On September 27, the citizens of Chile believed that their way of life would soon return to normal when their government officials lifted the state of emergency that was imposed during the pandemic, according to Reuters. However, France24 explains that the state of emergency was reinstated after less than two weeks. The state of emergency requires all citizens to adhere to stricter measures that includes curfews, quarantines, and a halt on virtually all activities.

This new state of emergency is the government’s response to the ongoing conflict between the Mapuche, an indigenous people in Chile who make up about 1.7 million of the country’s population, and the government of Chile. For more than three decades in the late 1800’s, the Mapuche were victims of conquis- tadors who attempted to conquer them. While the Mapuche survived, they were removed from their native territories and forced to relocate. Since then, the indigenous tribe has lived in great poverty, a direct result of the actions taken by Chilean officials.

While the Mapuche lack adequate opportuni- ties for education, sustainable housing, and clean, running water, Chilean officials and companies specializing in wood extraction from Mapuche land by 40 percent more than the Mapuche people. For over 200 years, the territory of the Mapuche, mainly re- stricted to the Araucanía region, has been home to acts of violence and terror. The Mapuche’s main goal is to reclaim their historic land. The New York Times reports that some of their other ma- jor goals include ending discrimination against their people, who are continuously exploited by the country’s militar- ized police. These forces have been accused of se- vere and inhumane abuse on multiple accounts.

A turning point of this brewing war between the Mapuche and Chil- ean officials can be pinpointed to the seemingly unprompted murder of Camilo Catrillanca by the police in 2018, according to The World Health Or- ganization (WHO). The WHO declared that their way of life would soon return to normal when their government officials lifted the state of emergency that was imposed during the pandemic, according to Reuters. However, France24 explains that the state of emergency was reinstated after less than two weeks. The state of emergency requires all citizens to adhere to stricter measures that includes curfews, quarantines, and a halt on virtually all activities.

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The WHO declared support for the Sinovac Booster

Keshav Agiwal  Staff Writer

The World Health Organization supported two Chinese-produced COVID-19 vaccines earlier this year in response to the increasing need for international vaccine supply. While China has been exporting a significant number of vaccines, with around 1.2 billion being exported last month, the WHO’s decision to rec- ommend third doses for those who received either the Sinopharm or Sinovac vaccines has cast doubts on the efficacy of these Chinese-made vaccines, according to The Washing- ton Post. The WHO previously noted gaps in data on the effective- ness of Sinopharm and Sinovac, mentioning that the organization has low confidence in the efficacy of the vaccine for people who are 60 years or older. These doubts on the efficacy of these Chi- nese-produced vaccines can cause an increased demand for and supply of COVID-19 vaccines. The WHO has recommended third doses for those who received either the Sinopharm or Sinovac vaccines earlier this year in response to the increasing need for international vaccine supply.

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BRITISH MP SIR DAVID AMESS KILLED IN STABBING ATTACK

Andrea Hebel
Associate Editor

For the second time in just five years, a British politician has died after an attack while meeting with constituents. The New York Times reports that on October 15, long-standing conservative Member of Parliament (MP) Sir David Amess was fatally stabbed inside of a church during a constituency surgery in Essex. The incident, quickly declared a terror attack by local authorities, has sent shockwaves throughout the UK, raising concerns about the security of lawmakers in an increasingly tense political climate.

BBC News reports that Amess was meeting with community members at his weekly constituency surgery, an open meeting where constituents can discuss their concerns with their MP, at a church in the small village of Leigh-on-Sea when he was killed. Police arrested a 25-year-old man shortly thereafter at the scene, whom Reuters names as Ali Harbi Ali. Ali, a British national, is the son of an ex-media advisor to a former Somali prime minister. It is believed that he acted alone. Sir David, 69, was a 38-year veteran of Parliament who was known for his soft-spoken manner and record of lawmakers aimed at helping the most vulnerable members of his community. Tributes poured in from figures both sides of the political spectrum, expressing shock at his death and commending his dedication to the British people.

In a statement, Prime Minister Boris Johnson referred to Amess as “one of the kindest, nicest, most gentle people in politics.” According to The Times, he was knighted in 2015 for his dedication to public service in the UK. Constituency surgeries are a regular part of British political life, a unique opportunity for voters to get face to face with their lawmakers, increased threats of violence against lawmakers. Amess’s death shed light on the increased vulnerability experienced by UK politicians in the wake of the country’s tense political climate. The Guardian details many of the horrific threats received by MPs both inside and outside of constituency surgeries, from confrontations and abuse of family members to one constituent warning an MP that they knew where her children attended school.

The New York Times continues that while many lawmakers feel strongly about the need to have close contact with their constituents, which are seen by many in Britain as the bedrock of parliamentary society, safety concerns have caused many to tighten security and even move meetings to online or private settings. Concerns about the use of social media, especially in light of COVID-19, have signifi cantly increased British political tensions, causing many to tighten security and even move meetings to online or private settings. Concerns about the use of social media, especially in light of COVID-19, have signifi cantly increased British political tensions, causing many to tighten security and even move meetings to online or private settings.

In his memoir, published last year, Amess remarked at how the murder of Jo Cox changed his career. He was appalled by what he called the “toxic environment” in politics, The Telegraph explains. He noted that he routinely experienced “menace” from constituents showing up at his home throughout his tenure, leading him to regularly check his locks for the safety of him and his family. Though he detailed how security had increased and changed the nature of constituent surgeries during his time in parliament, he acknowledged the element of risk that still came with every meeting.

“We all make ourselves readily available to our constituents and are often dealing with members of the public who have mental health problems,” Amess wrote. “It could happen to any of us.”

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Tigray Conflict Escalates Amid New Offensive and Famine Warnings

Jarrett Dang
Editor-in-Chief

Ethiopian troops have launched a new offensive to regain control of the restive Tigray region from ethnic separatists. According to The New York Times, the October offensive comes as a result of months of planning and has seen the use of airstrikes and foreign-made drones made in China, Iran, and Turkey. Government forces are also escalating the help of anti-Tigrayan militias, although troops from neighboring Eritrea are currently uninvolved.

According to the Associated Press, Tigrayan separatists hit the Tigrayan regional capital as recently as October 22, signaling the renewed intensity of the war amid Western attempts to mediate a settlement. The conflict, which is marked by war crimes including civilian massacres and sexual violence on both sides, has isolated Ethiopia on the world stage and drawn rebukes from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the United States—a key foreign ally. Alienation from the West may drive Ethiopia closer to China and Russia, who have previously invested in Ethiopia and are seen as a blind spot for human rights violations.

Since taking office, the Biden administration has publicly condemned the conflict in Ethiopia and introduced a sanctions regime set to take effect on November 1, if violence continues, says the Brookings Institution. The terms include removing all barriers to delivering humanitarian aid to the region, including food and medical supplies. Despite lobbying from the US and regional bodies like the African Union, neither side of the conflict has engaged in any formal peace negotiations.

The latest fighting marks the central government’s latest attempt to put down the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), the region’s governing authority that effectively declared independence from Ethiopia in September 2020, reports The New York Times.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopia’s leader and winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, has repeatedly defended the war in Tigray, insisting it was sworn in for a second term right before the latest offensive. While the national election was boycotted by numerous political parties, the prime minister’s fresh mandate may cause him to become both more ardent and uncompromising in his fighting.

The Abiy government has repeatedly refused to deal with the TPLF and imposed an effective aid blockade, at one point leaving hundreds of UN aid trucks stuck unable to cross into Tigray and deliver supplies, according to BBC News. The blockade, delays in aid delivery, and the Ethiopian government’s hostility towards outside organizations exacerbate the famine in Tigray. Some experts have even suggested that hunger is being weaponized by the region for an eventual government takeover.

ABC News says that over 900,000 Tigrayans are at risk of starving to death while up to 7 million are in food-insecure situations in the country. The Ethiopian government has done little to address worsening food security and has been quick to clamp down on any dissent. According to an additional Associated Press report, seven UN officials were expelled from the country on September 30 for criticizing the government.

Foreign aid workers operating in the country have fallen under suspicion and have been accused by pro-government supporters of working with the TPLF. Although the current Tigray conflict only began in late 2020, the Ethiopian government’s complex system of “ethno-federalism” made the country particularly vulnerable to ethnic conflict.

Under the current constitution, each of Ethiopia’s regions is defined by ethnicity and a great deal of power is held by the central government, according to BBC News. The TPLF, representing Tigrayans who make up just 6 percent of Ethiopia’s population, was one of the leading members of the political coalition that ruled the country from 1991 to 2018 under an authoritarian one-party state. Following Abiy’s election in 2018, the party entered the opposition and rallied against the prime minister’s reforms meant to redistribute power away from the TPLF.

The latest developments in the Tigray conflict all but confirm the unwillingness of either side to engage in dialogue despite external pressure and a looming humanitarian disaster. Martin Griffiths, the UN’s top humanitarian affairs official, said in an interview with the Associated Press that the worsening food situation in Tigray could become a “tipping point for a famine” in Ethiopia in the 1980s.

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Iraqi Election Yields Historically Low Turnout

Austin Delsontro
Staff Writer

On October 10, Iraq held the sixth parliamentary election since the fall of Saddam Hussein after the United States-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, reports The New York Times. The parliamentary election decides the 329 members of the Council of Representatives who elect Iraq’s president and confirm the prime minister.

Initial results from the parliamentary elections revealed populist Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's party, the Sadrist Bloc, as the biggest winner, according to The Washington Post. The biggest losers would be an alliance of candidates representing Shiite militias supported by the Iranian government, known as the Fatah Alliance. The Sadrist candidates beat out many of Iraq's preferred Fatah Alliance candidates to win the most seats of any party, albeit well short of the 165 seats necessary for a majority.

The Sadrist Bloc gained close to twenty seats, with a plurality of 73 representatives, while the Fatah Alliance lost more than thirty seats, with just 17 representatives. After the election results were announced, supporters of al-Sadr celebrated into the night. In a speech after his party's victory, The Washington Post quotes Moqtada al-Sadr as affirming “today [as] a day of victory” and expressed his desire for Iraqis “to live without occupation, wars, militias, terrorism, kidnappers and fearmongering.”

While the election results are promising for the Sadrist Bloc, they may not be a true indication of the country’s beliefs. Reuters estimates a turnout of just 41 percent in Iraq’s election on Sunday, speculating that this low turnout is a sign of dwindling trust in political leaders and the Iraqi citizenry. Though not as low as election officials had initially feared, the turnout rate is still a record low in the post-Saddam Hussein era. That turnout was even lower than the previous 2018 elections, which set the previous record low with 44 percent.

The Associated Press attributes these historically low voter turnouts to the widespread distrust of the Iraqi government, exacerbated further by the brutal suppression of a series of protests in late 2019 and early 2020. Tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens took to the streets to protest corruption in government, high unemployment, and a lack of efficient public services, but the protests devolved into calls to overthrow the entire government. These protests were met by Iraqi forces and Iranian-backed militias, who used violent suppression methods, including live bullets and tear gas, leading to more than 600 deaths and thousands of injures in just a few months.

Many Iranian-backed parties and armed groups have denounced the early results from Iraq’s election as “manipulation” and a “scam,” reports Al Jazeera. Several parties, including the Fatah Alliance, announced after the election results were reported that they “reject the results” and “will appeal against them.” The Iran-backed Kataib Hezbollah militia group’s spokesperson, Abu Ali al-Askari, described the election as the “biggest fraud and circumvention against the Iraqi people in modern history.” While there has yet to be any evidence of foul play in this election, many Iraqis claim it was a vote that is rigged and lacks transparency. Although the Associated Press notes it is unlikely any of the competing coalitions will be able to secure a clear majority, necessitating a lengthy process involving negotiations to select a consensus prime minister and a new coalition government.

Current Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has played a key role as a mediator in Iraq’s negotiations between regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia. Those in the region and across the globe will be watching to see if al-Kadhimi will secure a second term.

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Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis Loses Election in Surprise Defeat

Christopher Benitez Cuartas
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Czech voters gave Prime Minister Andrej Babiš the shock of his political life on Saturday, October 9 during the country's general election. Babiš and his party, ANO 2011, lost after the two partner parties in his coalition, the Communist and Social Democratic parties, failed to get elected according to the proportional representation system used to elect the lower chambers.

The victor of the night was the Civic Democratic party, led by former education minister Petr Fiala, who is allied with the center-right parties Christian-Democratic Union and TOP 09. However, the election and formation of a new government is set to be the backdrop of a hospitalized president, who cannot inaugurate the negotiations needed to formalize the governing coalition.

Radio Prague reports that President Miloš Zeman was sent to Central Military Hospital in Prague on October 10, the day after the election results were announced. In a broadcast to members of the Senate, announced that the head of state is incapable of performing his duties. Details of Zeman's condition are unknown. This apparent lack of transparency reminds some people of the Communist era, during which state media would report that purged politicians were dead.

President Zeman is known for chain smoking, which has appeared drunk in public on multiple occasions, including for a 2013 ceremony in which he was supposed to inspect the Czech crown jewels, as shown in a video by Canadian network Global News. He is also known for sporting a foreign policy friendly to Russia and China. The Associated Press reports that these allegations resurfaced in August, when Zeman commented on investigations into the actions at an armory in 2014. Zeman commented that the explosion, believed by Czech officials to have involved two Russian spies, may have simply occurred because of human error, leading to protests across the Czech Republic.

Zeman, a close ally of Prime Minister Babiš, was expected by some to let Babiš create a new government and keep himself in power. However, this suspicion was denied when Babiš conceded defeat. In his congratulatory message to Fiala, reports Babiš as saying, “We didn't expect to lose. We accept that,” and calling the results “excellent.” Andrej Babiš was one of the many leaders implicated in the recent Pan-Medora Papers, revealed by the ICJ, which revealed that he bought a $22 million mansion in France through shell companies. According to Radio Prague, Babiš decried the release of the findings as a pre-election smear. Similar investigations are being carried out regarding conflicts of interest with his agricultural goods company, AgroFert, and how he was found to be subsidizing it using state funds, reports Politico.

Some Europeans have referred to Babiš, the leader of an explicitly right-wing movement, as the “Czech Trump” due to his Euroscpticism and harsh reactions to issues such as climate change, reports BBC News. Nonetheless, his two main coalition partners, the Communists and Social Democrats, failed to reach the five percent threshold that would have allowed Babiš to stay in power.

As illogical as this coalition sounds, with two far-left parties teaming up with a far-right government, it is not as simple as it looks. When talking to Radio Prague, Babiš decried the release of the findings as a pre-election smear. Similar investigations are being carried out regarding conflicts of interest with his agricultural goods company, AgroFert, and how he was found to be subsidizing it using state funds, reports Politico.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS
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**PRISON OFFICIALS DESIGNATE NAVALNY AS A “TERRORIST” AND “EXTREMIST”**

Kathryn Natale  
Staff Writer

On October 11, the officials of a Russian prison in Vladimirskaya Oblast, which is located about 60 miles east of Moscow, designated opposition leader Alexei Navalny as a “terrorist” and an “extremist” according to Reuters. He was given these designations after the same commission revoked his previous status as an “escape-risk,” a status which necessitated more medical care and control. Navalny explained the situation through an Instagram post which described how he was summoned before the largest prison commission, held to end this year. The commission voted unanimously in favor of assigning Navalny the new designations and repealing his status as an escape-risk. Navalny said that the “news is good” as it means he will no longer need to check in with the prison every two hours to confirm his location. Navalny had run away. Navalny has “counted” [he said] the phrase ‘Alexei Anatolyevich Navalny, born in 1976, illegally held on the territory of IK-2’ to a video recorder 1669 times in order to complete these check ins, which he says he is “terribly tired of.”

In the post, Navalny said how he was afraid that the new designations would mean he would be forced “to kiss portraits of Putin and learn by heart quotes from Medvedev, but this isn’t needed.” He says “there is now a sign hanging over [his] bunk that [he is] a terrorist.” The change of status also means that Navalny will not require as many guard checks during the night, and those that do occur will not be as stringent.

According to ABC News, former inmates of Vladimirskaya Oblast believe that Navalny would not be subject to physical torture when sent to the prison, which is known for its brutality, because of the international attention paid to his base. Instead, they believed he would be isolated and pressured mentally. If this new designation was intended to increase that pressure, Navalny’s post indicates that it had the opposite effect, with the post about the change maintaining a positive tone throughout.

Navalny was originally sentenced to several years in prison, but these charges were suspended and he was allowed parole. In 2020, he was the victim of a poisoning attack, which he accused President Vladimir Putin of orchestrating. President Putin denied this allegation and said if there was such a description, it would have been done,” according to ABC News. Following the poisoning, Navalny was taken to Germany to recover. After Navalny recovered, he returned to Russia where he was promptly arrested in the airport and sentenced to two and a half years in prison. This is the sentence Navalny is currently serving. Reuters explains that this sentence was commuted from an earlier sentence of three and a half years, as it was determined that his time spent under house arrest would count as time served. These sentences follow from charges of parole violations as a result of Navalny not reporting to prison officials while recovering in Germany, as was required from a previous charge of fraud in 2014 according to CBS News and ABC News.

In late September of this year, another charge was brought against Navalny for creating an “extremist group” alongside various allies. This charge could see him serving an additional sentence of 10 years in prison if he is found guilty, Politico reports. Many of his allies either have left the country, been arrested, or are currently facing house arrest. Navalny and other members of the international community have alleged that these charges and sentences are politically motivated.

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**THE NETHERLANDS BECOMES FIRST COUNTRY TO LEGALIZE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE FOR HEIR-APPARENTS**

Elise Tierney  
Staff Writer

The prime minister of the Netherlands has announced that Dutch royals are now allowed to marry someone of the same sex without having to give up their royal position, reports BBC News. Prince Harry of the British Royal Family, another couple have also been very public about their personal life, either.

Amalia chose a same-sex donor or surrogate would become a new trend of young Russian royals breaking tradition. Meghan Markle and Prince Harry of the British Royal family have come under local protests of their non-traditional actions, most notably leaving the royal family, as BBC News reports. The couple have also been very uncomfortable with the situation. Historically, royal families have not been well-coming to members who were LGBTQ+. Many royalties throughout history have had to hide their sexuality, with many taking their own lives. According to the British Royal family’s attitude towards homosexuality. The wedding also occurred a month after Prince Harry and Meghan Markle’s wedding, another turning point for the British royal family. Though these actions show significant social shifts, Lord Mountbatten was not an heir to the throne, a vastly different scenario to many members of the royal family.

While the Netherlands has made great progress towards acceptance for all LGBTQ+ people, there is still a ways to go. As of April 1, 2021, the 20-year anniversary of the Netherlands legalizing gay marriage, only 28 countries and the self-governing nation of Taiwan have legalized gay marriage, according to The Associated Press. This means that only 15 percent of the world population can legally enter a gay marriage. The Netherlands has continued to pave the way for LGBTQ+ equality. While traditions in royal families around the world have begun to relax, there is still a long way to go on the front of marriage equality.

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**Navalny’s arrest and subsequent punishment have stirred up controversy.**

Courtesy of Liza Pozor (Unsplash)

**The Netherlands has been one of the most progressive places for LGBTQ+ rights.**

Courtesy of 3DVisu (Unsplash)

**Uncomfortable: The new laws in the Netherlands and Amalia’s attitude towards her student allowance shows a new trend of young royals breaking tradition. Meghan Markle and Prince Harry of the British Royal family have come under local protests of their non-traditional actions, most notably leaving the royal family, as BBC News reports. The couple have also been very uncomfortable with the situation.**

At this point in the drafting of the new legal- ization, it is unclear how an adopted child or child conceived with a sperm donor or surrogate would fit into the line of succession, with Rutte calling the situation, “frightfully hypothetical. According to The Guardian, the prime minister told Dutch TV that “We’ll cross that bridge if we ever come to it.”

The initial statement to legalize the royal ability to marry a same-sex partner came as a response to a Dutch political lawyer’s book, Anna Duk-Calls, which came out this past summer. The book raised the question of what would happen if Princess Amalia chose a same-sex partner. The Washington Post reports, however, that Amalia herself has not said anything regarding the matter or her own personal life. The book has also been speculated about Amalia’s personal life, either.

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**Navalny has “counted that Navalny would not be subject to physical torture when sent to the prison, which is known for its brutality, because of the international attention paid to his base. Instead, they believed he would be isolated and pressured mentally.”**

Markle’s wedding, another proof of social change for the British royal family. Though these actions show significant social shifts, Lord Mountbatten was not an heir to the throne, a vastly different scenario to many members of the royal family.

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**Navalny’s post indicates that it had the opposite effect, with the post about the change maintaining a positive tone throughout.**

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October 2021

‘Pandora Papers’ Leak Exposes Corruption among World Leaders

Alejandro Ramirez Staff Writer

On Sunday, reporters affiliated with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) unearthed one of the largest leaks of offshore data ever seen, bringing to the forefront the secret financial schemes of many of the most powerful people in the world. The Guardian reports that the sheer size of the leak, which encompasses more than 2.9TB of data, required a team of over 600 journalists to sift through and organize the myriad of documents. The Guardian and The Washington Post both released a series of articles detailing the different aspects and key revelations of the papers themselves.

The official ICIJ report describes the leak as consisting of a conglomerate of pictures, slides, and emails from 14 offshore services providers and legal consultancies across the world. The report paints a picture of a vast network of companies widely used as offshore tax havens, where limited transparency laws and legal loopholes allow those in the know to park their money and assets while concealing the owners’ true identity. Through networks of shell corporations, trusts, and other offshore services, wealthy individuals have found ways to evade taxation on their earnings and assets, while remaining unlisted in court filings and documentation. The level of privacy afforded by the use of offshore firms can cloak the ties of politicians and other prominent figures to business and financial interests they wish to conceal.

While the use of offshore services is not inherently illegal, the wide use of such schemes by money launderers, drug traffickers, and criminals worldwide has drawn attention to the practice in recent years, as The Guardian adds. A previous leak of documents in 2016, dubbed the Panama Papers, first brought attention to the scope and severity of the issue to the global community. However, this new leak is significantly larger and covers a much wider array of countries and individuals. An additional report from The Guardian reveals that the most significant discovery unearthed by this most recent leak is the widening of the array of foreign dignitaries and current or former heads of state mentioned by name or association, including members of the Jordanian royal family, current Ukrainian vice president Volodymyr Zelenskiy, and several prominent Tory conservatives in the UK.

The involvement of the art world in the leak has also drawn considerable attention. The massive scale and scope of stolen art passed through several hands, in some cases to exhibitions at the largest museums in the world, was discovered in a long form investigative report by The Washington Post. Several of the most valuable artworks of East Asian antiquity, originating from prized Cambodian cultural sites, have been found to have been moved and concealed through a series of offshore trusts and accounts. Notorious art dealer and explorer Douglas Latchford was found to have moved art, alleged by the Cambodian Government to be stolen, with the help of such loopholes. The ICJ reports that several countries, including the United States, have launched investigations into their own laws regulating financial crimes, further adding that lawmakers fear business operations to legal grey areas have abused current legal precedents. New proposed legislation dubbed the Enablers Act would place further requirements on consultancy, law, and property firms, arguably the most egregious facilitators of tax crimes. In the European Union, The Guardian reports that member states passed a non-binding code of conduct that aims to correct current restrictions on business taxation rulings, illustrating a concerted effort by the Union that speaks to the growing dissatisfaction amongst member states. In Singapore, the nation’s highest financial securities agency said in a statement to The Guardian that the leaks and their connection to several Singapore business consultancies would be thoroughly investigated. One such company, Asiaciti, has drawn widespread criticism for their involvement with figures including Pakistani minister Moonis Elahi and several Russian businesspeople. The firm denies wrongdoing regarding the allegations.

Further investigations into information revealed by the leak are likely to continue worldwide.

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ICJ RULES IN FAVOR OF SOMALIA IN MARITIME DISPUTE

Charleigh Stone Staff Writer

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ruled in favor of Somalia in a maritime time dispute case instituted against Kenya over the delimitation of maritime spaces claimed by both states in the Indian Ocean. The judgement, which is binding and without appeal, was unanimous in its finding that there is no agreed maritime boundary between the two states, according to an ICJ press release.

The dispute, which was filed on August 28, 2014, was brought to the ICJ by Somalia to determine the maritime boundary dividing areas between itself and Kenya, which are adjacent states on the coast of East Africa. According to the official ICJ judgement, Somalia argued for an unadjusted equidistant line through all maritime areas, while Kenya contended that the maritime boundary was already agreed, with Somalia acquiescing to a boundary following parallel of latitude. The disputed area, a 38,000 square mile triangle in the Indian Ocean, has been at the heart of diplomatic tensions between Kenya and Somalia because it is thought to be rich in oil and gas. While the ICJ’s border ruling split the disputed area almost equally between the two states, the new boundary was closest to a line proposed by Somalia. Somalia has subsequently been given several offshore oil blocks claimed by Kenya, reports Reuters.

Kenya has not only rejected the ruling “in total,” but also accused the ICJ of bias, according to The Guardian. The resultant strain on Kenya-Somali relations has several economic and security implications, particularly in the fight against terrorist networks, according to The Washington Post. For Somalia in particular, Kenya has been a major contributor of troops to its fight against the Somalia-based al-Shabab terrorist group, which regularly carries out attacks within Somalia and against its neighbors. Tensions are further complicated by the lack of enforcement mechanisms over the ICJ’s “jurisdictional overreach” and implications for the respect of sovereignty and consent of states to the international judicial process. Kenya withdrew its recognition of the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ on September 24, Al Jazeera reports that the Court addressed Kenya’s claims, stating there is no legal ground to reject the judgment because it cannot retroactively revive the Court’s authority to which it is a party in the World War II.

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Drew Starbuck  
Staff Writer

Taiwan’s defense minister, former Taiwanese general Chiu Kuo-chen, made headlines recently when he stood before the Legislative Yuan and predicted that China would launch a full-scale invasion of Taiwan by 2025. According to ABC News, the Chinese government in the past few weeks has sent more than 150 military aircraft to fly through Taiwan’s air defense zone in an apparent show of flash- 
dation. China’s People’s Liberation Army—the largest army in the world manpower-wise—oversees large amphibious land- 
drills within Chinese territory next to the Tai- 
wan Strait. The population of Taiwan is unan- 
considered about the threat of Chinese invasion, but the growing tension with 
their neighbors has grown much clearer, reports 
CNN. Historically, Taiwan and China have a com- 
plex history together that started with the Chinese Civil War, which drove the Chinese nationalists led by the Kuomintang (KMT) into exile on the island of Taiwan. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the People’s Re- public of China views the island of Taiwan as a rene- 
gade province and vows to eventually “unify” Taiwan with the mainland, accord- 
ing to the “One China” principle. This principle is based upon the notion that the PRC is the only government of China and that eventually, the people of Taiwan will unify their government with the mainland. The PRC also repeat- 
ed this system of govern- 
ance in Hong Kong, and a crackdown on dem- 
ocratic opposition there has strengthened the in- 
ternational community’s support for Taiwan, BBC reports. As the Council on Foreign Relations states, 
this understanding comes from the 1992 Consensus 

Hamzah Khan  
Staff Writer

The Israeli-Palestin- 
ian conflict made recent headlines in May after Israeli forces launched devastating airstrikes on Gaza. This latest Gaza war was sparked after Israeli Defense Forces raided one of the hol- 
est sites in Islam, the Al Aqsa Mosque, during the holy month of Ramadan. Israeli forces dispersed worshipers with tear gas, hang and rubber bullets, 
wounding nearly 300 people, reports The Guard- 
ian. Israeli settlers were also subsequently in the process of evicting Pal- 
estinian residents from a neighborhood in East Jerusalem called Sheikh Jarrah, which received international attention. Palestinian militants of Hamas subsequently launched thousands of rockets into Israel, kill- 
ing 12 people including two children. The Israe- 
li military responded by launching airstrikes on 
Gaza, leveling residen- 
tial buildings, and killing nearly 260 people includ- 
ing 66 children, says Hu- 
man Rights Watch. The International Criminal Court announced earlier this year that it would in- 
vestigate war crimes commis- 
sed by both the Israeli 
and Palestinian 
people. The neighboring Arab coun- 
tries rejected this plan and attacked. The Jewish state was able to defeat the Arab armies and the State of Israel was estab- 
lished in 1948 as a nation- 
al homeland for the Jewish people. Palestinians refer to this war as “the Nakba” or catastrophe, 
challenging the 750,000 Pal- 
lestine refugees who were 
exiled from their homes in 1948. The 1967 War, decades later, resulted in Israeli 
and China that the ruling party of 
Taiwan at the time, and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). However, neither side 
properly accepted this agreement and never addressed the proper legal 
status of Taiwan. The United States rec- 
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knowledge the “One Chi- 
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Taiwan, with focused U.S. Air Force war games on defense against a poten- 
tial Chinese invasion of Taiwan, reports Defense News. President Biden has also expressed his support for Taiwan and engaged in a series of policy changes designed to compete with China in the Indo-Pacific 
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Israel and Palestine

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Vietnam Normalizes Relations with Israel

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Israeltainment: A New Trend in Israel-Palestine Relations

With the rise of social media and online platforms, a new trend has emerged in the Middle East: the fusion of entertainment and politics. In Israel and Palestine, this phenomenon is known as “Israeltainment,” a term that combines “Israel” and “entertainment.”

One of the most prominent figures in Israeltainment is B’Tselem, an Israeli NGO that documents human rights abuses in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. B’Tselem’s work has gained international attention and has been used as evidence in international courts.

In recent years, the organization has expanded its reach beyond traditional news media. B’Tselem has collaborated with YouTube creators to produce viral videos that highlight human rights issues in the region. These videos often feature interviews with local experts and footage from B’Tselem investigations.

In addition to YouTube, B’Tselem has also begun to use online platforms to engage with the public. The organization has launched social media campaigns to raise awareness about human rights abuses and to encourage civil society organizations to hold the Israeli government accountable.

One example of Israeltainment is the viral video “Israel’s War Crimes,” which was released in 2018. The video, which features footage from B’Tselem investigations, has been viewed millions of times and has sparked a global conversation about human rights in the region.

The rise of Israeltainment highlights the role of social media in shaping public opinion and driving political change. As platforms like YouTube continue to grow in popularity, it is likely that Israeltainment will become an even more significant force in the Middle East.

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Russia and Ukraine

Sergei Valenzuela Staff Writer

Tensions are mounting on the Korean Peninsula as North and South Korea find each other in an arms race. As a frozen conflict with its origins in the Korean war—which has not yet formally ended—both sides are attempting to resume talks while balancing strategic interests in the region. In 2018, both Koreas began re-establishing frozen dialogue, trimming the risk of nuclear standoff, and keeping regional peace. Over the last decade, both North and South Korea have made improvements to their military apparatus, including nuclear weapons in the North. An arms race has the potential to disrupt the peace on the peninsula and create an adversarial economic environment for both countries’ allies such as the United States and China.

North Korea has a history of hostility toward the South and the United States. The Council on Foreign Relations notes that North Korea has developed an intercontinental ballistic missile that has the power to strike Seoul and Washington. In November 2017, the North conducted the first test of its largest ICBM yet, the Hwasong-15. As a response to the growing threat, the United States installed the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system in South Korea’s Seongju region.

According to Reuters, South Korea also has powerful weapons of its own. Last year, South Korea’s defense ministry announced that it will develop its strongest, long-range missiles to exercise deterrence and achieve security and peace on the Korean Peninsula. While both Koreas have made tremendous advancements in arms, South Korea believes it is maintaining its alliance with China and the Communist Party. According to Reuters, South Korea is becoming more aligned with China and believes its advances are key to its strategic position.

Peace and security in the Korean Peninsula are heavily shaped by recent history and the geopolitical landscape. China, which is striving to become the hegemon of the Indo-Pacific region, South Korea’s political alliance with the United States serves as a buffer to Chinese influence over both Koreas. Meanwhile, China has become a key partner of both Koreas, which puts pressure on South Korea to choose between economic relations or security. According to Deutsche Welle, analysts believe Beijing is pressuring South Korea to bring a trilateral U.S.-China agreement into being.

South Korea’s main concerns are to establish a collaborative dialogue with North Korea and work towards formally ending the Korean war and defusing tensions surrounding both nations’ development of deadly weapons that could spark another conflict on the peninsula. Yonhap News reports that both Koreas have recently resumed diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict.

The future of Ukraine remains uncertain. The recent completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline threatens the billion-dollar gas transport industry in Ukraine, according to Bloomberg. The effects this could have on the conflict are unclear, but Ukrainian efforts to decrease reliance on Russian gas will help mitigate any leverage Moscow hoped to gain. Nonetheless, an economically weakened Ukraine, combined with the damaged prestige of the U.S. following the Afghanistan withdrawal, presents an opportunity for Moscow. The U.S. and Europe must be careful to keep an eye on Ukraine, lest the conflict unfreeze.

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Eric Bunce Staff Writer

Seven years ago, Russia annexed Crimea in southeastern Ukraine, sparking the largest security crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War. Today, this conflict continues to simmer, with over 10,000 killed and 24,000 injured, according to the Council on Foreign Relations. Eastern Europe is no stranger to uncertainty, but the situation in Ukraine presents a serious obstacle to peace in the region and has left the country in a precarious state of limbo.

In recent years, there have been numerous deadly skirmishes in eastern Ukraine. As noted by the New York Times, France and Germany brokered the Minsk Peace Accords to end the conflict, with some warning that both countries’ militaries could fight. Afterward, tensions cooled as saber-rattling. Fortunately, Australia and South Korea have not yet formally ended the Korean war—which has not yet formally ended. To keep the arms race from escalating, the United States serves as a buffer to Chinese influence over the region and has left the country in a precarious state of limbo.

The conflict on the peninsula raises the question of Russia’s unclear motives. Some point out its desire to keep NATO at an arm’s length. As argued by the Atlantic Council, the threat of closer Ukrainian ties with NATO and the EU would realize Russian fears of being encircled by U.S. allies. By maintaining this dispute with Ukraine, Russia complicates any effort for them to join NATO. Voice of America notes that another motivation could be the large transcontinental pipeline that will be able to carry 3-ton warheads, reports Yonhap News. South Korea’s defense ministry said, “We will develop stronger, long-range missiles to exercise deterrence and achieve security and peace on the Korean Peninsula.” While both Koreas have made tremendous advancements in arms, analysts believe Beijing is pressuring South Korea and North Korea to keep the arms race going.

North and South Korea

The hope for peace on the Korean Peninsula is eclipsed by a heated arms race. Courtesy of Open Clipart (FreeSVG.org)

Erin Bunce Staff Writer

courtesy of Bekriah S. Mawasi (Wikimedia Commons)

Eric Bunce Staff Writer

courtesy of Open Clipart (FreeSVG.org)
Seton Hall Professor Joins Panel on Memory Politics

Megan Gawron
International News Editor

Chatham House, an international affairs think tank, hosted a panel discussion on October 5 called Memory Politics: The Need for a New Commemoration in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The panel was moderated by Lubica Pollakova of Chatham House and featured Dr. David Wood and Dr. Emelia Timpo, both professors from Seton Hall University’s School of Diplomacy and International Relations. Dr. Hans Gutbrod of Ilia State University, and Dr. Olesya Khromeychuk of the Ukrainian Institute London.

Speaking together, Wood and Gutbrod set a framework for when and how memory politics should be implemented. Both Wood and Gutbrod emphasized the necessity of this framework, explaining that when memory is not properly managed and appreciated, misconceptions begin to fill a sort of ‘ideological vacuum.’

Wood reinforced this, underlining that “peace is not possible without dealing with the past.” While there is no current ‘ethics of commemoration,’ both Wood and Gutbrod hoped to set certain standards for how commemoration should be treated.

Dr. Hans Gutbrod paralleled this new framework of memory politics to the existing framework for the Just War Theory. Gutbrod referred to Memoriam—the question of whether governments should use commemoration. Lus ad Memoriam covers three main categories: Right Intention, Legitimate Authority, and Reasonable Chance of Success. He clarified that the framework that he and Wood presented should only extend to the extent that it does not need to be used to govern personal remembrance or artistic expression.

For an act of commemoration to have the right intention, the people commemorating the event should not aim to sway the opinion of the public. Acts of commemoration are meant to honor the past, which cannot be done by focusing on one account of the events. Similarly, legitimate authority means ensuring that the commemoration is allowed, allowing the commemoration should not be doing so to assert their authority or undermine the authority of others.

Gutbrod emphasized what happens when the commemoration is allowed to create authority for themselves, they undermine the people’s trust and the integrity of the past. Reasonable Chance of Success is what the name implies, which Gutbrod explained should be established through empirical social data. A project should not be undertaken when there are not enough resources, or when the public is not receptive to it.

Dr. David Wood followed Gutbrod’s presentation by discussing Lus in Memoriam—the question of how people should use commemoration. In his presentation, Wood highlighted that understanding the past means understanding the future. These understandings impact how people treat another and view the reliability of institutions. An understanding of memory politics easily lends itself to public distrust in official and political institutions, just as the same kind of corruption can lead to animosity between opposing groups. Speaking from his experience mitigating conflicts in Northern Africa, Wood described the proper treatment of memory as “a proven process to stopping war, stopping violence.”

To show how memory politics should be understood, Wood analyzed two applications of memory politics: The Aurora Prize and memory laws. The Aurora Prize was created on behalf of the victims of the Armenian genocide in a way that acknowledges loss without focusing on villainization. Instead, the Aurora Prize provides recognition and rewards positive actions. In contrast, memory laws in Eastern Europe restrict how things may be remembered. Wood and Gutbrod criticize these laws from a human rights perspective, saying that one can ascertain their true needs, and it is only through listening to their true needs can we properly understand the work is on the behalf of others.

Timpo explained that the work is on the behalf of others is to “look at everyday.” Everyone in the international community has different needs, and it is only through listening that one can ascertain what their true needs are rather than what outsiders deem as necessary.

In a male-dominated field like international development, Dr. Timpo explained that there will always be the expectations that women are “meek and lowly” and get to participate if and when they want to, and that they should sit quietly and let the men lead. Especially, she explained, as a woman from Africa, “it is assumed you come from nothing!” But, she says, “I don’t get paid to be a spectator,” explaining what she always needed to stand up for herself to stand up for herself.

As a woman, Dr. Timpo explained that the women, faced additional challenges because of her gender. But, also like billions of other women, she overcame these challenges to change the world. She emphasizes, “I am me, I am no better or worse than anybody else. I will be who I am, and not what you think I should be.”
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea
Presents to the School of Diplomacy

Zachary Schullian
Staff Writer

On Wednesday, October 20, Cho Hyun, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, presented to the Seton Hall School of Diplomacy about the Republic of Korea’s and the United States’ alliance, the ROK’s unique relationships with the UN, and the ROK’s position on the world stage. Dean Samantha Grant of the Diplomacy School welcomed Ambassador Cho to the audience while a student led the introduction. Two undergraduate students later led the Q&A session following the ambassador’s presentation. Ambassador Cho opened his presentation with an overview of South Korea’s history. The ambassador explained how before the Japanese annexation of Korea at the turn of the 20th century, Korea under the Joseon dynasty held onto what he called a “rigid” belief system heavily influenced by neo-Confucianist ideology. In 1905, Korea became a protectorate of Japan. The 20th century marked a major turning point in Korean history due to the rapid influx of new ideologies, major wars, and regional competition. Ultimately, after Korea’s division into North and South, there remains a zeal to be reunited—mainly due to Korea’s century-long history of being a single entity. The ambassador emphasized that understanding the history of Korea is crucial to understanding South Korea’s current position in the world. Next, the ambassador discussed the relationship between the United States and the Republic and Korea. He pointed to several areas where the U.S. and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have worked side by side, along with the two countries’ cooperation in economic issues, such as the development of a successful market economy and the promotion of capitalist values abroad. Companies such as Samsung strongly reflect the shared values of the U.S. and ROK by encouraging global competition, contributing to global economic cooperation, and technological advancement. Furthermore, Korea’s adoption of Western influences in pop culture has massively boosted its recognition around the world, including in K-pop, movies such as “Parasite”, or most recently, the Netflix show Squid Game. In conflict and diplomacy, Ambassador Cho referred to U.S.-ROK cooperation in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and their shared management of the constant threat of North Korea. Ambassador Cho then pointed out the unique relationship the Republic of Korea has with the United States. For the first time in history, under President Biden, the U.S. and ROK have worked side by side. As the world faces challenges such as climate change; North Korea’s nuclear, ballistic missile, and conventional military capabilities; and the pandemic, the two nations continue to be strong partners and allies. In response, South Korea has been reunified—mainly due to the former Soviet Union’s disintegration and the Soviet Union’s dissolution and subsequent birth of the Russian Federation that South Korea was able to become a member of in 1991. Ambassador Cho further discussed other issues the UN is currently responding to, such as climate change and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. He mentioned the upcoming meeting in Glasgow, Scotland, where UN countries will gather to discuss targets and strategies for combating climate change; Ambassador Cho noted South Korea’s ambitious targets of reducing carbon neutrality and reducing overall emissions by 40 percent by 2050. A Q&A session followed the presentation. In response to a question about South Korea’s success in managing the COVID-19 pandemic, the ambassador remarked that vaccine distribution was a success story because South Korea’s ability to respond well was because of its cultural norms which differed from other countries such as the US, including the standard practice that “Koreans wear masks.” Another question reflected on the Korean government’s use of popular culture as a tool of diplomacy. Ambassador Cho explained that the main reason was related to the fear of growing Japanese cultural domination in the 1980s. In response, South Korea created its own national pop culture to share with the world and compete with Japan, making it a defining element of the country’s national culture and identity. One other question asked how open-minded South Korea is to embrace more multiculturalism more prevalent in the West, such as feminism and acceptance of LGBTQ+ rights. The ambassador expressed his optimism, recognizing that shifts in traditional norms have improved the country culturally and economically, personally noting how more women have become diplomats since he began his career.

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Annual Concordia Summit Convenes in New York to Discuss Global Issues

Patrick Condon
Staff Writer

The Annual Concordia Summit was held last September 20-23 in New York City alongside the High Segment of the 76th United Nations General Assembly. Multiple public-private partnerships were designed to revolve around major topics of discussion at the UNGA this year. From environmental sustainability to vaccine distribution, the Concordia Summit delved into the largest problems in the world today. The Concordia Summit highlight ed the pandemic-induced standstill of industries and governments at rolling out projects tasked at solving sustainability, digitization, military withdrawal from Afghanistan, and widespread poverty. The most common issue discussed at the summit was COVID-19 and the international vaccine rollout. Multiple public-private partnerships increasing vaccine accessibility to encourage widespread vaccination were announced. Most notable was the U.S. government’s partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation, Rajeev Sheth, which aimed to tackle the “largest threat to widespread vaccination”: vaccines. While the Former First Lady of Namibia Monica Geingos stated that “the lack of vaccines is a greater threat than the lack of acceptance of vaccines in Africa.” This cyclical debate of the largest threat to vaccine rollout narrowed to the same answer: Americans are privileged to have this conversation of “if” and “when” they should take the vaccine while people all over the world are without adequate access. Another prominent theme throughout the Summit’s panels was the failure of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. The discussion panels, which featured military officials and foreign government representatives, revolved around the failures of the Biden administration to facilitate a structured withdrawal and pointed to the lack of stability in the Afghan army. However, in this discussion of the different possibilities policies Biden might have administered for better results, there were varied opinions in regards to the lives of the Afghan people, speaking with Representative Ro Khanna stating “the situation is worse in Afghanistan, we need every sanction in place on them.” While a few panelists’ remarks detracted from the severity of the human rights crisis in Afghanistan, President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee David Miliband explained that “the case of fleeing Afghans needs to be told by themselves, not by men in suits. You have to convince people that refugee solutions are manageable and sustainable.” Another overarching theme of the Summit was the necessity for digitization to develop a more connected international system. Tech company panelists offered an innovative approach to the development of democratic governments and economic institutions all over the world. Discussions ranged from the use of Bitcoin by SVVC, a tech startup owned by Joe Lonsdale to the societal importance of social media by Future of Democracy Fellow, Yael Eisenstat. However, advice to companies of lower-income cities across the world to provide greater employ opportunities was more expensive for most nations to afford, as Namibian First Lady Monica Geingos stated. The final theme present at Concordia was the topic of sustainability. From the restructuring of production by corporations like Walmart to offers of environmental replenishment, the Summit stage was an opportunity for multiple actors to share their progress toward sustainable solutions. The Summit highlighted numerous sustainability progress reports, including this year’s Walmart Environmental, Social, and Governance Report, which listed the increased focus and usage of materials in decreasing their environmental footprint. Concordia featured Kate Williams, the CEO of 1% Of The Planet, an international organization that focuses on measuring and tracking donations to sustainable initiatives to forge partnerships with companies like Walmart.

Overall, the Concordia Summit offered solutions and partnerships in response to many of the world’s largest problems. The Summit offered a diverse field of experts and officials to discuss its eight main topics and spark new conversations between the public and private sectors. However, despite the various initiatives proposed, the consensus was unclear at times. This year’s Concordia Annual Summit thus reflected the polarizing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the prospect of public-private partnerships and their ability to tackle the world’s biggest issues.

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World leaders and influencers in a panel, discussing the future of the world.
Germay Hosts Pivotal Government Elections

Sebastian Kopeç  Staff Writer

Following the announcement of the retirement of Angela Merkel, Germany held a federal election on September 26, 2021, the first without their Chancellor in almost 16 years. According to the Guardian, Germany uses a system in which voters cast two votes, one directly for a representative and another for a party. These votes then translate into seats within the Bundestag, where parties, through the formation of coalitions, choose the next Chancellor.

Sebastian, the Social Democrat Party (SPD), led by former finance minister Olaf Scholz, has seemingly emerged victorious, winning 25.7 percent of the vote. Scholz's pragmatic center-left politics have won over a large share of voters, especially in the East, where the SPD made substantial gains. This strong election performance has put Scholz and the SPD in a strong position for coalition negotiations, a process by which Scholz could assume Chancellorship. As The Associated Press reports, following the announcement of the election results, Scholz stated he had "a very clear mandate to ensure now that we put together a good, pragmatic government for Germany."

Meanwhile, CNN reports that the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the party of Chancellor Angela Merkel which has run Germany for almost 16 years, suffered its most damaging election result in modern history, securing only 24.1 percent of the vote. Led by Armin Laschet, the center-right talks in the vote share put him in doubt in his leadership, though Laschet maintains that he and his party retain a mandate to govern. Nevertheless, in coalition talks, the CDU/CSU is in a weak position and will undoubtedly have to make concessions on their center-right conservative policies if they are to govern.

The Greens, led by Annalena Baerbock, who had been high in the spring, performed worse than hoped, securing only 14.8 percent of the vote. However, this was still a 5.8 percent increase since the last election, consequently placing the Greens in a solid position to play a role as kingmaker in coalition talks with the SPD and CDU/CSU. As Euronews reports, their center-left environmental policies appealed to many German voters who saw the environment as a priority issue in this election.

Scholz's pragmatic government may have to moderate its more progressive economic proposals, such as the $13 minimum wage and the 1 percent wealth tax. On the other hand, a Jamaica coalition, with the CDU/CSU, would likely govern to the right of center, favoring policies that increase investment in technology and implement more laissez-faire economic policies, such as a 25 percent corporate wealth tax cap. Reuters also reports that the coalition would be proceeding towards social issues. Still, due to the influence of the SPD, the CDU/CSU may have to moderate its more progressive economic proposals, such as the $13 minimum wage and the 1 percent wealth tax.

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Algeria Bans France from Entering Its Airspace

Hamzah Khan  Staff Writer

Despite being the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak, China's swift and strict response to the pandemic allegedly led to a 2.3 percent increase in GDP in the year 2020, reports NPR. The pandemic posed a unique challenge for the communist government, but not an unmanageable one. Learning from authoritarian tactics, the Chinese government was able to fight the virus while simultaneously building back its economy. Although the United States was unable to stout a similar GDP increase, the tactics used by the Chinese government to achieve this financial success came at an unimaginable price.

Wuhan saw the first cases of COVID-19 in November 2019, and doctors and scientists began to warn the public about the dangers of the virus. At the same time, Chinese authorities silenced and censored public and expert opinion to avoid panic and continue national operations. However, the strategy did not work. Soon, COVID-19 spread to over 31,000 people, reports WHO. The entire country went into a brutal lockdown, highlighted by the use of surveillance drones to detect unmasked individuals in Mongolia, door-to-door health checks by government officials, and forced isolation in government facilities, as reports The Guardian. Concurrently, financial operations came to a halt, and state's GDP shrank 6.8 percent in the first quarter.

Back in the US, a lack of transtational strategic economy dominated the country's ability to fight the pandemic as noted Pro-Publica. Millions across the country were unable to access the virus, stayed in their homes and made it a priority to leave only if necessary. Many others did not. As their bodies and skeptics downplayed the virus, embracing individual choice for masks and quarantine. For the first time, a silent and invisible enemy threatened American cities, ones that could neither be hunted down nor kept it outside of U.S. borders. In response to the strict lockdowns implemented in many states, a sizable proportion of the U.S. population fled their homes to states and towns with loose pandemic regulations, a decision that would only exacerbate the severity of the health crisis.

The Trump administration fed into the “you go it alone” mindset of many Americans, as reports The Atlantic. A polarized individualization of the health crisis exacerbated one of the most significant economic disasters since The Great Depression. COVID-19 crushed small businesses, while the number of jobless Americans grew to over 14 million and hospitals reached full capacity, leading to the deaths of thousands each day from COVID-19.

Simultaneously, the Chinese government continued to report decreasing numbers of infections via its draconian lockdown tactics. These extreme measures to detect and contain coronavirus did allow for a quicker return to normalcy in 2020, but as the International Journal of Refugee Law reports, public health crises do not justify the blind stripping of basic human rights.

The World Health Organization however applauded Chinese efforts in unitary action against coronavirus, reports The Guardian. In the last quarter, the Chinese economy grew 4.9 percent. At the Great Hall of the People on November 29, President Xi Jinping celebrated the country's response to the pandemic and its economic accomplishments. The leader said, “in the global struggle against the virus, we have acted with wisdom and strength.” Despite the WHO and the government's belief that their response was not only apt, but also efficacious, the public suffered an from nearly militaristic treatment.

The strategy to recover from the economic con traction of early 2020 was a treat to big businesses in China. The nation's focus on increasing global export revenues was essential for its recovery, and CBS News reports that the Central Bank of China "provided companies with tax rebates and loans" to avoid laying off workers. Though the US attempted a similar strategy, the rising number of COVID-19 cases prevented Americans from returning to work. By the end of 2020, the Chinese economy grew 2.3 percent, and the population to safely return to pre-pandemic conditions and spend. At the Gold Week, Chinese New Year, citizens spent $6.9 billion in eight days of celebration.

Although, China was the only nation to grow its GDP in 2020, the state's citizens suffered immensely for that outcome. The iron grip that the government exercised over its citizens left no room for indiscipline from the population. Today, images of music festivals, crowded flea markets, and economic recovery serve to prove China's questionable pandemic response tactics. Nevertheless, the nation's economic victory over the coronavirus does not reflect the well-being of its population, but rather its force in authoritarian control.

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Algeria Bans France from Entering Its Airspace

$6.9 billion in eight days of celebration.
A Call for Accountability at Guantanamo Bay

Andrea Gonzalez  
Staff Writer

China's Evergrande Bubble is Ready to Burst

Andrea Gonzalez  
Staff Writer

China's Evergrande is facing a media crisis after missing its debt payments in recent weeks, reports The New York Times. News outlets see the situation as paralleling the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. Evergrande, a real estate giant, faces a capital crunch, causing companies to accelerate the nation's full-scale ramifications of the real estate collapse when millions of people become jobless, up with it, and in turn events of many of these prisoners to trial in a military courtroom. According to The New York Times, the crisis was a blow at America's promise of justice and accountability. Only by allowing Abu Zubaydah, a Saudi national, to be charged in a military courtroom, the DOJ has failed to tie many of the events that sparked the financial crisis. In recent weeks, the firm lost over 80% of its value on the Hong Kong stock market. In an attempt to relieve investors, the company said it would pay off domestic bondholders. However, they did not offer any insight into the colossal debts tied up in foreign bonds, raising eyebrows about a possible contagion effect in other industries. According to a potential default may leave millions of people jobless, contractors in bankruptcy, and families out of savings. China and Evergrande blossomed together in the last three decades, making Chinese real estate a bastion for the development of generational wealth amongst the population. The real estate paragon turned many of China's rural areas into pristine urban complexes. For the growing middle-class. Now, a South China Morning Post video shows a protester voicing her anger at Evergrande's situation by threatening to “jump off a tall building” if the company does not return her deposit. Similar to the current situation in China, when Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2008, hundreds of American investors whose lifetime assets were liquidated in the default, immediately took their own lives, according to The New York Times. The crisis was a blow at America’s promise of generational wealth, and small businesses and individuals today are still reeling from the fallout. Evergrande has offered to pay back, through installments, property or payables and hired top financial advisors to create a viable solution. However, default would rob millions of immediate recovery. If the company faces bankruptcy, property prices will fall, complicating its ability to finish projects or pay loans and causing the liquidation of more of the company’s assets. Evergrande composed almost 20 percent of China's gross domestic product, and its current financial forecast has unraveled its promise. Headlines project that Evergrande’s potential failure could take several banks down with it, and in turn create an atmosphere of uncertainty around the full-scale ramifications of its collapse. A report from Forbes outlines how Nevertheless, in the world of finance and real estate, stability usually makes its way back. When COVID-19 hit, financial operations came to a halt, and China's GDP shrunk 6.8 percent in the first quarter. In the United States, stocks plunged, causing companies to block trade when millions of investors began selling their positions, as reported by CNBC. The situation opened up a sea of opportunities for new investors who were willing to take on larger risks and earn better returns because the economy would inevitably have to recover at some point. According to CNBC, a year after the pandemic began, young investors helped recover 79 percent from the lows of 2020. Nevertheless, Evergrande’s potential defaults are not so different. The parallel demonstrates people's ability to reshape the financial arena. While Evergrande’s default would result in a devastating loss for millions of people and may even spill onto different industries, it does not equate to eternal failure for the Chinese economy. Nevertheless, Evergrande may be showing an even more important fact, China’s rapid economic growth has limitations. A real estate bubble to accelerate the nation’s economy is bound to have consequences for its wild financial model.
Could a New Legal Approach Curb Deforestation?

Katherine Dorrer
Staff Writer

The Brazilian Government is ignoring the amount of carbon dioxide being emitted through the combination of deforestation and agricultural exploitation practices in the Amazon Rainforest under President Bolsonaro’s administration. Officials are failing to acknowledge the climate imbalance of the Global South, wildlife extinction, and habitat loss the rainforest is currently facing. The Indigenous Organization in Brazil (IOB) is desperately calling out the need for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to start an investigation into Brazilian economic development. Officials have rallied for the approval of several policies in question including the Forestry Act, the Amazonic Forest Development Act, and the Forestry Act of Law and Environmentally Sound Trade. The FOREST Act’s main goal is to reduce agribusiness’ role in facilitating deforestation around the globe, according to Friends of Earth. This will be the first piece of legislation to prevent agricultural goods from being produced on illegally deforested or obtained land from the United States. Representative Fitzpatrick (R-PA) stated that, “Commodity-driven illegal deforestation is wreaking havoc on our planet by contributing to the emission of greenhouse gases and threatening biodiversity and wildlife habitats globally.”

According to Senator Scharf, the bill will also create a framework to provide information and transparency in the international supply chain, while also including deforestation financial crime statutes so that the U.S. can prosecute those who use proceeds from deforestation for illegal use. Along with the U.S., the United Kingdom has also proposed laws that would ban products linked to deforestation, and the European Commission has also vowed to ban goods linked to deforestation, according to Human Rights Watch.

Though these new enactments of legislation are a step in the right direction for preventing deforestation practices in the Amazon Rainforest, will that be enough? The damage is irreversible, but laws and policies are actions that need to be taken in order to regulate agricultural goods. Other nations need to follow the footsteps of those who have proposed and passed legislation targeting corporations that use deforestation for their profit and holding their suppliers accountable for impacting the climate, while also protecting indigenous people and their native land.

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The views expressed in The Diplomatic Envoy are those of the writers and are not intended to represent the views of the School of Diplomacy, Seton Hall University, or the CJM Fund.

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