

THE EPOCH TIMES SPECIAL REPORT

EPOCH INSIGHT



SPECIAL REPORT

BEHIND THE **TRUMP RAID**

The Trump Raid and the Erosion of America's Justice System

By Editorial Board

THE UNITED STATES OF America is great because of its constitutional rights and a justice system that has traditionally protected citizens from government overreach.

The principle of equal justice under the law, however, has taken a severe beating in recent years.

The unprecedented FBI raid of a former president's home has led Americans to fear what might be next.

If an opposition politician who has indicated he'll run for office again can be targeted this way by federal agents, what about average citizens?

The raid targeting former President Donald Trump follows the Justice Department's years-long Russia collusion investigation. That probe found no evidence of wrongdoing. But inquiries into the investigation's origin exposed a bias-tainted operation premised on lies funded by a political opponent.

The issues these incidents raise are larger than politics. They go to the core of what America stands for.

The United States is the standard-bearer for fundamental rights. A functional justice system differentiates us from dictatorial regimes.

The raid on Trump based on allegations surrounding his handling of government records, which he as president had the authority to declassify, has further divided the country.

If the goal of a politicized raid was to reduce support for the former president, it appears to have had the opposite effect. In the wake of the raid, protests were held across the country. Even those who politically oppose Trump have condemned the search.

Meanwhile, in anticipation of congressional investigations should the majority shift this November, Republican lawmakers have asked the leaders of the FBI and the Department of Justice to preserve records related to the raid.

Amid the controversy, our nation is facing enormous external threats. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) works unceasingly toward its stated goal of destroying America.

While the FBI has recently, and rightly, pursued cases and investigations against CCP agents operating on U.S. soil, the agency is now finding itself losing the trust of tens of millions.

It's no secret that communist groups, both domestic and international, have sought for decades to infiltrate all U.S. institutions with the goal of undermining the nation from within. The book "How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World," published by The Epoch Times, describes this in great detail.

America needs to be strong to face this threat. To be strong, we need to heal our internal divisions. Further politicization of federal agencies achieves the opposite effect.

How do we move forward as a country when the rule of law seems to be unevenly applied, causing trust in our institutions to fade?

The appearance of politics tainting prosecutorial decision-making is a dangerous trajectory for America and the world.

Sunlight is the best disinfectant. As a starting point, the government should be fully transparent about the Mar-a-Lago raid. Full disclosure would be a step in the right direction, helping to lower the temperature of the nation. ■

EPOCH INSIGHT

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The Department of Justice in Washington on Dec. 9, 2019. | Photo by Samuel Corum/Getty Images

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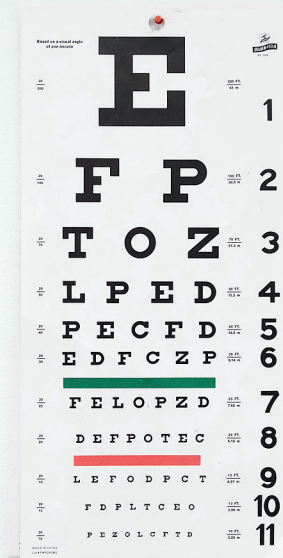
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A TURNING POINT IN US HISTORY

Critics see FBI's Trump raid as an
unprecedented political move that crosses
a line; DOJ defends it as legitimate

By Petr Svab *News Analysis*



THE AUG. 8 RAID on Donald Trump's residence at Mar-a-Lago was a defining moment for the United States. Never before has the home of a former president been searched by federal police. For many Americans, it was the last straw, the act that broke their trust in the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI.

As new information trickles in on what was and wasn't taken from Trump's property, the 45th president has been sharing updates on his social media platform, Truth Social.

"Wow! In the raid by the FBI of Mar-a-Lago, they stole my three Passports (one expired), along with everything else," Trump stated on Aug. 15. "This is an assault on a political opponent at a level never seen before in our Country. Third World!"

A day earlier, Trump said materials covered by attorney-client and executive privilege were taken.

The DOJ told the Trump team on Aug. 15 that the passports could be picked up at the FBI's Washington Field Office, according to an email apparently from a DOJ official released by Trump's spokesman Taylor Budowich.

The DOJ planned to return documents it identified as privileged within two weeks, just the News

reported on Aug. 15, citing unnamed DOJ sources.


The raid prompted outrage among Trump's supporters and from some of his detractors as well. On the morning of Aug. 15, Trump said he offered, through his representatives, to work with the DOJ in light of the "tremendous anger in the country—at a level that has never been seen before, other than during very perilous times."

"People are so angry at what is taking place," he told Fox News. "Whatever we can do to help—because the temperature has to be brought down in the country. If it isn't, terrible things are going to happen."

In the wake of the raid, Republican lawmakers have demanded answers on what prompted the raid, and have vowed to investigate the DOJ and FBI should, as anticipated, the GOP regain control of the House come January.

While the exact justification for the raid remains shrouded in secrecy, many commentators have already settled on the general view that such a step would have only been justifiable if the reason was grave, the timing urgent, and the evidence ironclad. Calls for transparency have come from both sides of the aisle.

Information revealed so far indicates the justification was the FBI's investigation of potential



“Once the precedent is established that you can use the search as a first recourse rather than a last recourse, you can go after people based on their politics.”

Alan Dershowitz, constitutional lawyer

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: L. REUTERS/MARCO BELLO; REUTERS/MARCO BELLO; FILE PHOTO; REUTERS/ERIN SCOTT/FILE PHOTO; MARIO TAMAYO/GETTY IMAGES

mishandling of defense information; taking, hiding, or destroying government records; and altering, destroying, or falsifying records in federal investigations. How the statutes were supposedly violated remains unclear.

Attorney General Merrick Garland took responsibility for approving the raid on Aug. 11. The DOJ agreed to release the warrant for the raid, including what the agents were searching for and where, as well as what, in general terms, they took. While some of the documents taken were labeled in the raid inventory as "top secret," Trump said he declassified all of them while he was still in office. The president is free to declassify information at will.

Presidential Records

Since Trump left office, National Archives officials have been pressing him to hand over presidential records that were packed up and shipped to his Florida estate. In January, he returned some 15 boxes of

(Left) Secret Service members stand guard outside former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago home after the FBI raid, in Palm Beach, Fla., on Aug. 8. **(Above)** Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla. **(Right)** Workers move boxes from the Eisenhower Executive Office Building into a truck on the White House grounds, before the departure of then-President Donald Trump, in Washington on Jan. 14, 2021.

documents and other items, but archive officials pushed for more.

In June, several FBI and DOJ officials visited Mar-a-Lago, went over the documents at issue with Trump's lawyers, and inspected the basement room where the materials were kept. The officials were allowed to go through the documents as they wished, Trump's lawyer Christina Bobb told Epoch Insight after the Aug. 8 raid.

"We walked them to the storage unit and showed them whatever they wanted to see and answered any questions," Bobb later explained on a podcast with former Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani.

"And it was very cordial. Everybody was nice and friendly and very professional. So we had no reason to believe that there was any type of adversarial nature to the discussion. So going from that to a full-blown raid seemed a bit shocking."

The officials asked if a "heftier" lock could be put on the door, which was done within a few days, only for the lock to be broken during the raid, she said.

Intrusive

Some lawyers have pointed out that before executing a search warrant, less intrusive means should have been used, such as requests for documents and subpoenas. The DOJ reportedly did issue a subpoena in May, but that still

doesn't necessarily justify a raid, according to constitutional lawyer Alan Dershowitz.

"If you want to get documents, you issue a subpoena, and then the other side protests and says, 'No, this is not classified. This was declassified. This is lawyer-client privilege. We're invoking the Fifth Amendment about production of this,' and you litigate," he told The Epoch Times in a previous interview. "You go to court. You litigate. You don't just grab the material and then say, 'I got it. And now you have to litigate.'"

Dershowitz and others have pointed out that other officials and former presidents have faced issues over withholding sensitive documents, but none of them have had their homes raided.

President Barack Obama started shipping his presidential records to a private facility months before his second term was over. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) worked with him to secure the documents at that facility and only reached an agreement with the Obama Foundation in 2018 to transfer some classified records "to NARA-controlled facilities that conform to the agency's archival storage standards for such records and artifacts".

The Trump raid appears to display unequal treatment by the DOJ, Dershowitz argues.



Former President
Donald Trump gestures during a rally to boost Ohio Republican candidates ahead of their May 3 primary election, at the county fairgrounds in Delaware, Ohio, on April 23.

“If I had to put a symbol on the Justice Department, it would be, ‘Due process for me but not for thee. Free speech for me but not for thee. Equal protection for me, but not for thee.’ That’s the direction in which the pendulum seems to be swinging today,” he said.

Moreover, he noted, the raid has set a dangerous precedent.

“Once the precedent is established that you can use the search as a first recourse rather than a last recourse, you can go after people based on their politics, not based on the relative culpability of the crime,” he said. “It can happen to anybody, and it has. We’ve seen more use of these draconian techniques. It’s easily possible that local prosecutors will pick this up.”

Political

Trump has denounced the raid as a part of a “political witch hunt”

against him, likening it to the FBI’s ultimately fruitless pursuit of allegations that he colluded with Russia to sway the 2016 election—allegations seeded and spread by operatives of his then-opponent, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

A number of commentators have raised the issue of the FBI going after Trump while he’s the presumptive Republican candidate for the presidency in 2024 and while he’s campaigning for GOP candidates ahead of November’s midterm elections.

The DOJ has an internal policy of not taking over investigative steps in politically charged cases within 90 days of an election. The raid took place 91 days before the Nov. 8 midterms.

Banana Republic

A common analysis of the raid on the conservative side has held it as

symbolizing the deterioration of the American justice system.

“I think we are wavering between restoring the rule of law and the Constitution and decaying into a third world banana republic system of greed, dishonesty, political power, and law-breaking on a grand scale,” former House Speaker Newt Gingrich wrote in a recent op-ed.

Conservative filmmaker and author Dinesh D’Souza dove deeper into the analogy:

“The key feature of banana republics is that they make up the rules as they go along. They prosecute their opponents and they suppress basic liberties,” he said during a recent podcast. “They manipulate the election process, doing what they can to ensure that they stay in power. They preselect ... the candidates if they can. So they flout the entire ensemble of

90 DAYS

THE DOJ HAS AN INTERNAL POLICY of not taking over investigative steps in politically charged cases within 90 days of an election. The raid took place 91 days before the Nov. 8 midterms.

basic rights and liberties that are characteristic of a republic. And we’re seeing that here.”

Moreover, he pointed out, “banana republics do all these things while pretending not to—that’s why they call themselves republics.”

He noted a mismatch between Garland’s avowals after the raid about evenhanded justice being executed “without fear or favor” and the reality that Americans can see with their own eyes.

“This is exactly, actually, what you hear from tinpot despots who are flouting the rule of law, even as they pretend to be apostles of it,” D’Souza said.

Former Trump national security official Kash Patel agrees.

“Those are terms we throw around because they used to be a good basis of comparison. It’s scary now that we have become that basis,” he told EpochTV’s Jan Jekielek.

“The American judicial system has been superior because it did not reflect those of other countries where you have a dictator, or you have tyrannical rule, like in Russia, or the Chinese Communist Party, where they suppress due process, and they execute political convictions through their intelligence law enforcement apparatus.”

What America is now witnessing, he said, is the “continuous destruction of our law enforcement apparatus because our leaders at the highest levels have chosen to politicize it.”

Future of the FBI

The raid has prompted some commentators to propose a radical reining-in of the federal police force.

Defense lawyer and former FBI agent Stuart Kaplan suggested that the DOJ inspector general may need to take over the FBI.

“I’m not so sure it can operate without oversight. That’s how bad things are presently,” he said during a recent interview with podcaster and former Secret Service agent Dan Bongino.

Historian Victor Davis Hanson went even further, proposing to disband the FBI and transfer its personnel and functions to other federal and local agencies.

“The FBI interferes with and warps national elections. It hires complete frauds as informants who are far worse than its targets. It humiliates or exempts government and elected officials based on their politics. It violates the civil liberties of individual American citizens,” he wrote in a recent op-ed.

“The FBI’s highest officials now routinely mislead Congress. They have erased or altered court and subpoenaed evidence. They illegally leak confidential material to the media. And they have lied under oath to federal investigators.

“The agency has become dangerous to Americans and an existential threat to their democracy and rule of law. The FBI should be dispersing its investigatory responsibilities to other government investigative agencies that have not yet lost the public’s trust.”

Kaplan estimated that the FBI leadership remains “obstinate” in their belief that the “fruits” of their efforts outweigh the risks.

FBI Director Christopher Wray responded to questions about the raid with a statement condemning “unfounded attacks on the integrity of the FBI” as well as “violence and threats against law enforcement, including the FBI.”

Several days before the raid, he

cut short questioning by members of Congress, saying he had an urgent matter to attend to. In fact, he took the FBI private jet to his vacationing spot in upstate New York.

A Convenient Judge

Many conservative commentators have argued that the federal magistrate judge who approved the warrant, Bruce Reinhart, should have recused himself. Reinhart stepped aside earlier this year when he was to preside over a racketeering case that Trump brought against Clinton in Florida. He acknowledged at the time he couldn’t be impartial, although it isn’t clear whether his partiality had more to do with Clinton or Trump.

In 2017, the year before he was appointed to the bench by local district judges, Reinhart made comments on social media berating Trump for criticizing Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.). Lewis died in 2020.

Reinhart was a senior prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida in 2007 when the office reached a nonprosecution agreement with Jeffrey Epstein, who was later indicted for the sex trafficking of children and died by apparent suicide in a New York jail.

On Jan. 2, 2008, within days of leaving office, Reinhart began representing multiple Epstein associates and employees in civil cases against Epstein by his alleged victims. ■

The Trump raid appears to display unequal treatment by the DOJ, an expert says.





TIMELINE OF **TRUMP RAID**

2020

OCTOBER



PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP issues an order to declassify documents related to Spygate—the scandal in which operatives of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton tried to tie Trump to Russia using false information, and the FBI used that information to spy on Trump associates.

2021

JAN. 19



TRUMP ISSUES a memo declassifying more Spygate documents.

JAN. 20



TRUMP LEAVES the White House in a manner his lawyer Rudy Giuliani later describes as “chaotic.”
The “bulk” of the Spygate documents are returned to the DOJ for further redactions regarding privacy issues before they are to be released, Trump’s

chief of staff, Mark Meadows, says in a memo.
According to Newsweek, 27 boxes of materials were mistakenly shipped from the White House to Mar-a-Lago. The White House Office of Records Management had informed the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) that some of the boxes should go to the archive. NARA engaged in a back-and-forth with Trump staff about transferring the materials.

2022

JANUARY



TRUMP TRANSFERS 15 boxes of materials to NARA. The materials reportedly include documents marked as classified.

JAN. 13



ARCHIVIST of the United States David Ferriero announces that he will retire in mid-April. Ferriero was appointed in 2009 by President Barack Obama.

MARCH 24



TRUMP FILES A LAWSUIT under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act against Clinton and dozens of other parties involved in the unsubstantiated allegations that Trump colluded with Russia to sway the 2016 election. The suit is filed in Florida federal court.

APRIL 7



THE WASHINGTON POST reports, citing unnamed sources, that the DOJ is taking steps to investigate “improper removal of presidential records to Mar-a-Lago.”

APRIL 28



C-SPAN PUBLISHES an interview with Ferriero in which he says “there is

an investigation going on” regarding materials Trump kept from his time in office.
“We suspect that we don’t have everything,” Ferriero says. “We’re still trying to figure out what we don’t have.”
He complains about the “weakness of the Presidential Records Act,” which is a civil, rather than criminal, statute.

MAY



THE DOJ REPORTEDLY subpoenas some documents from Trump.

MAY 11



THE WASHINGTON POST publishes an interview with Ferriero in which he says that Jan. 6, 2021, was “the absolute worst” day of his life and that he was worried the National Archives could be in danger upon seeing a “mob” of

“really angry, angry people” on Pennsylvania Avenue. In fact, all violence that day took place at the U.S. Capitol, more than half a mile away. Footage from Pennsylvania Avenue indicates the crowd streaming along was peaceful and, if anything, cheerful.
Ferriero also says he resigned so that his replacement—who he says “better not [be] ... another white male”—could be picked by President Joe Biden.

MAY 12



THE WASHINGTON POST reports, citing unnamed sources, that the DOJ is using a grand jury to issue a subpoena to NARA in an investigation of the 15 boxes handed over to the agency by Trump in January.

JUNE 3



TOP DOJ counterintelligence official Jay Bratt and three FBI agents visit Mar-a-Lago to discuss document issues with Trump’s lawyers, RealClearInvestigations

reports based on unnamed sources. Trump pops in to say hello and instructs his lawyers to give the officials a tour of a basement room where he keeps documents and artifacts from his presidency. Agents are allowed to go through the boxes and leave with some documents. The interaction is “nice and friendly and very professional,” one of Trump’s lawyers says

JUNE 19



MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

TRUMP APPOINTS former national security official Kash Patel and investigative journalist John Solomon as his representatives to NARA.

JUNE 21



BRANDON BELL/GETTY IMAGES

TRUMP FILES an amended complaint in his RICO suit.

JUNE 21



ANNA MONEYSMAKER/GETTY IMAGES

KASH PATEL reveals in an interview that he was tasked by Trump to go to NARA and retrieve and release Spycgate documents. "We are going to start putting that information out next week," he says.

JUNE 22



JOERAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

MAGISTRATE JUDGE Bruce Reinhart recuses himself from assisting District Judge Donald Middlebrooks with the Trump suit. Reinhart is the third in a line of six magistrates who have recused themselves from the case, after Judge Shaniek Maynard recused herself on March 25 and Judge Ryon McCabe did so on April 6. Judge William Matthewman would recuse himself on June 27.

JULY 1



MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

MAGISTRATE JUDGES Alicia Valle and Jared Strauss recuse themselves from Trump's suit.

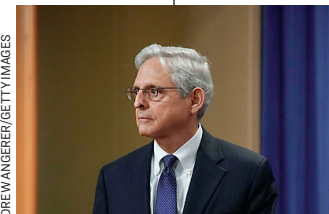
JULY 4



MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

PATEL COMPLAINS during an interview about bureaucratic hurdles to obtaining the Spycgate documents from NARA, but promises to follow through. "I will be coming to the National Archives in the coming weeks, I will be identifying those documents, and I will be demanding that they'll be released because they're already declassified," he says.

MID-TO-LATE JULY



DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

ATTORNEY GENERAL Merrick Garland starts weighing whether to greenlight a raid on Mar-a-Lago, unnamed sources would later tell The Wall Street Journal.

AUG. 5



JOERAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

REINHART ISSUES a sealed search warrant for Mar-a-Lago.

AUG. 8



GIORGIO VIERA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

ABOUT 9 A.M.: Some 30 FBI agents arrive at the Mar-a-Lago resort in West Palm Beach, Florida. Trump isn't present. Agents tell staff on site that nobody is allowed to observe the search and that security cameras must be turned off. The staff initially complies, but then switches the cameras back on.

AUG. 8
10 A.M.

TRUMP LAWYER Christina Bobb receives a phone call from a Trump staffer that Mar-a-Lago is being raided by the FBI and that she needs to go there immediately.

AUG. 8
10:30 A.M.

BOBB ARRIVES at Mar-a-Lago. She asks the FBI agents on the scene to show her the search warrant. They initially claim they don't have to, but she insists. She attempts to accompany agents during the search, but is physically prevented from doing so and is forced to remain in the parking lot outside. Agents eventually start giving her updates on which part of the property they are searching.

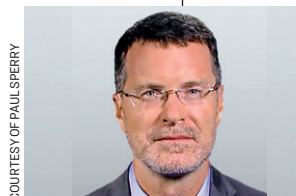
AUG. 8
6-7 P.M.

FBI AGENTS FINISH their search of Trump's office, residence, and basement document storage room. Bobb is provided a copy of the warrant and signs an inventory of what was taken. The inventory is too general for her to tell what specifically was taken. She isn't provided with the supporting affidavit that explains on what grounds the warrant was granted. Agents leave with dozens of boxes, binders of photos, and other items.

AUG. 8
6:51 P.M.

TRUMP ISSUES a statement saying his house has been "under siege, raided, and occupied by a large number of FBI agents." The raid is "not necessary or appropriate," he says, given that he has been cooperating with the government.

AUG. 9



COURTESY OF PAUL SPERRY

THE TWITTER ACCOUNT of investigative journalist Paul Sperry is suspended after he posts that "speculation on Capitol Hill" was that the FBI "had PERSONAL stake & searching for classified docs related to its #Spygate

scandal" during the raid.

He would later tell Breitbart that he was given no warning or explanation by Twitter. He also would point out that Twitter's deputy general counsel is James Baker, former FBI general counsel during the Spycgate era.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) refuses to comment on the raid.

White House spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre says President Joe Biden was not briefed on the raid.

AUG. 10



NEWSWEEK REPORTS that the FBI sought the search warrant based on information from a “confidential human source” regarding Trump’s possession of classified documents.

FBI Director Christopher Wray says he can’t comment on the raid and refers questions to the DOJ.

AUG. 11



GARLAND TAKES responsibility for approving the raid and announces that the DOJ will ask the court to

unseal the warrant. Wray issues a statement condemning “unfounded attacks on the integrity of the FBI” and threats and violence against law enforcement. The Washington Post, relying on unnamed sources, reports that the FBI was looking for “nuclear documents.”

AUG. 12



TRUMP CALLS for the release of the warrant documents. He also calls the “nuclear weapons issue” a “hoax” and suggests the FBI may have planted evidence

during the raid since his lawyers were prevented from observing the search. Reinhart releases the warrant application and attachments showing what and where was to be searched as well as a general list of what was taken. The supporting affidavit, which shows the justification used for the warrant, is not released. The documents cite

three statutes as related to the raid: mishandling of defense information; taking, hiding, or destroying government records; and altering, destroying, or falsifying records in federal investigations. None of the statutes talk specifically about classified information. Trump says he had declassified all documents kept at Mar-a-Lago.

AUG. 14



TRUMP AND HIS STAFF say the FBI took materials covered by attorney-client privilege, and potentially executive privilege. Trump requests the return of the documents.

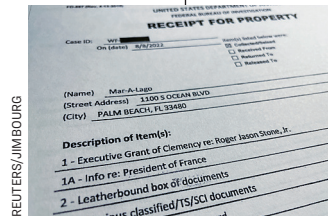
AUG. 15



TRUMP SAYS the FBI took his passports during the raid. His spokesman then releases an email from the DOJ saying

Trump staff could pick up his passports at the FBI Washington Field Office. FBI plans to return privileged materials within two weeks, Just the News reports, citing unnamed sources. The DOJ tells the court it opposes the release of the supporting affidavit. Trump calls for the affidavit to be released.

AUG. 17



CITING UNNAMED SOURCES, Newsweek reports that the FBI sought a personal “stash” of documents Trump allegedly collected during his presidency, “including material that Trump apparently thought would exonerate him of any claims of Russian collusion in 2016 or any other election-related charges.”

AUG. 18



REINHART HOLDS a hearing on unsealing the affidavit. He asks the DOJ to propose redactions.

TIMELINE OF TRUMP RAID



Reactions to Raid

“““

ON AUG. 8, the FBI raided former President Donald Trump's Palm Beach resort of Mar-a-Lago, as part of an investigation into documents allegedly removed from the White House when Trump departed in 2021.

“These are dark times for our Nation, as my beautiful home, Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, is currently under siege, raided, and occupied by a large group of FBI agents.”

Donald Trump
Former president



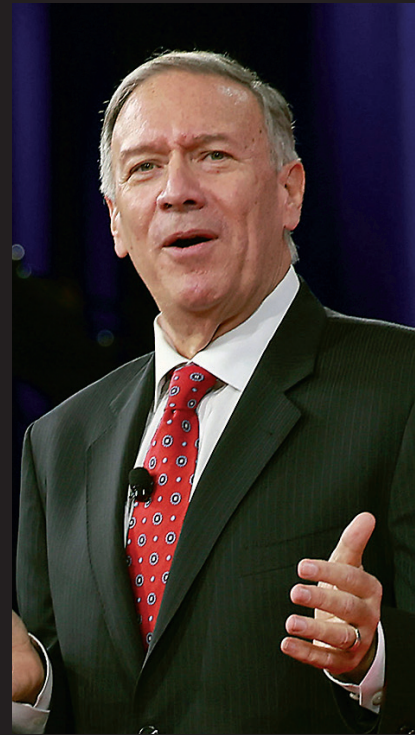
“We’re in a ‘revolutionary cycle’—[as] the left has now said—under the pretext that Donald Trump is so extraordinarily threatening to the republic that it requires any means necessary to end him.”

Victor Davis Hanson
Classicist and military historian



“This is the modern-day version of Watergate, except the only difference is [that] it wasn’t political operatives breaking in to their opponents’ headquarters. It was the FBI and DOJ.”

Kash Patel
Former chief of staff to the acting secretary of defense



“The apparent political weaponization of [the] DOJ/FBI is shameful. [The] AG must explain why 250 [years] of practice was upended with this raid.”

Mike Pompeo
Former secretary of state



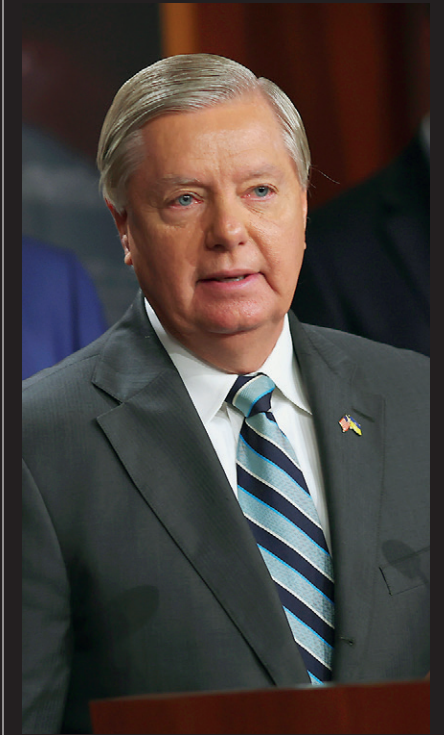
“We did not know about this, and we have not been briefed about this. No one at the White House was given a heads up.”

Karine Jean-Pierre
White House press secretary



“[‘Russia hoaxers’] have now been promoted into the Biden administration. ... They’re definitely targeting [former] President Trump because they don’t want him to run for president.”

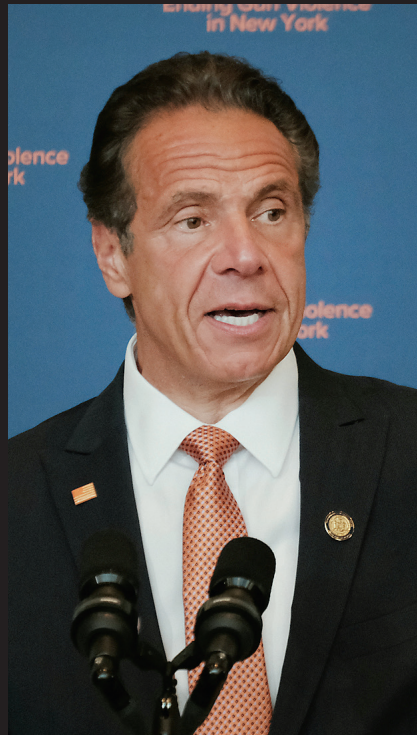
Devin Nunes
Former U.S. representative



“Half the country believes that when it comes to President Trump there are no rules. They have lost faith in the system.”

Lindsey Graham
Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM L: YORK DU/THE EPOCH TIMES, THE EPOCH TIMES, JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES
 FROM R: ANNA MONEY/MAKER/GETTY IMAGES, ANDREW HARRER/POOL/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES, KEVIN DIEZSCH/GETTY IMAGES



“DOJ must immediately explain the reason for its raid ... or it will be viewed as a political tactic and undermine any future credible investigation.”

Andrew Cuomo
Former New York governor



“They’re using the full power—illegally, I think, unconstitutionally—of the law to harass, intimidate, and try to push Trump out of the picture.”

Louie Gohmert
U.S. representative for Texas



“[The raid] was the latest link in a long series of operations starting six years ago with absurd claims that Donald Trump was the asset of a foreign country. That operation was called Russiagate.”

Lee Smith
Author, *'The Plot Against the President'*

FROM L: SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES, MOLLY RILEY/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



“Beginning in 2016, Americans began to have doubts when we began to unravel the Russia collusion reporting. ... Those doubts kept growing and you started to hear people say we have a dual justice system in America.”

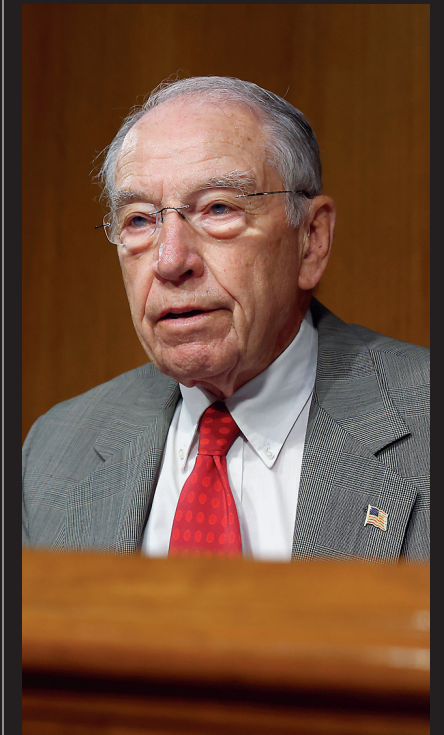
John Solomon
Editor-in-chief, *Just the News*

FROM L: COURTESY GAGE SKIDMORE, JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES, ANNA MONEYSMAKER/GETTY IMAGES



“The raid of MAL is another escalation in the weaponization of federal agencies against the Regime’s political opponents.”

Ron DeSantis
Florida governor



“[The] raid on the home of a former U.S. president without explanation will only further erode confidence in the FBI and the Justice Department.”

Chuck Grassley
Ranking member,
Senate Judiciary Committee



“The country deserves a thorough and immediate explanation of what led to the events.”

Mitch McConnell
Senate minority leader



“Three FBI agents visited me and seized my cell phone. I’m outraged ... [that the FBI] would seize the phone of a sitting Member of Congress.”

Scott Perry
U.S. representative for Pennsylvania



“I didn’t actually get to oversee the search. They wouldn’t let anybody see what they were doing.”

Christina Bobb
Attorney to Trump



“If there’s anything negative about Trump or his allies, that gets accelerated, leaked, and used for political purposes.”

Matt Gaetz
Member,
House Judiciary Committee



“They see the support that he has all over the country. His rallies terrify them.”

Marjorie Taylor Greene
U.S. representative for Georgia



“The security state complex and the complexity of the security state ... is now overtaking our system of government and our rule of law.”

Michael Flynn
Former national security adviser to Trump

FROM L. OHP/SOMDEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES, KEVIN DIETSCH/GETTY IMAGES, SCREENSHOT VIA EPOCH TV

FROM L. GRAEME JENNINGS-POOL/GETTY IMAGES, JIM WATSON/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES, ANDREW HARRER-POOL/GETTY IMAGES



“When Republicans take back the House, we will conduct immediate oversight of [the DOJ].”

Kevin McCarthy
House minority leader



“Let’s be clear: This is a brazen weaponization of the FBI by Biden’s DOJ against his political opponent—while giving their political allies free passes.”

Steve Scalise
House minority whip



“It’s all a coordinated attack with the FBI. Do you think that the FBI director is going to raid the former president’s house ... without getting the approval of President [Biden]?”

Eric Trump
Son of former president

FROM: ANNA MONE/MAKER/GETTY IMAGES; SAMUEL COFFIN/GETTY IMAGES; CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES



“No person is above the law. Not even the president of the United States. Not even a former president of the United States.”

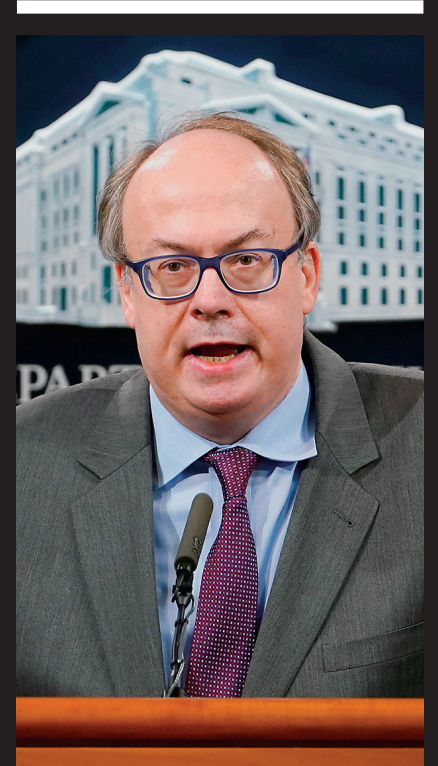
Nancy Pelosi
House speaker

FROM: CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES; MICHAEL M. SANTAGO/GETTY IMAGES; SUSAN WALSH/POOL/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES



“It seems like this was authorized ... without buy-in or notification of higher levels of government. But literally no one will believe that.”

Andrew Yang
Former Democratic presidential candidate



“[Democratic Party attorney] Marc Elias is saying that the criminal statute could result in President Trump being barred from future office. And I think it’s clearly part of his plan.”

Jeff Clark
Former lawyer, Justice Department



“I think for anyone who doubted that there was a swamp when Donald Trump was saying ‘drain the swamp,’ now I think there’s true believers.”

Warren Davidson
U.S. representative for Ohio



“We’ve got a job as the Oversight Committee to push back on this and to really get to the bottom of what’s going on, and to help bring sunlight to the bad corrupt actions that are going on.”

Michael Cloud
Member, House Committee on Oversight and Reform



“You go to court. You litigate. You don’t just grab the material and then say, ‘I got it. And now you have to litigate.’”

Alan Dershowitz
Constitutional lawyer



“I think we are wavering between restoring the rule of law and the Constitution and decaying into a third world banana republic system of greed, dishonesty, political power, and law breaking on a grand scale.”

Newt Gingrich
Former House speaker



“The key feature of banana republics is that they make up the rules as they go along. They prosecute their opponents, and they suppress basic liberties. They manipulate the election process, doing what they can to ensure that they stay in power.”

Dinesh D’Souza
Conservative filmmaker and author



“Violence against law enforcement is not the answer, no matter what anybody’s upset about or who they’re upset with.”

Christopher Wray
Director, FBI

FROM L: PUBLIC DOMAIN, JUSTIN HAMEL/APP VIA GETTY IMAGES, JOHN LAMPARSKI/GETTY IMAGES FOR HILLU FROM R: ZAKARIA ABDELKAFI/AFR VIA GETTY IMAGES, JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES, ANNA MONETMAKER/GETTY IMAGES



Raid on Trump Looks Suspicious: Legal Experts

Unprecedented search could upend democratic norms, experts say

By Matthew Vadum

THE FBI RAID OF former President Donald Trump's home in Florida was shocking and may violate U.S. democratic norms, but it's possible that it's a legitimate part of the law enforcement process, legal commentators told Epoch Insight.

However, not enough is known to say for sure, they said.

Assuming that the FBI was "hon-

est with the magistrate [who issued the search warrant], then I guess it's legal," Curt Levey, president of the Committee for Justice, told Epoch Insight.

But if authorities "lied" about the facts of the case in the underlying affidavit, "that's a different story."

Magistrate Judge Bruce E. Reinhart issued the warrant for Mar-a-Lago on Aug. 5, according to the court docket in the case known as United States v. Sealed Search

Warrant, court file 9:22-mj-08332 before the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

A magistrate judge isn't nominated by the president or confirmed by the U.S. Senate but is chosen by federal district judges to carry out supporting judicial functions. A magistrate judge doesn't have the same powers as a Senate-confirmed judge, according to the Federal Magistrates Act of 1968.

Reinhart has previously provid-

(Above) Former President Donald Trump's residence at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla., on Aug. 9.

(Right) Trump says there was no need for the FBI to raid his residence and that it was another in a series of "witch hunts" his enemies have carried out against him.



ed legal representation to close employees of the late convicted pedophile Jeffrey Epstein during a sex-trafficking investigation, according to a Miami Herald report.

Levey said the Aug. 8 raid at Trump's Mar-a-Lago property could set a dangerous precedent.

"It certainly goes against democratic norms, and eventually we will find out what they were after and whether it was warranted," he said. "You would certainly want to never say that you can never raid the home of a former president if you suspect that he's murdered someone and there's a dead body there."

"On the other hand, if what we're talking about is just an everyday fight over what should go in the National Archives, I think most people would say that's not worth breaking a democratic norm."

Presidents routinely take documents related to their presidencies with them when they leave office. Former President Barack Obama reportedly had 30 million documents from his time in office sent to Chicago to his presidential library.

Sometimes the legal status of the documents is unclear—especially since in the U.S. system of government it's the president

himself who can declassify sensitive documents at will—and the former president and the new administration enter into talks to get the documents back.

"The problem with breaking democratic norms is they're hard to restore," Levey said. "I mean, the next time we have a Republican president, they're going to be very tempted to, say, indict Joe Biden or Hunter Biden, and it's just not a road you want to go down."

Search warrants are generally sealed and their details aren't normally made available to the public, he said.

Trump insists that he has done nothing wrong and that he has cooperated with the administration regarding the documents in question. Trump argues there was no need for the FBI to raid his residence and that it was one in a series of "witch hunts" his enemies have carried out against him.

"These are dark times for our Nation, as my beautiful home, Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, was raided, and occupied by a large group of FBI agents," Trump said in an Aug. 9 email to supporters sent out by his Save America political action committee. "I stood up to the Radical Left's corruption. I restored power to the people and truly delivered for our Country like we have never seen before. The establishment hated it."

Jim Burling, vice president of

"The problem with breaking democratic norms is, they're hard to restore."

Curt Levey, president, Committee for Justice

legal affairs for the Pacific Legal Foundation, a national nonprofit public interest law firm that challenges government abuses, said that normally, the execution of search warrants isn't a big deal, but in this case, the identity of the person targeted is relevant.

"This is a former president of the United States who very well may run again in a couple of years for the presidency," Burling said. "So keeping that in mind, the whole thing is unprecedented—bizarrely unprecedented—to go after him."

He also said there's a question of whether the raid was proper or whether it was "politically motivated or not."

"You're never going to get the DOJ [Department of Justice] to admit that there's any politics involved. But, as you know, in the past decade or so, the FBI and DOJ have done things that are rather odd," Burling told Epoch Insight.

But the circumstances seem suspicious, given that an attorney general appointed by the current president is targeting a "former president who may run again," he said.

The materials filed in support of the application for the search warrant, which presumably "spell out in detail all the alleged crimes" have to be "credible enough."

"And how credible are those allegations?" Burling said. "And I don't think anybody out there, except the judge and the people at DOJ who came up with it and wrote up the affidavit have a clue how good any of this stuff is. But who knows? Like everybody else, I want to see the work, [the affidavit, to determine] how appropriate and proper this was."

If the raid wasn't justified, the Biden administration "has done the country a disservice," he said.

The White House has denied that President Joe Biden knew about the raid in advance. ■

FBI Used 'KGB-Style Tactics,' Lawmaker Says

Congresswoman who grew up in former Soviet Union calls for equal treatment after Trump raid

By Randy Wyrick

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.—AN Indiana congresswoman who grew up under communism rule said the raid on former President Donald Trump's home was similar to "KGB-style tactics."

Rep. Victoria Spartz (R-Ind.), who grew up in Ukraine when it was part of the former Soviet Union, was one of about a dozen House Republicans who met with Trump on Aug. 9, the day after the FBI raid.

She says the raid outraged her. "As a U.S. congresswoman who grew up in the USSR, the FBI raid of President Trump's home is alarming. It is reminiscent of KGB-style tactics," Spartz wrote in an email to Epoch Insight.

Spartz is calling for equal treatment under the law, "not spectacles to destroy potential political opponents."

"I don't remember Hillary Clinton or Hunter Biden's homes being raided in this embarrassing way," she said.

Spartz joined Rep. Jim Banks (R-Ind.) and members of the House Republican Study Committee in a three-hour meeting with the for-

mer president at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey.

Banks told Fox News that Trump was "upbeat" and had made his decision about whether to run for president in 2024.

Spartz advised facts before feelings in the wake of the raid on Trump's Palm Beach, Florida, home.

"Regardless of people's feelings about President Trump, this should not be acceptable in a democratic society," she said.

"If the federal government can raid the home of a former president, all Americans should ask, 'What can 87,000 new IRS agents do to me?'"

She was referring to a provision in the Inflation Reduction Act that would give the Internal Revenue Service \$45.6 billion in funding for tax enforcement activities—enough to hire as many as 87,000 new agents. The bill was recently passed by the Senate and House, and was signed by President Joe Biden on Aug. 16.

Trump was in New York City while his Florida home was raided on Aug. 8. Unconfirmed reports citing anonymous sources have said that the raid was related to



"As a U.S. congresswoman who grew up in the USSR, the FBI raid of President Trump's home is alarming."

Rep. Victoria Spartz



(Above) Rep. Victoria Spartz (R-Ind.) speaks at a news conference at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on March 2. (Left) Former President Donald Trump (C) and House Republicans, including Spartz (4th L), at a meeting at Trump's New Jersey residence on Aug. 9.

a Department of Justice probe into whether Trump held on to records when he left the White House. Both the FBI and DOJ have declined to comment on the raid.

All presidential correspondence and documentation have to be handed over to the National Archives when a president leaves office, according to a 1978 law.

"It breaks my heart to see what is happening in our country and around the world," Spartz said, "but I have full faith in the American people to defeat the rise of

socialism and communism once again with the right leaders."

Banks said the lawmakers' conversation with Trump involved Republicans winning back the congressional majority, and what they might do with that majority.

Spartz said she was honored to spend time with and support Trump along with her Republican colleagues.

"We need to have more people like President Trump who aren't afraid to challenge the DC machine," she said. ■

FROM TOP: KEVIN DITTS/GETTY IMAGES; OFFICE OF REP. JIM BANKS/TWITTER

The Department of Justice in
Washington on Aug. 9.

PHOTO BY STEFANI REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

‘HANDFUL IN LEADERSHIP’ ARE POLITICIZING FBI

Former FBI assistant director speaks out against the
extraordinary search of the former president’s home

By Scott Wheeler

News Analysis

YEARS OF INVESTIGATIONS have led to claims by Republicans of partisan political power plays at the FBI and the Department of Justice (DOJ).

A raid on former President Donald Trump's home on Aug. 8 has sharpened the nation's focus on what many Republicans have been raising alarms about for years—the politicization of the DOJ and its law enforcement arm, the FBI. Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) has been demanding answers about alleged politicization since well before the raid.

“Unfortunately, a growing number of Americans have lost confidence in the bureau based on its inconsistent handling of politically sensitive investigations, its lack of cooperation with legitimate congressional oversight inquiries, and its failure to hold its own people accountable for their misconduct,” Grassley told Epoch Insight.

Late in July, the senator sent a searing letter to Attorney General Merrick Garland and FBI Director Christopher Wray that states that if the allegations he has received from FBI whistleblowers are true, “the Justice Department and the FBI are—and have been—institutionally corrupted to their very core.”

But not all agree. In an exclusive interview with Epoch Insight, former Assistant Director for Intelligence of the FBI Kevin Brock said Grassley's statement didn't “fit the facts” and that “it is dangerous to plant seeds in the minds of the American people that the FBI is corrupt.”

Partisanship at the Top

While Brock said Grassley's claims about the FBI went too far, he's also highly critical of the actions of what he refers to as a “handful in leadership” who he said are politicizing the bureau and doing damage to its image.

In response to the raid on Trump's residence at Mar-a-Lago, Brock told Epoch



Insight: “The use of armed agents to execute an invasive search warrant does not match up with the relatively low-level offense—for anyone—let alone a former and possible future president. Most Americans recognize this extraordinary search for what it is: an attempt by one political party that temporarily controls the DOJ to eliminate an adversary from the other party.”

When asked how the FBI and DOJ could become politicized, Brock said, “When justice is captured by the Democrat Party, it seeks to find criminality on the right,” while “Republicans have less of an appetite” to reciprocate.

At a press briefing about the raid on Aug. 11, Garland confirmed that he approved the search warrant and also said the DOJ had filed a motion in the Southern District of Florida to unseal the search warrant that was executed. Garland noted that the department didn't take the de-

cision to seek a search warrant lightly.

Similar Cases Involving Democrats

The raid at Trump's home in search of classified documents reveals what some consider to be a clear example of that which Grassley and Brock are referring—a heavy Democratic Party influence at the DOJ. To some, the raid at Trump's quarters is reminiscent of a similar case.

In 2015, former Secretary of State and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton came under FBI investigation for concealing classified information on an unauthorized email server she kept at her home. During that investigation, Clinton deleted emails that were under subpoena. The FBI, which was in charge of the investigation of Clinton, didn't conduct raids at any time and allowed Clinton and her attorneys to negotiate what evidence Clinton would turn over to the bureau

and dictate the terms in which Clinton would be interviewed.

Just prior to the conclusion of that investigation, labeled “Midyear Exam,” then-Attorney General Lorretta Lynch announced—after it had been revealed that former President Bill Clinton had met with her in secret—that she had appointed a “career prosecutor” to make the decision as to whether Hillary Clinton would be charged with a crime.

Epoch Insight has learned that the career prosecutor who made that decision was then-Deputy Chief of Counterintelligence Richard Scott, who had previously been an associate at the law firm of Williams and Connolly, the same firm that was representing Hillary Clinton in the matter. In 2018, former FBI attorney Lisa Page testified to the House Judiciary Committee that the FBI was inclined to prosecute Clinton for “gross negligence” in handling classified information on her

Local law enforcement

officers in front of the home of former President Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla., on Aug. 9.

private email server.

“Separately, you know, we had multiple conversations with the Justice Department about bringing a gross negligence charge,” she told the committee in July 2018.

Page went on to testify that it was Scott who made the decision to not charge Clinton with a crime. Scott left the DOJ in 2018



“Most Americans recognize this extraordinary search for what it is: an attempt by one political party that temporarily controls the DOJ to eliminate an adversary from the other party.”

Kevin Brock, former assistant director for intelligence, FBI

and couldn't be reached for comment.

At about the same time that the DOJ decided to not pursue charges against Clinton, the now infamous “Crossfire Hurricane” probe was being opened against then-presidential candidate Trump. While the predicate for that investigation has been debunked, the claim that Russian President Vladimir Putin preferred Trump over Clinton is frequently referenced as fact by Democrats and some in the news media. Brock disagreed with that conclusion, citing eight years of Obama and four years

of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's appeasement of Putin.

“If Putin preferred Trump over Clinton, he's a bigger idiot than anyone thought,” Brock said, referring to a list of things the Obama administration did to appease Putin and Russia.

The list included Clinton's “reset” with Russia, withdrawing missile defense systems from strategic allies Poland and the Czech Republic, the return of 10 Russian spies in 2010 before the FBI could interrogate the sleeper cell, and being conciliatory following Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea.

Brock said that “it is in the face of all that it is beyond the scope of imagination” that Putin would have preferred Trump.

Calls for Reform at FBI

While disinformation about Trump continues to circulate, Grassley said senior officials at the FBI went out of their way to classify evidence of criminal financial information found on the laptop computer of Hunter Biden as foreign disinformation.

“The information provided to my office involves concerns about the FBI's receipt and use of derogatory information relating to Hunter Biden, and the FBI's false portrayal of acquired evidence as disinformation,” Grassley wrote in the July letter to the attorney general and FBI director.

“The FBI has an important mission, but they need credibility and public trust to be able to successfully execute that mission,” he told Epoch Insight.

Critics say the raid at the Trump estate by the FBI has further undermined its credibility.

“To be taken seriously, the FBI needs to take steps to earn back that trust, but I haven't seen much interest by the bureau to make this a priority,” Grassley said.

The FBI and the Department of Justice didn't return requests for comment on this report by press time. ■

FROM TOP: GIORGIO VIERA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

A helicopter flies at Mar-a-Lago. The timing of the raid makes it likely it was a bid for the Democrats to discredit their opponents, a representative says.

PHOTO BY GIORGIO VIERA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



LAWMAKERS: TRUMP'S NOT PERTURBED BY FBI RAID

GOP lawmakers who met with Trump a day after the raid say he's 'upbeat' and 'positive'



Former President Donald Trump was “very upbeat” in the wake of the FBI raid on his home, according to Republican lawmakers who met with him on Aug. 9.



ABOUT A DOZEN MEMBERS OF THE Republican Study Committee, led by chairman Jim Banks (R-Ind.), met with Trump over dinner at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, a day after the FBI raid on his Mar-a-Lago resort, which Trump and allies have characterized as an attempt from the left to keep the former president from taking the office again.

The raid was an inevitable topic during the roughly three hours they spent together, but it wasn’t a major focus, the lawmakers said. During the meeting, which was scheduled ahead of the raid, the former president appeared to be in a great mood. He made jokes and signed autographs on his trademark red hats. He talked to all the Republican members in the room and interacted with some of their staff members.

“I didn’t see Donald Trump sweating at all last night. I didn’t see him being concerned,” Rep. Troy Nehls (R-Texas) told Epoch Insight on Aug. 10. Trump was “cordial,” “very upbeat,” and “very positive,” according to Nehls.

He and others saw the FBI’s move as part of a continued campaign to attack and discredit the former president, who was “not moved by it.”

“Yes, the left is after him. But he’s been dealing with these whack jobs for five years now. So this is nothing new to him. Donald Trump knows what he’s

done. And Donald Trump hasn’t done anything wrong,” Nehls said.

“He’s Teflon, everything bounces off of it. Why? Because he’s an honorable man that loves this country.”

‘4th Impeachment’

The conversation was casual and relaxed with “fantastic food,” according to Rep. Claudia Tenney (R-N.Y.), who at one point shared with Trump some photos of “cute kids that are big Trump supporters” in her district.

While Trump “expressed his disregard for [Attorney General] Merrick Garland and the FBI,” he was upset that the agents went through Melania Trump’s wardrobe, according to Tenney. The consensus in the room was that “it was an

abuse of power.”

Tenney dubbed the raid a “4th impeachment.”

“They tried twice to impeach him when he was in office. They had the Jan. 6 show trial that never ends. ... They will convene another meeting with a predetermined outcome, just like a Soviet-style event,” she told Epoch Insight. “And now, this is another attempt.”

Trump’s second son, Eric Trump, who said he had first alerted his father, who was in New York, to the raid, said on Aug. 9 that the FBI agents had breached a personal safe that was empty. The agents wouldn’t allow Trump’s representatives to oversee the 10-hour search and took boxes of documents from the Trump home, his lawyer Christina Bobb pre-

Trump said the DOJ and FBI had earlier asked his legal team to put an extra lock on the door leading to where boxes containing records were stored, to which they agreed. Then, agents ‘broke into’ his home and ‘went to the same storage area, and ripped open the lock that they had asked to be installed.’



Former President Donald Trump walks to a vehicle outside Trump Tower in New York on Aug. 10.

PHOTO BY STRINGER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A “Trump 2024” banner outside Trump Tower in New York on Aug. 9.

PHOTO BY ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

“Everybody behind the scenes knew exactly what they were doing and this was a calculated event.”

Rep. Claudia Tenney

viously told Epoch Insight. She noted that the agents were given access to a storage facility in the resort in June but didn’t leave with anything at the time.

The FBI raid is reportedly in connection with a Department of Justice (DOJ) probe into whether Trump took presidential records with him after he left office. But representatives of Trump have maintained that the former president had been cooperating with the National Archives and Records Administration on this matter. The DOJ and FBI have declined to publicly comment on the case.

Trump said on Aug. 10 that the DOJ and FBI had previously asked his legal team to put an extra lock on the door leading to the place where boxes containing records were stored, to which they agreed.

“Then on Monday, without notification or warning, an army of agents broke into Mar-a-Lago, went to the same storage area, and ripped open the lock that they had asked to be installed. A surprise attack, POLITICS, and all the while our Country is going to HELL!” Trump wrote on his social media platform Truth Social.

‘Calculated Error’

While the White House has denied having foreknowledge of the FBI action, Tenney found that hard to believe.

“Everybody behind the scenes knew exactly what they were doing, and this was a calculated event,” she said. ♦



Rep. Claudia Tenney (R-N.Y.) speaks on Capitol Hill in Washington on March 10, 2021. The raid is a “fourth impeachment,” Tenney says.



“The proof will be in the evidence when it comes out and if we can ever get to the truth.”

“The Democrats thought this would really make Trump look bad. I think they’re trying to cook up some kind of scheme, again, to prevent him from running again, should he decide to enter the race.”

Tenney also saw the raid as a way to distract the public from the “horrific bill that they just passed,” the Inflation Reduction Act, a \$700 billion Democrat spending measure that includes \$80 billion in funding to the IRS, which Republicans say would allow the agency to hire an additional 87,000 enforcement agents. The legislation passed along party lines in the Senate and the House last week, before President Joe Biden’s signed it into law on Aug. 16.

While the White House has maintained that the IRS wouldn’t increase audits for households making less than \$400,000 each year, critics disagree. Ultimately, the middle class will be the ones “leveraged into just paying what-

ever the IRS wants because they can’t afford a lawyer to fight it,” Tenney said.

With three months left until the midterm elections, Republicans are poised to take back control of the House chamber. The timing of the raid makes it a likely bid for the Democrats to discredit their opponents, according to Rep. Lisa McClain (R-Mich.).

Part of the dinner table discussions involved “putting America First in November and how the left is using every dirty trick in the book to try and save their fading majority,” she told Epoch Insight.

“I was glad to see President Trump doing well, and I look forward to working with him to save our country.”

Tenney believes that the “weaponized federal government’s acting, whether it’s the FBI, the Department of Justice, and its two-tier justice system,” will backfire on the Democrats and rally even those who don’t really like Trump but believe in freedom.

“This is going to make people even more concerned, especially with all these IRS agents scattering the coun-

try looking for people,” she said. “The Democrats made a calculated error, in my opinion.”

Voters appear to be reacting to the raid as well, according to findings released by the Convention of States Action, a conservative advocacy group, in the first national poll conducted following the raid.

The poll, carried out in partnership with the Trafalgar Group on Aug. 9 and 10 canvassing 1,000 2022 election voters, found that 83 percent of Republicans and 72 percent of independent voters are more likely to vote as a result. About three-quarters of Republicans and half of the independent voters believe the raid was politically motivated, although only less than 12 percent of Democratic voters said the same.

“Not only has the FBI’s raid of President Trump’s home fueled his spirit and energized his supporters—but for those on the fence, it’s pulled back the curtain on the deep partisan bias [that] has become entrenched in much of the bureaucracy,” Rep. Michael Cloud (R-Texas) told Epoch Insight.

2024 Bid

During the meeting, Trump gathered viewpoints from around the room on his entering into the 2024 presidential race and whether he should announce his bid after the midterm elections in November.

Nehls, when it was his turn, urged Trump to “get out there right away” to remove anxiety from his supporters, who know how “ruthless” Trump’s enemies are and are overwhelming him with their concerns.

“My phone and my texts, my emails are blowing up,” the congressman said.

Nehls cited the success of Trump-endorsed candidates in key races as evidence of the former president’s in-

FROM L: KEN CEDENO-POOL/GETTY IMAGES; NATHAN HOWARD/GETTY IMAGES

Rep. Troy Nehls (R-Texas) speaks at the Capitol Triangle in Washington on July 21. Nehls said Trump was “cordial,” “very upbeat,” and “very positive” after the raid.



fluence among voters. Trump should “make that announcement” and “take away any doubt” from his supporters, Nehls said he told Trump.

“You don’t have to wait. There’s no need to wait. You’re the leader of our party,” he told Trump. “You will put [the Democrats] on Roloids for the next two years. And it’s going to be great to see.”

His confidence in Trump’s 2024 presidency was shared by another Texas Republican, Rep. Randy Weber (R-Texas).

“I encouraged President Trump to run in 2024, and I hope he does,” Weber told Epoch Insight.

Investigations

House Minority Leader Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) has pledged action against what he described as the DOJ’s “weaponized politicization” when Republicans are back in charge of the chamber.

“I’ve seen enough,” he said in an Aug. 8 statement following the raid on Trump’s property, vowing the investigation will “leave no stone unturned.”

“Attorney General Garland: Preserve your documents and clear your calendar,” he said.

Multiple lawmakers at the dinner also echoed such calls and highlighted what they observed to be a double standard being applied to Republicans vis-à-vis Democrats.

Weber noted what he described as an absence of outrage over Hillary Clinton’s use of private emails when serving as secretary of state, as well as foreign business dealings involving Hunter Biden, President Joe Biden’s second son.

“We remain focused on November, and President Trump is fired up. When the Republicans are in charge, we will conduct rigorous oversight of the unelected bureaucracy,” he said, naming the FBI, the DOJ, the Biden family’s “suspicious foreign business deals,” the COVID-19 origins, and the record surge of illegal immigrants at the southern border as some of the key priorities after midterms.

“This egregious double standard must be stopped, and the swamp must be drained!” Nehls shared this indignation.

“Could you imagine if Hunter’s last name was Trump? Just think about what the left and the dishonest media ... would have been doing to Trump every day, all day long,” Nehls said. “They would be asking for Donald to resign. They would say your family’s a disgrace. ... But looking at what the media has done to Hunter, nothing. Zero.”

Biden’s sale of strategic oil reserve oil to foreign adversaries, the debacle at the southern border, and the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal are “impeachable offenses,” he said.

Trump’s ‘Going to Come Back’

Trump didn’t reveal his plans for 2024 at the meeting.

Whatever decision he makes, Nehls said he would stand behind the former president.

“I will fight to the gates of hell if it was for him,” he said. “That man loves this country more than just about anybody I’ve ever met. He put the American people first. His policies and the results of those policies put America on a trajectory to just having a lot of hope—a bright, bright future for every American, but disenfranchised.

“I’m a Donald Trump guy. I’ve always been a Donald Trump guy, and I will continue to be a Donald Trump guy.”

The congressman said that he couldn’t be more excited to be part of the group. “[The year] 2024 is the year of Donald Trump,” Nehls said. “We need him, he’s going to come back.

“Our country is burning on several fronts. If they call it a crisis, I guess we have a crisis everywhere. And there’s only one guy that did come in and save this country right now, in my humble opinion, and that’s Donald J. Trump.”

The White House and DOJ didn’t respond to queries from Epoch Insight by press time. ■

Law Enforcement Distrust

Handling of Mar-a-Lago FBI raid is breeding distrust in law enforcement, says expert

By Jackson Elliott

UNLESS TRUST IS restored, the FBI's Mar-a-Lago raid may begin the "collapse" of U.S. law enforcement, according to police expert Michael Letts.

Over the past few years, the FBI has acted politically often enough that many Americans now struggle to trust it, Letts said. He runs In-Vest USA, a nonprofit that provides bulletproof vests to police departments.

Without explanations, acts such as the Mar-a-Lago raid create distrust between local and federal law enforcement, he said. They also create civilian distrust for law enforcement in general.

"Mar-a-Lago is just another nail in the coffin," he said.

U.S. law enforcement runs on trust, according to Letts. Without trust, the system collapses into "Third-World status," where police serve power instead of enforcing the law.

"Then, you have coup d'états, you have overthrows, riots. And then, whatever power happens to win at that particular day tries to solidify. The forces that it controls run out and eliminate everybody that's not on their bandwagon," he said.

Lack of Transparency in Politically Sensitive Case

The FBI made several decisions at Mar-a-Lago that could catastrophically damage trust in law enforcement, Letts said.

First, the raid itself shouldn't have happened, he said.

Presidents often take many documents with them when they leave the White House. Often, staff accidentally pack at least a few secret documents by mistake. Most of the time, the federal government doesn't punish this mistake, according to Letts.

Trump's predecessor, former President Barack Obama, turned over 30 million documents to the National Archives.

"More often than not, they look at and realize [the document] no longer needs to be classified anymore," he said.

But the FBI raided Trump's home for the documents.

The FBI also refused to let Trump's lawyer observe the search. Without someone else present, law enforcement could potentially plant fake evidence or steal a suspect's property, Letts said. This has led many to now wonder whether the FBI demanded secrecy for alleged misconduct.

"They should have never provided fodder to the American people to have these kinds of questions," he said.

Finally, FBI and DOJ leaders have failed to provide the public with a clear explanation as to why the raid had to happen.

Although the government released the warrant and receipt for property taken, these things didn't provide enough of an answer, Letts said.

Since then, reports have been spreading about an internal FBI and Department of Homeland Security bulletin, leaked in part by CNN, NBC, and CBS, of an increase in bomb threats made online to law enforcement and officials fol-



lowing the Mar-a-Lago raid.

If the government truly wants to calm the situation, it needs to provide a full explanation, according to Letts.

"We need straight and direct answers," he said. "We need congressional leadership. It needs to be a bipartisan effort."

Trust: Cornerstone of the American System

The distrust from the FBI raid doesn't only affect politics, Letts said. It also affects the inner workings of law enforcement.

Law enforcement agencies have to cooperate to do their work, he said. Federal and state police often join forces for investigations.

In these investigations, trust is crucial, according to Letts. If the FBI and local police don't trust

New York Police Department police officers stand guard near the New York Stock Exchange on Sept. 9, 2011.

LOOKWISE FROM L. JUSTIN SULLIVAN/BETTY IMAGES, COURTESY OF IN-VEST USA, REUTERS/JIM BOURG

each other, they can't cooperate.

Even law enforcement on drug dealing will fall apart if the FBI and police don't trust each other, he said. If the FBI targets conservative politicians today, it might target anyone tomorrow.

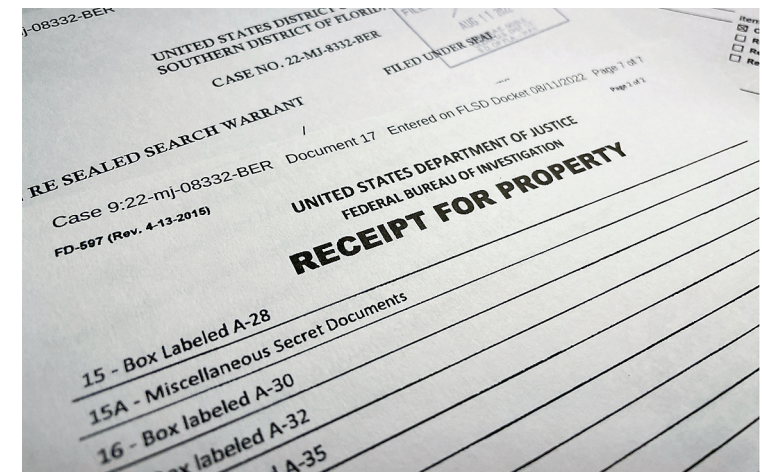
"Is there something else behind the scenes? You're willing to lie on FISA reports to courts. Are you willing to lie about this?" he asked.

The FBI's Mar-a-Lago raid will also cause the public to distrust state and local police, as most of the time, the public doesn't see the difference between local police, state police, and federal law enforcement, according to Letts.

"If anybody's wearing a badge—sheriff, deputy, city police—they all get mixed into the same boat," he said. "And now they all get vilified."

In the past few years, law en-

forcement's trust foundations have been weakened from a number of events, Letts said. Some media outlets have villainized them for alleged racism, which the police deny, during deaths in



An itemized receipt lists property seized by the FBI at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in West Palm Beach, Fla., on Aug. 12.



"We need straight and direct answers. We need congressional leadership. It needs to be a bipartisan effort."

Michael Letts, police expert

custody, while some city councils have cut their budgets. Officers faced immense pressure from all angles during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many police officers have resigned; few are recruited.

"They're having to pull extra shifts. They're at the highest stress rates. I mean, look at their divorce rates. They have some of the lowest morale we've ever seen in history," he said of the police.

At some point, the "thin blue line" will snap, according to Letts.

"Who will they call when somebody is banging on their door to try to break in?" he asked. ■

DOJ FACES AN IMAGE PROBLEM

in Wake of Raid

Observers say the department will need to fend off allegations of double standards, political bias arising out of its decision to seek a search warrant targeting Trump

By Michael Washburn

The Department of Justice in Washington on Aug. 9.

PHOTO BY STEFANI REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

News Analysis

THE FBI'S RAID last week on the home of former President Donald Trump in Palm Beach, Florida, ostensibly for the purpose of retrieving documents containing classified information pertinent to national security, has undermined public trust in federal law enforcement and the Department of Justice (DOJ), experts say.

While the affidavit that shows

the DOJ's justification in seeking the search warrant remains sealed and many details have yet to emerge, observers interpret the raid as a symptom of the growing politicization of the DOJ under President Joe Biden and its willingness to bend the law in pursuit of its objectives.

The warrant, unsealed on Aug. 12, showed that Trump is being investigated for potential breaches of three U.S. laws relating to the handling of records, including defense information and records

used in federal investigations.

The timing of the raid—just days before a deposition during which the former president invoked his Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination, in the context of an inquiry into his family's business dealings—is particularly concerning, observers say.

No Rush to Judgment

Opinion within the legal community is divided as to the legality of the raid; it's important not

to jump to conclusions as more details about the deliberations and the legal basis for it—if any—continue to emerge, legal experts caution.

Mark Graber, a law professor at the University of Maryland, dismissed theories raised by Trump and allies suggesting that “the FBI is controlled by the radical left in the United States or that it is there to persecute the Republican Party.”

Rather, he said, “there may be some reason to believe that the FBI is searching Donald Trump's

residence because they have significant evidence and believe that they will find something illegal.”

Graber described the raid as an event that didn't happen spontaneously or without any warning, but rather, as the culmination of a process in which the National Archives made requests to Trump for a return of documents taken from the White House at the time of his departure last year, and waited a long time before receiving only some of the requested items.

“These requests had been going

on for months. Should they have sent one more email, saying, ‘Please return the documents?’ I can't say, but it's very clear, the government tried to play nice and got nowhere,” Graber told Epoch Insight.

Trump and his lawyers, however, dispute the appropriateness of the FBI's actions, saying they had been cooperating with investigators for months and they would have provided documents if asked by the feds. Trump also has argued that all the documents were “declassified.”

Double Standards?

Federal law enforcement may be vulnerable to charges of having double standards and having subjected Trump to treatment that others with political views more congenial to the current administration have avoided.

Graber said it's likely that Trump's legal team will make the case that the DOJ applied standards to Trump from which other political figures have been exempt.

"We should expect Trump's lawyers are going to argue that Trump was singled out, they will argue that the FBI never raided Hillary Clinton's home" during the scandal that arose over her alleged mishandling of classified information ahead of the 2016 presidential election, Graber said.

While law enforcement agencies in theory have a responsibility to carry out their duties in a politically neutral manner, Graber said the unavoidable reality is that interpretations of the law will vary from one administration to another.

"We can anticipate that, under a Democrat administration, the Department of Justice will adopt a broader interpretation of some laws and a narrower interpretation of other laws than under a Republican administration," he said.

'Sad Story'

Graber said that the Biden administration isn't investigating Republican political figures en masse, and if anything, some Democrats are disappointed with what they see as the relative paucity of enforcement actions.

"We don't see the Biden administration investigating Republican after Republican," he said.

But for other observers and commentators, the FBI has committed an invasion of privacy that cannot fail to erode public trust in the Bureau and recall abuses of power more typically associated with the authoritarian regimes and dictatorships that were common during the Cold War.

Van B. Poole, a former member



of Florida's state Senate and former chair of the Florida Republican Party who works today as a political consultant, told Epoch Insight that many Floridians he has spoken to in recent days object vehemently to the raid and have given up affording the Bureau any credibility.

"It's a sad story, because people have always looked up to the FBI, and the leadership is really giving the Bureau a bad name, and the rank and file, men and women who work hard for the FBI, are getting the brunt of it, and people don't trust them now at all," Poole said.

"Attorney General Merrick Garland is just a puppet doing what the administration wants, and this is terrible for the country," he added.

Poole said he couldn't think of a

time during his time in the Florida Senate, from 1979 to 1983, or his chairmanship of the state Republican Party, from 1989 to 1993, when such public friction existed between federal law enforcement and the rights and liberties of the people of the state.

"If there was anything going on, if they were looking into something, we always cooperated with law enforcement," Poole said.

Not Reassured

In public remarks delivered in Washington on Aug. 18, Garland defended the legality and appropriateness of the DOJ's actions, adding that the decision to seek the search warrant was one that he personally approved.

"Faithful adherence to the rule of law is the bedrock principle of

Law professor

Mark Graber says that while law enforcement agencies in theory should act in a politically neutral manner, interpretations of the law will vary from one administration to another.

COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

the Justice Department and of our democracy. Upholding the rule of law means applying the law evenly, without fear or favor. Under my watch, that is precisely what the Justice Department is doing," he said.

Garland's remarks didn't reassure all observers about the operation's legality or the politically neutral stance of the DOJ.

"We don't know what the nature of all these documents is. There's an inventory list, which includes, for example, pictures of Trump with other foreign leaders, and a reminder to call someone. I can't see how that's an issue for national security," said Richard Conley, a professor of political science at the University of Florida and the author of a number of books on U.S. politics.

In Conley's view, this matter may

Trump's legal team will make the case that the DOJ applied standards to Trump from which other political figures have been exempt, an expert says.

have arisen partly out of the chaos of the transition when Trump prepared to leave the White House and as the events of Jan. 6, 2021, unfolded.

"My understanding is that the FBI found those documents, and instead of taking them, which they could have done at the time, they asked Trump and his associates to put additional locks on the door" when storing the boxes, Conley added, referring to comments made by Trump in the wake of the raid.

Conley sees a double standard at work in the FBI's treatment of Trump, as compared to federal law enforcement's failure to probe the Bidens over the contents of the younger Biden's laptop.

"How do you go to China and come back with \$85 million, yet nobody seems to be investigating this. Yet Trump is going to be charged under the Espionage Act. All this undermines the credibility of the FBI, and we've known for a long time, whether it's the IRS or the FBI, that people in law enforcement are going after political enemies," he said, referring to Hunter Biden's business dealings with Chinese businessmen with connections to the Chinese Communist Party.

A Foreign Perspective

For some people in Romania today, the FBI's raid on Mar-a-Lago is a chilling reminder of the kind of abuse of state authority and police power that they took pains to outlaw after the fall of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989.

"In Romania today, it is illegal

to search someone's home if the person is not there to witness the search. Any item seized when the homeowner is not present is not admissible in a court of law," Alexandra Ares, a writer, playwright, and journalist based in Bucharest, told Epoch Insight.

An operation such as the Mar-a-Lago raid wouldn't happen in Romania, where authorities must follow a protocol designed to safeguard the rights of citizens, she said. Trump's legal representatives were present during the raid, but they weren't allowed near the areas where the FBI agents were searching, according to the former president.

"Police can enter someone's residence only in the presence of the homeowner or one of his legal representatives (maids and service staff don't qualify), regardless of the emergency. Before they arrive, the agents must wait outside," Ares said.

Agents must then state their name to the homeowner or the latter's legal representative, and every move they make within the property will be filmed.

"No unidentified agents can just walk inside someone's house unattended. These procedures were put in place after the fall of communism in 1989. Romanians are very surprised that U.S. law allowed for the Mar-a-Lago raid and consider this an egregious breach, something that would happen in Congo or Bangladesh or some other militarized, totalitarian regime," Ares said.

Epoch Insight has reached out to the Department of Justice for comment. ■

Victor Davis Hanson,
historian and fellow at the
Hoover Institution and the
National Review Institute, near
Fresno, Calif., on Aug. 11.

PHOTO BY SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

FBI a Great Threat to Democracy

Victor Davis Hanson says FBI is a
'massive behemoth that is out of control'

By Gary Bai & Jan Jekielek

FOLLOWING THE FBI'S RAID ON MAR-A-LAGO, MILITARY HISTORIAN VICTOR DAVIS HANSON IS CALLING FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE AGENCY, WHICH HE CALLS "ONE OF THE GREAT THREATS TO DEMOCRACY."

"THIS IDEA OF a Federal Bureau of Investigation ... its record is too dangerous to democracy," Hanson said in an interview with EpochTV's "American Thought Leaders" program following the raid on former President Donald Trump's home in Palm Beach, Florida.

"The left always says democracy dies in darkness. Right now, at this moment, the FBI is one of the great threats to democracy.

"It's a terrible thing to say."

But Hanson holds his position: The FBI, he says, intervenes in elections, lies under oath, and is a "massive behemoth that is out of control."

Attacking Trump and Allies

The raid on Mar-a-Lago, according to Hanson, was part of a "series of incidents" against Trump and Trump's allies that shows the FBI and Department of Justice (DOJ) to be "out of control."

"If you want a lurid diary of Joe Biden's and you're in the FBI, and you become a retrieval service for the Biden family, you drag out James O'Keefe in his underwear," Hanson said, referring to the FBI's search of citizen journalist James O'Keefe's home in November 2021. The raid was reportedly motivated by O'Keefe's possession of a diary belonging to Ashley Biden, President Biden's daughter.

"You go to Roger Stones's house with a SWAT team. You put Peter Navarro on leg irons. You go to Rudy Giuliani's office and mess it up," Hanson said, referring to other instances where the FBI prosecuted or raided Trump allies' homes.



"Right now, at this moment, the FBI is one of the great threats to democracy."

Victor Davis Hanson, military historian

"So it was part of that series that the FBI and this DOJ are out of control, and they're trying to send all of us a message: 'We can do this, and nobody's going to stop

us from doing this and you better make the necessary adjustments,'" Hanson said, echoing Trump and Trump's allies' protests that the FBI raid was a political "witch hunt" and at least partly an attempt to stop Trump from running for the presidency in 2024.

Election Interference

Hanson pointed to a disparity between the FBI's treatment of Trump—who's said everything short of announcing a 2024 run—and what he observed as the agency's reluctance to prosecute other establishment figures who were once presidential candidates or likely candidates.

"Didn't James Comey tell us that when he was investigating Hillary Clinton and he found thousands of emails that were classified, and there was evidence that she took a hammer and broke up her devices and [used the] BleachBit program to bleach it?" Hanson asked rhetorically. "[Comey] basically said, 'Well, she did things that were wrong, but she's a candidate—and I'm not going to interfere in [the] election.'"

Then-FBI Director Comey said in July 2016 that the agency would bring no charges against Clinton for mishandling classified information, despite finding evidence that she and her team "were extremely careless in their han-



Secret Service and Palm Beach police in front of the home of former President Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla., on Aug. 8.

FROM L: SAMIRA BOUJAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES; EVA MARIE UZCATEGUI/GETTY IMAGES

dling of very sensitive, highly classified information.”

In comparison, Hanson pointed to the 2019 impeachment of Trump, when Trump asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to “look into” the firing of Ukrainian Prosecutor-General Viktor Shokin for possible connections to then-candidate Joe Biden.

“Joe Biden would be a likely candidate. Therefore, Donald Trump is using his office to preemptively hurt a possible candidate. So this is the locus classicus of everything—and there was not a word,” Hanson said of the impeachment effort.

“They hired a foreign national spy. ... He was basically being paid by Hillary Clinton GPS-DNC pay wallet Perkins Coie,” Hanson said, recounting when federal officials found Hillary Clinton’s 2016 campaign and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) to have likely violated the law when they hired former British spy Christopher Steele, who conducted political opposition research (in the “Steele Dossier”) that alleged collusion between Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign and Russian entities.

“They ruined the life of Carter Page. They went after [George] Papadopoulos. They tried to destroy Michael Flynn,” Hanson said, noting people who were affected by the Steele dossier.

“Their leaders—when asked to explain what was going on—lied,” Hanson said. “Andrew McCabe lied to federal investigators. James Comey pled amnesia—he broke the law and he disseminated confidential memos. ... Mueller lied when he said he didn’t know [about] Fusion GPS or the Steel dossier. McCabe admitted he lied four times.”

Yet, before the 2020 election, when the FBI obtained Hunter Biden’s laptop from a computer repair shop owner, and the laptop was found to contain information that could be incriminating to both Joe and Hunter Biden, Hanson said, the agency dismissed it as “Russian disinformation.”



“When you have an agency that has gone rogue and is interfering at the highest level of the country to affect an election ... and the directors of those agencies are willing to alter or leak documents that they shouldn’t ... or lie under oath to federal investigators, or lie to a committee by claiming amnesia ... and they oversee a bureau that will wipe clean phone records that are under subpoena ... or they will not prosecute one person, but they will [prosecute] another ... then it’s institutionalized,” Hanson said. “And you’ve got to get rid of it. I think you do.”

‘Revolutionary Cycle’

According to Hanson, the big picture overshadowing the raid is that the left has perceived Trump as such a threat to the republic that it would use any means against him, putting America in a “revolutionary cycle.”

“We’re in a ‘revolutionary cycle’—[as] the left has now said—under the pretext that Donald Trump is so extraordinarily threatening to the republic that it requires any means necessary to end him,” Hanson said, “and therefore we’re going to do things that are revolutionary.”

FBI Director

James Comey testifies during a hearing before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington on July 7, 2016.

The left has perceived Trump as such a threat to the republic that it would use any means against him, putting America in a ‘revolutionary cycle,’ Hanson says.

FROM TOP: ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES, CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON/THE EPOCH TIMES

like the State of the Union, we tear it up on national TV. We just tear it up,” Hanson said, referring to the 2020 incident when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi tore up Trump’s State of the Union speech on national television.

“We’re going to impeach a president, in his first term, the moment he loses the majority in the House,” Hanson said. “We’re going to impeach a president twice. We’re going to impeach a president when he is a private citizen and out of office.”

“And so they have set precedents—that and we’re not even talking about the Supreme Court—we’re going to set precedents that the Senate minority leader is going to go to the Supreme Court doors and threaten by name the Supreme Court justices,” Hanson said, recalling when Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), then the upper chamber’s minority leader, said in 2020 that Justice Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch of the Supreme Court “will pay the price” for unspecified “awful decisions.”

The ‘What’

Within the “revolutionary cycle,” Hanson said, one thing that would be worth seeing is how the Republican Party will react after it takes power in 2022, especially taking into account the unprecedented raid of a former president’s home.

“There better be something good [in Trump’s Mar-a-Lago documents]—or we’re going to do ‘what?’” Hanson said, emphasizing the interrogative. Regardless, Hanson said, Republicans would need to act if nothing inculpatory is found in Mar-a-Lago and if there are no consequences for the parties who approved and conducted the raid.

“And the ‘what’ is interesting,” Hanson said. “Because when the Republicans take the House—and I think they will, in November—are they going to have an article of impeachment of Merrick Garland? I don’t know. Will they impeach Joe Biden?”

“In other words, will Kevin McCarthy say, ‘I don’t like Joe Biden; it’s another one of his line speeches; I’m tearing it up on national TV just to show you that you shouldn’t do this.’

“Or will he say, ‘Squad members, none of you are going to be in committee? I’m sorry. But Nancy taught me in a good rule that you’re just too troublesome. And you would get in our way. So not any of you get to serve on a congressional committee.’

“And by the way, it’s time to impeach Joe Biden. Take your pick. ... He destroyed federal immigration law. He harassed individual citizens. He didn’t pay tax, we think, on money he gave Hunter, and he didn’t pay income tax on money Hunter gave him. So we’re going to investigate that.

“Or, we’re going to say: and by the way, Joe, we’re going to probably have to impeach you a second time, if the first one doesn’t work in conviction. And we might do it when you were a private citizen. And we might even have to go into one of your three homes.”

“That’s what happened in the Roman Republic. It happened at the end of Athenian democracy,” Hanson said of the revolutionary cycle. “So that’s what the Democrats have started—and we’ll see how it plays out.”

The FBI didn’t respond to a request for comment by press time. ■

House Minority

Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) speaks at a press conference at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Jan. 9, 2020.





(Far left) A photo of former President Donald Trump is displayed at a hearing of the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 breach of the U.S. Capitol, on Capitol Hill on June 16. (Left) Then-President Barack Obama (R) and then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the White House on Sept. 12, 2012.

The FBI Raid and the Rule of Law

The disparity in the official treatment of Trump and Clinton is but a vignette in a much wider mural

By Rob Natelson *Commentary*

IN THIS INSTALLMENT in my series on the rule of law, I was going to explain how the rule of law is declining in America. But Aug. 8’s massive FBI raid on former President Donald Trump’s residence for alleged misuse of government documents—after the FBI gave Hillary Clinton a pass for a similar offense—has made my case for me.

In my previous article (“Governor DeSantis, the Raid on Trump, and the Rule of Law—Part I,” available on The Epoch Times’ website), I summarized an Aug. 4 executive order issued by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. It suspended from office one Andrew Warren, a “woke” prosecutor who refused to enforce certain laws with which he disagreed.

I explained that DeSantis (or his staff) crafted his order in a way that forestalled any credible line of

attack from the liberal-propaganda media. I added that the order may help reverse a current drop in respect for the rule of law.

Here, I’ll explain what the rule of law is, why it’s important, and provide further evidence—if any is even necessary—of how it has deteriorated.

What Is the Rule of Law, and Why Is it Important?

Compliance with the rule of law means that (1) legal standards are clear, enforced, and reasonably stable, (2) officials comply with and enforce those standards, and (3) the judicial system is impartial, fair, and reasonably efficient. When the rule of law is respected, a citizen can usually predict the consequences of following, or violating, legal standards.

Without the rule of law, democratic self-governance is im-

possible. When officials violate, or refuse to enforce, measures adopted by the people and the people’s representatives, those officials undermine democracy. That’s why DeSantis accused Warren of “usurping the province of the Florida Legislature.”

Without the rule of law, economic prosperity is also impossible. Legal standards must be clear and predictable before investors will risk capital and before entrepreneurs commit their time and creativity. When rules are fuzzy, unevenly enforced, or subject to random change, investors and entrepreneurs shy away.

In the years immediately before adoption of the U.S. Constitution, demagogic politicians had weakened the rule of law in some states. One reason the Founders adopted the Constitution was to shore up the rule of law. In No. 44 of “The

Federalist,” James Madison wrote:

“The sober people of America are weary of the fluctuating policy which has directed the public councils. They have seen with regret and indignation that sudden changes and legislative interferences, in cases affecting personal rights, become jobs [i.e., opportunities for unfair gain] in the hands of enterprising and influential speculators, and snares to the more-industrious and less informed part of the community.

“They have seen, too, that one legislative interference is but the first link of a long chain of repetitions, every subsequent interference being naturally produced by the effects of the preceding. They very rightly infer, therefore, that some thorough reform is wanting, which will banish speculations on public measures, inspire a general prudence and industry, and give a regular course to the business of society.”

The New Decline in the Rule of Law

The disparity in the official treatment of Trump and Clinton is but a vignette in a much wider mural. A 2021 international survey shows that the United States has dropped to 27th place among all nations

in its respect for the rule of law. Another survey observes that in the United States, “the judicial appointments process has become increasingly politicized.”

“Public perceptions of corruption and distrust of institutions have been rising in recent years.”

Survey by The Heritage Foundation

“A troubling and growing tendency of federal governance by the unaccountable administrative state empowered by presidential decrees has undermined public confidence in the rule of law. Public perceptions of corruption and distrust of institutions have been rising in recent years,” the survey states.

Our decline toward third-world status began in earnest during the presidency of Barack Obama (2009 to 2017). His administration was marred by a frenzy of opaque economic regulations; raw favoritism for some business interests over others; politicization of law enforcement; and massive, inscrutable statutes of questionable constitutionality. Among those ♦♦

FROM L: DREW ANGERER/POOL/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES; CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

The Week

Antifa and Black Block demonstrators protest on election night near the White House on Nov. 3, 2020.



statutes were the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) and the Dodd-Frank financial regulation law.

Moreover, Obama repeatedly issued executive orders punching holes in federal statutes addressing drugs, immigration, and health care. As noted in Part I, this conduct violates a core principle of Anglo-American constitutionalism.

As the cases of Trump, Clinton, and Warren all illustrate, another aspect of the decline has been the biasing of the law enforcement process. In 2012, the constitutionality of the federal Defense of Marriage Act—reaffirming traditional one man-one woman marriage—was pending before the Supreme Court. Attorneys general are obligated to defend the laws enacted by their legislatures, but Eric Holder, Obama’s attorney general, refused to do so. In fact, he joined the opposition.

Other attorneys general and prosecutors followed Holder’s sordid example. Another miscreant was Roy Cooper, then-attorney general of North Carolina, who refused to defend his state constitution’s “one man-one woman” rule. This may well have contributed to the 2015 Supreme Court decision, which, on markedly weak reasoning, narrowly struck down traditional marriage rules such as North Carolina’s.

Prosecutors responded to the highly destructive Black Lives Matter/Antifa rioters with indulgence, but savagely to the less destructive Capitol Hill riot. While prosecutors have been unrelenting in their pursuit of Trump associates, they showed no interest in enforcing

federal law against leftist protesters harassing Republican-appointed (and only Republican-appointed) Supreme Court justices.

Congress has also participated in the trend: As I have documented in other essays, the Senate’s conduct of the Trump impeachment trials and the House’s conduct of its Jan. 6 hearings disregarded basic standards of fairness and due process.

While most of the responsibility for the breakdown in the rule of law is chargeable to the left, the record of the Trump administration wasn’t spotless either. In my previous essay, I mentioned the case of the legally dubious transfer of military funds to the construction of the border wall. Another illustration was the mass intrusion, during the COVID-19 pandemic, of the federal government into public health law—a subject the Constitution clearly assigns to the states.

DeSantis’s Contribution

As a political issue, the rule of law often has less traction than some other issues. Some voters find it hard to appreciate that people

they disagree with are entitled to fair and impartial treatment. Moreover, once a faction obtains power, it’s tempted to disregard legal standards when striking back at opponents. This is particularly true if those opponents previously violated the rule of law to attack the now-triumphant faction. This cycle of strike and counter-strike is, indeed, a vicious one.

When rules are fuzzy, unevenly enforced, or subject to random change, investors and entrepreneurs shy away.

In such circumstances, one mark of the leader-statesman (as opposed to the typical politician) is that he makes an effort to educate the public on crucial issues it might not otherwise understand.

DeSantis has just helped to educate us on the rule of law. For that, he deserves our gratitude. ■

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky at a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on July 20, 2021.

PHOTO BY STEFANI REYNOLDS/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



CDC Director Announces Changes

THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTERS for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced that the agency will be revamped, after a review found it didn’t adequately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky informed the CDC’s 13,000 employees of the planned changes, which she said include reorganizing the agency in an attempt to make quicker decisions, be more accountable, and improve communication.

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“We realize that [social distancing is] actually not the right way to think about this.”



Dr. Ashish Jha, White House COVID-19 response coordinator, referring to the guidance that people should maintain six feet of distance and limit their time together to 15 minutes.

“Without the affidavit, we’re flying blind in the dark.”



Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), calling for the release of the FBI affidavit that was used to justify the raid of former President Donald Trump’s Florida home.

203%

A Customs and Border Protection report shows **seizures of the synthetic opioid fentanyl jumped 203 percent from June to July, reaching 2,130 pounds.**

48%

of Texans believe President Joe Biden and Congress are responsible for soaring inflation, according to a survey by The Dallas Morning News and the University of Texas–Tyler.

72%

of the nearly 200,000 people apprehended along the southern border in July were foreign nationals from countries other than Mexico, according to Customs and Border Protection.

\$1.9 BILLION

in digital tokens have been stolen by hackers this year through July, according to blockchain analysis firm Chainalysis.

\$3.9 BILLION

The Department of Education has approved a group discharge of \$3.9 billion in federal student loan debt for **208,000 borrowers who claim to have been defrauded by the now-defunct ITT Technical Institutes.**

\$717 PER MONTH — Americans are paying \$717 more on average per month as a result of the highest inflation in almost 41 years, according to Republicans on the Joint Economic Committee.

2022 MIDTERMS

Liz Cheney Loses Wyoming Primary to Trump Endorsee Harriet Hageman

THREE-TERM REP. LIZ Cheney (R-Wyo.) on Aug. 16 became the eighth out of 10 Republicans who voted for Donald Trump’s impeachment to either retire or be defeated by party rivals endorsed by the former president.

Cheney, one of Trump’s most vociferous critics, was defeated in Wyoming’s Republican primary for the state’s lone congressional seat by Harriet Hageman, a Cheyenne natural resources attorney.



Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wy.) speaks to supporters at a primary night event in Jackson, Wyo., on Aug. 16.

ELECTION INTEGRITY

Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Fires 2020 Election Investigator

WISCONSIN ASSEMBLY Speaker Robin Vos has fired Michael Gableman, more than a year after hiring the former Wisconsin Supreme Court justice to investigate the 2020 election amid allegations of fraud and irregularities.

In a statement, Vos, a Republican, said he’s seeking to close the Office of Special Counsel, which was created in July 2021. The election investigation, which documented numerous instances of misconduct in the 2020 election, cost taxpayers more than \$1.1 million, not including any attorney fees.



President Joe Biden removes his mask as he speaks at the White House on July 28.

MASKING

Watchdog Sues Biden Administration Over Refusal to Provide Studies on Masks

A WATCHDOG GROUP has sued the Biden administration for allegedly refusing to provide information on studies on the efficacy of cloth masks.

The Functional Government Initiative (FGI) says the Department of Health and Human Services and two subagencies have violated federal law by refusing to provide the information.

FGI in February sent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the department, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases seeking details on how the agencies have analyzed the effectiveness of cloth masks, including information on any studies the agencies have funded on the matter.

But all three agencies have violated the law governing FOIA requests, which sets out specific periods of time in which the agencies must respond and determine whether requests require extra time due to complexities, according to the pair of suits filed in federal court in Washington.

VACCINE

Lab Rat Offspring Had Rib Malformations After COVID Vaccination: Documents

MODERNA DOCUMENTS regarding the drugmaker’s COVID-19 vaccine trial on animals show that some of the offspring of rats that were injected with the company’s mRNA shot developed rib malformations.

Included in the documents, which were obtained via a Freedom of Information Act request by Judicial Watch, are test results showing that the shots caused statistically significant skeletal malformations in the offspring of the rats that received doses of mRNA-1273 (SpikeVax) vaccine.

Six out of about 149 baby rats had “wavy ribs,” or ribs not properly shaped, and five of those also had rib nodules.



The Moderna headquarters in Cambridge, Mass.

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: ANNA MONEVMAKER/GETTY IMAGES; KEVIN DITSCHE/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT PAGE FROM TOP: ANNA MONEVMAKER/GETTY IMAGES; ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES; MADDIE MERRIN/GETTY IMAGES



Taiwanese Air Force soldiers clear the ground in front of an armed F-16V fighter jet during a drill at Chiashan Air Force Base, Taiwan, on Aug. 17.

CHINA-TAIWAN

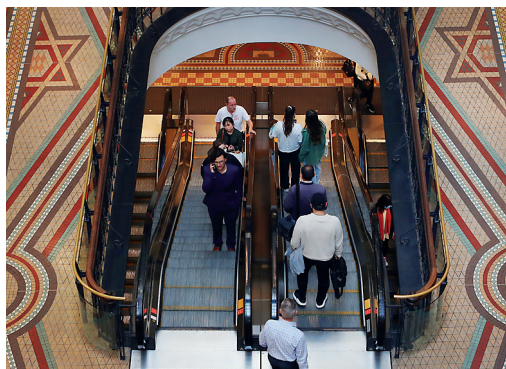
Taiwan and China Stage Dueling Military Exercises

TAIWAN IS CONDUCTING its own military exercises in the wake of ongoing aggression from Chinese communist forces that began this month. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) forces have continuously launched missiles over Taiwan and directed military operations into the air and waters around the island since House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) visited on Aug. 2. Taiwan hopes that its drills, launched on Aug. 17, will enhance combat preparedness amid fears that the CCP is preparing for an invasion of the island.

AUSTRALIA

Australia's Annual Wage Growth Reaches Highest Since 2014

AUSTRALIAN WAGES ROSE by 2.6 percent on average in the 12 months ending in June, the highest annual growth rate recorded since September 2014. However, the increase is unlikely to be enough for Australians to cover hikes in living costs. With the annual inflation rate sitting at 6.1 percent, the wage figures for June indicate that real wages are actually decreasing, adding more pressure to household budgets.



Shoppers make their way through the Queen Victoria Building in Sydney on Aug. 16.

AFRICA

Kenyan Deputy President William Ruto Declared President-Elect

AFTER SIX DAYS of verification of votes at the national tallying center in Nairobi, William Ruto has been declared the president-elect of the Republic of Kenya. Ruto, 56, has been serving as the deputy president of the East African nation since 2013, after being elected into office alongside his counterpart, President Uhuru Kenyatta.



People gather around a newspaper showing Kenya's new president, William Ruto, in Kisumu, Kenya, on Aug. 16.

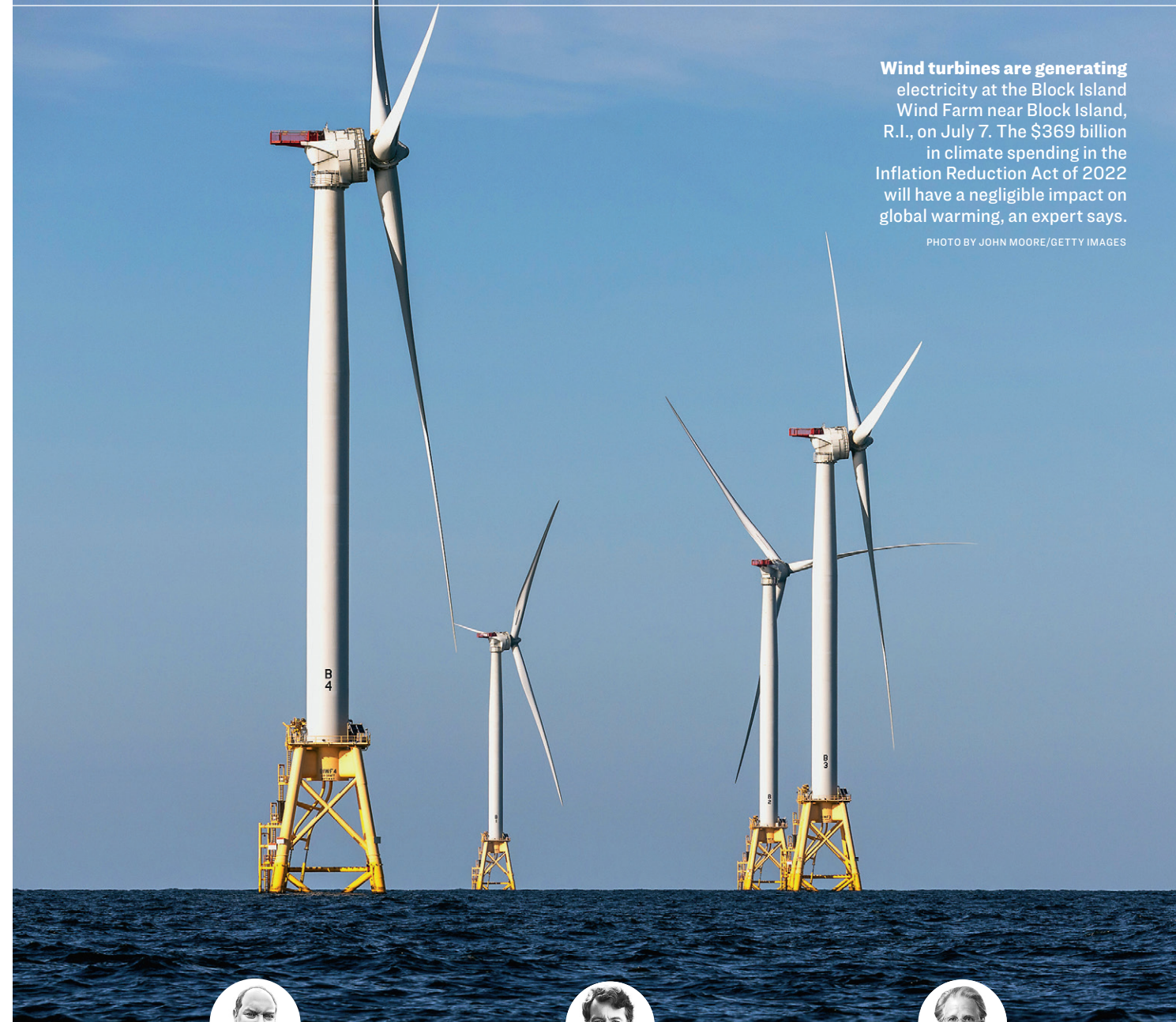
UK

UK Workers Face Record Pay Slump Due to Surging Inflation

UK WORKERS SAW a record drop in real earnings over the past quarter amid soaring inflation, according to official figures. The Office for National Statistics stated that regular pay (excluding bonuses) between April and June was estimated to have increased by 4.7 percent compared to the same quarter last year. However, after adjusting for inflation, regular pay plummeted by 3 percent year-over-year, the biggest drop since the record began in 2001.

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Perspectives



Wind turbines are generating electricity at the Block Island Wind Farm near Block Island, R.I., on July 7. The \$369 billion in climate spending in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 will have a negligible impact on global warming, an expert says.

PHOTO BY JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES



RAIDING TRUMP—AND YOU
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INSIDE

THOMAS MCARDLE was a White House speechwriter for President George W. Bush and writes for IssuesInsights.com.

Thomas McArdle



Raiding Trump—and You

The 87,000 new IRS agents will invade middle-class taxpayers' privacy

HOW SELF-DESTRUCTIVE can the Democratic Party be? In control of the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives, they're not satisfied with bearing the blame for the highest inflation in four decades; a recession that has only just begun; a bloody debacle in Afghanistan last year that left 13 of our servicemen and women dead and advertised so much U.S. weakness; treating concerned parents of public school pupils as domestic terrorists at the behest of the public school establishment; and while on their watch, Russian ruler Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine.

Now, they add to all that not only dispatching the FBI to turn upside down the home of a former president who had been cooperating with investigators, but also releasing a cascade of additions to Americans' expenses by raising taxes like crazy.

While the FBI raid on Trump's home at Mar-a-Lago could be construed as an overreach of the rule of law, the taxation assault, however, violates a rule-of-thumb that has been upheld by economists across the ideological spectrum: Don't raise taxes as recession looms. The clumsily named Inflation Reduction Act will also sic on Americans 87,000 new IRS agents who will be just as determined to root around in the financial privacy of middle-class taxpayers as the armed agents who were shuffling around items in the former first lady's bedroom.

The independent Penn Wharton Budget Model forecasts that the Inflation Reduction Act "would very slightly increase inflation until 2024 and decrease inflation thereafter," adding that "these point estimates are statistically indistinguishable from zero, thereby indicating low confidence that the legislation will have any impact on inflation."

In addition, "We project no impact on

GDP by 2031 and an increase in GDP of 0.2 percent by 2050."

How can a new tax on those who generate jobs not have a negative effect on gross domestic product (GDP)? How can an IRS bureaucracy bigger than the staffs of the State Department, Pentagon, FBI, and the border patrol combined not end up harassing small businesses and taxpayers with modest incomes? After being vandalized and terrorized, crisis pregnancy centers can soon expect visits from IRS "auditors" who "carry a firearm" and are "willing to use deadly force."

What the FBI finds in raiding the pocketbooks of taxpayers, they are sure to lose in votes—many times over.

How can billions for Green New Deal boondoggles and subsidizing expensive electric cars not add burden to an agonized economy? How can Affordable Care Act subsidies not further skew the health care market and increase medical costs?

And how does any of this bring down the price of gasoline, meat, milk, eggs, fruits, and vegetables for Americans struggling with skyrocketing prices?

Americans' energy bills will soon suffer the onslaught of a \$6.5 billion natural gas tax. A new methane tax alone could mean "the average customer seeing an approximate increase of 17 percent in their natural gas bill, or over \$100 per year for the average American family," according to the American Gas Association, plus "put more than 100,000 American jobs at risk."

A tax of 16.4 cents per barrel on crude oil and imported petroleum products will increase taxes by \$12 billion, according to the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT), and

is sure to be passed down to drivers in the form of still higher prices at the pump. The more than doubling of excise taxes on coal, to \$1.10 per ton from 50 cents (and to 55 cents per ton from 25 cents on coal from surface mining) will be a \$1.2 billion tax increase, according to the JCT, manifesting in the form of higher electricity bills.

The 15 percent corporate alternative minimum tax on businesses with \$1 billion in profits over three years is a \$225 billion tax increase, nearly half of which will hit the manufacturing industry, will cut GDP and kill about 27,000 jobs, according to the Tax Foundation.

The Democrats' tax on stock buybacks sounds like a narrow attack on the wealthy. In fact, with 60 million Americans holding 401(k)s worth more than \$7 trillion, once again it really hurts the middle class as they build and seek to protect their nest eggs.

Blackmailing drug manufacturers with a 95 percent excise tax unless they accept price controls means inevitable shortages of vital medicines and the possible dampening of innovation in developing cures in the future. The Congressional Budget Office warns that the reduction in drug makers' revenues could reach \$1 trillion over a decade.

The JCT also warns that Biden's change of rules for capital-intensive pass-through businesses with losses is a \$52 billion tax increase that will badly hurt smaller firms.

Presumably, the FBI could find something from the raid of Mar-a-Lago so repellent to swing voters that they would accede to four more years of tax increases, massive inflation, crime, social revolution, and diminished national security. But in raiding the pocketbooks of taxpayers, what they find in cash for ever-expanding government they are sure to lose in votes—many times over.

ANDERS CORR is a principal at Corr Analytics Inc., publisher of the Journal of Political Risk. He is an expert in political science and government.

Anders Corr



Democrats Trip Up on Climate

Anti-inflation law increases taxes and gives into China

SEN. BRIAN SCHATZ (D-Hawaii) cried as he left the Senate chambers.

He had just voted for the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, predicted to cut U.S. emissions by 40 percent by 2030.

"We've been fighting for this for decades," he told The New York Times. "Now I can look my kids in the eye and say we're really doing something about climate."

Schatz apparently means well. But the bill he voted for is about as much of a mess as he was after he voted.

Contrary to what most Democrats think, the \$369 billion in climate spending in the "inflation" bill will have a negligible impact on global warming.

According to The Wall Street Journal, it will reduce the global temperature rise by as little as 0.0009 degrees Fahrenheit or as much as 0.028 degrees Fahrenheit, depending on the estimate, by the year 2100. Given predicted temperature rises of approximately 5.76 degrees Fahrenheit (3.2 degrees Celsius), the effect is next to nothing.

Neither will it have much effect on inflation. The anti-inflationary part of the bill comes from \$300 billion in higher taxes that will put downward pressure on supply and increase the risk of recession, which would require Federal Reserve interest rate reductions that increase inflation.

The new taxes are only about 0.12 percent of gross domestic product in the coming year. The effect on 9.1 percent inflation could be about the same percentage—almost nothing.

Climate optimists will counter that the climate part of the bill will have a demonstration effect in which the rest of the world, most notably China and India, take notice and decrease emissions. But this is unlikely.

Beijing is more concerned with ruffling the world. New Delhi is trying to

remain free of China's hegemony and knows it needs a thriving economy to achieve this.

Most Americans don't understand these global dynamics. We aren't contextualizing our climate politics in the multidimensional chess board on which we and everybody else find ourselves increasingly at a disadvantage to Beijing.

The \$369 billion in climate spending in the 'inflation' bill will have a negligible impact on global warming.

The new climate spending matters because, again, contrary to what Democrats think, it will have deleterious repercussions for the economy on which we depend to defend ourselves from China.

The \$369 billion is on top of the \$67 billion for zero-carbon industries and research in the CHIPS and Science Act, signed into law on Aug. 9, and tens of billions more of climate spending in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021.

Over the course of this decade, according to The Atlantic, the three acts together will spend almost \$80 billion annually on climate measures that will have almost no effect on the climate but will put upward pressure on inflation.

There's also an opportunity cost when it comes to our defenses against the regime in Beijing. Currently, the People's Liberation Army puts more ships in the ocean annually than the U.S. Navy does. They are building faster than we are. Eventually, they could push us out of Asia, which would lead to the crumbling of our alliance systems.

That dire eventuality could be forestalled had we instead spent the hundreds of billions of climate funding on 200 nuclear submarines for ourselves and our allies.

That's inscrutable heresy to Democrats. But that kind of defense spending is required to deter Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine (which is causing a lot of emissions) and Xi Jinping's aggression against Taiwan and in the South China Sea, which, by Chinese estimates, has as much as \$60 trillion worth of oil and gas reserves.

If China is allowed to pump all of that oil and gas, emissions will increase.

Those hundreds of billions in new defense spending might even have brought these two climate rogues to the negotiating table to address their emissions in a serious way, at which point we could safely address our own.

Without China and Russia joining us by together making the economic sacrifices that emission reduction requires, including transaction costs from transitioning to clean energy, we're risking the international rule of law upon which all else depends.

America cannot act alone. Even \$800 billion of climate spending over about 10 years isn't much compared to the \$275 trillion that McKinsey estimates is required in order for the world to achieve net zero by 2050.

Without making U.S. climate sacrifices contingent on progress in China and Russia, at least, our drops in the climate bucket are just weakening the United States and, therefore, democracy.

Instead, we need to use our limited resources to leverage the world toward net zero. We can't achieve it alone or through a demonstration effect. We don't live in isolation and need to lead on global climate issues, not pretend we can make real change through symbolism.



Inflation Won't Go Away Soon

Believing July's good inflation news will lead you astray

THE LATEST INFLATION news looks remarkably good, at least on the surface. The Labor Department reported that, overall, the consumer price index (CPI) for July showed no inflation.

After months of horrific news and no small amount of fear, this seemingly happy result arrived entirely from a 4.6 percent drop in energy prices. The stock market took the news to heart. An hour after the news was released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time on Aug. 10, the benchmark S&P 500 stock price index jumped 1.7 percent on the opening bell. Investors seem to think the good news will convince the Federal Reserve (Fed) to abandon its anti-inflationary efforts, stop raising interest rates, and provide liquidity more liberally to financial markets.

But one month doesn't reverse any trend, especially one that has gained considerable momentum for more than a year. Investors and Americans generally would err should they now dismiss inflation concerns. Policymakers at the Fed would do the nation a disservice to throttle back their counter-inflationary posture. Details from this latest CPI report make these conclusions clear.

Food is the first consideration. It's the largest single part of America's household budget, about 14 percent, according to the Labor Department. It rose 1.1 percent in July alone, an annual inflation rate of 14 percent. (It's purely a coincidence that these two numbers are the same). This is a distinct acceleration from the 10.9 percent pace of advance averaged by food prices during the past 12 months. Alone, this picture, regardless of

any other consideration, pressures households and the Fed, and has political ramifications.

Nor is it likely that energy prices will continue to provide in the coming months the relief they did in July. The recent plunge was mainly a one-time adjustment. For some time now, a shortage of domestic refining capacity has pushed up gasoline and fuel oil prices faster than those of crude oil. The July drop in retail energy prices seems to signal that the production of refined products has at last caught up with demand.

Policymakers at the Fed would do the nation a disservice to throttle back their counter-inflationary posture.

With this adjustment now more or less complete, gasoline and heating oil prices should return to tracking those of crude oil. And those prices have picked up again. The price of a barrel of benchmark West Texas Intermediate grade hit a low of \$88.54 at the beginning of August. Since then, it has risen to more than \$94 a barrel, before dropping back to \$90 on Aug. 18.

For the rest of the inflation index—the so-called core measure, which excludes food and energy—July brought a mix. It nets out as what could be described as modest relief. This core measure rose between April and June between 0.6 and 0.7 percent a month, or at a 7.8 percent average annual rate. July showed a monthly gain of 0.3 percent, or a 3.7 percent annual rate. If this were to hold, it would

still exceed the Fed's preferred inflation of 2.0 percent. But it isn't apparent that the economy will realize even this relative moderation in inflation. Much of what brought it came from more volatile sectors, while more important and otherwise stable sectors carried less encouragement.

Part of July's break in “core” inflation reflected a 0.5 percent drop in the prices of transportation services. This is clearly a direct result of the drop in energy prices that, as already indicated, will not likely persist. A 0.4 percent decline in used car prices also helped to hold back the pace of core inflation in July. This is a notoriously volatile component of the CPI and is as likely to surge in August as it is to repeat its decline.

Against these unreliable sources of relief, the prices of rent and housing continued in July to show the same 8 percent annual rate of advance they have averaged all year. Ominously, the prices of medical services, which had until now held back the overall accounting of inflation, accelerated from the average 4 percent annual rate of increase to a 5 percent rate in July.

Of course, anything is possible, especially in a single month's accounting. The likelihood, however, suggests four key conclusions to take away from this exciting news. One, inflation matters aren't nearly as good as the headline number suggests. Two, whatever relief the nation gets from inflation, price pressure will remain a source of concern. Three, investors are foolish to take the good news to heart. Four, the Fed would fail the nation if it were to relax its stated determination to keep up its counter-inflationary policies.



A Remedy for Higher Prices

Demand destruction contributes to the decline in oil prices

FOR THE FIRST TIME since early March, the national average price for a gallon of gasoline is roughly \$4, according to data from GasBuddy and the American Automobile Association (AAA).

Since peaking at more than \$5 per gallon in June, prices have tumbled by about 20 percent.

But while President Joe Biden has touted his administration's policies as the cause for the steady decline, market analysts attribute demand destruction—high prices spurring reduced demand—as a major contributor to the downward trend.

“The drop in the national retail price can be attributed to consumers reducing their usage of gasoline as the summer driving season started during the first week of July, when the price peaked around \$5.00 per gallon,” economist Ed Yardeni wrote in a recent note. “During the August 5 week, the four-week average of usage was down 5.3% from a year ago. The four-week average price fell back down to \$4.37 during the August 8 week.”

Energy Information Administration (EIA) supply data show that gasoline stocks have risen five of the past eight weeks, totaling nearly 3 million barrels during the typically busy driving season. Gas demand has also dropped, from 9.25 million barrels per day (bpd) to 8.54 million bpd, which is down by 1.24 million bpd from the same time a year ago.

Inflationary pressures are ostensibly weighing on consumers, forcing motorists to change their driving habits to cope with elevated gas prices. A recent AAA survey found that 64 percent of U.S. adults have altered their lifestyles since March, including driving less, combining errands, and reducing shopping or dining out. Others have also postponed their vacations this year and saved less money.



Inflationary pressures are ostensibly weighing on consumers, forcing motorists to change their driving habits to cope with elevated gas prices.

“Traders are going to see if the demand drop corrects itself or is it a sign that U.S. drivers are bucking under the pressure of the most aggressive inflation we have seen since the 1980s,” market commentator Phil Flynn wrote in The Energy Report.

China, Recession Hurt Oil

The decline in crude oil prices has played a significant part in diminishing the pain at the pump, too.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) and Brent have erased their post-invasion gains. WTI futures have slumped by nearly 14 percent over the past three months to \$90 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent, the international benchmark for oil prices, shed 10 percent over the same period to \$95 per barrel on London's ICE Futures exchange.

“Oil is the primary ingredient in gasoline, so less expensive oil is helpful in taming pump prices,” Andrew Gross,

AAA spokesperson, said in a statement. “Couple that with fewer drivers fueling up, and you have a recipe for gas prices to keep easing.”

Market analysts have alluded to China and its COVID-Zero strategy that has resulted in routine lockdowns every time there's a COVID-19 outbreak. The world's largest energy consumer saw its imports of crude and refined petroleum products plummet by 9.5 percent and 35.3 percent, respectively, in July.

Experts forecast that imports will pick up steam in the second half of 2022 as Beijing accelerates its infrastructure-spending plans to stimulate the world's second-largest economy.

But growing recession fears in the energy market have weighed on demand expectations, turning investors more bearish this summer, according to Warren Patterson, head of commodities at ING.

“The higher prices seen for much of this year would have also led to some demand destruction,” Patterson wrote in a research note. “The more recent weakness in prices may limit the demand destruction that some may feel is needed in order to keep the market balanced.”

Despite the United States and other countries injecting emergency reserves of crude into the international market to help curb prices, global supplies remain considerably tight.

“When the market wakes up to the reality that these barrels of oil aren't going to be dumped onto the market in the winter, we should see solid buying come back in,” Flynn said.

Overall, the U.S. energy situation is fragile, as inventories are down by 10.7 percent compared with a year ago. If recession fears subside and consumer demand for gasoline and diesel picks up in the coming weeks, conditions may reverse the steady stream of losses in oil and gas in the fourth quarter of 2022, energy analysts say.

DANIEL LACALLE is chief economist at hedge fund Tressis and author of “Freedom or Equality,” “Escape from the Central Bank Trap,” and “Life in the Financial Markets.”

Daniel Lacalle



Turn Off the Lights?

Europe's stringent policies aren't about energy efficiency, but control

THE EUROPEAN UNION has announced strict “energy efficiency” consumption reduction measures to cut 15 percent of gas demand as Russia threatens to shut down gas supplies. Some regions and cities have imposed aggressive heating and air conditioning limits as well as cuts in building lights. Could this work or will it backfire?

Spoiler alert. It will backfire again. Interventionism always damages the ones they pretend to protect.

Energy efficiency is producing the same or greater goods and services with less energy use. Imposing restrictive measures isn't about energy efficiency, but control policies looking to collect more taxes via fines.

The decision to turn off the lights of buildings at night has an extraordinarily minor impact on natural gas demand and a massive impact on safety. The demand for natural gas on a typical day already falls by between 20 and 25 percent between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m., according to Enagas and Sedigas. However, “electric power and adequate lighting, in addition to improving urban life, have an additional effect: reducing the crime rate at night,” according to Ariel Yépez, head of the energy division of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The solution to a supply risk from Russia is to increase diversification and supply sources, not repression.

We can't forget that the same politicians who tell Europeans that they must turn off lights, cut air conditioning, and reduce heating are the ones who decided to shut nuclear plants, ban natural gas exploration, and introduce regulatory changes that have limited investment in domestic energy.

The solution is to close many more bilateral treaties and trade agreements with other natural gas suppliers, continue to develop wind and



The solution to a supply risk from Russia is to increase diversification and supply sources, not repression.

solar power, strengthen and extend the life of nuclear power plants, and develop our natural gas reserves, which is prohibited.

Imposing restrictive measures isn't energy efficiency, but control.

Germany created its own problem by shutting down nuclear plants and making its energy mix more volatile, intermittent, and expensive despite—or due to—more than 150 billion euros of subsidies. The average power price for households and small businesses in Germany has increased by more than 45 percent since 2006, according to the German Association of Energy and Water Industries (BDEW). More than half of the price paid by households is due to politically determined components, such as taxes, levies, and surcharges.

If we want to improve efficiency, we must invest in technology, not multiply government spending that supposes a much higher energy consumption.

From a global demand and supply balance point of view, the set of

announced limitations doesn't make sense. European demand for natural gas is around 549 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year, according to the IEA. Europe imports 150 bcm a year from Russia. Reducing demand artificially and temporarily by 15 percent has no discernible impact on the global supply-demand balance, as it will be absorbed by China, India, and others, yet has an enormous impact on the European economy.

Government-imposed light and heating cuts will destroy the European Union economy with no relevant impact on Russia's energy trade.

Temporarily and artificially limiting the demand for natural gas only harms the country that implements it and, at the same time, perpetuates long-term use: the economy contracts, but the energy mix doesn't change.

Consuming 15 percent less gas doesn't hurt Putin. On July 24, Gazprom, the Russian gas company, reached a new all-time high in sales to China, and Chinese consumption via gas pipeline has skyrocketed in the past 12 months.

In Europe, governments have created the problem: banning exploration and development of domestic resources, closing nuclear power plants, imposing heavy taxes on the companies that invest the most in solar and wind power, and introducing constant legal uncertainty in energy investment with random and harmful regulatory changes. The solution isn't repression, it's investment.

It doesn't make any sense to force citizens to freeze from the cold in winter and suffocate from heat in summer while the European governments maintain enormous public spending programs and bloated administrations. That is huge power consumption.

If Europe wants to lower Russian imports, what it should do is stop putting limits and barriers on trade and investment in energy.

FANYU is an expert in finance and economics and has contributed analyses on China's economy since 2015.

Fan Yu

China's 'Gray Swan' Risk

Real estate woes threaten China's economy and stability

THE REAL ESTATE industry accounts for 25 percent of China's gross domestic product, and more than one-third of local government revenues are tied to either land sales or home sales.

But mounting problems—with no obvious solutions—are threatening to destabilize not just the real estate sector but China's banks and industrial producers. It's a “gray swan” problem that has long simmered but may finally tip over.

Despite recent attempts by Beijing to bolster the country's real estate markets, combined sales at China's top 100 property developers in July fell by 29 percent from June and 40 percent year-over-year. This is after two consecutive monthly increases, according to data released by China Real Estate Information Corp. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has attempted to shore up housing demand since at least March, introducing measures such as reducing the required down payment and cutting mortgage rates.

There are questions about whether the recent measures had enough time to make an impact or were too weak to offset negative market sentiments.

The average selling price of pre-owned housing across 100 Chinese cities also declined in July. It was the second straight monthly decline.

Mortgage boycotts continue to plague developers throughout the country, complicating Beijing's efforts to rescue the real estate industry.

Many homebuyers boycotting paying mortgages complained that their monthly mortgage payments hadn't been held in escrow accounts as stipulated in their purchase agreements, but were siphoned out of those accounts by cash-strapped property developers.

The issue is rooted in China's “pre-sale” system, in which buyers typically begin making payments to purchase an apartment before the apartment



Mortgage boycotts continue to plague developers throughout the country, complicating Beijing's efforts to rescue the real estate industry.

is built. This system helps developers raise cash quickly to buy new land and start new developments.

Until recently, developers had ample access to debt financing and were allowed to use the bulk of this presale revenue for whatever they wanted, only setting aside a small amount to finish the construction of the housing project.

But in the past 12 months, developers have become increasingly cash-strapped, while Beijing has imposed more stringent restrictions on how the cash can be used. This created a “catch-22,” with many developers running out of cash before fully finishing the apartments, leaving masses of angry customers in their wake.

Recently, lax supervision and oversight within some localities had allowed some developers to tap into this presale cash supposedly held in escrow accounts to fund new land purchases. Recall that it's in the best interest of local governments to unlock this cash, as land sales to developers are a key

revenue source for municipalities.

Those transfers were also made through kickbacks from contractors, in which developers moved more cash out of customer escrows than necessary to construction companies, which in turn transferred the excess back to the developers. Customers only saw that cash was used for construction, a permissible expense from the escrow accounts.

This underscores the deep-seated problems plaguing China's developers and their business model. Absent a massive bailout from the CCP regime, it's impossible to envision how the real estate industry can pull itself out of this downward spiral.

The other side of the coin is downstream customers. Buyers fed up with the status quo system and boycotting mortgages are creating issues for both banks and developers. The nationwide mortgage boycott began at an Evergrande housing project in Jiangxi Province.

Yet today, protests have spread beyond mere customers. Dozens of contractors, such as construction companies and landscaping firms, have also halted their debt payments, citing an inability to pay their debts because of money owed to them by developers.

The unanswered question is how much this turmoil in the real estate industry will impact China's broader economy, specifically the \$50 trillion banking system.

Banks are caught in the middle of this crisis. The real estate industry is Chinese banks' biggest source of business—providing a stable foundation in prior periods of market disruptions—yet it could prove to be their undoing.

If banks don't step in and provide loans to developers to help finish projects and induce buyers to pay, they'll stand to lose more money. But stepping in is also undesirable—it's increasing their exposure to a failed industry and potentially more risks later.

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."

Jeff Minick

Live Life Using the 'If ... Then' Method

Want happiness? Make a plan and make it happen



IF. NOW THERE'S A TRIM welterweight of a word that can put you on the canvas with a single punch, or let you step from the ring with your hands raised in triumph.

"I've always wished I stepped off that train," says Bruce in Daniel Pink's book "The Power of Regret." Bruce is remembering his chance encounter years earlier with a young woman he'd met on a train in Europe. He was smitten with her that evening, and possibly she with him, but Bruce not only let that lovely get away, he neglected to ask for her address.

Pink calls this a "boldness regret": "If only I'd taken that risk."

Probably most of us have felt the shadows cast by the dark cloud of this conjunction. "If only I'd bought a house before the prices went through the ceiling, I'd be sitting pretty," a friend says. (Hindsight is a bummer.) "If I'd studied in college instead of partying," thinks another, "I could have gone to medical school."

"You pays your money and you takes your choice," as the old saying goes.

"If wishes were horses, beggars would ride" is another antique. My mom sometimes tossed that one my way when, as a boy, I would wish for the rain to stop, or that my friend Allen could come over and play.

Here we can extend that "if" of wishes to adulthood and find that it still packs a powerful uppercut. "If I could just get away from this place, everything would change," a man says. (The environment would change, for better or for worse, but he'd still be dragging along that inescapable shadow: the self.) "If I had the money, I could turn that place into a barbecue joint that would knock the socks off this town," a man once told me of a closed, run-down restaurant building in a great



Delayed gratification nearly always accompanies this 'if ... then' scenario.

location. ("If wishes were horses ...")

Eugene O'Neill devoted an entire play, "The Iceman Cometh," to this dark side of empty wishes. The alcoholic wastrels in Harry Hope's saloon live on pipe dreams and promises, and lift their glasses to the great god If.

Which, thankfully, brings us to the brighter side of this two-letter word.

There are occasions when the "If ... then" formula drenches us in sunshine rather than rain. This occurs when we practice that equation with intention, hoping to exchange a present circumstance for a better future.

A personal instance: If I walk half an hour a day, as my doctor has instructed me, then my overall health will improve.

We all face situations where this is the case, where we can take hold of the possibilities embedded in "if," put them into action, and make them a reality.

Recently, for instance, it was mid-afternoon in the coffee shop I frequent, and the place was deserted. The young barista at the counter, whom I only then realized was married, was reading "The Empowered Wife: Six Surprising Secrets for Attracting Your Husband's Time, Attention, and Affection."

I looked the book up online and found that it asks the question: "Can a wife singlehandedly bring a boring or broken marriage back to life?"

Here the "if ... then" formula, as the sweet barista is discovering, involves tactics that she can put into action to revive love in her marriage.

Delayed gratification nearly always accompanies this "If ... then" scenario. "If I finish up my physics homework," thinks a high school kid, "then I can relax and have fun talking to friends." "If I buy a load of groceries today," a frugal wife tells her husband, "then I'll save money when the prices go up again next month."

In all these cases, "if" we make our plans and execute them, "then" our dreams, large or small, can come true.

And that's the "If ... then" recipe for a good life.

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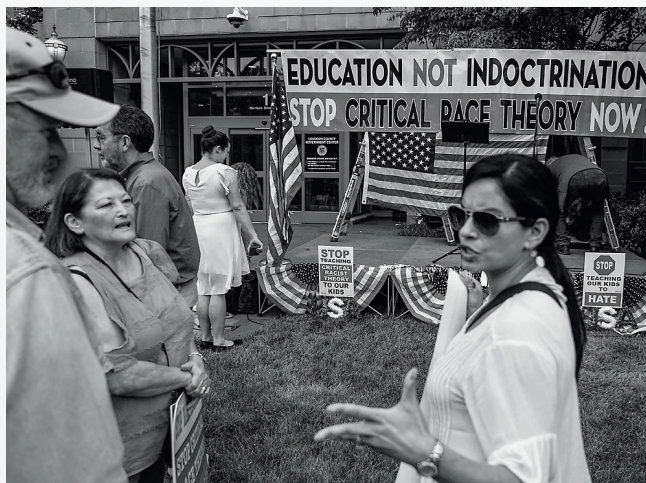
AN EPOCH TIMES DOCUMENTARY

THOUGHT LEADERS

Civil Rights Laws Threatened

Critical race theory training is antithetical to freedom, says whistleblower

“When it was my turn, I said, ‘I’m not comfortable discussing my race here,’” whistleblower Jodi Shaw said. “The facilitator said, ‘Any white person who displays discomfort or distress when asked to discuss their race is not actually feeling distress. What they’re exhibiting is a power play, and that is white fragility.’”



People rally against critical race theory instruction in schools, at the Loudoun County Government Center in Leesburg, Va., on June 12, 2021.

at Smith College. Why don’t you start there and bring us up to the present?

MS. SHAW: I graduated with my [Bachelor of Arts] in anthropology in 1993. I loved Smith. After graduation, I spent most of my time in Brooklyn. I was a musician living hand to mouth, but I was happy doing something I loved.

After I got married and had children, I became a librarian. Then my marriage ended. It’s tough living in the city with children if you don’t have a lot of money, so I was excited to get a job at Smith as a temporary librarian. I noticed there were a lot of discussions about

whiteness and white privilege and systemic racism. I hadn’t been in academia for a long time, so these discussions were pretty foreign to me.

During this first year, I was tasked with giving an orientation to 600 incoming first-year students. I was told to do something wild and crazy. I pitched this idea of rapping, and it was accepted.

I was working on this rap over that summer of 2018 when a black student accused a white custodian of racism. The student made a Facebook post about it, and it went viral.

Smith immediately apologized to the student, announcing they were go-

ing to fight systemic racism with mandatory anti-bias trainings for employees. They did this before they even began an investigation into the incident. Less than a week before my presentation, my supervisor told me, “You can’t do the rap.” I asked, “Why not?” He pretty much said, “Because you’re white. Rap by white staff can be seen as culturally insensitive.”

I asked him, “If I was a person of color, could I do it?” And he said, “Yes.” So there was no rap. Even though I was up for a full-time position, I ended up leaving the library and taking a job in the residence life department. I took a big pay cut, but I thought I could avoid all this discussion about race and wouldn’t have to talk about my white privilege and my white fragility. Boy, was I wrong.

I didn’t know this, but in general, residence life departments are staffed by people with their master’s degrees in education, which is now saturated with social justice ideology. This is part of their job, to teach social justice to students.

It was made clear to me early on that I was going to have to talk about my fixed characteristics, like race and gender. That’s when I really started questioning

this ideology. It’s hard when everyone around you is saying one thing, and you’re having this feeling that something isn’t right. So I tried to validate that feeling and find out why I was having it.

In the fall of 2019, I was mandated to attend a professional development training where we would discuss race. You’re not supposed to ask about race at a job interview, so I wondered why I asked to do it as a continued condition of my employment.

I told my supervisor I wasn’t comfortable discussing my race at work, and she said, “Just say that in the workshop.” So we went around the room, and when it was my turn, I said, “I’m not comfortable discussing my race here.” The hired facilitator said: “Any white person who displays discomfort or distress when asked to discuss their race is not actually feeling distress. What they’re exhibiting is a power play, and that is white fragility.”

It felt like my heart stopped. I never dreamed that would be the response. I was singled out for my skin color, and I felt ashamed. That was when I decided I had to say something. I talked to my supervisors. I filed a lengthy internal complaint. I was passed off among administrators, and the investigation was delayed and delayed.

While this investigation was ongoing, I was informed that I would have to start going to discussions about racial justice at Smith. I thought, “If I’m not going to say anything, will I be construed as racist?” It was

really stressful.

I don’t have a Ph.D. I’m not a faculty member. I’m a staff member. So I thought: “What can I do to get Smith to respond? How can I get them to pay attention to what I see is a real problem here, and not just for me, but for all the staff?” So I made a YouTube video with no idea what would happen.

In the video, I asked Smith College to stop reducing my personhood to a racial category, to stop telling me

what I must think and feel about myself. I was watching television with my kids and checked my phone and saw the video had gotten 10,000 views. That’s when I knew, “They’re probably going to pay attention now.” And they did.

MR. JEKIELEK: What happened next?

MS. SHAW: The president released a letter on the website. She characterized the video as a critique of our social justice initiatives. It wasn’t a critique of the initiatives. It was very

“I thought, ‘I have to choose freedom. I just can’t give up my freedom.’”

Former Smith College employee
Jodi Shaw



FROM L. ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/SAFARI VIA GETTY IMAGES, CHONGHENG CHOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

“I took a big pay cut, but I thought I could avoid all this discussion about race and wouldn’t have to talk about my white privilege and my white fragility.”

specific about things they were asking me to do. She didn’t address that. At the end of her letter, after she mentioned all this stuff about the video, she basically said, we stand by our initiatives and with students of color. That was condescending to any student who’s not white who watched my video. She implied they can’t handle somebody talking honestly in a polite, respectful way. I think that’s disempowering.

So I made a video in response to her letter. In it I said, “I’m going to create this as a dialogue, because I haven’t had one yet.” Then she sent a letter back. And there was retaliation. I was forwarding emails from my work account to my private account about my complaint, because this was documentation. For this, they put me under investigation, saying I’d compromised college information.

Then they said, “We’d like to resolve this amicably.” At that point, I asked them to apologize to the Smith staff and stop the programming, and they refused. I remem-

ber agonizing in front of my wood stove in the middle of winter thinking, “I could take a settlement and be OK.”

MR. JEKIELEK: But there would be strings attached.

MS. SHAW: Correct. Basically, I couldn’t talk about Smith anymore. In the end, I decided I would regret taking a settlement. I made a video about this decision, about freedom versus comfort. I thought: “I have to choose freedom. I just can’t give up my freedom.” Finally, I left.

MR. JEKIELEK: How is your family?

MS. SHAW: Thanks for asking. It’s been hard on my kids, but I comfort myself knowing they can take strength because their mother didn’t back down. I don’t want them to inhabit a future in which they’re told they’re bad because of their skin color or gender.

MR. JEKIELEK: Have people reached out to you

who have made difficult decisions like you did?

MS. SHAW: Yes. And that’s very gratifying to me. I just had somebody write to me last night. I had talked to her on the phone about a year ago. She was in a similar terrible situation and has now filed a complaint with her state office of civil rights. She has gone from talking to me to filing a public complaint.

Something I would tell people is to find one other person. You need to find another person, preferably in the same environment as your job or school, just one other person. Once you start talking to each other, that one person can have such an impact.

MR. JEKIELEK: In your acceptance speech, you make this distinction between stories that are ours and stories that come from outside, and how these stories impact our emotions. Woke ideology demands that its story be accepted. Either you do it volitionally, or it will be done against your will.

MS. SHAW: If you don’t participate, then woke ideology says you are wrong.

People in woke ideology tell us that reverse discrimination doesn’t exist. But racism is an adverse action taken because of your skin color. That’s racism—across the board. ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.



A woman holds a sign during a rally against critical race theory instruction in schools, at the Loudoun County Government Center in Leesburg, Va., on June 12, 2021.

THIS PAGE: ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Unwind

Ancient Mayan ruins are just some of the wonders waiting to be explored in Mexico, along with bustling cities, quaint beach towns, deserts, and jungles.

PHOTO BY SOFT_LIGHT/SHUTTERSTOCK



Mexico: Land of Ancient Adventure 82

GLASSES OR CONTACT lenses are an easy fix for most vision issues such as near- or farsightedness, but surgery offers a permanent solution. 84

WE’VE GATHERED A FLEET of easy-to-transport, people-powered craft ideal for exploring local waterways, fishing, getting an aquatic workout, or just playing. 87

BREWING YOUR OWN beer is fun, easier than expected, and sure to deliver the flavor you’ve been missing in store-brand brews. 90

INSIDE

The island's sheltered harbor has ample draft and space for as many as five large center console boats. Improvements include multiple docks, ramps, lifts, maintenance facilities, and a private launch.



A Beautiful Bahamian ISLAND ESTATE

A private island set in the magical islands of the Bahamas lies just a short flight from South Florida

By Phil Butler

FOR THOSE IN SEARCH OF A personal paradise, Crown Pigeon Island, an 11-acre tropical paradise in the Bahamas, warrants serious consideration. Situated northeast of the island of Nassau, between the northern tip of Eleuthera Island and Man Island, the island boasts three natural beaches, a protected harbor with docks, three large villas, and five well-equipped cottages. Accessible by private boat or by air via Eleuthera's three airports, the island is listed for \$44,495,000.

The well-appointed residences scattered across the island provide a total of 15 bedrooms with en suite baths. Every window delivers unfettered views of the fabulous natural surroundings. Exploring the island reveals numerous patios, breezy deck spaces, secluded courtyards, lush gardens, two infinity pools, multiple outdoor kitchens, and a variety of living and entertaining spaces to ensure the owners and guests are cosseted and comfortable during their stay.

The island's winding cart paths meander through lush foliage, native hardwoods, broadleaf coppice, colorful orchids, and past several kitchen vegetable gardens. The three sandy beaches are located on the island's north, south, and west sides, one of which has its

own beach club. The island's protected harbor, which is also a sea turtle sanctuary, has space for four or five large center console vessels. The marina is equipped with two boat lifts, a haul-out ramp, a floating dock, and a boathouse with two bathrooms.

The island is just a fast 10-minute boat ride away from historic Dunmore Town on adjacent Harbour Island. There, you will find quaint restaurants and shops, friendly residents, and the famous Pink Sands Beach. About a mile to the west is Eleuthera Island, which languidly meanders from Spanish Wells down to Bannerman Town. The island is equipped with a launch to transport the owners and guests to the surrounding islands.

The island's power needs are served via a power cable to Eleuthera's main grid. It is also equipped with its own backup generators, a water-making system, organic composters, and high-speed internet throughout the property. Staff quarters, a catering kitchen, and a caretaker's house round out the features. ■

Phil Butler is a publisher, editor, author, and analyst who is a widely cited expert on subjects ranging from digital and social media to travel technology.



CROWN PIGEON ISLAND
North Eleuthera, Harbor Island, Eleuthera, Bahamas
\$44,495,000

- 15 BEDROOMS
- 12,000 SQUARE FEET
- 11 ACRES

KEY FEATURES

- PRIVATE ISLAND
- FAIRLY ACCESSIBLE LOCATION
- PRIVATE BEACHES/MARINA
- MULTIPLE RESIDENCES

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(Above) The private beach on the north end features a beach club for family fun or entertaining large groups. (Top Right) Breathtaking sunrises and sunsets over Crown Pigeon Island are glorious everyday occurrences. (Right) The villas and cottages feature colorful, breezy island architecture and decors. All of the residences enjoy easy access to breezy decks, patios, kitchen gardens, and BBQ areas.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAMIANOS SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY



Isla Mujeres, eight miles off the coast, feels completely different from Cancún, Mexico.

Beyond the Beach

Local charm and ancient wonders await visitors who explore the Yucatán region

By **Tim Johnson**

BOARDING THE FERRY AND CLIMBING the narrow stairs to the top level, the cheap plastic seats bathed in the hot sun and swept with warm Caribbean winds started to fill quickly. Behind them, the white and glassy towers of the hotel zone rise. Ahead was an island a world away, although it would only take 30 minutes to make the crossing.

But first, there was a little music. As we pulled away from the dock, a man dressed like he had been separated from his mariachi band walked to the front of the deck, fiddling with a couple of speakers and picking up a microphone, the sun shimmering off his huge, reflective belt buckle. Then the crooning began. A love song? It sounded like it.

It didn't matter that he had a captive audience. The man still put his everything into

the performance, hitting all of the notes in his register (and a few that weren't). It was a perfectly fun, quirky moment—and one you'll only encounter if you venture out from your resort to explore Mexico.

I was on my way from Cancún to Isla Mujeres on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, which beckons those seeking a little warmth from across northern climes every winter. Many will arrive at the beach and just stay there. There's nothing wrong with just soaking up the sun and maybe a few margaritas for a week or two. But those who look just a little further beyond that in the Riviera Maya will be rewarded with local charm, ancient wonders, and some very good food.

Take Isla Mujeres for example. The place is by no means a secret destination, but the feel is entirely different from Cancún. Literally meaning "island of women," it's long and thin, stretching about four miles and separating the



Cancún International Airport welcomes frequent, nonstop flights from major U.S. hubs.



(Above) Floating in a cenote in Tulum. (Middle) A Cancún beach during sunset. (Right) Pyramid of the Magician in Uxmal, in Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico.

FROM TOP: L. GERSON/REPREZA/UNSPASH, THE EPOCH TIMES, ROBERTO NICKSON/UNSPASH, JONATHAN ROSS/GETTY IMAGES, DANIELOZ/SHUTTERSTOCK

Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico about eight miles off the mainland coast. The primary mode of transportation on the island is golf carts. The feel is bohemian, people lunching on tamales and burritos at little beach bars shaded under thatched palapas, then sprawling on loungers or in hammocks nearby.

I walked around the northern tip of the island for a couple of hours, following the bathing-suit-clad throngs of people and the smell of coconut shrimp to the beach. After digging my toes into the sand, I doubled back through the main town. There, a pedestrian shopping street was much quieter, lined with shops, food stalls, and sidewalk cafes. I popped into a few stores, then enjoyed a cool drink, people-watching for a little while.

Not far from the resorts, you'll find ancient wonders as well. Once, the Yucatán was the heart of the sophisticated Maya civilization. The first Maya cities date back to 750 B.C., which became city-states with a complex trading network starting at about A.D. 250. The kingdom lasted until the 17th century. The ruins left behind by thousand-year-old cities are impressive, with towering pyramids and observatories that demonstrate advanced knowledge of the cosmos. The Maya still inhabit this part of Mexico, and their cultural legacy remains part of the day-to-day fabric of the region.

Spanish colonizers named Isla Mujeres for the many images of Maya goddesses that they found there, and the remains of a small temple still sit on the southern end of the island. From Cancún, a popular day trip takes travelers to Chichen Itza, which became one of the largest

Maya cities between A.D. 600 and A.D. 1200. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it blends architectural styles, and you can tour it from the iconic El Castillo to the House of Eagles, Jaguar Temple, and the Great Ball Court, where teams played a traditional game known as pok-a-tok. It wasn't a casual affair played on a Saturday afternoon, but more of a battle—the losing team was usually killed.

Or you could head south to Tulum, where the Maya ruins sit right next to the Caribbean. One of the last cities in the kingdom, its height and influence lasted into the 15th century.

Riding about two hours south of Cancún in a taxi along a fast highway, I found Tulum to be a sort of boomtown. The modern city that's grown up next to the archaeological site is vibrant, dynamic, and very tropical, feeling like the entire place just sprung up in the jungle a few years ago. It was still a sleepy beach town until the 1990s. Today, it's home to more than 45,000 people.

With only a couple of days in town, my schedule was busy. I chomped gourmet burritos and browsed big tequila stores in the heart of town, toured the beach bars and restaurants all along the coast, and made plans to swim in the nearby freshwater lagoons and cenotes (the latter are natural sinkholes in the limestone that dot the Yucatán, filled with cold, clear water). And I ran out of town—there was just too much to do. Leaving town, I placed in my pocket a list of things I needed to do, see, and eat when I return. Soon. ■

Tim Johnson is based in Toronto. He has visited 140 countries across all seven continents.

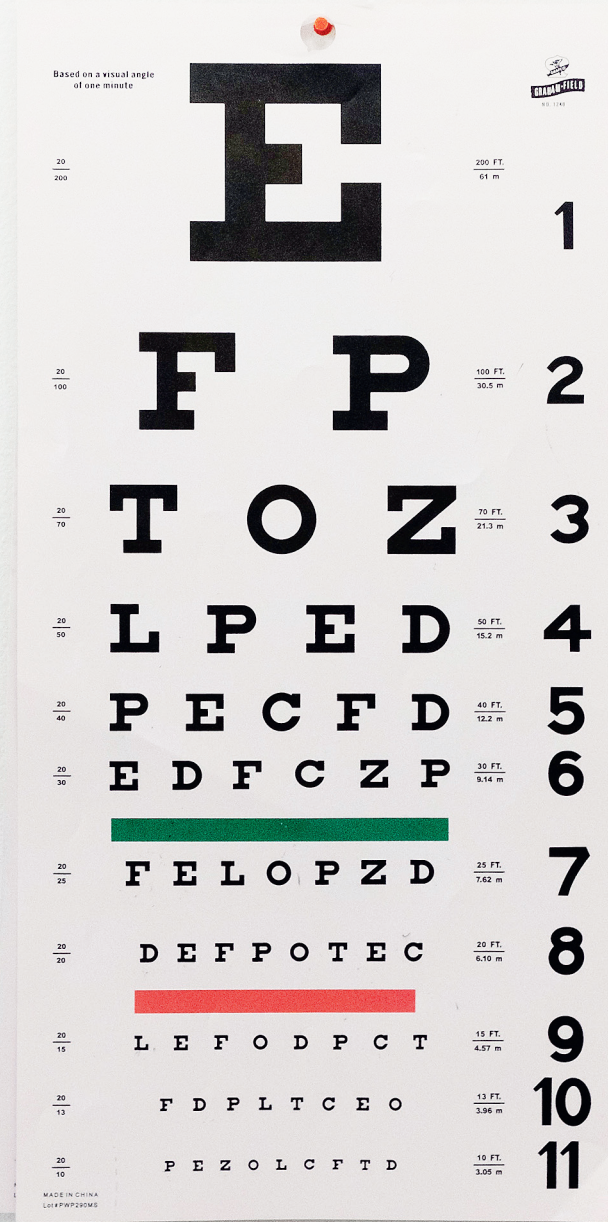
The first Mayan cities date back to **750 B.C.**

If You Go

Getting Around: Within towns and cities, taxis will take you anywhere, including up and down the coast, for the right price.

Stay: In Cancún and further down the coast near Playa del Carmen, two Hard Rock Hotel resorts provide a high-end, all-inclusive experience with a bit more rhythm. Live shows reprise the sounds of rock royalty, music is always playing throughout the property, and, for some room categories, "personal assistants" will help you organize your days, whether they're spent on or off the resort.

BRING LIFE INTO SHARP FOCUS



Perfect vision used to be dictated by your genes, but now anyone can enjoy crisp, glasses-free sight.

If age or genetics have blurred your vision, consider these corrective options

By Bill Lindsey

OUR ABILITY TO OBSERVE THE world around us is surely one of our most valuable natural abilities. Because not everyone enjoys clear vision from birth, great efforts have been undertaken to improve vision, most recently in the area of surgical options.

But let's first take a look at how we got to this point.

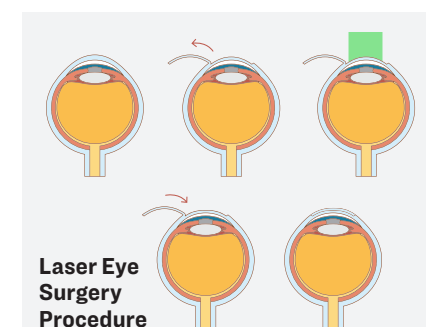
The Romans are credited with the development of the magnifying glass, and in the 13th century, the first eyeglasses were created by Italian craftsmen by setting lenses into a frame that could be perched on the bridge of the wearer's nose or held in front of their face. Said to initially be widely used by monks, examples can be seen as accessories in some early Renaissance paintings of scholars who saw them as a mark of intellect and prosperity.

AN IMPORTANT STEP in the quest for improved vision occurred in the late 1700s, when a British instrument maker named Benjamin Martin created reading glasses called "Martin's margins," which featured a metal frame held in place by hoops that went over the wearer's ears.

In 1784, eyeglasses took a quantum leap when Benjamin Franklin invented bifocal eyeglasses. Franklin described his invention as "serving for distant objects as well as near ones, making my eyes as useful to me as they ever were."

Contact lenses are often considered to be a relatively recent development, but it was in 1508 that Leonardo da Vinci illustrated the contact lens. In 1887, the first contact lens, made of glass, was crafted, but plastic versions didn't appear until 1948.

LEFT PAGE: UNSPLASH; RIGHT PAGE FROM TOP: BLOERN WYLEZICH/SHUTTERSTOCK; KOVALCHUK OLEKSANDR/SHUTTERSTOCK; MARTIN BERGSMAN/SHUTTERSTOCK; MARINA_UA/SHUTTERSTOCK



A huge leap in vision correction via surgical procedures took place in 1974—by accident.

A huge improvement in vision correction via surgical procedures took place in 1974—by accident. Svyatoslav Nikolay Fyodorov, a Russian eye surgeon who had implanted the world's first artificial crystalline lens and was a pioneer in the treatment of glaucoma, was treating a young boy who, due to an accident, had shards of glass in his eye. Fyodorov removed the shards by using a scalpel to shave off a sliver of the damaged cornea.

During the recovery period, the boy, who was severely nearsighted prior to the surgery, reported significant improvement to his vision. Fyodorov realized that by reshaping the cornea, vision improvement was possible, thus leading to the creation of the radial keratotomy (RK) process of vision correction. Fyodorov went on to take a ship around the world to provide RK treatments to as many people as possible.

On a related note, in 1948, a Spanish ophthalmologist named José Barraquer Moner created a treatment in which slivers of the cornea were removed to improve vision. Moner went from using a scalpel to a device called a microkeratome, a surgical instrument utilizing an oscillating blade, designed specifically to create the corneal flap required in laser eye surgery.

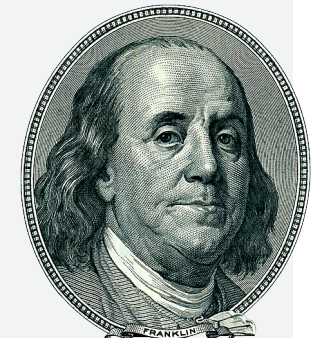
IN 1989, THIS SURGICAL PROCESS was further improved by utilizing a laser instead of a blade. Laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis, better known as LASIK, received Food and Drug Administration approval in 1999. Since then, more than 10 million people diagnosed with nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism have had the treatment.

There are currently three surgical procedures that utilize lasers for vision improvement. The original process

The Romans are credited with creating the first versions of what are now magnifying glasses as the original vision correction system.



Benjamin Franklin was a prolific inventor; his bifocal glasses are still in wide use.



British instrument maker Benjamin Martin invented what has become the standard design for eyeglasses with his Martin's Margins.





Annual eye exams are recommended in order to maintain eye health and determine if any type of correction is required.

is photorefractive keratectomy (PRK), in which the surgeon uses a scalpel or laser to completely remove the epithelium, the outer layer of the cornea, before using a laser to reshape the cornea. The surgeon then fits a nonprescription contact lens to keep the treated area clean. Recovery time is typically one to two months, with some eye pain and eye dryness afterward not uncommon.

PRK HAS LARGELY been replaced by LASIK, which has become the most widely used process. In LASIK, many surgeons rely on extremely sophisticated, robotic systems in which no needles or scalpels are required to make corneal corrections.

One such surgeon is Dr. Corey Lessner of Millennium Laser Eye Centers in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Lessner starts by mapping each eye to determine the required adjustment. In the first of two steps, after numbing anesthetic eye drops have been administered, an extremely precise femtosecond laser is used to create a flap on the eye's surface. In the second step, an excimer laser sculpts the cornea to allow improved vision.

During the process, the patient reclines in a comfortable seat; the entire surgical procedure takes about 15 minutes to make corrections in both

eyes, with immediate results and a recovery time measured in hours, often with no discomfort.


In the interest of full transparency, I underwent this procedure 10 years ago, entering severely nearsighted, and enjoying 20/20 vision 15 minutes later.

The third, and most recently available surgical option is called small incision lenticule extraction (SMILE), in which, rather than LASIK's two lasers, only one is needed to make a very small incision in the cornea and then do the actual reshaping. The process requires about 30 seconds per eye, with a recovery time similar to that of LASIK. But SMILE can only be used to correct nearsightedness.

Seeing clearly has never been so approachable. ■

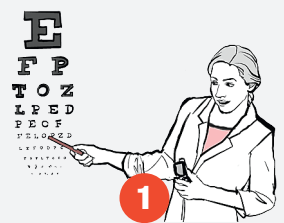


Lasers allow fast, precise, "no-scalpel" vision correction surgery.



LIFESTYLE
20/20
HINDSIGHT


Smell—and see—the roses



1

See the Difference


By undergoing a surgery that requires about 1.5 minutes at most, you may be able to eliminate the need for glasses or contact lenses, achieving 20/20 vision.



2

Toss the Reading Glasses

In some cases, surgeons can provide monovision, in which one eye is adjusted for distance and the other for close-up viewing, eliminating the need for reading glasses.



3

Protect Your Peepers

To keep foreign objects at bay, always wear protective glasses.

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: SERHIL BORYK/SHUTTERSTOCK; ROMAN ZAIETS/SHUTTERSTOCK

NO-GAS-NEEDED BOATS

Canoes and kayaks have been around for hundreds of years, but this collection shows they are still a nice way to have fun and get exercise in the fresh air

By Bill Lindsey



The Clear Choice
CRYSTAL BOARD STAND-UP PADDLEBOARD
\$2,199

Stand-up paddleboards combine an unobstructed view with a great upper-body workout, but this one takes it a step further by providing a view of what's below the surface. Weighing just 42 pounds and made of 100 percent crystal-clear, 6 millimeter-thick Lexan, it can support up to 240 pounds.



Surf's Up!
OCEAN KAYAK CAPER
\$779.99

Even if you've never surfed, this sit-on-top kayak makes catching an ocean wave easy. Instead of standing and balancing, just paddle as the wave passes underneath you to find yourself zooming along, inches above the rushing water, in complete control. It's also a good choice for exploring lakes and rivers.



Ready for Adventure
STELLAR 16' (S16 G2) TOURING KAYAK
\$3,395

This sleek craft is perfect for waterway expeditions. The cockpit is designed for easy paddling during long-range voyages, while an 18.5-gallon forward storage bin and 27.7-gallon aft bin hold camping gear. A third storage bin in front of the cockpit can hold a VHF radio, cellphone, GPS, and snacks.



Traditional Transportation
SANBORN CANOE CO. OSPREY
\$3,050

It isn't hard to fall in love with this little lake yacht. The old-school design uses high-tech Kevlar and fiberglass with a protective gelcoat finish, with traditional cherry ribs and caned seats. The 48-pound, 13-foot-long canoe can hold up to 600 pounds of passengers and gear for picnics or overnight camping trips.



Pedal Power
OLD TOWN SPORTSMAN BIGWATER PDL 132 PEDAL KAYAK
\$2999.99

Leave the paddle at home—this unique fishing and adventure machine uses leg power to move across the water. Perched in the super comfortable seat, with your feet on pedals powering the propeller, you'll have your hands free to fish or take photos. The 13-foot-long hull is so stable you can even stand up to reel in a fish.

RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we look at exotic journals from the female "Lawrence of Arabia," and a history of early U.S. Navy heroes and their inspiring dedication.

FICTION



'PERCY ST.-JOHN AND THE CHRONICLE OF SECRETS'
By E.A. Allen

A Fun Mystical Thriller

Fate brings Percy to an old monastery in Switzerland. His gifts as a thief, however, result in an unforeseen adventure against a great source of power found in an ancient book. Joined by a young monk and a French girl, Percy leads the way to uncover a mystery.

HISTRIA BOOKS, 2021,
212 PAGES



'A FATAL BOOKING'
By Victoria Gilbert

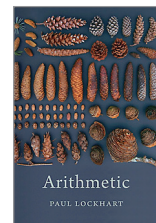
A Mystery in a Literary B&B

In this third novel in the "Booklover's B&B Mystery" series, Charlotte Reed, the owner of Chapters Bed and Breakfast on the Carolina coast, discovers a guest, disliked by all who knew her, murdered

in the garden. Soon she joins forces with her friend Ellen Montgomery to track down the killer. As they rummage through the lives of the suspects present that day, however, they discover that each has the motive and means for committing the crime. A delightful escape into intrigue and a vicarious trip to the beach.

CROOKED LANE BOOKS, 2022,
304 PAGES

MATHEMATICS



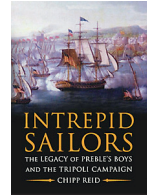
'ARITHMETIC'
By Paul Lockhart

It Adds Up to a Fun Read

Math is hard, right? Most people master arithmetic by grade school. It's so familiar to us that we view it as mundane. Lockhart, though, shows that there's more to arithmetic than meets the eye. The author goes beyond arithmetic as rote calculation of numbers and sees it as a way to organize and manipulate information. He explains the inner machinery of arithmetic, through the ages and by different cultures, in entertaining and simple language that actually makes understanding arithmetic fun.

BELKNAP PRESS, 2017,
240 PAGES

HISTORY



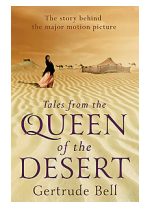
'INTREPID SAILORS'
By Chipp Reid

Preble's Boys in Action

This book explores the U.S. Navy during the First Barbary War in the Mediterranean from 1801 to 1805. Commodore Edward Preble commanded Navy forces during the most dramatic period of the war, from 1803 to 1804. Relying on primary sources, Reid shows the war through the eyes and words of the squadron's junior officers, men whose dedication and professionalism made them heroes in their day and have continued to inspire the Navy ever since.

NAVAL INSTITUTE PRESS,
2012, 320 PAGES

TRAVEL WRITING



'TALES FROM THE QUEEN OF THE DESERT'
By Gertrude Bell

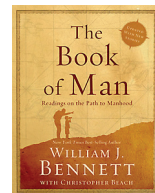
Wandering the Arabian Desert

Gertrude Bell has been called "the female Lawrence of Arabia." In

1892, a visit to her uncle in Persia created a lifelong fascination with the Middle East. Well ahead of her time, Bell traveled, explored, and wrote extensively about this region. Her diaries and journals give us a glimpse into her extraordinary world and time.

HESPERUS CLASSICS, 2015,
304 PAGES

CLASSICS



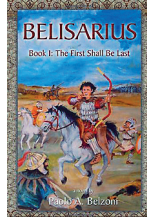
'THE BOOK OF MAN'
By William J. Bennett

Readings on the Path to Manhood

This hefty collection of articles about the meaning of manhood presents moderns such as Winston Churchill, James Baldwin, and Audie Murphy, but the majority of the entries give us men from the time of Theodore Roosevelt back to the ancient Greeks. Plato, Plutarch, Lord Acton, Noah Webster, and Davy Crockett are only a few of the historical figures who share with us, either by word or deed, the ideals of manliness. Here's a great book to enjoy on its own behalf or as a springboard to writers and heroes we may have missed.

THOMAS NELSON PUBLISHERS,
2013, 608 PAGES

FOR KIDS

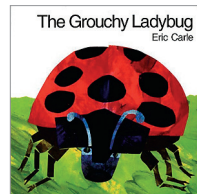


'BELISARIUS'
By Paolo Belzoni

The Last of the Romans

This sixth-century Byzantine commander won renown as one of the greatest generals of all time. Along with its war tales, this novel recreates the religious strife and political intrigues of the Eastern Roman Empire. Grades 8 and higher.

ARX PUBLICATIONS, 2006,
248 PAGES



'THE GROUCHY LADYBUG'
By Eric Carle

A Lesson Learned by a Bad-Tempered Ladybug

Eric Carle's recognizable illustrations bring to life the tale of a ladybug with a bad attitude. The concepts of time, shape, size, and character are scattered throughout as the ladybug exhausts itself before learning its lesson.

HARPERFESTIVAL, 1999,
44 PAGES



Ian Kane
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author.
He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

MOVIE REVIEWS

This week, we feature one of the funniest romantic comedies ever, and a classic in which a ballerina must decide between her art and love.

NEW RELEASE



'Fall' (2022)

Becky (Grace Caroline Currey) and Hunter (Virginia Gardner) are good friends who enjoy the challenge of rock climbing. To help Becky overcome a rock-climbing tragedy, the pair embark on the most extreme challenge yet. They scale a 2,000-foot-tall abandoned radio tower but soon find themselves stranded.

While the photography gives a real sense of being trapped at a dreadful height, the rapid-fire valley girl dialect makes much of the film's dialogue unintelligible. For a thrill, however, it offers decent summer entertainment.

THRILLER

Release Date:
Aug. 12, 2022

Director:
Scott Mann

Starring:
Grace Caroline Currey,
Virginia Gardner,
Jeffrey Dean Morgan

Running Time:
1 hour, 47 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG-13

Where to Watch:
Theaters

★★★★★

A MASTERPIECE OF FILMMAKING



'The Red Shoes' (1948)

When an up-and-coming ballerina begins to fall for a young composer, she must choose to

dedicate herself to either her craft or a chance for romance.

Although this film focuses on the lives of a ballerina, a composer, and a genius who manipulates both of

them, the sumptuous photography, score, and brilliant acting elevates this romantic drama far beyond a mere soap opera.

DRAMA | MUSIC | ROMANCE

Release Date:
Oct. 22, 1948

Directors:
Michael Powell,
Emmerich Pressburger

Starring:
Moira Shearer, Anton
Walbrook, Marius Goring

Running Time:
2 hours, 15 minutes

Not rated

Where to Watch:
HBO Max, Kanopy

★★★★★

FAMILY PICK

'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone' (2001)



In this first adaptation of J.K. Rowling's immensely popular novels, a young orphan named Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe) discovers that he has unique magical powers. At an English boarding school called Hogwarts, he befriends several other young would-be wizards who help him to discover his past.

Without spoiling the story, I'll say that director Chris Columbus churns out a powerful combination of rivet-

ing drama, creativity, and suspense that will leave a lasting impression upon audiences. It's a must-see film for all ages.

ADVENTURE | FAMILY | FANTASY

Release Date:
Nov. 16, 2001

Director:
Chris Columbus

Starring:
Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint,
Richard Harris

Running Time:
2 hours, 32 minutes

MPAA Rating: PG

Where to Watch:
Redbox, Vudu, HBO Max

★★★★★

ONE OF THE BEST ROMANTIC COMEDIES

'When Harry Met Sally ...' (1989)



College graduates Harry Burns (Billy Crystal) and Sally Albright (Meg Ryan) share a ride from Chicago to New York and discuss whether men and women can be strictly platonic friends. A decade later, they meet again in a bookstore and their friendship grows. Then sparks fly.

If you're a fan of romantic comedies, you should see this Nora Ephron-Rob Reiner project. Even if you're not, this superb come-

dy has great direction, acting, and believable chemistry between its co-stars, as well as a fantastic score.

COMEDY | DRAMA | ROMANCE

Release Date:
July 21, 1989

Director:
Rob Reiner

Starring:
Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan,
Carrie Fisher

Running Time:
1 hour, 35 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
Redbox, DirecTV, Vudu

★★★★★

YOU, TOO, CAN BREW: HOW TO GET STARTED ON YOUR HOMEBREWING JOURNEY

When it comes to brewing your own beer, it's easy to start—the hard part is stopping. Will you be the next breakout craft brewer?

By Kevin Revolinski

I'VE WRITTEN BREWERY TRAVEL guidebooks to Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, featuring every brewery in each state, and the origin stories of these brewing superheroes were almost always “a hobby gone out of control.”

Here's generally how the story goes: It starts on the kitchen stove, then moves to the garage and a turkey-fryer burner, usually at the behest of an annoyed housemate or spouse (who likely purchased the starter brew-kit as a Christmas gift).

Let this be a warning if you choose to accept this mission.

Join the Club

Find a homebrewers' club near you. Having support from fellow hobbyists increases the fun, and you may end up exchanging final products with new friends.

Consult your local homebrew supply store for equipment, or find a not-so-local store that ships. A popular one is Northern Brewer.

When the lockdown came in 2020, retired Wisconsinite Dean Danner needed something to do. He'd talked for a long time about homebrewing, and so his son got him a 2-gallon BrewDemon craft beer brewing kit. His first brew was the Arizona-based Demon Brewing Co.'s Prophecy Ale.

“I was actually surprised how good it was,” Danner said.

The process is straightforward: Boil water, add the malt extract (this mixture is called the wort), move it all to the fermenter, and add the yeast. Follow with seven days in the airtight fermenter, then conditioning in bottles for at least seven more days.

After an initial kit investment of about \$95, each new batch costs \$20 to \$30 and produces 2 gallons, the equivalent of about 21 standard cans of beer.

This is stage one of the out-of-control part. You can change malt extracts for actual grain and grind your own using

You can be downing a glass of ice cold, homebrewed beer in as little as two weeks.



Look for a homebrew starter kit from your local supply store, or a supplier that ships, such as BrewDemon.



Start with basic stovetop brewing; when you start buying multi-barrel tanks, it's time to move out of the kitchen.



There's a certain satisfaction in brewing your own beer at home.



a portable grain mill that sits atop a 5-gallon bucket. Upgrade by using a glass carboy instead of plastic, larger vessels, or that turkey-fryer burner out in the backyard for the boil. You can even culture your own yeast.

Learn the Basics

Joe Walts, a professional brewer who works in the lab for Octopi Brewing in Waunakee, Wisconsin, recommends reading “How to Brew: Everything You Need to Know to Brew Great Beer Every Time” by John J. Palmer. The first edition is free on HowToBrew.com.

“It's a great start for broadly understanding the processes of brewing,” Walts said. “My advice would be to focus on one, whatever you find fun, and two, fermentation.”

Certain beers can't be made with extracts, he says, but “you can make equally good beer with extracts, plus steeped bags of specialty grain versus all-grain.”

“But you may want to switch to all-grain at some point because it's fun,” he said.

Temperature control, another important aspect of the process, may incline you to upgrade equipment, but “a used fridge or chest freezer with a temperature controller is as good as anything,” Walts says.

So, aspiring homebrewers, you have options, starting from basic stovetop boiling with malt extracts. But when you start buying stainless steel multi-barrel tanks, you might want to move out of the kitchen.

Don't say you weren't warned. ■

Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan. He's based in Madison, Wis.

COURTESY OF BREWDEMON, UNSPLASH, SHUTTERSTOCK



How to Behave on Ski Vacations

Here's a fast review of snow skiing etiquette as the season draws near

Ski resorts tend to be crowded places in town, in lift lines, and up on the mountain, making it important to be respectful and polite to everyone you interact with, from equipment rental shop techs to the other skiers.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Take It Easy

Be patient if the lift lines are long or the rental shop doesn't have exactly what you want. Take a breath and enjoy the scenery. If it's been a while since you were on skis, take a refresher lesson. Even if your friends insist “You can do this!” resist the temptation to do runs that are beyond your skill level.



4 Respect Boundaries

While there may be times you're tempted to duck under ropes to ski in areas that are off limits, there's a reason those trails are closed. Stick to the open runs; there's no need to test the ski patrol's response time if you get into trouble. Stay far away from areas where lessons are underway. Buzzing past new skiers is rude and could result in a collision. It also could, and should, get you kicked off the mountain.

2 Be Respectful

Be understanding with the locals working in shops, restaurants, and on the mountain; they are there to take care of you, so be respectful and courteous. Don't cut lines, even if a group of friends waves you up—it's rude to the people you pass. Yield to other traffic, looking before you push off. Downhill traffic has the right of way, so don't be a speed bump. Get out of the way if you need to stop for any reason.

3 Be Helpful and Safe

Safety and courtesy go hand in hand on the mountain. Help the new skier ahead of you who's nervous about getting on the lift, offer to adjust another's loose helmet strap, and stop to make sure someone who just crashed is OK. As you make your way down the mountain, maintain a safe distance from other skiers and snowboarders. Not everyone is an expert, so be careful passing slower traffic, and stay far away from anyone who's snowplowing their way down.

5 Pay Attention

Make sure you get on the correct lift. If you're new to skiing and lifts, watch to see how others board the lift and how they get off, as it can be a bit tricky at first. If you make it off the lift unscathed, only to realize you're on a run clearly beyond your skills, get out of the way of traffic and flag down the ski patrol.

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SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

01-04-2021

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THE ATLANTIC

01-13-2021

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