crocodiles were killed in 2018 by villagers in the country's West

Papua Province. The killings were an act of reprisal for a local farmer who was killed while harvesting grasses for his cattle in a crocodile sanctuary.

The conflict is also increasing in Africa. Between 1990 and 2007, lions attacked more than 1,000 people in Tanzania—home of the world's largest lion population—and humans have retaliated at different times.

"WE ARE DYING IN SILENCE."

Sunday Abang, local farmer

In 2020, 90 people in Kenya were killed by wild animals, and in retaliation, seven elephants were killed by the local community.

Last year, local farmers from Cameroonian border villages killed wildlife from Nigeria's Gashaka-Gumti National Park, according to a local report. The wildlife was said to cross the Cameroon border to eat farm crops.

In 2018, local hunters killed one elephant said to have invaded the farmlands of residents in Idanre, a community in Nigeria's Ondo State.

At that time, Ojo Adaralode, president of the hunters association in the area, said the killing of the elephant from the thick forest was "to save the lives and properties of the people living in communities."

In Boki, where both Sunday and Angela Abang are based, Bette said one elephant was killed in 2015. But because of the strong conservation awareness and indigenous by-laws that prohibit killing and eating of animals, some of the farmers involved in killing the elephant were ostracized and some people's properties were destroyed.

But as the demand for space and resources continues to be on the rise,

Odunlami believes that Boki residents might one day retaliate if there are no measures to enable the people to live harmoniously with the wildlife.

"National parks have laws and regulations, so ordinarily, there should be no killings of animals," he said. "Animals move primarily to look for food and shelter. As they damage crops, the people might retaliate."

Push for a Solution

The WWF-UNEP report states that there are practical solutions that will encourage coexistence between humans and wildlife.

Some solutions, Odunlami said, include compensating farmers for livestock or crop losses, installing fencing, and using sensory deterrents, such as shouting and beating objects, to ward off wildlife.

Odunlami said Nigeria can adopt some of these solutions that are already working in other

countries, such as in Kenya, where deterrents such as seismic vibrations are used to frighten and keep elephants away from farms.

"There is a need to also educate the people who are living very close to the habitat and inform them about the consequences of moving close to the habitat," Odunlami said.

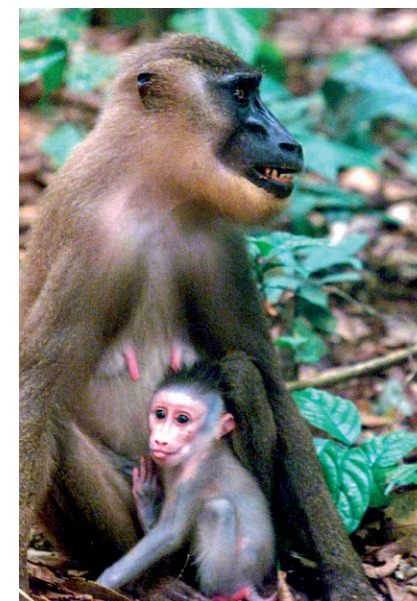
Another approach, suggests Bette, is bee farming. "No matter how strong the animals are, when bees surround them, they will run," he said.

Another method is planting pepper plants, as the odor can keep animals away, he said.

Both Sunday and Angela Abang believe that the government plays a critical role in ensuring these solutions are provided. But because the people barely get the government's attention on conservation issues, they are concerned that solutions might not come their way any time soon.

"There is no good leader in Cross River state who is giving a helping hand to farmers," said Sunday Abang, who's making efforts to return to his farm to start over.

"I have told my [workers] we should go there and start making noise to chase the animals away." ■



A drill monkey with her baby in Boki, Nigeria, in this file photo.

FROM LUIS TATO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; PLUS UMI KEPEL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

SPOTLIGHT

A Run for a Cause

DOGS AND THEIR OWNERS participate the first edition of the 4K Pet Run "A Race with a Cause," a fundraising event for sheltering rescued dogs in Caracas, Venezuela, on April 30.

PHOTO BY YURI CORTEZ/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Will Trump, Biden Meet Again in 2024?

Independent voters are equally split between Trump and Biden, according to polls

By Jeff Louderback *News Analysis*

NOW THAT PRESIDENT Joe Biden has formally announced his bid for a second term, the United States is one step closer to a rematch that polls suggest many Americans don't want.

No high-profile Democrat has entered the party's 2024 presidential primary. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who declared his candidacy earlier this month, is considered a monumental underdog, and Biden is expected to win the party's nomination next summer, according to surveys.

Former President Donald Trump has several contenders for the Republican presidential nomination, but polls show he has a substantial lead over a pool that includes Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, among others.

DeSantis and Pence have yet to formally enter the race.

Polling Favors Trump, Biden

An Emerson College polling survey released on April 27 shows that Biden has a 41 percent approval rating, and while 65 percent of Democratic voters believe that he should be the 2024 Democratic nominee, 35 percent think it should be someone else.

"Driving Biden's lower approval this month is independent voters, 37 percent of whom approved of the president in February, which has dropped to 30 percent

this month," said Spencer Kimball, executive director of Emerson College polling. Biden, Kennedy, and self-help author Marianne Williamson are currently the only candidates in the 2024 Democratic presidential primary. The Emerson College poll indicated that Biden leads with 70 percent support, compared with 21 percent for Kennedy and 8 percent for Williamson.

Trump leads the Republican primary with 62 percent, followed by DeSantis at 16 percent, according to the survey. No other candidate received double digits.

"Independent voters are nearly split on the presidential ticket between Trump and Biden; 34 percent would vote for Biden and 33 percent Trump," Kimball said. "A third of independents support someone else or are undecided."

In a video posted in the early morning hours of April 25, Biden announced that he was running for reelection.

"The question we are facing is whether, in the years ahead, we have more freedom or less freedom," he said. "More rights or fewer."

"This is not a time to be complacent. ... That's why I'm running for reelection," Biden said.

He targeted Trump and his supporters

on April 25 by saying that "around the country, MAGA extremists are lining up to take on those bedrock freedoms."

"When I ran for president four years ago, I said we were in a battle for the soul of America. And we still are," Biden said.

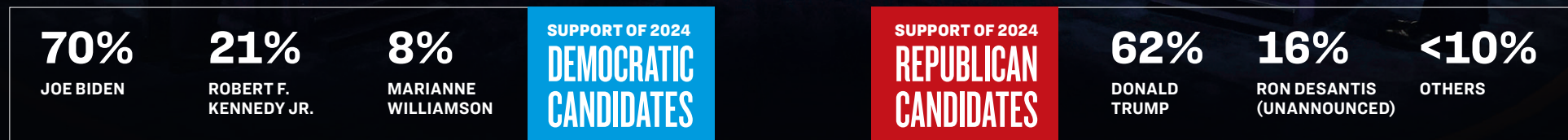
His words are "a dog whistle for the left," according to Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, who questioned the authenticity of the comments that the president made in his campaign announcement video that referenced "personal freedom being fundamental to who we are as Americans."

"He has been systematically taking away the freedom and amassing power of government over families, children, individuals, on down the line. It's 'don't watch what I am doing, watch what I am saying,'" Perkins said.

A desire for freedom and for the next generation to succeed is "still in our DNA" as Americans, he noted, but Biden's policies "are 180 degrees removed from those ideals."

Biden has traveled around the country since January touting what he deems legislative victories.

Among the measures he proudly publicizes are the \$1.9 trillion American Res-



Then-President Donald Trump and then-Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden during the final presidential debate in Nashville, Tenn., on Oct. 22, 2020.

are politically motivated. Trump's legal issues motivate his base, according to Wes Farno, an Ohio-based Republican strategist.

"They feel that the indictments are not legitimate and are a direct attack on Trump," Farno said. "They think the indictments are further examples that Democrats will do anything they can to keep him from running and winning."

Trump can get support from Republicans and independents who don't vote for him in the primary because "it will come down to that well-known Ronald Reagan quote asking if you are better off today than four years ago."

"For the vast majority of Americans, the answer to that is a definite 'no,'" he said.

Trump will remind Americans of the thriving economy before COVID-19 arrived, low inflation and gas prices, a more secure southern border, and that the nation was a safer place when he was president, according to Farno.

"In 2016, Trump ran on his Make America Great Again vision. In 2020, he had a track record of accomplishments, but the election became more about his personality than his documented success as president," he said.

Trump will be the likely Republican nominee, Carlucci said. No high-profile Democrat will enter the primary because "there is no smoking gun to say that Joe Biden's gotta go," he said.

"It would be difficult to go to the left of Biden and win the general election," Carlucci said.

He also said Biden is "in a strong place to win the primary and cruise to reelection," and Trump is a key reason why.

"If there was another high-profile Republican instead of Trump, that might motivate a well-known Democrat to enter the race and challenge Biden," Carlucci said. "Without Trump, Biden would not be president. Biden has already beaten Trump, and there is no reason to think he won't again in 2024." ■

cue Plan, the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the \$745 billion Inflation Reduction Act, and a \$1.7 trillion government spending bill that he signed in December 2022.

Biden's handling of the nation's economy has been a source of concern for many Americans since late 2021 because of stubbornly high inflation and ongoing recession fears.

The debt ceiling standoff with the Republican-controlled House of Representatives is one of his most urgent matters.

Inflation, which reached its post-pandemic peak in June 2022 at 9.1 percent, is now at 5 percent. Yet rising interest rates implemented by the Federal Reserve to combat inflation have increased the risk of a recession, many economists have said.

Even with those challenges, Biden is "in a good spot for 2024," David Carlucci, a former New York state senator and a Democratic campaign strategist, told The Epoch Times.

"The fact that Trump is the clear Republican front-runner is good for Biden's reelection," he said. "Republicans didn't do as well as they thought in the 2018, 2020, and 2022 elections, and the party is divided over people who support Trump

and people who want the party to move on from Trump."

Biden will move to attract more moderate Democrats and continue to paint House Republicans and MAGA Republicans as extreme, according to Carlucci.

Legal Woes Loom

Critics say that Trump's legal woes will hurt his chances in 2024.

The former president continues to fight the highly publicized indictment in Manhattan over his alleged hush-money payments to two women during his 2016 campaign.

This week, a defamation case against him started in Manhattan.

On April 24, an Atlanta prosecutor exploring whether Trump and his associates illegally interfered with the 2020 presidential election in Georgia told reporters that she expects to announce this summer whether charges will be filed.

Trump continues to face a U.S. Department of Justice investigation about classified documents discovered at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Trump has denied wrongdoing with all of the accusations and allegations, and he has said that the investigations

JIM BOURG-PPOOL/GETTY IMAGES

A Tesla Model X electric vehicle during an unveiling event for the Boring Co. Hawthorne test tunnel in Hawthorne, Calif., on Dec. 18, 2018.

PHOTO BY ROBYN BECK/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

ANALYSIS

An automotive industrial policy favoring EVs doesn't make sense, analysts say

What You're Not Being Told About **the Electric Vehicle Revolution**

News Analysis By Kevin Stocklin

Georgia Power's coal-fired power plant in Euharlee, Ga., in this file photo. One average EV battery requires 50 tons of extracted minerals to be refined using a coal-powered process.



KAREN BLEIER/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION can't force you to buy an electric car, although by capping tailpipe emissions and other coercive measures, it can compel producers to severely curtail the manufacturing of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and drive up the cost of gasoline-powered cars.

That will likely result in a fundamental restructuring of the U.S. automotive industry, which accounts for about 3 percent of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) and employs more than 1.7 million Americans.

The Biden administration's auto in-

dustrial policy features a combination of ever-tightening emissions regulations, subsidies to electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers, and government payments to EV consumers. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, enacted in 2021, featured \$25 billion for things such as charging stations, EV production, and mining. The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act doled out billions more in subsidies, and several European countries and U.S. states have banned or plan to ban the sale of new ICE vehicles over the next several years.

The most recent effort is new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations that will set significantly higher CO₂ emissions standards for passenger vehicles, heavy trucks, and buses. This follows President Joe Biden's

directive that half of all new passenger vehicles and trucks should be zero-emission vehicles by 2030.

These regulations, Biden claims, will cut 10 billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 2055. And according to the EPA, EVs aren't just good for the planet; they also are good for your wallet. Buying an EV will save Americans an estimated average of \$12,000 over the life of the vehicle, the agency claims. It states that the benefits of its new emissions standards will exceed costs by at least \$1 trillion.

However, some analysts say those numbers don't add up. They predict that Biden's EV industrial policy will fail about as badly, and prove about as costly, as most other government schemes to direct and micromanage

private-sector industries.

There are many reasons to question whether an automotive industrial policy favoring EVs makes sense. But here are four claims that analysts challenge in particular.

Claim No. 1: EVs Are Good for the Environment

The push for EVs, Biden claims, is necessary to cut global greenhouse gas emissions. But the EPA regulations focus solely on vehicle tailpipe emissions, where EVs have a clear advantage. When the manufacturing and charging of EVs is taken into account, EVs become dramatically less "green" and can actually increase CO₂ emissions.

EVs are portrayed as a nonpolluting alternative to dirty, gasoline-fueled ve-

hicles. Looking at the whole picture, it's more accurate to say that EVs exchange high-density liquid fuel for low-density mineral-based energy in the form of batteries, which are extracted and mined using fossil fuels, then charged with electricity generated at least in part by fossil fuels.

Whether an EV emits less CO₂ than an internal combustion engine over its lifetime depends greatly on how its component minerals are produced, and how, where, and when the EV is driven and charged. Predictions that EVs will be cleaner than ICE vehicles appear to be based on best-case scenarios across the board.

One basic issue with EVs is that batteries are significantly less dense energy sources than liquid fossil fuels. In order to get the same driving range as 60 pounds of gasoline, an EV battery would have to weigh about 1,000 pounds, according to a report by energy economist Mike Mills. In order to mine enough materials for an average EV battery, 250 tons of rock and earth must be moved, and 50 tons of extracted minerals must then be transported, in most cases to China, to be refined using what is usually a coal-powered process.

"The shift to a clean energy system is set to drive a huge increase in the requirements for these minerals," reads a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), an energy analytics group.

According to the IEA, "a typical electric car requires six times the mineral inputs of a conventional car." To meet the expected production of EVs, wind turbines, and solar panels, the IEA projects that the demand for lithium will grow by 40 times by 2040; the demand for graphite, cobalt, and nickel will grow by 20 to 25 times; the demand for rare-earth elements will grow 3 to 7 times; and the demand for copper will double.

CO₂ emissions from all this new mining will certainly increase, but by how much is uncertain. To highlight the uncertainty of emissions estimates from this process, Mills cites a compila-

"It is an absolute concern by the auto manufacturers, by technology companies, by all areas of the supply chain, that we will have enough [lithium]."

Steve Hanson, CEO, ACME Lithium

tion of 50 academic studies that found that emissions from a single EV battery ranged from eight to 20 tons of CO₂, depending on where and how raw materials are sourced and processed.

"The high end of those ranges is nearly as much CO₂ as is produced by the lifetime of fuel burned by an efficient conventional car," Mills writes. "Again, that's before the EV is delivered to a customer and driven its first mile."

Electric vehicles thus enter the world with what is called a "carbon debt," and some believe that carbon debt will be on the high end of estimates. As EVs become more ubiquitous, the number of driven miles required for an EV to repay its carbon debt will likely get higher and higher, and the cost of manufacturing them will likely rise.

"Trends show that energy-use-per-pound mined has been rising because of long-standing declines in ore grades," Mills states. "If mineral demands accelerate, miners will necessarily chase ever lower-grade ores and increasingly in remote locations. The IEA sees, for example, a 300 percent to 600 percent increase in emissions to produce each pound of lithium and nickel, respectively."

In addition to manufacturing, ♦

there is the question of how EVs are charged. In the United States, where 60 percent of electricity is generated by fossil fuels, the emissions savings are reduced further, in some parts of the country to zero. Proponents argue that the United States' grid will be increasingly powered by wind and solar, but installing that new capacity comes with its own carbon debt from mineral mining, and solar power likely won't be useful when people charge their cars overnight.

Claim No. 2: US Electric Grid Can Power EVs

John Moura, director of reliability assessment at the North American Electricity Reliability Corp. (NERC), told The Epoch Times that the U.S. electricity grid is designed to handle peak demand in summer, when Americans run air-conditioning units, but that "one electric vehicle charger is equivalent to about two-and-a-half normal-sized air conditioners."

push home and office heating onto the electric grid, as well.

"You need quite a tremendous increase in electricity transmission capacity," Peter Hartley, an energy economist at Rice University, told The Epoch Times. "To put all these charging stations along interstates and so forth is a pretty expensive proposition."

The cost will largely be paid by taxpayers and electricity consumers, creating another subsidy for EV owners.

In addition to building the charging stations and new generating capacity, there are the electric wires to connect each station to the grid. That entails more mining for copper and other minerals, more construction, and the CO2 emissions that go with it.

Claim No. 3: EVs Are Affordable, Superior Products

According to the EPA, despite all the necessary incentives to compel people to buy EVs, there are many benefits to owning them, if consumers only knew.

\$4,000 for used ones.

To date, EVs have been a niche product, and although sales have increased dramatically in recent years, they still make up only about 6 percent of all cars currently sold in the United States.

According to Hartley, EVs have been popular, often as a second vehicle, for people who live near cities, drive short distances, and can charge them at home or at work and don't have to rely on public charging stations.

"To use them to transport over long distances doesn't make a whole lot of sense," he said.

They have generally been cars for the urban affluent, as their price tag is above what many Americans can afford. The average cost of a new EV in 2023 tops \$60,000, which is more than 30 percent above the average cost of an ICE vehicle, although that gap has recently narrowed.

Less expensive models, such as the Nissan Leaf or the Chevrolet Bolt, start between \$26,500 and \$28,000, although

30%

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1,000 POUNDS

IN ORDER TO GET THE SAME driving range as 60 pounds of gasoline, an EV battery would have to weigh about 1,000 pounds, according to an economist.

20 TONS

EMISSIONS FROM THE MINING needed to produce a single EV battery ranged from eight to 20 tons of CO2, studies show.

The NERC produces an annual long-term reliability assessment. According to the 2022 assessment, while many areas of the United States' grid are expected to meet demand, several areas are at "high risk" of falling short. This condition is only exacerbated by government and private initiatives to replace reliable fossil fuel power production with weather-dependent wind and solar plants.

"Today, we don't have the generating capacity that would be needed to serve any percentage of the total EV cars in a given area," Moura said. "No area has the capacity to handle it today. We have a lot of things that are electrifying as well—manufacturing processes, crypto mining, population growth."

Lawmakers in places such as Massachusetts and California are working to

"Battery electric vehicles offer consumers significant pocketbook savings compared to gasoline and diesel vehicles, from reduced fuel costs as well as reduced costs for maintenance and repair," an EPA representative told The Epoch Times.

"A battery electric vehicle owner of a model year 2032 sedan, wagon, crossover utility vehicle, or SUV would save about \$9,000 on average on fuel, maintenance, and repair costs over an eight-year period (the average period of first ownership) compared to a gasoline vehicle. A battery electric vehicle pickup truck owner would save even more—about \$13,000."

These estimates don't include the additional cost of buying an EV, but the Inflation Reduction Act includes subsidies of \$7,500 for eligible new EVs and

smaller batteries in these cars mean they have less range, and manufacturers' profit margins are much lower on these models. The Bolt's range is 250 miles on a full charge.

EV owners currently avoid gas taxes, which fund road construction and maintenance. But EV owners will at some point have to also begin paying for their usage of roads; electricity prices also are likely to rise to pay for additions to the grid, further increasing the cost of ownership.

But where EVs fall short is the most basic reason why people buy cars: They provide freedom to go where you want, whenever you want. They can be refueled in minutes at ubiquitous filling stations, and oil is a commodity that the United States has in abundance. Electric vehicles, by contrast, are tied



Workers at a factory for Xinwangda Electric Vehicle Battery Co. Ltd., which makes lithium batteries for electric cars and other uses, in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China, on March 12, 2021.

to the electric grid, which increasingly is struggling to meet demand even at current levels.

Last summer, California asked EV owners not to charge their cars because the electric grid was struggling to meet demand. In January, following rolling blackouts during Christmas, Tennessee electricity administrator Chris Templeton was asked what would happen if half of Tennesseans owned EVs during such an event. He responded that they would be asked not to charge them.

Claim No. 4: EVs Are a Good Bet for US Automakers

The U.S. Energy Information Association (EIA) foresees a bright future for EV manufacturers as the market share for EVs has been increasing rapidly. It predicts in its 2023 Annual Energy Outlook that zero-emission vehicles could achieve a market share of 14 to

24 percent by 2050, depending on how high the price of gasoline goes, from the current 6.4 percent.

The EPA is more optimistic, stating that its new regulations, combined with federal subsidies, will boost the market share of zero-emission vehicles to 67 percent.

Automakers have responded, spending tens of billions on new EV assembly plants. In 2021, they announced \$36 billion in new spending on EV manufacturing; in the first half of 2022 alone, they announced an additional \$24 billion. About \$5 billion was invested in nonelectric vehicles over that 18-month period.

A Wall Street Journal report noted the proliferation of new EV manufacturers, including those that went public in recent years: Rivian, Nikola, Canoo, Lordstown, Fisker, Workhorse Group, Mullen Automotive, and Lucid. They then were quickly valued at billions of dollars.

To date, EVs have been a niche product; they make up only about 6 percent of all cars sold in America today.

"Most had never sold a single car at their public debut," the report states. "Fueled by cheap credit and political subsidies, their stocks surged, only to crash."

The EIA states that "projected declines in EV vehicle component costs, along with federal and state policies that provide incentives for EV purchases or

High voltage transmission towers in Houston on Feb. 21, 2021. “No area has the capacity to handle [EVs] today,” NERC’s director of reliability assessment, John Moura, says.

require minimum sales, drive EV sales growth in [the agency’s] model projection.” The bet is that the cost of making EVs will come down and that, of course, most consumers will want them.

But increasing demand for component materials to manufacture EVs indicates that costs will likely go up rather than down, leaving carmakers the choice of raising EV prices or, for those who are still making ICE vehicles, subsidizing EV losses by raising prices on gas-fueled cars.

“The inherent costs of electric vehicles are tied to the mineral inputs that are needed to make the vehicles,” Mills said. “They’re inherently heavier than conventional vehicles, and they inherently require a radical increase in the consumption of basic metals, not just unusual metals, not just lithium or cobalt, but common metals like copper and aluminum.

“The consumption per vehicle is roughly 200–300 percent more than for conventional vehicles, so the world is going to have to supply the automakers enough copper and aluminum without raising the cost of the vehicle, and none of the data show that that’s happening. In effect, the world’s automakers are making this bet, betting the world’s miners will provide them with the materials they need to build vehicles.

“There’s no evidence that’s happening or that it’s going to happen, and by evidence, I mean actual spending and investments in sufficient mining capacity.”

Experts within the mining industry concur with this assessment.

Steve Hanson, CEO of ACME Lithium, for example, told The Epoch Times that, regarding essential minerals for batteries, “every forecast suggests we’re going to be in perpetual deficit.” About 95 percent of all lithium produced today, he said, comes from four countries: Australia, China, Argentina, and Chile.

“It’s all fine to build battery factories, to build the infrastructure, to forecast thousands of vehicles to be on



the road, but the supply chain needs to be put in place,” Hanson said. “It is an absolute concern by the auto manufacturers, by technology companies, by all areas of the supply chain, that we will have enough.”

Hanson said he believes there are significant supplies of lithium in North America, but companies struggle to get permits from government agencies to mine them. Mining companies have received stiff resistance not only from the EPA but also from local environmental groups.

In canceling the Pebble Bay copper mining project in May 2022, the EPA stated, “Two decades of scientific study show us that mining the Pebble Deposit would cause permanent damage to an ecosystem that supports a renewable economic powerhouse and has sustained fishing cultures since time immemorial.”

One country that currently has first claim on EV raw materials is China. Having worked out mining contracts with countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where 70 percent of cobalt is sourced, China now has a controlling market share in the refining of essential EV minerals.

“China’s share of refining is around 35 percent for nickel, 50–70 percent for lithium and cobalt, and nearly 90 percent for rare-earth elements,” according to the IEA.

Given China’s control over raw materials, Western automakers are becoming little more than assembly plants for imported materials, the supply of which they can’t control. Chinese automakers are already dominating the global EV market. Compared with the about 800,000 EVs sold in the United States in 2022, China’s EV manufactur-

ing capacity is 5.7 million vehicles.

Chinese automakers not only are better able to source material inputs, but also are lower-cost producers, producing EVs on average about \$11,000 cheaper than European competitors. China currently produces more than half of the world’s EV batteries.

This leads some analysts to question whether Western carmakers are surrendering the engineering and manufacturing expertise, and brand recognition, they have built up over decades with ICE vehicles, to jump into a technology that some say is essentially “batteries and computers with wheels,” and an area in which Western companies have little competitive advantage.

Central Planning’s Troubled History

Some carmakers are stepping out of line

to criticize the EV movement. In January 2022, Carlos Tavares, CEO of Stellantis—which formed the world’s fifth-largest carmaker through a merger of Fiat, Chrysler, and Peugeot—said EVs were “a technology chosen by politicians” and “imposed” on the auto sector.

The pitfalls of industrial policy and central planning are that state plans are based on political calculations, are expensive and wasteful, tend toward cronyism and enrich insiders, inevitably choose outdated or inferior technologies, and are slow to change course when plans fail or when innovations could be implemented.

“Any environmental economist will tell you that trying to solve environmental problems with central-planning solutions invariably gives you much less environmental bang for your buck, or much, much higher costs for the given amount of environmental good that you do,” Hartley said.

Georgia, for example, has spent \$1.5 billion in taxpayers’ money since 2021 in tax breaks and grants to attract a new plant by EV maker Rivian, which aspires to dominate the electric truck market. The effort was plagued by delays and missed sales targets, with Rivian now facing losses and concerns that it could go under.

According to a study by George Mason University professors, titled “The Economics of a Targeted Economic Development Subsidy,” subsidizing industry in this way usually proves harmful, for five reasons: subsidized companies are less efficient; companies become reliant on state favors; nonsubsidized companies are harmed; communities are harmed because subsidized companies are more prone to failure; and taxpayers inevitably end up paying the cost.

“Every business has a hard time resisting massive government policies and funding,” Mills said. “[Auto manufacturers] have to hope the government will keep subsidizing to convince consumers to behave, or they have to hope that governments will require consumers to buy products.”

Indeed, when conservative states attempted to thwart the EPA’s new emissions rules in 2022, automakers came out in support of the EPA.

MINERALS GROWTH NEEDED TO MEET EXPECTED PRODUCTION BY 2040

- Lithium:** 40 times
- Graphite:** 20 to 25 times
- Cobalt:** 20 to 25 times
- Nickel:** 20 to 25 times
- Rare Earths:** 3 to 7 times
- Copper:** 2 times

“I had a former colleague who said that there’s always a problem when you sleep with elephants, and that is, you might get squashed,” Hartley said. “Getting in bed with governments is like sleeping with elephants, and the problem with this [EV transition] is that it’s all driven by government policy more than consumer demand.”

The risks to U.S. carmakers are that consumer demand for EVs isn’t there, that they can’t source critical materials at an economic price, that the electric grid can’t power EVs at scale, and that they lose their competitive advantage to low-cost manufacturers in countries such as China. If the auto industry’s EV bet fails to pay off for any of these reasons, the result will likely be that a number of carmakers will go bankrupt and require government bailouts. At that point, the U.S. automotive industry will look less like an independent private industry and more like a ward of the state, with another round of taxpayer subsidies for EVs.

It likely will become an industry that depends on government and is oriented toward the state rather than toward consumers. And for Americans, our cherished ability to go where we want, when we want, could be at the state’s whim. ■

JUSTIN SUJAN/GETTY IMAGES



SPOTLIGHT

Ongoing Unrest

POLICE OFFICERS ARRIVE IN FRONT of a truck set on fire by protesters during riots in Nairobi, Kenya, where people are protesting against the cost of living and last year's election results, on May 2.

PHOTO BY LUIS TATO/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

2040 will mark the United States' entry into an age of AI-dependent killing machines, chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff says

BY ANDREW THORNEBROOKE



The RIPSAN-MS1, designed to be an unmanned convoy security vehicle, demonstrates its off-road capabilities during an exercise at the Fort Hood Robotics Rodeo, in this file photo.

PHOTO BY U.S. ARMY

NATIONAL SECURITY

**PENTAGON
ROBOTIC
IN 10**

**ENVISIONS
ARMIES
YEARS**

WASHINGTON—ROBOTIC killing machines prowl the land, the skies, and the seas. They're fully automated, seeking out and engaging with adversarial robots across every domain of war. Their human handlers are relegated to the rearguard, overseeing the action at a distance while conflicts are fought and won by machines.

Far from science fiction, this is the vision of Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley.

The United States, according to Milley, is in the throes of one of the myriad revolutions in military affairs that have spanned history.

Such revolutions have spanned from the invention of the stirrup to the adoption of the firearm to the deployment of mechanized warfare and, now, to the mass fielding of robotics and artificial intelligence (AI).

It's a shift in the character of war, Milley said, that's greater than any to have come before.

"Today, we are in ... probably the biggest change in military history," Milley said during a March 31 discussion with Defense One.

"We're at a pivotal moment in history from a military standpoint. We're at what amounts to a fundamental change in the very character of war."

Robotic Armies in 10 Years

Many would no doubt be more comfortable with the idea of robots battling for the control of Earth if it were in a science-fiction novel or on a movie screen rather than on the list of priorities of the military's highest-ranking officer.

Milley said he believes, however, that the world's most powerful armies will be predominantly robotic within the next decade, and he means for the United States to be the first across that cybernetic Rubicon.

"Over the next 10 to 15 years, you'll see large portions of advanced countries' militaries become robotic," Milley said. "If you add robotics with artificial intelligence and precision munitions and the ability to see at range, you've got the mix of a real fundamental change."

"That's coming. Those changes, that technology ... we are looking at inside of 10 years."

That means that the United States has "five to seven years to make some fundamental modifications to our military," Milley said, because the nation's adversaries are seeking to deploy robotics and AI in the same manner, but with Americans in their sights.

The nation that is the first to deploy robotics and AI together in a cohesive way, he said, will dominate the next war.

"I would submit that the country, the nation-state, that takes those technologies and adapts them most effectively and optimizes them for military operations, that country is probably going to have a decisive advantage at the beginning of the next conflict," Milley said.

The global consequences of such a shift in the character of war are difficult to overstate.

Milley compared the ongoing struggle to form a new way of war to the competition that occurred between the world wars.

In that era, Milley says, all the nations of Europe had access to new technologies ranging from mechanized vehicles to radio to chemical weapons. All of them could have developed the unified concept of maneuver warfare that replaced the attrition warfare that had defined World War I.

But only one, he said, first integrated their use into a bona fide new way of war.

"That country, Nazi Germany, overran Europe in a very, very short period of time ... because they were able to take those technologies and put them together in a doctrine which we now know as Blitzkrieg," he said.

A U.S. Army staff sergeant conducts route clearance training using the Talon IV Reset robotic vehicle at the armory in Graniteville, S.C., on Oct. 17, 2018.



U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY 2ND LT. JORGE INTRIAGO

THE NATION THAT GETS THERE FIRST, THAT DEPLOYS ROBOTICS AND AI TOGETHER IN A COHESIVE WAY WILL DOMINATE THE NEXT WAR, MILLEY SAYS.

Blitzkrieg 2040

Milley, and the Pentagon with him, hopes to do the same now by bringing together emergent capabilities such as robotics, AI, cyber and space platforms, and precision munitions into a cohesive doctrine of war.

By being the first to integrate these technologies into a new concept, Milley said, the United States can rule the future battlefield.

To that end, the Pentagon is experimenting with new unmanned aerial, ground, and undersea vehicles and seeking to exploit the pervasiveness of nonmilitary smart technologies, from watches to fitness trackers.

Though the effort is just gaining traction, Milley has claimed since 2016 that the U.S. military would field substantial robotic ground forces and AI capabilities by 2030.

Just weeks from now, that idea will begin to truly culminate, when invitations from the Defense Department (DOD) go out to leaders across the defense, tech, and academic spheres for the Pentagon's first-ever conference on building "trusted AI and autonomy" for future wars.

The Pentagon is on a correlating hiring spree, seeking to pay six figures annually for experts willing and able to develop and integrate technologies including "augmented reality, artificial intelligence, human state monitoring, and autonomous unmanned systems."

Likewise, the U.S. Army Futures Command, created in 2018, maintains as a critical goal the designing of what it calls "Army 2040." In other words, the AI-dependent, robotic military of the future.

Futures Command deputy commanding general Lt. Gen. Ross Coffman said he believes that 2040 will mark the United States' true entry into an age characterized by artificially intelligent killing machines.

Speaking at a March 28 summit of DOD leaders and technology experts, Coffman described the partnership between man and machine that he envisions for the future, relating it to the relationship between a dog and its master.

Rather than having AI help soldiers get into the fight, however, Coffman said humans will be helping machines to the battlefield.

"I think we're going to see a flip in 2040 where humans are doing those functions that allow the machine to get into a position of relative advantage, not the machine getting humans ♦♦"

A military specialist prepares to launch his unmanned aerial vehicle during training at Fort Irwin National Training Center, Calif., in this file photo.



THE PENTAGON DOES NOT HAVE ANY HARD AND FAST RULES TO PROHIBIT AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS FROM KILLING.

into a position of relative advantage,” he said.

‘Everything Spins Out of Control’

Remaking the U.S. military and forming a new, cohesive way of war is a tall order. It’s nevertheless one that the Pentagon appears prepared to pay for.

The DOD is requesting a record \$1.8 billion in funding for AI projects for the next year alone. That amount will exceed the estimated \$1.6 billion in AI investments being made by China’s military.

Much of it is also earmarked for initiatives to improve the decision-making of autonomous weapons systems.

The effort appears at the very least to be a real start toward Milley’s vision of fielding autonomous systems en masse. It also raises deep concerns about what the next war could look like and whether the very much human DOD leadership is adequately prepared for managing its autonomous creations.

John Mills, former director of cybersecurity policy, strategy, and international affairs at the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, said he believes that this path is rife with the potential for unintended consequences.

“It is Skynet,” Mills told The Epoch Times, referencing the fictional AI that conquers the world in the movie “The Terminator.”

“It is the realization of a Skynet-like environment.

“The question is, ‘What could possibly go wrong with this situation?’ Well, a lot.”

Mills said that he doesn’t believe AI deserves all the mystique it’s been given in popular culture but that he is concerned about the apparent trend in military decision-making toward building systems with real autonomy—that is, systems capable of making the decision to kill without first obtaining human approval.

“[AI] sounds dark and mysterious, but it’s really

FROM LUIS ALFARO/PHOTO/MASTERSTOCK/SHANE A. CUMMO, PATRICK SEMANSKI/POOL/GETTY IMAGES



Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley said he believes that the world’s most powerful armies will be predominantly robotic within the next decade.

big data, the ability to ingest and analyze that data with big analytics, and the key thing now is to action that data, often without human interaction,” Mills said.

The loss of this “man-in-the-loop” in many proposed future technologies is thus a cause for concern.

Training human beings to correctly identify between friend and foe before engaging in kinetic action is complicated enough, Mills said, and it’s much more so with machines.

“What’s different now is the ability to action these incredible data sets autonomously and without human interaction,” Mills said.

“The integration of AI with autonomous vehicles, and letting them action independently without human decision-making, that’s where everything spins out of control.”

To that end, Mills expressed concern about what a future conflict might look like between the United States, and its allies, and China in the Indo-Pacific.

Imagine, he said, an undersea battlespace in which autonomous submarines and other weapons systems littered the seas.

Fielded by Chinese, American, Korean, Australian, Indian, and Japanese forces, the resulting chaos would likely end with autonomous systems engaging in war throughout the region, while manned vessels held back and sought to best launch the next group of robotic war machines. Anything else would risk putting real lives in the way of the automated killers.

“How do you plan for engagement scenarios with autonomous undersea vehicles?” Mills said.

“This is going to be absolute chaos in subsurface warfare.”

Automated Killing

To be sure, preventing the automated killing of combatants by artificially intelligent systems is something the Pentagon has thought about for a long time.

The 2018 Artificial Intelligence Strategy, for example, sought to accelerate AI adoption across the DOD while seeking ethical approaches to “reduce unintentional harm.”

The 2020 Ethical Principles for Artificial Intelligence, likewise sought to ensure that only “trustworthy” and “governable” AI technologies were adopted by the military.

The 2022 Responsible Artificial Intelligence Strategy and Implementation Pathway, meanwhile, outlined a plan to mitigate potential unintended consequences of the deployment of AI in military systems.

None of these efforts, however, actually will prevent the adoption of fully autonomous killing

machines. And they were never intended to.

That’s because all such documents were crafted under the guidance of DOD Directive 3000.09, the Pentagon’s guiding document for the development of autonomous weapons systems.

“That’s foundational,” Mills said of the document. “It’s very important because it drives development.”

Originally issued in 2012, the document just received a major overhaul in January, meant to prepare the Pentagon for what DOD Director of Emerging Capabilities Policy Michael Horowitz said at the time was a “dramatic, expanded vision for the role of artificial intelligence in the future of the American military.”

There is just one caveat to that ethical, trustworthy, governable, deployment of lethal AI systems: The Pentagon doesn’t have any hard and fast rules to prohibit autonomous systems from killing.

Although 3000.09 is often referenced by proponents of man-in-the-loop technologies, the document does not actually promote such technologies, nor does it prohibit the use of fully automated lethal systems.

Instead, the document outlines a series of rigorous reviews that proposed autonomous systems must go through. And although no independent AI weapon systems have made it through that process yet, the future is likely to see many such systems.

This is in no small part to the fact that China’s communist regime is rapidly working to field its own automated killing machines, and the DOD will have to prepare to meet that threat head-on, all the while attempting to retain American values.

“[China is] trying to address these hard problems also, of allowing [AI] to engage without human intervention,” Mills said.

“I think their proclivity is to allow it even if they accidentally kill their own people.”

To that end, the next war may well be one fought primarily between artificially intelligent robots, with human handlers standing at the sidelines, trying their best to direct the action.

Whether the United States can manage that without losing control of its creations remains to be seen.

Mills said he is hopeful that if anyone can do it, it’s the United States. After all, he said, we have the best human talent.

“I think we still have enough guardrails where it will be iterative, so that we can become smarter and learn to build into the algorithms precautions and control measures,” Mills said.

“I think we have good teams and people in place.”

The Pentagon didn’t respond by press time to a request by The Epoch Times for comment. ■

\$1.8 BILLION

THE DOD IS requesting a record \$1.8 billion in funding for AI projects for the next year alone.

AGRICULTURE

Uncertain Future Looms as Farmers Retire

Sixty-two percent of farmers will reach retirement age by 2027, most without successors

By Autumn Spredemann

IT'S NO SECRET THAT HARDWORKING U.S. farmers are looking to hang up their hats. However, the price of land has left many producers struggling to find successors willing or able to follow in their footsteps.

Research shows that 62 percent of U.S. farmers were older than 55 as of 2017. That means more than half of U.S. farms will begin undergoing ownership transitions as that group reaches retirement age by 2027.

This is happening against a backdrop of states racing to pass new legislation to restrict the foreign purchase of U.S. agricultural land. At the same time, wealthy private investors are grabbing as much as they can.

It's an alarming situation for many, prompting the question: Who will own the future of U.S. farms?

"It's getting harder and harder because investors have more money to buy the land versus the farmers," Tony Peirick told The Epoch Times.

Peirick runs the T&R Dairy Farm in Watertown, Wisconsin. It's one of those classic American Midwest towns that looks like it was lifted out of a Norman Rockwell painting, surrounded by rolling pasture and cropland. Peirick has seen many changes in the industry over the years; he recalled that he used to carry fresh cows' milk in buckets as a boy.

"Years ago in our township, I bet we had 15 to 20 dairy farms. Times have changed; there are only three dairy farms now milking cows," he said.

Peirick said he enjoys the hands-on experience



of running a dairy farm and that having a love of farming is essential—particularly in dairy—to be successful because of the job's demanding nature.

"Now our sons are taking it over, and they're doing the milking. It really takes commitment with dairy because you are there 24/7, every day of the week," he said.

Steep Price Tag

Peirick is one of the lucky ones. The 67-year-old dairy farmer's sons are willing to take the reins of the family business, which Peirick plans to gift to them.

Gifts his sons the land is crucial. Due to the ballooning price of U.S. farmland, it's the only way they can afford to take the business.

"Back in the '80s, land was only a thousand dollars an acre and investors weren't looking at it. Land is more valuable now, up to 10 to 20 thousand dollars an acre just for farmland," Peirick said.



(Above Left) Farmer Tony Peirick shows a no-till planter at Tiger Farms in Neosho, Wis., on March 26, 2021. **(Above)** A farmer walks with his grandson at a farm. The number of aging farmers who have identified successors range from 30 percent on the low end to less than 70 percent.

FROM: CAROLING/THE EPOCH TIMES, JOERAEDEL/GETTY IMAGES

Agricultural land in the United States hit record highs last year, topping a nearly three-decade steady rise in prices that began in 1987.

In October 2022, cropland in southeastern Nebraska sold for more than \$27,000 per acre. The average price per acre soared past \$5,000 last year, an almost 20 percent spike since 2021.

When coupled with inflated operating costs and supplies, Peirick said producers have a rough road ahead.

"Next-generation farmers will face challenges like land availability and just the cost of material things," he said.

Family-run businesses such as Peirick's account for 98 percent of all U.S. farms, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). But with the price of farm ownership so high, many aspiring producers are left with little option except to lease the land.

And even that's becoming a rich man's pursuit.

"You have to enjoy what you're doing because you're not going to make a lot of income."

Tony Peirick, dairy farmer

Land rental prices are set to increase for the second year in a row. Research from the Illinois Society of Professional Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers shows that rent increased across the board in all land categories between 2021 and 2022 by \$60 to \$70 per acre. The organization predicts that rent prices will increase by about \$20 per acre again this year.

Although \$20 doesn't seem like much, many farms are hundreds or thousands of acres. Peirick's farm is a 1,100-acre spread; a \$20 rent hike on a farm that size would cost \$22,000.

"Farming is a capital-intensive business with high cost to access new farmland and the equipment needed to farm. This is [the] No. 1 deterrent I've witnessed from young or aspiring farmers from getting into farmland," Mike Downey told The Epoch Times.

Downey is the co-owner of Next Generation

Ag Advocates, an Iowa-based service that helps retiring farmers connect with a new generation of producers. With so many farmers getting ready to retire, Downey said he has seen an increase in veteran producers willing to help out new farmers with a gradual ownership transition.

This process can take years but offers peace of mind to the retiring U.S. producers by helping keep small farms in the hands of people instead of corporations.

Troubling Numbers

Eighty percent of rented farmland is owned by “non-operator landlords,” according to the USDA. That means 30 percent of all U.S. agricultural land is owned by companies or people who aren’t farmers.

It all comes back to having a passion for working with the land because farming is a high-cost and challenging industry, Peirick says.

It’s a trend Downey has seen in Iowa, where he said that about one-third of all land is owned by people who aren’t operators or have no farm experience.

“I believe we, as an [agriculture] industry, need to do a better job educating new owners about the responsibilities that come with land ownership,” he said.

When it comes to nonoperators owning farmland, the writing has been on the wall for years.

When Bill Gates became the largest private owner of U.S. agricultural land in 2018, the world sat up and took notice. Headlines of the Microsoft co-founder’s acquisitions—more than a quarter million acres—triggered alarm over how wealthy private investment could affect the U.S. food supply chain.

But America had already been losing crop and pasture land to nonfarming interests for years.

One 2020 analysis shows that the United States lost 11 million acres of farmland over the past 20 years.

Compounding this is the number of foreign investors making purchases in the agricultural sector. In 2022, foreign interests controlled 37.6 million acres of pasture, timber, and farmland. That’s roughly the size of Iowa.

For Downey, the shift toward nonproducer land ownership and big private investment is a more

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 price per acre in the United States soared past \$5,000 last year, an almost 20 percent spike compared to 2021.

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11
MILLION
THE UNITED STATES
 lost 11 million acres of farmland over the past 20 years, a 2020 analysis showed.



Cattle graze on pasture land near Ojai, Calif., on June 21, 2022. America had already been losing crop and pasture land to nonfarming interests for years.

significant concern than aging producers.

“I’m more concerned about what motives foreign buyers or larger institutional groups have for buying farmland, as it related to future food production,” he said.

Peirick said he shared this sentiment. Because at the end of the day, whoever holds the land holds all the cards.

“The main thing is the land because investors are looking at it and trying to buy it, then will rent it back to farmers,” he said.

Words of Wisdom

Even optimistic estimates of the number of aging farmers who have identified successors are bleak. These figures range from 30 percent on the low end to less than 70 percent in the best-case scenario.

It’s part of what drives Downey and his team to help connect the new generation of producers during this critical changing of the guard.

“Our first priority is to make sure we are identifying all parties’ goals, so we are matching up like-minded individuals and philosophies for farming,” he said.

For Peirick, it all comes back to having a passion for working with the land, as farming is a high-cost and challenging industry.

“It is labor-intensive, and it’s hard to find people to do the hand labor,” he said.

When asked whether he had any words of wisdom to impart to future farmers, Peirick didn’t mince words: “The next generation of farmers needs to be passionate. ... The net income will be getting tight, so you have to enjoy what you’re doing because you’re not going to make a lot of income.” ■

Perspectives



Tucker Carlson, Fox’s most popular primetime host, speaks during an event in Esztergom, Hungary, on Aug. 7, 2021.

PHOTO BY JANOS KUMMER/GETTY IMAGES



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Thomas McArdle



Free Speech Loses

A lawsuit forced Fox to silence its most popular commentator

THE BUSINESS OF CABLE news and commentary isn't just business; it goes to the core of how the First Amendment operates in the 21st century.

Fox's most popular prime-time host, Tucker Carlson, was shown the door a week after Fox settled with Dominion Voting Systems for \$787.5 million in a defamation suit.

Texts from Carlson, unearthed during discovery, revealed an on-air titan who apparently thought he could play as fast and loose as he liked, making assertions about the 2020 election he privately believed to be false, expressing loathing for Donald Trump while staunchly defending him before the cameras, and ripping apart Fox management, sometimes through the use of misogynistic obscenities.

There were other problems with Carlson at Fox, not least his attacks on what he calls "market capitalism." He has criticized pro-family, pro-life social conservatives who "consider markets sacrosanct. The idea that families are being crushed by market forces seems never to occur to them. They refuse to consider it. Questioning markets feels like apostasy."

Carlson warned viewers that "libertarians are sure to call any deviation from market fundamentalism a form of socialism." But Carlson, who in 2003 on CNN famously coaxed Britney Spears to express support for the war in Iraq and George W. Bush, is almost always sure to call any deviation from the post-Iraq foreign policy noninterventionism he has come to embrace in latter years a form of the nation-building neoconservatism routinely propagated by former conservative MSNBC fixtures Bill Kristol, David Frum, and Max Boot.

"Hubris, stupidity, the damaged psychological makeup of our lead-

ers, massive lobbying campaigns by Ukrainian politicians and American defense contractors" are among the reasons Carlson cites as being behind America helping Ukraine stave off Vladimir Putin's invasion.

It brings into question the whole issue of punitive damages vis-à-vis free political expression.

Boycotts of his Fox show by major advertisers, however, clearly had more to do with backlash from the left for the forceful stance Carlson took against illegal immigration, shared by other commentators throughout Fox, but advertisers' hostility apparently hurt Fox financially because the smaller businesses who replaced them during Carlson's airtime were reportedly being charged at a lower ad rate.

None of this, however, diminishes the fact that a lawsuit led to a leading press outlet silencing its most popular commentator after it shelled out more than three-quarters of a billion dollars. And it brings into question the whole issue of punitive damages vis-à-vis free political expression.

Americans have always had a strong sense of justice, and this has allowed our civil jurisprudence to become a kind of judgment seat of God on earth, with the extraction of money the means of imposing divine wrath.

In *State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co. v. Campbell* in 2003, a case involving a doubly fatal car accident, the U.S. Supreme Court was faced with a case in which the jury had settled on a punitive award 145 times greater than the compensatory damages—a total of \$145 million. The case showed just how wild a jury can go if left unimpeded; playing God, indeed.

In the wake of that case and others, the high court effectively limited legitimate punitive damages to less than 10 times the compensatory damages; but both Justice Antonin Scalia and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, ideological opposites, forcefully dissented in favor of the federal judiciary leaving the remedy to elected state lawmakers.

In *BMW of North America, Inc. v. Gore* in 1996, for example, Scalia's dissent argued that "since the Constitution does not make [excessive awards] any of our business, the Court's activities in this area are an unjustified incursion into the province of state governments. ... The Constitution provides no warrant for federalizing yet another aspect of our Nation's legal culture (no matter how much in need of correction it may be)."

As Ginsburg noted in her dissent in the *State Farm* case, "damages-capping legislation may be altogether fitting and proper." Indeed, it may be the only solution, but legislators seldom cease fearing being accused of being in the pocket of big business.

Fox so feared what a jury might end up doing to it that it voluntarily agreed to pay \$787.5 million to a company valued at \$226 million at the time of Fox's alleged defamation in 2020.

Tax deductions and insurance will, apparently, greatly lessen the monetary blow for Fox, but it doesn't diminish the fact that lawyers were allowed to nose through the supposedly private conversations of opinion leaders at a major TV news outlet and use the information to muzzle Fox's most-watched host.

Yes, in this case, the intentional falsehoods and reckless inaccuracies were hard to defend, but next time, the bar may be found to be set lower.

The First Amendment isn't as secure as it was.

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Anders Corr



China Enters EV Trade War

US and EU already awash in counterproductive green subsidies

CHINA IS BOOSTING ITS economy with new subsidies that promote auto exports at the expense of jobs and industrial strength in the United States, the European Union, Japan, South Korea, India, and other allied countries.

The subsidies could also decrease global emissions. By 2030, 1 in 3 new vehicle sales will be electric. China dominates that market, with 60 percent of worldwide electric vehicle (EV) sales.

China has used its economic strength in the past to build its military and threaten its neighbors, including Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, and India. There's no reason to believe that it won't channel its new EV profits into the same malign endeavors.

Beijing announced the subsidies on April 25 in the context of reports of strong EV orders in March for China's outbound shipments, according to Reuters. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) economic planners sense massive profits from the global green trend and are trying to push the industry even further to accelerate China's economy.

In addition to subsidies, the CCP will force Chinese banks to offer financial support to car manufacturers to expand foreign sales. Beijing has so much control over the Chinese economy that many of its subsidies and tariffs are unofficial. China's companies must support other Chinese companies—or else.

Laws to that effect are superfluous when Chinese CEOs and managers from foreign companies in China regularly disappear for not showing sufficient enthusiasm for the CCP. Most recently, the police targeted U.S. and Japanese corporations, including Bain & Company, a white-shoe consultancy headquartered in Boston.

On April 25, China's State Council asked its embassies, consulates, provincial governments, and financial institutions to increase support for exports and encourage the settling of trade in yuan rather than dollars.

China's new subsidies add to an international trade war over EV sales.

China has used its economic strength in the past to build its military and threaten its neighbors.

In 2022, Democrats devoted \$1.2 trillion through the misnamed Inflation Reduction Act to divert \$3 trillion into the U.S. green economy, which increases energy prices and inflation in the United States and upsets its allies in Europe and the United Kingdom, who don't want the subsidies to price them out of U.S. markets.

U.S. and foreign companies announced 75 new facilities in the United States totaling \$45 billion, according to the Biden administration. Germany's Volkswagen is planning a \$2 billion EV plant in South Carolina and a battery plant in Canada to take advantage of U.S. subsidies. The European Union is responding with subsidies of its own that may reallocate up to \$1 trillion to the green economy by 2030.

The two main rationales for U.S. subsidies are to boost the U.S. economy while decreasing global emissions. These goals won't come cheaply, as U.S. subsidies are ultimately paid for by higher taxes or dollar inflation, both of which hurt U.S. economic growth and, thus, geopolitical competitiveness against China and Russia.

Any environmental gains from the

subsidies will be spread globally, but the costs will be borne almost entirely by U.S. citizens. The act subsidizes foreign industries in more than 20 countries, including Canada, Mexico, Australia, Japan, and South Korea, yet their taxpayers contribute nothing.

The subsidies will also support vehicle manufacturers in China, as the law has no U.S. sourcing requirements for commercial vehicles, and loopholes exist for passenger vehicle subsidies. U.S. taxpayers pay 100 percent of the subsidies. Still, they could get as little as zero percent of the benefit from new industry and jobs if, for example, a Chinese company built a vehicle in Mexico and exported it to the United States. Beijing could tax that company and use it to buy missiles that target Washington, New York, Tokyo, New Delhi, and Taipei.

The subsidies do a bad job of addressing climate change, as China produces twice as much carbon dioxide as the United States, and China's green subsidies are unquantified.

At a time when Russia and China are destabilizing global politics, and the United States is already spending an unfair amount of U.S. taxpayer dollars for the provision of global security, it makes little sense to subsidize manufacturing in countries such as Canada and South Korea that don't even contribute the minimum expected defense expenditure of 2 percent of GDP. These countries are free-riding not only on U.S. defense but also on U.S. green subsidies.

It makes even less sense to subsidize cars with components from China, Mexico, and Russia, which are imposing massive costs from the fentanyl crisis, war against Ukraine, and aggression toward Taiwan.

Meanwhile, the Democrats are wasting taxpayer dollars as U.S. economic and military power deteriorates relative to those of China.

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Milton Ezrati



A Cost to Climate Virtue

Ill-conceived green initiatives have added to inflation

ALL OVER THE DEVELOPED world, voters identify inflation as a significant concern. They do so for good reason.

Inflation is stubborn and brings hardships at all levels of society. If left unchecked, it will stifle growth prospects. As is always the case, today's inflation stems primarily from faulty monetary policies. But if monetary mismanagement is, as always, the basic cause, there can be other contributors.

One such contributor that deserves special attention today is the fallout from ill-conceived green initiatives.

The monetary roots of the United States' current inflation are clear. The Federal Reserve had for years willingly accommodated reckless spending by the federal government. Because of the pandemic but also to pursue a raft of other policies, Washington boosted spending at an unsustainable rate of almost 20 percent a year between 2019 and 2022.

Budget deficits exploded, averaging almost 11 percent of gross domestic product for 2020, 2021, and 2022. All through this time, the Fed supported the government spending binge with a flood of new money, raising the pace of money growth to 20 percent a year between February 2020 and February 2022 from 5.4 percent a year during the previous five years.

Because there was no way that real economic output could possibly keep up with the sudden demands made by government spending and, more generally, by the Fed's new money creation, inflationary pressure became inevitable.

However, green initiatives contributed by holding back the economy's ability to respond as thoroughly as it might have otherwise and, in the process, made the resulting inflation much more severe. This particular aspect of the inflation problem arose

less because the United States and other developed countries pursued green initiatives and more because the green actions that they took exhibited little foresight or even a recognition of practicalities.

Poorly thought-out policies and attempts to move faster than is practical have made the recent inflation more severe than it otherwise would have been.

The biggest mistake was an unrealistic expectation of how fast green energy sources could substitute for fossil fuels. In the United States, for example, President Joe Biden, upon taking office in January 2021, immediately canceled the Keystone XL pipeline to carry Canadian oil into this country.

His administration further restricted exploration for fossil fuels or drilling where it had any authority to do so. Strong anti-fossil fuel rhetoric further discouraged private investment in such resources.

Similar talk and policies had been in place for even longer in Europe. These actions had profound effects. Investments in fossil fuel development and transmission fell worldwide. By the end of 2021, the amount of money so dedicated had fallen 25 percent below 2019 levels.

None of this would have mattered in the inflation picture if green substitutes had kept up with this loss of fossil-fuel-based energy. But as it turned out, spending on green energy sources hardly rose at all. This difference is at least as significant as the loss of Russian oil due to the war in Ukraine.

It's then little wonder that world economies faced energy shortages and

would have even in the absence of the war in Ukraine. That shortage made it much more difficult for economies to respond to the demands imposed by increased government spending and the flood of money provided by the Fed.

The effect is clear in how energy inflation led to the general price acceleration of this time. The energy component of the U.S. consumer price index (CPI), for example, rose by 18 percent a year on average from December 2020 to December 2022, far faster than the 6.1 annual gain in the overall index.

The shortsighted emphasis on electric vehicles (EV) and batteries compounded the green inflation effect. While governments and advocates pressed this emphasis, economies failed to make commensurate developments in mining the metals—cobalt, copper, nickel, graphite, and manganese—crucial to constructing these products.

With these supplies constrained, the emphasis on EVs and batteries forced a huge jump in the prices of these metals, adding significantly to the rise in first producer prices and then consumer prices. The impact is clear in how the weight of these metals has risen as a part of the overall cost of a lithium-ion battery, increasing from some 50 percent of the total cost in 2017 to approaching 70 percent in 2022.

None of this is to blame the green agenda for inflation. As already indicated, inflation is fundamentally a monetary phenomenon. Nor is it an attempt to say that the green agenda is inherently inflationary. Instead, this analysis shows that poorly thought-out policies and attempts to move faster than is practical have made the recent inflation more severe than it otherwise would have been.

Rhetoric should follow thought and perhaps action, too. In this case, it led or rather substituted for both action and thought.

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Kevin Stocklin



Left-Wing Causes Infiltrate Advertising

Progressives pressure CEOs to steer companies into the political arena

ANHEUSER-BUSCH'S CONTROVERSIAL sponsorship of trans influencer Dylan Mulvaney in an advertising campaign for its beer brand Bud Light is just the most recent example of corporations championing progressive causes—and then having to backpedal when they discover that the message proves divisive.

In an attempt to quell a backlash among Bud Light drinkers, Anheuser-Busch CEO Brendan Whitworth stated on April 14: “We never intended to be part of a discussion that divides people. We are in the business of bringing people together over a beer.” Anonymous sources within the company claimed that “no one at a senior level” was aware of the promotional campaign.

Whitworth's statement echoes the words of Disney CEO Bob Iger in November 2022, following Disney's vow to fight a parental rights law in Florida that barred the teaching of sexual topics in school for children in third grade or younger.

While speaking to employees shortly after taking the helm from fired CEO Bob Chapek, who made the decision to fight the Florida law, Iger said, “I was sorry to see us dragged into that battle, and I have no idea exactly what its ramifications are.”

Other corporations who have gone down this path include fashion brands company Balenciaga, which published ads showing preschool-age girls posed alongside sexual tools and messages in November 2022.

These companies followed in the political footsteps of Major League Baseball, Delta Air Lines, and Coca-Cola, who in 2021 fought a voter-ID law in Georgia, alleging that it amounted to racist voter suppression.

In the wake of the controversy, a Rasmussen poll found that 37 percent of responders said they were less likely



Companies' political initiatives appear to be off-putting not only for conservative customers and shareholders but for employees as well.

to buy Coca-Cola products, while 25 percent said they were more likely, because of the company's political stance, which caused the nickname “Woke-a-Cola” to go viral.

According to a 2022 Gallup poll, 79 percent of voters, including a majority of both Democrats and Republicans, support voter ID laws.

“At this point, it's clear that corporations are going to be risking customers, employee engagement, and relationships with shareholders if they decide to drive a particular political agenda with their brand and resources,” Jeremy Tedesco, senior counsel at Alliance Defending Freedom, told The Epoch Times.

“There are definitely negative consequences to businesses continuing to go down this path of choosing one side or another in these political debates.”

Progressives often pressure CEOs to steer companies into the political arena through a system of internal and external pressure. Activist campaigns

from employees and outside nonprofits ultimately swayed Chapek to oppose the Florida parents' rights law, despite his initial hesitation.

Elsewhere, employee and nonprofit campaigns at Netflix attempted to pressure its executives to cancel comedian Dave Chappelle's show, “The Closer,” claiming that his jokes offended transgender people.

Ultimately, Netflix refused to go along, and co-CEO Ted Sarandos responded, “Chappelle is one of the most popular stand-up comedians today, and we have a long-standing deal with him.”

The Human Rights Campaign, which advocates for LGBT rights, publishes a Corporate Equality Index, which rates companies' compliance with its views.

“They have a 360-degree pressure campaign to push these companies further and further left, including on the positions they take on contentious political issues,” Tedesco said. To get a high score, “you have to essentially cede control over your marketing to external groups that have no interest in whether your company is successful, whether you're alienating your customers or your employees.”

Companies' political initiatives appear to be off-putting not only for conservative customers and shareholders but for employees as well.

An Ipsos survey in March reported that while corporate executives become ever more comfortable about imposing their political views on their companies, two-thirds of employees surveyed said they feared expressing their political or religious views at work.

An alternative path that corporate executives who want to venture into politics should consider, Tedesco said, is “just stay out of it. Serve the interests and needs of everybody who wants to be a consumer of your products, or an employee in your organization, or a shareholder of your business.”

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Daniel Lacalle



OPEC Cuts May Cause World Crisis

Demand and monetary aggregates deny the need to cut oil supply

OPEC CUTS MAY CAUSE World Crisis. The world is facing a precarious moment in the oil market. The recent decision by OPEC+ to extend production cuts has raised concerns about the potential impact on the global economy. While the move may benefit oil producers in the short term, it may be a misguided action that could also have unintended consequences that could harm the broader economy and oil demand with it.

OPEC should remember that after a burst in oil prices due to unnecessary cuts comes a massive slump due to a recession.

Why did OPEC announce a surprise production cut of 1.16 million barrels per day (bpd)?

First, to defend the price of oil. OPEC has been surprised by the weakness in commodity prices since the June 2022 rate cuts. By the end of 2022, oil prices were trading below the level before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Furthermore, prices continued to slide in the first three months of 2023 due to a weaker recovery than expected from China.

Second, to allow room for rising Iraqi production. Iraq is a member of OPEC, but it isn't limited in its production due to the impact of the war. Iraq produced an average of 4.61 million bpd in 2022, according to the Iraq Oil Report. It expects to increase production to 5 million bpd by 2028. As such, Iraq will offset part of OPEC's production cut with an increase of 500,000 bpd in output.

Third, OPEC was surprised to see a weaker recovery from China, which led the organization to downgrade its global oil demand expectations.

The elephant in the room is money. The biggest driver of oil weakness in 2022 and 2023 was monetary contrac-



OPEC may be misguided in its production cuts because the demand and monetary pictures have changed significantly.

tion and rate hikes, which trampled over the impact of the Ukraine war and the Russian production cut. Monetary destruction was more than enough to offset geopolitical concerns.

OPEC may be misguided in its production cuts because the demand and monetary pictures have changed significantly.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) expects world oil demand to grow by 2 million barrels bpd in 2023, to a record 101.9 million bpd, driven mostly by stronger consumption in China. In its monthly report, the IEA cites jet fuel demand as the driver of 57 percent of the 2023 gains. So, the demand picture is stronger than what OPEC thinks.

The monetary picture has changed dramatically as well. The U.S. Dollar Index has weakened as well as the trade-weighted dollar index, according to Bloomberg. Rate hikes and monetary contraction are no

longer here. The global money supply has risen back to \$104 trillion, as Bloomberg's proxy shows, while the Federal Reserve has bounced back after meeting the liquidity requirements of troubled U.S. lenders.

Demand and monetary aggregates deny the need to cut supply. The extended cuts raise concerns that the market may be artificially inflated, which could lead to a supply crunch and a spike in oil prices that becomes the final element required to create a recession.

Moreover, the OPEC+ production cuts could lead to rising geopolitical tensions, as some countries may feel unfairly disadvantaged by the cuts. This is already creating a shift toward protectionist policies, which undermine global trade and economic growth.

The rise of renewable energy and the increasing prevalence of electric vehicles are inevitable. These factors could lead to a fundamental shift away from oil as a primary source of energy, which could ultimately lead to a long-term decline in demand and prices.

Policymakers and businesses must take a long-term perspective on the energy market and make the most of innovation, technology, diversification, and security of supply.

Oil-producing countries must remember that the worst they can do is put at risk their customers' perception of their role as reliable and competitive suppliers. If OPEC is seen as greedy and uncompetitive, its future is doomed.

While the OPEC+ production cuts may provide short-term benefits for oil-producing countries, they also create much larger negative implications for them in the future as well as significant risks for the global economy. OPEC doesn't benefit from a crisis and certainly may hurt its own strategy by pursuing unnecessary cuts.

ALEXANDER KLEIN/AP/WIA GETTY IMAGES

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Fan Yu

China's Information Game

The new CCP measures increase the 'price of doing business' in China

ONLY MONTHS AFTER publicly attempting to assuage fears of a crackdown on foreign businesses, Beijing seems to be doing just that.

A spate of probes and investigations against foreign businesses in China has renewed questions about China's policy on foreign companies operating locally.

Recently, Chinese authorities questioned the staff of and seized laptops and other documents from the Shanghai offices of U.S. consulting firm Bain & Co. Earlier in March, authorities closed the Beijing offices of Mintz Group and detained its employees. Mintz is a U.S. corporate due-diligence firm. Also in March, Beijing started an investigation into Micro Technologies on suspicions of “cybersecurity” risks of the products Micro sells in China.

The type of firm under Beijing's current scrutiny is concerning. Bain and Mintz, and Micro indirectly, traffic in information. These consulting and advisory firms have a ton of information on Chinese companies, Chinese industries, foreign companies in China, China's political trends, and across China's government hierarchy. And they provide such information to U.S. audiences (government and corporate).

China's goal is straightforward.

In October 2022, at the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress, regime leader Xi Jinping announced that the main focus over the next five years is to become independent from reliance on technology and capital from the West. In short, Beijing made its intentions clear that the United States isn't its friend.

Recently, China has made its security laws more ambiguous to more easily target foreign corporations and individuals.

In April, state media announced revisions to the counterespionage law, which now scopes in any nonstate actors. This means Beijing could label almost any normal inter-



The endgame of this is that the CCP turns foreign corporations into 'double agents.'

action a national security offense.

For example, the ordinary business activities conducted by consulting firms, including gathering information on local industries, potential domestic competitors and business partners, and the relevant regulatory agencies and key political figures, could all be considered espionage.

At the same time, parts of the Chinese government are trying to send a message that China is back and open for business. In other words: Don't worry, keep your capital coming.

The issue lies in how foreign companies and governments interpret these measures and consider them the ever-higher “cost of doing business” in the Chinese market.

Beijing's bet is that most multinationals can't afford to lose the ability to produce in and sell to China. Or if they can afford to leave, they're loathe to do so.

And multinational corporations are mostly proving China right.

In my view, the endgame of this is that the CCP turns foreign corporations into “double agents” of sorts working on

behalf of Beijing and the Xi regime.

Local Chinese branches of these companies and consulting firms gather and shape the intelligence and information that foreign companies and governments receive, which eventually shape their opinions of what's occurring “on the ground” and ultimately influence their decision and policy making on China.

Wall Street has already been playing such a role between Beijing and the West.

China's former Vice Premier Liu He, one of Xi's most trusted lieutenants, sought advice from Larry Fink on how to keep Western capital from leaving China during January's World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, according to a Wall Street Journal report. Fink is the powerful and connected CEO of BlackRock, the world's biggest asset management firm.

We've discussed in past columns investment banks' role in facilitating capital movement both into and out of China. In return, the financial services industry has received relatively preferential treatment in the Chinese market, including being granted the ability to wholly own their domestic Chinese subsidiaries.

But is this permanent? Only time will tell. Elon Musk has long been a China advocate, and Tesla has maintained a level of success selling in the Chinese market and operating giant battery plants locally. But Tesla's long-term success is still unknown. Chief local competitor BYD—backed by Warren Buffett—appears on the verge of local and potentially global EV domination.

It's unfortunate to admit that in comparison with Xi's regime, the Biden administration appears myopic, impotent, and weak.

America's political, economic, and military leadership against China is simply being outclassed and looks like a group of modern-day Keystone Kops.

THOUGHT LEADERS

North Korean Defector on the Fragility of Freedom

Is America on the road to ruin?

North Korean defector **Yeonmi Park.**



ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES, JACK WANG/THE EPOCH TIMES

“THE TACTICS USED here to control people are the same tactics the North Korean regime used to control and enslave us,” North Korean defector Yeonmi Park says.

In a recent episode of “American Thought Leaders,” host Jan Jekielek spoke with Park, author of the new book “While Time Remains: A North Korean Girl’s Search for Freedom in America.” They discussed the victimhood pseudo-religion that she sees taking over America, the manipulation of language, and the fight to preserve the ideals of this country.

JAN JEKIELEK: Yeonmi, congratulations on your new book, “While Time Remains.” Please tell our viewers what you mean by time running out.

YEONMI PARK: The subtitle of the book is “A North Korean Defector’s Search for Freedom in America.” I actually didn’t expect to come to America and have to look for freedom. America was the land of the free and the home of the brave. Unfortunately, I went to Columbia University, where I was reminded of a lot of things that I saw in North Korea. Americans can’t recognize those threats because they’ve never lived in a truly oppressive country.

So I wrote this book to wake up America to see these threats. The tactics used here to control people are the same tactics the North Korean regime used to control and enslave us.

MR. JEKIELEK: In our last interview, I asked if you think it’s possible for America to become like North Korea. Do you still think that’s possible?

MS. PARK: It’s very possible. Living through the pandemic, that’s when I really understood that America is not

“People really don’t understand the danger of the CCP. The Chinese regime has been expanding through America, Africa, to the Middle East in Iran.”

immune to oppression. This country can totally become like China or North Korea if individuals stop defending their liberty.

MR. JEKIELEK: In your book, you reference Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s quote, “The line between good and evil cuts through every human heart.” In 1978, he gave the Harvard Commencement speech. He had exposed the Soviet Union for what it was and had won the Nobel Prize. He was this hero coming out of a very despotic regime. But after this Harvard address, he wasn’t so popular anymore. The people running the show were expecting him to tell them how great they were and thank them for helping him. Instead, he basically said, “You have some great things here, but I don’t think I would wish your system on my home country.” People were shocked.

In your case, you could have easily been popular as well, going to the Met Gala every year. You talk about that in this book and what a surreal experience that was. But you chose to be a truth teller, and that caused you some trouble.

MS. PARK: You’re saying I could be the darling of this movement of victimhood. I’m a woman. I was raped. I was sold and I could complain all day about how horrible men are. Because

the men I met then were rapists. I can totally make the case for the world that men are truly horrible.

When I was trying to write my second book, a lot of people were trying to force me to write a book on how hard it is to be a woman or on how horrible America’s treatment is toward black men, and compare the American prison system with the North Korean concentration system to show how America is brutal towards black men. Of course, if I had written that book, I would be on the New York Times Best Seller list right now.

When I was trying to do my audiobook, we couldn’t find a narrator. They would keep bailing out, and they would not want to narrate my book. Eventually, we got a lady and she wanted to use a pseudonym, after we went through 11 people. Just finding a narrator who wanted to narrate the book, not even the writing of the book, was a real challenge.

This is a really shocking thing to see how Americans are afraid and not acknowledging they are living in a somewhat oppressive country. Of course, the extent is not like North Korea and China. I’m not saying that. But we are on that path if we don’t turn back. We are getting closer every day, especially with the education system, and especially in the current climate where they can say your speech is

violence. If it's politically incorrect, then you are spreading hate.

MR. JEKIELEK: You say, "My life's purpose is to fight for human rights, especially for North Koreans." A number of the people at Columbia where you went to school and many other places would say: "We're fighting for human rights. We need to be safe and secure in our thoughts. We don't want to be exposed to dangerous things." They might imagine themselves as fighting for human rights. What do you think about that?

MS. PARK: I was studying economics for the first two years. For the remaining two years, I studied human rights and then got a human rights degree. It was really shocking sitting in the classroom. The professors or students would say that health care is a human right, the rights of LGBTQ+ are human rights, [and] universal income is a human right.

What human rights mean to me has currently lost meaning. I'm so sorry to say that. When people say I'm a human rights activist, that's not what I mean. Human rights for me are the right to pursue your life in a land where there is no infringement of your speech, your religion, your movement, and your thoughts. It isn't about me demanding that the country give me free education, free health care, free housing, and free universal income. It isn't about entitlement.

But now in America, human rights means that feelings rise over facts, that if I feel gender fluid or like some unicorn or a cat, then I have a right to be respected for that. I don't even know what to say to that. It's a mental condition.

If you go against political correctness, you lose your dignity, your character is assassinated, and you lose your liveli-



"It's a perfect time for China to infiltrate because Americans are so divided and have lost perspective on what's important in life," says Yeonmi Park.

hood. The elite decides what we can talk about and what we need to believe.

MR. JEKIELEK: A few days ago, The New York Times published an op-ed, "The Mask Mandates Did Nothing. Will Any Lessons Be Learned?" Anyone following actual scientific papers already knew this was the case. But there were a lot of people out there enforcing compliance. You have a child in the New York school system, so you know exactly what I'm talking about.

MS. PARK: My son was 2 years old when these lockdowns began. I couldn't afford not to be working, and he had to go to day care. They would demand that he wear a mask for up to eight hours a day in the day care.

Then they would open dog parks, but they would shut down the children's playgrounds in the summer

when there's a warm breeze and sunshine. They said, "We need to stay safe." I was thinking, "Dogs have more rights than my son right now."

Many people were shunned during that time. If you asked a single question about mainstream orthodoxy, then you were marked as a conspiracy theorist, a danger to public health. You lose your job, you get banned, you get censored. We did this to our own people in the name of public health and the public good. In the name of this one thing, the government destroyed so many lives.

MR. JEKIELEK: I'm reminded of the power of propaganda in North Korea, which is really unbelievable.

MS. PARK: The North Korean policies are beyond evil, beyond anything that we have seen. They chose

to starve their own population. They would choose to let them die from starvation, even though they had every resource to feed them. Until this day, Kim Jong-un uses the same tactic to control the population.

Of course, government is a necessary evil. We need it to keep us safe. We need it to protect us, and we give them power for our military and some public things that we need to run. But we need to keep it as limited as we can.

The thing is, a lot of people think that somehow the government looks out for the best interest for all of us. As long as we give them more power and let them keep growing, somehow they're going to bring us a paradise, which is exactly what the North Korean regime promised. But they took everything and gave nothing back and made us slaves.

Right now, there are so many Biden promises, like the student debt forgiveness, similar to the same tactics that Kim Il-sung used to buy the votes and become a dictator. When the government keeps promising free things, that becomes very dangerous.

MR. JEKIELEK: Years ago, someone told me that when you're getting Facebook for free, the reason is you're the product.

MS. PARK: You're the product, yes.

MR. JEKIELEK: I want to finish up about the masks. It feels like we're going to cruise right through the accountability for what was done.

MS. PARK: Yes, suddenly they're like: "Oops, we made a mistake. Let's move on."

This can be a pattern if we let them go like this. There should be consequences for harming people, and they actually harmed so many people.

"We're not celebrating the victorious life; we're celebrating the misery. We've stopped telling people, 'You are strong.'"

MR. JEKIELEK: What this really speaks to is the cozy relationship between big government, Big Tech, and big education, all these different structures, including big business.

MS. PARK: And mainstream media.

MR. JEKIELEK: Mainstream media, yes, and Big Pharma, and all of them working together. It really amounts to a massive amount of power and the ability to shape our perceptions.

MS. PARK: And it's getting harder to find the truth. They keep burying the truth. That's what they do in schools, and even in universities. And if you look for truth, then you are a bigot.

In any dictatorship, the first thing they go for is the media and education. Every country did that during this kind of revolution. This is what people don't understand or are just starting to understand—this is our moment of cultural revolution in America.

The tactics are the same. The media gets compromised. The education system gets compromised. Hollywood produces propaganda, and scientists cannot question the science. That completely defeats the purpose of science.

We don't have a lot of time left. What institution is there right now that is not under a threat from the unification of all these institutions who demand that we follow their commandments?

MR. JEKIELEK: A lot of people have been what you would call black-pilled, which means they are thinking to themselves, "What's the point? I've tried."

MS. PARK: Americans are the freest individuals in human history. No citizens of a country have ever been this prosperous and had this many rights and a bigger voice. There are people in North Korea who do not even know what it means to have a voice. Americans certainly do.

If a North Korean can come to America not speaking a word of English, can become who I am today, anybody in America can make a difference. But that mind of perseverance is lacking. That's why so many people become pessimistic and nihilistic. Somehow, the world becomes pointless. Fighting for truth and justice is somehow a pointless game.

There's so much to be grateful for, so much to be excited about, and so many ways to make a difference, but this current culture is so negative, especially to young minds. It's horrifying.

You can complain about a million different things and the list will never run out. But if you decide to be thankful today, to be grateful, that list is never going to run out either. This is like what the Bible taught us. When I asked God how to be happy, he asked me to learn

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gratitude. Happiness only comes when you're grateful.

Americans have lost that gratitude. In this culture, they almost demand that you be a victim. They ask you to be oppressed and miserable. This is like when people were asking me: "Why are you so normal? Why are you so functional?"

We're not celebrating the victorious life; we're celebrating the misery. We've stopped telling people: "You are strong. You can persevere and be resilient." Instead, we're teaching them to be victims and to complain about literally everything and anything, and how not always having a problem is a problem.

MR. JEKIELEK: In your book, you said that an increased Chinese Communist Party influence around the world translates into an increase of North Korean reality around the world. Can you explain what you mean here?

MS. PARK: People really don't understand the danger of the CCP. The Chinese regime has been expanding through America, Africa, to the Middle East in Iran, and to all these other countries. They started giving them scholarships. They are offering to build roads and companies and factories, they make them indebted, and then they move in.

For example, in North Korea, the mining towns gave the CCP a 200-year lease, or a 300-year lease. Do you really think 300 years later, North Korea will have anything left when they take back the land? No way—it has become Chinese. Their agenda is really to make the North Korean reality a norm in the world.

Right now, as long as America stands as the defending democracy, people still understand an alternative way of life is possible. A lot of Chinese people

want to come to America. They know a superior system exists here. But once the American system goes down, then what do we have? China is left with all this influence, and the entire world is under its power.

Then, what is going to be the norm of our world is going to be the way of China and the way of North Korea. That will truly be a time when humanity will forget that this American kind of life was ever possible. When I was born in North Korea, I didn't even know that I was oppressed. I did not know that life could be different, because that's all I knew. In a few generations, that is easily possible.

China has given money to Harvard, Columbia, MIT, and all the schools, so they cannot criticize China. After I wrote my new book, there was a producer in Hollywood who was trying to make a movie about my first book, and he sent me a script. I was reading the script, and I could not believe it. It says that when I got to China, they gave me refuge, and that was my promised land. They protected me.

So I called up the producer: "What are you talking about? This is not what happened." He said, "This is the only way we can make a movie about North Korea in the current Hollywood." That's when I understood how many messages had to be altered.

The depth of this infiltration from China is so deep that I can't even fathom it. I don't think most Americans really understand how deep this is, the infiltration into our system, and it's a perfect time for China to infiltrate because Americans are so divided and have lost perspective on what's important in life.

MR. JEKIELEK: You have this one term in the book, "The warriors of light." Tell us about that.

MS. PARK: An individual is beautiful. I really believe we are unique, and all of us have warriors inside with that beautiful light that we can carry if we recognize it and get in touch with ourselves.

You can stop looking at social media and read more books and find your community. If you are not going to church, create your community. Stay connected to your family and look after each other, and really get back to reading books. There are so many great Western minds. John Stuart Mill wrote "On Liberty." These books still move my heart, but nobody else seems to read them. No other system, no civilization ever thought that individuals deserve rights like we have now.

MR. JEKIELEK: Some people who feel demoralized might say, "Sure, Yeonmi, this is all very interesting, but nothing I do is going to make a difference." What's your message to them?

MS. PARK: To me, saving the world doesn't mean you will be a Spider-Man superhero. If you learn how to take care of yourself physically and mentally, then you can start taking care of your family. Once that is in order, then you can take care of your community, and then bigger things. But it starts within you. Maybe all you can handle is just yourself, and that's fine. That's what I teach my son.

We don't need to be these virtuous beings who keep talking about how we need to save everybody and make everybody have equality of outcome. All that it takes is just taking care of yourself and not being a burden to somebody else, and that can be a noble cause. ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

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Using Autosuggestion and Visualization

Deciding what we want is the first step to achieving it

By Jeff Minick



YEARS AGO, WHEN asked “How’s it going?” a woman I knew always responded, “I’m getting better and better every day in every way.” This response sounded a bit contrived and hokey, but I assumed this mantra was just part of her personality.

Recently, while I was thumbing through Joseph Epstein’s “Wind Sprints,” a collection of short essays, a version of those same words snagged my attention: “Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better.” As Epstein notes, French psychologist Émile Coué de la Châtaigneraie (1857–1926) employed that very formula as part of the foundation for his positive thinking philosophy. Coué is the father of optimistic autosuggestion and the author of “Self-Mastery Through Conscious Autosuggestion,” which was published in the United States in 1922 and remains in print today. He believed that positive thoughts, constantly repeated, could in turn influence our mental and physical health.

“If you persuade yourself that you can do a certain thing,” he wrote, “provided this thing be possible, you will do it however difficult it may be.”

Others of that time were walking the same trail. In 1902, for instance, American James Allen brought out “As a Man Thinketh,” which begins with a poem:

Mind is the Master power that moulds and makes, And Man is Mind, and evermore he takes The tool of Thought, and, shaping what he wills, Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills:— He thinks in secret, and it comes to pass: Environment is but his looking-glass.

Usually, we have little to lose and much to gain by heading out the door.

Fifty years later, Norman Vincent Peale published “The Power of Positive Thinking,” a huge best-seller that’s still popular today. Upbeat thinking has guides abounding in the self-help sections of bookstores, podcasters, and career coaches tout its benefits, and athletes use autosuggestion to run a marathon or improve their game in golf, tennis, and other sports.

Accompanying autosuggestion is its cousin, visualization. Here, we fire up our imagination to scout out some future event—a job interview, a marriage proposal, skydiving—in the hopes of bolstering our chances for success. A friend of mine found her teenager lying in bed just hours before a dance recital.

“Shouldn’t you be practicing?” Mom asked. “I am practicing,” the girl replied. “In my head.” She’d never heard of visu-

alization, but she was doing that very thing, critiquing herself in her mind’s eye as she went through her routine.

Does Coué’s autosuggestion theory have flaws? The jury is out as to whether Americans are self-obsessed—but carried too far, autosuggestion could certainly stoke the ego to the detriment of our relationships with others. It’s hard to imagine Mother Teresa walking the poverty-stricken streets of Calcutta chanting to herself, “Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better.”

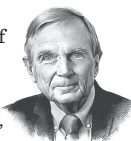
Does conscious autosuggestion work? Ask that question online, and the answer is a resounding affirmative. Article after article describe this technique for self-improvement as a powerful tool that can boost self-confidence and benefit our health. Here, we might note that money spent on media advertising of all kinds in the United States in 2022 was well in excess of \$250 billion, so clearly companies and ad agencies believe in the power of suggestion.

In most cases, we have little to lose and much to gain by heading out the door buoyed by a bit of bright cheer, if for no other purpose than to keep us afloat in the rough seas of our battered world.

“Try this for a week and you will be surprised,” wrote Peale in “The Power of Positive Thinking.”

Game on. How about it? ■

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. He is the author of two novels, “Amanda Bell” and “Dust on Their Wings,” and two works of nonfiction, “Learning as I Go” and “Movies Make the Man.”



Unwind

Because they’ll be calling camp “home” for several weeks, here are some suggestions on items to make it more enjoyable.

PHOTO BY PETER AMEND/GETTY IMAGES



Must-Have Gear for Sleepaway Camp 79

LISTED ON THE NATIONAL

Register of Historic Places, Georgetown’s Baker House is a standout even in a town full of very impressive properties. 70

YOU CAN EASILY WALK

around the petite French Polynesian island of Mangareva on foot, but plan ahead if you stay overnight, because it doesn’t have a hotel. 72

GRANOR FARM’S

Abra Berens has an interesting perspective on food and cooking, having made the transformation from farmer to chef. 75

Built in 1794, the main residence has been lovingly maintained to highlight the impressive examples of custom millwork and moldings.



Jackie Kennedy's Georgetown Home

An 18th-Century Federal-style home recently connected to the adjacent homes to create an estate

By Bill Lindsey

FOLLOWING THE TRAGIC DEATH OF President John F. Kennedy, his widow, Jacqueline Kennedy, moved from the White House to an 18th-century Georgetown residence known as the Baker House to serve as home for her and her young children. Known for her oversized sunglasses, unerring sense of style, and unflappable quiet elegance, in addition to her career as a book editor, Jackie was an active proponent of preserving historically important homes and buildings, making this property a great choice.

Built in 1794 as an example of Federal-style architecture, in addition to the Kennedys, the residence at 3017 N Street NW also has been called home by Georgetown's Mayor Thomas Beall (1748–1819), Secretary of War Newton D. Baker (1871–1937), and Miss America 1951 Yolande Betbeze Fox (1928–2016). Not surprisingly, Baker House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Sadly, to escape the paparazzi, the Kennedy family moved after only a year.

In 2017, this home was connected to the

adjacent two homes: 3009 N Street NW, a three-bedroom, 3 1/2-bathroom home built in 1950 as a modernist brick and concrete structure, and 3003 N Street NW, a five-bedroom, 3 1/2-bathroom home built in 1880. The 16,300-square-foot compound of three houses that now constitute Baker House has a total of 13 bedrooms, 13 full bathrooms, and five half bathrooms, making it an ideal choice for a corporate retreat, a large family, or owners who enjoy hosting guests, in addition to being a national treasure.

The main house in which the Kennedys resided has been studiously maintained over the years. The home features a grand main reception hall, numerous original fireplace surrounds, and elegant wood moldings throughout. The spacious primary suite on the second floor features parquet flooring, a private balcony overlooking the rear gardens, and a spa-quality bath. Four additional bedrooms, all with private baths, and the lofted observation deck are located on the third floor. A tunnel connects all three homes to a three-car garage. ■



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(Above) The Kennedys, after building this Federal-style architecture, moved after only a year due to paparazzi. (Top Right) The spacious suite's unique features include the fireplace surrounds and exquisite woodworking. (Right) The property combines a sense of history and elegance with the practicality of a massive estate.



Islands' End

Life is entirely different on Mangareva, French Polynesia's remotest island

By Tim Johnson



Rikitea, on the island of Mangareva, is the main town on the Gambiers.

PHOTO BY LYN DURHAM/GETTY IMAGES

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A MAP GUY. EVEN as a little kid, my constant companion was an oversized Rand McNally road atlas. I was the same with globes and world maps—I had the latter masking-taped to the ceiling over my bed. And sometimes, I would just lie there and stare into the blue, all that ocean, way out there.

The Pacific is almost incomprehensibly huge, encompassing almost a third of the Earth's surface. It's bigger than all the continents combined.

I would ask myself questions about the little white islands that spotted those otherwise blank, blue areas. What's happening out there? Do people live there? If I closed my eyes here and opened them there, what would everything look like?

Now, I know—because I've been to Mangareva, part of the far-flung Gambier Islands. If you have a map nearby, take your finger and point it near the middle of the Pacific, just above the Tropic of Capricorn, and you'll be close. It's impossibly far from literally everywhere.

Only Here

I arrived by sailing there on Aranui 5. Departing from Tahiti on this half-cargo, half-cruise ship, it took several days to cover the 1,000 miles that separate the islands.

And then, suddenly, on our arrival, so much sound and activity. Approaching in one of Aranui's landing craft, a big, open barge, we could hear and smell the party before we saw it. Drums and ukuleles. Happy singing. The scent of lagoon fish and chicken and beef hearts being barbecued over a fire, rising in a delicious column of smoke. A feast, and a festival, assembled in our honor.

Rikitea, on the island of Mangareva, is the main town on the Gambiers. The whole island chain is home to only about 1,500 people—and it felt like every single one of them showed up to greet us this day. It's the most distant part of French Polynesia. (A French woman living in the Tahitian capital told me, "Even for Tahitians, the Gambiers are really the end of the world.")

We disembarked. Small, tented stands sold shell jewelry and other handmade items—I browsed through, had a look at the grill, then made my way to the village green. A group of young women dressed in green grass skirts and beautiful floral headdresses were preparing to dance.

"This is a dance done only on the Gambiers," the leader announced. "Today, we do it only for you."

They proceeded to perform a series of very small steps, the drums, ukuleles, and guitars playing them into high gear. All together they dance, completely in synch, with a

Mangareva is just over **1,000 miles** from Tahiti.



The Gambier Island chain is home to only about 1,500 people.

Visitors can see the palace and mausoleum of King Maputeoa, Mangareva's last monarch.

Rikitea Cathedral is the South Pacific's largest church.



THIS PAGE FROM TOP: THE EPOCH TIMES; TIM JOHNSON



Musicians prepare to accompany the dancers on the village green.

true sense of joy. It's unlike anything I've seen, even in Hawaii or Bora Bora or anywhere else across Polynesia.

It's an undeniable fact: Isolation breeds uniqueness. Formed by ancient volcanoes, the Gambier Islands comprise just 10 square miles of land. But they're considered completely distinct—culturally, geologically, and linguistically—from the two closest archipelagos, the Marquesas and the Tuamotus.

It's a paradise of big palms and bright, blue water, with Mangareva protected by a coral reef enclosing a lagoon with just three openings to the big, open ocean. Despite a couple of miles of paved road and a few modern conveniences (including Wi-Fi and 2G mobile signal), life here hasn't necessarily changed so much over the centuries.

Cargo ships arrive twice a month with goods for the small supermarkets. Fishing and subsistence farming still provide the staples. Rattling out of the main town on a truck tour, Manlitahi,



Locals assemble a feast to welcome the Aranui 5's passengers.

a friendly guide sporting a floral headdress, shared a little about her life on Mangareva.

"It is very peaceful, tranquil," she says, in a French accent. We conversed in a mix of French and English.

We passed a pearl farm and vanilla plantations and breathtaking vistas over the lagoon, with so many shades of blue. While she has a place in Rikitea, Manlitahi told me that life even in that small village is too busy for her liking. She prefers her house in the mountains.

"People up there, they're kinder, more peaceful."

Because of its remote location—more than a four-hour flight from Tahiti—there are no resorts here. It's one of the least-visited places in French Polynesia, with guests booking longer stays in one of the small, charming pensions in town. Joys are simple and genuine.

"On the weekends, a snack shop opens up," Manlitahi shared. "They serve hamburgers and steak frites. Everyone enjoys eating out."

Soon, it's back on the barge, and back on the ship, although the sound of the drums and ukuleles continues as we sail away. Ahead lies days of open ocean, in the comfortable confines of the Aranui. But I know that every time I see a world map, I'll think differently about that vast, blue, Pacific expanse.

Instead of question marks, I'll picture the faces of the dancers, musicians, and Manlitahi, smiling under her green, leafy crown. ■

Tim Johnson is based in Toronto. He has visited 140 countries across all seven continents.

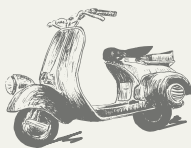
If You Go

Fly: All flights to Mangareva leave from Faa'a International Airport (PPT) on Tahiti, the main gateway to French Polynesia.

Getting Around: If you arrive by ship, a truck tour may be available. Otherwise, you may be able to borrow a bicycle or hire a scooter. The entirety of the Rikitea can be seen easily on foot.

Stay: There are no hotels or resorts, so most will stay in one of a handful of small pensions. Or book a trip on board Aranui 5.

Take Note: French is the main day-to-day language here.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: TIM JOHNSON; EVERLEDA/SHUTTERSTOCK; TIM JOHNSON

ABRA BERENS'S FOOD IS A CELEBRATION OF THE MIDWEST'S BOUNTY—AND A LOVE LETTER TO THE PEOPLE WHO GROW IT

A conversation with the Michigan chef, cookbook author, and former farmer about her culinary journey, how she stays focused, and what she's been cooking lately

By Crystal Shi

"WHAT ARE YOU most excited about?" That, Abra Berens says in her new cookbook, is the single best question you can ask a farmers market vendor—or a restaurant server, or even a grocery store stockist—and your surest path to a delicious discovery. These people are skilled workers with the most intimate and recent knowledge of your food, she explains.

"Put yourself in our capable, dirt-nailed hands."

Championing the country's farmers and food workers and their hard labor hidden behind our plates—this lies at the heart of Berens's work. As the chef at Granor Farm, a certified organic farm in Three Oaks, Michigan, she hosts limited private dinners with produce harvested on the same day. As a cookbook author, she brings her knowledge to home cooks; her third and most recent book is "Pulp: A Practical Guide to Cooking With Fruit."

THE EPOCH TIMES: You had a brief stint as a farmer. What was your biggest takeaway?
ABRA BERENS: Just how much work goes into food production. I didn't know that it takes nine months to grow a head of garlic. Garlic! Something I use every day takes as long to grow as a baby!

THE EPOCH TIMES: Tell us about your path to cooking professionally.
MS. BERENS: It started at Zingerman's Deli in Ann Arbor,

Berens's new cookbook highlights the versatility of fruit.



Ginger-poached apricots pair unexpectedly well with bok choy and chile oil.



Rhubarb, a spring favorite, shines in an easy upside-down cake.



Abra Berens, cookbook author and chef at Granor Farm in Three Oaks, Mich.

MEET THE CHEF

Age: 41

Born in: Kalamazoo, Michigan

Lives in: Galien, Michigan

Comfort Food: Tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches.

Drink of Choice: Black coffee in the morning, dry sherry for cocktail hour.

Favorite Way to Unwind: I have a toddler, and he loves to be tickled. His laughter can unwind the fiercest tension.

Michigan. I always loved cooking, but that was the first time I saw it in a professional kitchen. I went to culinary school on a bit of a whim because I wanted to learn more about food in hopes of writing about it someday; then I realized that I wanted it to be central to my day-to-day. The most pivotal moment came when I realized that, as a farm kid, I could use food to help connect people to agriculture. That gave me a lot of focus and kept me from chasing shiny pennies.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What's your cooking mantra?
MS. BERENS: Taste it! How do you know if a fruit is sweet or tart without tasting it? If a berry is perfect, I don't do very much to it—maybe throw it on some ice cream. If it's less than perfect, I feel encouraged to

cook with it or add some other elements of flavor.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What spring produce are you most excited about?
MS. BERENS: I love rhubarb so much. I've been poaching it and serving it savory with pork chops or grilled salmon or in a spinach salad. It also makes a great filling for a cream puff or topping for ice cream.

THE EPOCH TIMES: What do people not know or understand about your work?
MS. BERENS: That we truly are cooking from the farm. There are so many "farm-to-table" places that most folks think the farm is for show, but it isn't. We couldn't create these dishes without the hard work of our farming colleagues. ■

DEALING WITH ROADSIDE EMERGENCIES

By Bill Lindsey

Rapidly changing weather or road debris can sideline a drive, making preparation a must

Modern cars are more reliable than ever, but drivers need to know how to get home safely in case nature throws them a curve ball.

PHOTO BY MMD CREATIVE/SHUTTERSTOCK

FEW PEOPLE, WHEN GETTING into their car to drive to work, wonder whether the trip might not go as planned; we get into the car and we go. But the recent once-in-a-millennium flooding in South Florida made it clear that even short drives can suddenly go awry.

In the recent flooding, some drivers ran out of fuel because they had to make long detours away from flooded areas, others had their vehicles stall in deep water, and still others experienced flat tires caused by debris in the road. The brand of the car wasn't a factor; the flooding stranded Mercedes as often as it did Kias.

The lesson here is that a bit of planning can help prevent a situation from becoming an ordeal. Avoid driving through deep water, even if that means making a long detour; if possible, wait for the water to drain. Flat tires happen; what counts is the car owner's response.

Vehicles equipped with tire pressure monitoring systems alert the operator to low tire pressure, but a visual inspection is always the best method. If a tire begins to lose pressure while driving, consider how low the tire is and whether the car can make it safely home. If the pressure is dropping fast, pull over, activate the emergency flashers, and assess the situation.

There are three ways to respond to excessively low tire pressure: change the tire, use a can of tire sealant to plug the leak, or use a portable inflator to add air so the car can be driven to a repair facility. Changing a tire can be a straightforward or unpleasant experience. Many drivers never bother to inspect their car's tire-changing tools and spare tire or even confirm that it has a spare tire; some car manufacturers provide a can of tire sealant instead of a spare tire.

If the tire leak is slow, a get-home option is to use a tire inflator to add air, even if that means stopping every few blocks or miles to add more. If the tire is flat and will not accept air, it needs to be changed, either by someone in the vehicle or by someone who is called to come provide



Getting a flat tire is always possible, and knowing how to change one is a must-have skill for all drivers.

The first thing to do after buying a new vehicle is to inspect all the emergency equipment and add a first-aid kit, a flashlight, LED road flares, and basic tools. Also consider upgrading the vehicle's jack and lug wrench.



While it's unwise to store a gas can full of fuel in the vehicle, it's a good idea to have an empty gas container handy in case you run out of fuel.





Flash floods can make roads impassable and damage vehicles, leaving motorists stranded. Pay attention to weather alerts and use a route-planning app to get home safely.

The brand of the car wasn't a factor; the flooding stranded Mercedes as often as it did Kias.

assistance—which could mean the car isn't going anywhere for quite a while.

The process of changing a tire is simple and safe as long as the instructions are followed. The vehicle's owner's manual will provide detailed instructions, but taking time now to watch how-to videos can provide much-needed confidence. Some owners augment the car's tire-changing equipment with a more efficient bottle jack and a heavy-duty lug wrench.

Running out of fuel is never fun, so many drivers make a point of topping off the fuel tank as soon as it hits the half-full mark. However, there are times when getting gas isn't an option. If the car's fuel tank is showing empty and the engine is starting to make odd noises or vibrations, safely pull off the road and turn off the engine.

It's never a good idea to keep spare fuel in a vehicle, but storing an empty fuel container is a great idea. This en-

sure that someone can transport fuel from the nearest station to the car and get the vehicle back in action.

In order to be prepared for unforeseen events, consider equipping the vehicle with some basic equipment. The list begins with a comprehensive yet compact first-aid kit with a tourniquet, such as those offered by My Medic. Next on the list is a supply of water, both for the vehicle in the event of coolant loss and to keep the occupants hydrated.

Add several long-shelf-life energy bars, work gloves, a tarp to work on or use for shade, a flashlight with spare batteries, an LED emergency flare, a can of tire sealant, a 12-volt or cordless tire inflator, a better jack than what came with the vehicle, a heavy-duty lug wrench, and jumper cables or a battery jumper such as the Athena, which can also recharge phones.

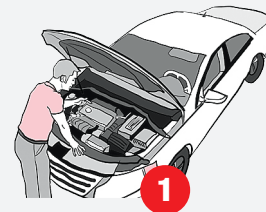
Other helpful gear includes an empty fuel container, basic tools, a roll of duct tape, an ice scraper, and a raincoat or poncho. Taking a few minutes to learn where the vehicle's battery is located is another good idea—some are actually stashed under the passenger seat—as is knowing where to connect battery jumper cables.

A bit of preparation is the way to get home safely. ■



LIFESTYLE GETTING HOME

It isn't being paranoid to be prepared



Know the Vehicle

Know where the car's battery or jumper connections are located. Look at the spare tire to see if it's ready to use or must be inflated, and inspect the jack and lug wrench, too.



Pay Attention

The South Florida flooding took everyone by surprise, but news quickly spread, allowing some to avoid the worst areas. Listen to local news and weather radio stations for updates.



Stock Up

Add a few essentials such as a flashlight, a first-aid kit, jumper cables, emergency snacks, water, and a rain poncho, just in case. Keep the fuel tank topped off, too.

THIS PAGE FROM L: JOE RADE/GETTY IMAGES; THE EPOCH TIMES

SLEEPAWAY CAMP MUST-HAVES

Some gear to make hikes, overnight adventures, and time bonding with new friends in the cabin more fun for your little camper

By Bill Lindsey



Stay in Touch KAITO KA500 SHORTWAVE CRANK RADIO WITH FLASHLIGHT & READING LAMP

\$49.99

Many camps don't allow phones, tablets, or computers in order to make sure the campers take a break from tech, but music can liven up a cabin if it's raining too much to take a hike. Because this radio can be powered by the hand crank, there's no need to worry about finding fresh batteries. The built-in reading lamp is great for writing letters to home—or enjoying a comic book—after lights-out.



Be the Cabin's MacGyver VICTORINOX SWISS ARMY EXPLORER

\$62.99

Tucked away in your camper's pocket, this amazing tool can tighten or loosen screws, start campfires, open pistachios, loosen knots, sew leather, pick up hot items, open cans or bottles, make a walking stick, trim loose threads, remove splinters, and so much more. Crafted for a lifetime of service in Switzerland, this is sure to create many "you'll never guess how I saved the day" stories.



Snug as a Bug MARMOT KIDS' TRESTLES ELITE ECO 30-DEGREE SLEEPING BAG

\$119

Campouts require sleeping bags, but for many younger kids, a standard bag is just too big to carry and too large to allow them to sleep well. This sleeping bag is made specifically for campers five feet tall or less, weighs less than two pounds, and can be tightly compacted for backpacking or storage in a footlocker when not needed. It features a roomy "foot" section, too, for plenty of toe-wiggling room.



Wet Your Whistle HYDRO FLASK 32 OZ WIDE MOUTH BOTTLE

\$44.95

Having fun in the sun on hiking trips, canoe adventures, or mastering the bow at archery class can work up a thirst, making this 32-ounce insulated water bottle a must. The rugged construction means that it'll survive being dropped, while the bright-orange color makes it almost impossible to lose. The optional straw lid and bottle sling make it convenient to use, even while on the go.



Cool Breezes on Demand COLEMAN CPX 6 LIGHTED FAN

\$34.99

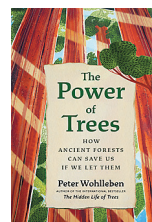
Sometimes on a hot summer night, the cabin can get a bit stuffy, making this battery-powered fan a wonderful way to create a very welcome, refreshing breeze. It can even be used on campouts and will attach to the ceiling of a tent. Four "D" batteries power it for up to 30 hours on the low setting, while the soft blades make it safe for use by younger campers.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: L: COURTESY OF KAITO; HYDRO FLASK; COLEMAN; MARMOT; VICTORINOX

Are there books you'd recommend?
We'd love to hear from you. Let us know at features@epochtimes.com

RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we feature the gripping sports history of a U.S. team in the Berlin Olympics and a potent analysis of the CCP's threat to our country.



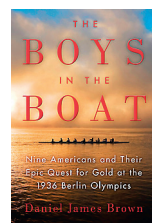
SCIENCE

'The Power of Trees'

By Peter Wohlleben

In his latest homage to one of our richest resources, German forester Peter Wohlleben isn't an alarmist. He looks to the wisdom of ancient forests and the knowledge to be gleaned as roots for a brighter future. Nicknamed the "tree whisperer," he shares new perspectives on forest management, often countering modern-day methods. Perhaps preserving old-growth forests is better than planting new ones. Perhaps Mother Nature knows best when it comes to the planet's health. This is an enlightening read.

GREYSTONE BOOKS, 2023, 280 PAGES



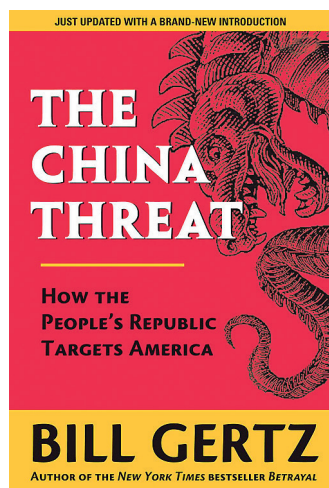
SPORTS

'The Boys in the Boat'

By Daniel James Brown

Competitive rowing was once followed as intensely as college football. Broadcast networks used to cover important races, and fans eagerly followed the results. This book explores that era by looking at the University of Washington's rowing team during the 1930s. It shows how, against the odds, the team qualified to represent the United States in the 1936 Olympics and then went on to win the gold medal in their category: the Men's Eight. A story of triumph against adversity, it's a great read.

PENGUIN BOOKS, 2014, 404 PAGES



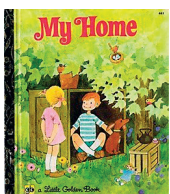
GEOPOLITICS

'The China Threat'

By Bill Gertz

The People's Republic of China has grown in power—economically and militarily—at an exponential rate since the turn of the 21st century. Since being admitted into the World Trade Organization, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) antagonisms have been ignored by world leaders, even to the detriment of national and regional economies. Gertz reveals how the Clinton administration led the world in turning a blind eye to the CCP's long-term threats and how this evasion continues to cripple Western democracies.

REGNERY PUBLISHING, 2002, 280 PAGES



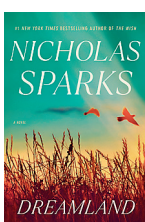
FOR KIDS

'My Home'

By René Bartkowski

This vintage Little Golden Book features sweet rhymes and simple illustrations in its contemplation of the kinds of homes that animals and people might live in. "If I were a gopher," "If I were a whale," the young narrator posits, finally concluding that a home is where family is. An example of simpler times, it can still be found if you look.

GOLDEN PRESS, 1973, 24 PAGES



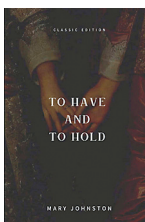
ROMANCE

'Dreamland'

By Nicholas Sparks

North Carolina farmer and musician Colby Mills vacations in Florida and meets the musically talented recent college graduate Morgan Lee, and the table is set for another of Sparks's romantic tales. Obstacles arise that seem to make a future together impossible. Meanwhile, a woman fleeing an abusive husband haunts these pages, her presence a mystery to readers until the final pages. Sparks's storytelling abilities and characters who seem as familiar as our neighbors make this one another success.

RANDOM HOUSE, 2022, 384 PAGES



CLASSICS

'To Have and to Hold'

By Mary Johnston

This 1900 bestseller sweeps readers into the Jamestown Colony of the 1620s. Johnston tells a love story between Lady Jocelyn Leigh and a gentleman farmer, Ralph Percy, but it's also a history of Jamestown's settlers: the "Starvation Time," the Indian attack of 1622, and the constant battles against the wilderness. Percy and Lady Leigh must also face the wrath of the intended husband from whom she escaped in England. Accustom yourself to the old-fashioned language, and it's a grand story.

INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED, 2022, 337 PAGES

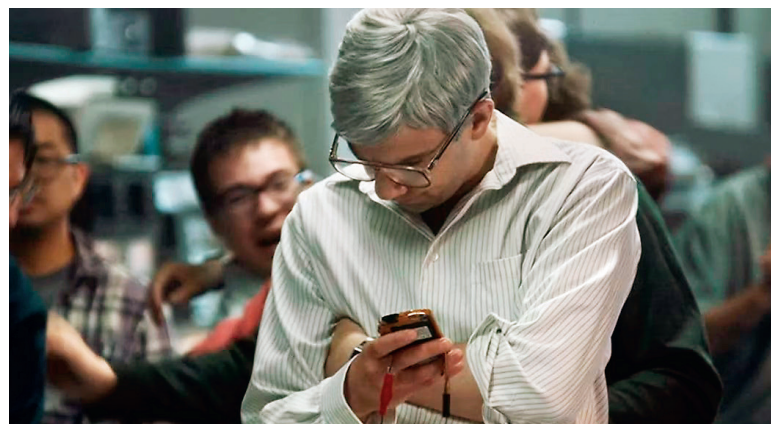


Ian Kane
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author. He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

ENTERTAINMENT

This week, we feature a hilarious satire about the world's first notable smartphone and an immersive animated fantasy about a unicorn's quest.

NEW RELEASE



'BlackBerry' (2023)

Before the iPhone, Mike Lazaridis (Jay Baruchel) and Jim Balsillie (Glenn Howerton) of Canadian technology company Research in Motion paved the way for one of the first smartphones, the BlackBerry. Although the two men revolutionized the mobile phone market, certain forces led to the BlackBerry's eventual extinction.

This satire certainly delivers laughs and also adds a sense of nostalgia for those old enough to remember the once-ubiquitous device. Baruchel and Howerton virtually disappear into their respective leading roles.

BIOGRAPHY | COMEDY | DRAMA

Release Date:
May 12, 2023

Director:
Matt Johnson

Starring:
Jay Baruchel, Glenn Howerton, Matt Johnson

Running Time:
2 hours, 2 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
Theaters

★★★★★

A ROUSING ACTION ADVENTURE



'The Vikings' (1958)

Viking King Ragnar's (Ernest Borgnine) son, Prince Einar (Kirk Douglas), seeks the affection of captured Welsh princess Morgana

(Janet Leigh). But she's attracted to Eric (Tony Curtis), a slave.

This is a splendid swashbuckling epic full of excellent action scenes, a multifaceted plot, and intense acting

performances—particularly by Douglas as a merciless warrior prince.

ACTION | ADVENTURE | HISTORY

Release Date:
June 28, 1958

Director:
Richard Fleischer

Starring:
Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis, Ernest Borgnine

Running Time:
1 hour, 56 minutes

Not Rated

Where to Watch:
Pluto, Amazon, Apple TV

★★★★★

FAMILY PICK

'The Last Unicorn' (1982)

A sheltered unicorn (Mia Farrow) discovers that she's one of the only remaining unicorns still in existence; the creatures have been nearly driven to extinction by evil King Haggard (Christopher Lee). She joins forces with bumbling magician Schmendrick (Alan Arkin) and embarks on a journey to save her fellow unicorns.

This animated family flick is a story of redemption, as well as a search for truth and inner peace. Its fantastic writing immerses



viewers in a magical world, making it great entertainment for both kids and adults.

ANIMATION | ADVENTURE | DRAMA

Release Date:
Nov. 19, 1982

Directors:
Jules Bass, Arthur Rankin Jr.

Starring:
Jeff Bridges, Mia Farrow, Angela Lansbury

Running Time:
1 hour, 32 minutes

MPAA Rating:
G

Where to Watch:
Plex, Redbox, Tubi

★★★★★

A COURTROOM DRAMA WITH NUANCED PERFORMANCES

'A Few Good Men' (1992)

At the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba, a Marine is found dead in his bed with signs of bodily trauma. Two Marines are suspected of murder, and Lt. Daniel Kaffee (Tom Cruise) is assigned to defend them. But JAG lawyer Joanne Galloway (Demi Moore) suspects corruption behind the scenes.

With pitch-perfect performances by its outstanding cast, this is a riveting courtroom drama built entirely on excellent dialogue. It's a fasci-



nating watch that will keep you guessing until the dramatic finale.

DRAMA | THRILLER

Release Date:
Dec. 11, 1992

Director:
Rob Reiner

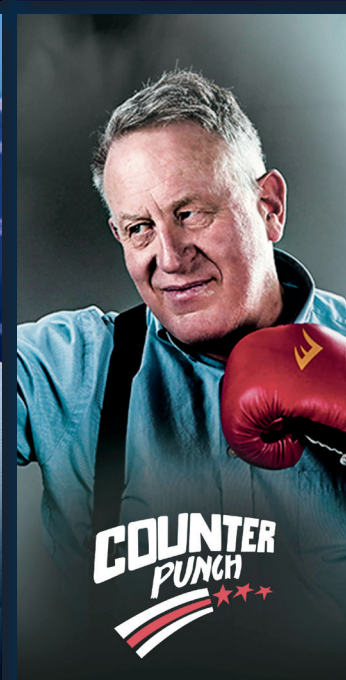
Starring:
Tom Cruise, Jack Nicholson, Demi Moore

Running Time:
2 hours, 18 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
Apple TV, Vudu, Redbox

★★★★★



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Etiquette Omissions

Having good manners is easy, but requires constant attention

Even those of us with the best intentions occasionally commit inadvertent acts of bad manners, making it important to stay on our toes and set a good example.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Soup Scoop

When eating soup, either in a public setting or while seated at the family dinner table, the rule is to scoop the soup into the spoon away from you; yes, it's a small thing, but one that betrays less-than-stellar manners. Another dining faux pas that isn't well known but is easy to avoid is neglecting to fold and place your napkin on the left side of the plate at the completion of the meal.

2 Be Social

Whether you're attending a company function or a backyard barbeque, when people you know come over to say hello and you're with a person they don't know, make a point of quickly introducing them to each other. Not doing so and then launching into an animated conversation with the newly arrived person is incredibly rude. Also, make eye contact with those around you to bolster the connection.

3 Be Equitable

If you and your friends or co-workers have a custom of taking turns picking up the check for lunch or evenings out, make sure to grab the check when it's your turn to do so. Stepping away from the table to use the restroom just before the check arrives, or making no effort to reach for it in the hopes someone else will, sends the quite-possibly correct signal that you're a cheapskate.

5 Hold That Thought

Taking or making a call in a restaurant, an elevator, or in an office setting where doing so can disturb others shows a complete lack of respect for those around you. The same can be said for those who feel the need to continue talking when a waiter or retail clerk approaches to provide service. This rule also applies in a work setting when another co-worker sticks their head into your office to ask a question.

4 Let Them Speak

Allow others to complete what they're saying without interrupting them. Hold your thoughts until the other person has finished talking. However, be careful to not blurt out your comments the moment the other person pauses. Instead, when they've made their statement, begin by first addressing what they just said or asked. Resist the urge to constantly correct or downplay what others may say. Even if you're right, that's rude behavior.



What Our Readers Say

“It’s a magazine that’s FOR the American people, not against.”

Vanessa Morrison, medical records clerk

“Well thought out material, thoroughly investigated, and I trust [the] sources.”

Gail F. Sauve, homemaker

“It is straightforward, rather than a lot of speculation or pontificating.”

Jan Hamilton, retired professional

“[Insight] reminds me that there are still a LOT of wonderful, good, and dedicated people in this country.”

Creed Haymond, surgeon

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Mark Naumann, photographer

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Jim Edwards, retired

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