



TRAFFIC STOP



QAnon's 'Save the Children' morphs into popular slogan

A group holds signs rallying in support of the "Save the Children" movement, calling for an end to child trafficking Sept. 26, 2020, in Morris, Ill.

Associated Press

By AMANDA SEITZ
Associated Press

MORRIS, Ill. (AP) — At a busy intersection in this small Illinois town, Lynn Vermillion smiles at passing drivers who honk their support for the colorful posters she and friends wave: "Save Our Children. Save their Children. Save ALL the Children." As the U.S. presidential campaign heated

up in recent months, the 57-year-old mother of two and others like her took to city and suburban streets nationwide to join rallies calling for an end to child trafficking. The "Save the Children" effort emerged earlier this year as a splinter movement from QAnon, the group of internet conspiracy theorists who believe without evidence that

President Donald Trump is secretly fighting a supposed network of celebrities and government officials who are running a child trafficking ring. The movement's rise has complicated the efforts of the humanitarian organization called Save the Children and other nonprofits that work to help the world's needy children.

Vermillion, who works in home health, said she is not a QAnon supporter and tries hard to filter out conspiracy theories that enter her Facebook feed. She said she supports the "Save the Children" movement because she wants to protect children and believes Trump is the only candidate taking the issues of child sex abuse and traf-

ficking seriously. "Why are we finally talking about it? Because we have a president who's talking about it," she said last month as she and about 30 others sought to bring attention to the movement in Morris, a conservative stronghold of about 15,000 people 60 miles (about 100 kilometers) from Chicago.

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Associated Press

Continued from Front

She promoted her event on Facebook, as many other women are doing. Some also use the platform to launch private groups where they swap tips, rumors and stories about child trafficking. Mentions of #SavetheChildren on Twitter began climbing in June and peaked in August when the hashtag was used more than 800,000 times during the first week of that month, according to an analysis by

the media intelligence firm Signal Labs conducted for The Associated Press.

The movement gained popularity as posts about QAnon spiked on Facebook and Instagram this year, prompting millions of likes, shares and comments on the platforms, a separate AP review of public social media posts found.

While Trump has not made "Save the Children" part of his campaign, he has twice publicly praised QAnon's mission. Under his administration, however, federal

prosecutors have less aggressively prosecuted child sex trafficking cases.

"I do know they are very much against pedophilia," Trump said during his televised town hall this month, when asked about QAnon. "They fight it very hard."

As the movement's popularity grows, Save the Children — a century-old, London-based humanitarian organization that aided 144 million children worldwide last year with a mission of ensuring kids grow up healthy, educated and safe — found its trademarked name coopted on social media. The charity has repeatedly said it is not associated with the SavetheChildren hashtag used to spread conspiracy theories. The conspiracies also distort the reality of how people become victims of human trafficking, experts have said.

Washington-based Polaris, the nonprofit group that runs the National Human Trafficking hotline, created a myth-busting resource page on its website focused on debunking

some misinformation that surfaced from QAnon after receiving hundreds of calls about human trafficking conspiracy theories over the summer.

Some social media users have been introduced to QAnon through posts about child sex trafficking that use #SavetheChildren. Facebook and Instagram tried to squelch those QAnon recruitment efforts last month by directing people who search for #SavetheChildren to the official website for the humanitarian organization.

But the connections among "Save the Children," QAnon, and Trump still permeate social media.

Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts regularly use #SavetheChildren to promote memes and conspiracy theories about Democrats.

One such Instagram post that was liked nearly 12,000 times includes pictures of former President Barack Obama, his wife Michelle, former President Bill Clinton and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

It asks: "How much would you pay-per-view to see the FBI raid their homes and take them out in handcuffs at 3 a.m.?"

A video viewed more than 5,000 times on a QAnon account features images of Trump giving a thumbs up to the #SavetheChildren and photos of abused women, with dramatic music in the background.

Under the guise of benefiting children, many of the posts seek to lure people into the QAnon conspiracy theory circle and encourage support for Trump, said Sophie Bjork-James, an anthropology professor at Vanderbilt University who studies the religious right and QAnon.

The movement is particularly attractive to conservative religious women, Bjork-James said. Her research on small, evangelical churches in Colorado Springs more than a decade ago found that human trafficking was one of the few political causes the congregations organ-

ized around. "The core of QAnon is that Trump is the hero. It assembles a narrative to justify any of (Trump's) actions as valiant and heroic," she said.

Social media posts about QAnon and the "Save the Children" movement have also increased in Instagram communities focused on health, wellness and yoga that are popular with women, said Melanie Smith, the head of analysis for social media research firm Graphika.

QAnon and "Save the Children" have become such a force in the online yoga community that influencers including yoga teacher Seane Corn posted letters on Instagram last month warning followers not to "be fooled" by slickly crafted posts spreading misinformation about human trafficking.

Smith has studied QAnon for two years and said the conspiracy theory reached new audiences in recent months through hashtags like #SavetheChildren.

"The way in which people encounter QAnon, now, is through relatively mainstream, non-absurd topics," Smith told the U.S. House Intelligence Committee during a hearing this month. "We're seeing a huge explosion in content around child sex trafficking and child exploitation through the Save the Children movement."

Vermillion hands out homemade leaflets with statistics and online resources for combatting child sex abuse. She said she avoids "Save the Children" Facebook groups promoting misinformation, QAnon and white supremacy symbols. But there was some QAnon support at her event. One woman held a sign reading, "Hollywood loves adrenochrome," a reference to a QAnon conspiracy theory claiming baselessly that celebrities traffic children to harvest adrenaline from their blood to create a drug.

Vermillion insisted: "This rally today is not about Hollywood and drinking blood." □

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Former DHS official says he wrote 'Anonymous' Trump critique

By **KEVIN FREKING** and **ZEKE MILLER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former Trump administration official who penned a scathing anti-Trump op-ed and book under the pen name "Anonymous" revealed himself Wednesday as a former chief of staff at the Department of Homeland Security.

The official, Miles Taylor, said in a tweet six days before Election Day that Donald Trump is "a man without character" and "it's time for everyone to step out of the shadows." Taylor has been an outspoken critic of Trump's in recent months and had repeatedly denied he was the author of the column — even to colleagues at CNN, where he has a contributor contract. He left the Trump administration in June and endorsed Democrat Joe Biden for president this summer. In a statement, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany called Taylor a "low-level, disgruntled former staffer" who "is a liar and a coward who chose anonymity over action and leaking over leading."

"This is everything people hate about Washington — two-faced liars who push



This March 27, 2018, provided by the Department of Homeland Security, then-Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen and then-Department of Homeland Security chief of staff Miles Taylor, right, meet with Honduran President Juan Hernandez, not pictured, and security ministers from the Northern Triangle countries in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Associated Press

their own agendas at the expense of the People," she later tweeted. "This is the epitome of the swamp!" White House chief of staff Mark Meadows called Taylor's revelation "a monumental embarrassment," tweeting, "I've seen more exciting reveals in Scooby-Doo episodes."

Taylor's anonymous essay was published in September 2018 by The New York

Times, infuriating the president and setting off a frantic White House leak investigation to try to unmask the author. In the essay, the person, who identified themselves only as a senior administration official, said they were part of a secret "resistance" force out to counter Trump's "misguided impulses" and undermine parts of his agenda.

The author wrote, "Many

Trump appointees have vowed to do what we can to preserve our democratic institutions while thwarting Mr. Trump's more misguided impulses until he is out of office." The Times identified the author as a "senior official" in the administration and received some criticism online Wednesday for inflating Taylor's credentials. The newspaper, which said it had granted Taylor

anonymity because his job would be jeopardized if his identity was revealed, on Wednesday confirmed Taylor was the author because he has waived his right to confidentiality, and had no other comment.

The allegations incensed the president, bolstering his allegations about a "deep state" operating within his government and conspiring against him. And it set off a Beltway guessing game that seeped into the White House, with current and former staffers trading calls and texts, trying to figure out who could have written the piece.

Trump, who had long complained about leaks in the White House, also ordered aides to unmask the writer, citing "national security" concerns to justify a possible Justice Department investigation. And he issued an extraordinary demand that the newspaper reveal the author.

Instead, the author pressed forward, penning a follow-up book published last November called "A Warning" that continued to paint a disturbing picture of the president, describing him as volatile, incompetent and unfit to be commander in chief. □

Judge says Texas mask mandate must extend to polling places

By **PAUL J. WEBER**
Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A federal judge ruled that Texas' statewide mask mandate must include polling places, but election officials Wednesday did not rush to enforce the order that was handed down after more than 8 million people have already voted.

U.S. District Judge Jason Pulliam, who was appointed last year by President Donald Trump, said not requiring face coverings in Texas polling places created a discriminatory burden on Black and Latino voters who are at higher risk of death and severe illness from the coronavirus. Texas is three weeks into

early voting, but Pulliam said enforcing a mask order would not be disruptive.

The ruling comes as COVID-19 cases are flaring again in Texas, which on Tuesday reported more than 5,500 hospitalized patients with COVID-19 — a more than 70% increase since the beginning of October. Along the U.S. border with Mexico, a record surge in coronavirus cases is pushing hospitals to the brink in the twin cities of El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

"Making polling sites subject to the statewide mask mandate will not dissuade citizens from voting due to disruption, but will provide the opportunity to vote to

an otherwise burdened class," Pulliam wrote in his order Tuesday.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton immediately appealed, and there was no indication elections administrators were acting on the order. In Houston, where more than 1 million people alone have already voted, Harris County Clerk Chris Hollins said he applauded the court ruling but expected it would be stayed by an appeals court.

"Thus, to avoid confusion, we will continue our policy of accommodating all voters, providing those who need it with protective equipment, and strongly encouraging all voters to wear masks at



Voters line up and wait to cast a ballot at the American Airlines Center during early voting Thursday, Oct. 15, 2020, in Dallas.

Associated Press

the polls," Hollins said. The lawsuit was filed by the Texas NAACP and Mi Familia Vota, a Latino rights group. Texas has had a statewide mask mandate since July, but Republican Gov.

Greg Abbott carved out an exception for polling places. Early voting ends Friday in Texas, which is already close to surpassing the nearly 9 million people who voted in 2016's general election. □

ICE settles lawsuit filed by immigrant activists in Vermont

By LISA RATHKE
Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — The federal government has agreed not to deport three immigrant activists in Vermont who sued two years after they were arrested, saying they were targeted in retaliation for their activism, according to the settlement filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Vermont.

As part of the settlement in the lawsuit against U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security, ICE will also pay \$100,000 to be split among the three plaintiffs.

"ICE tried to terrorize us by going after our leaders," said plaintiff Victor Diaz, a member of Migrant Justice, an advocacy group representing immigrant farmworkers in Vermont, at a rally outside the federal courthouse on Wednesday. He spoke in Spanish as a translator interpreted.

"They tried to divide us by



Enrique Balcazar, left, Zulily Palacios Rodriguez, center, and Victor Diaz, right, of the group Migrant Justice, poses outside the federal courthouse on Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020, in Burlington, Vt. Associated Press

going after our organization. They tried to silence us, but with this settlement we are saying that we will not be silenced," he to cheers among the crowd blocking part of a downtown street.

An email was sent to ICE seeking comment.

During the rally, a driver who wanted to drive through the street blocked by activists holding signs yelled at them to get out of the

way, pulled out a machete and from the driver's seat banged it on hood of his vehicle. Leaders urged activists to get out of the way and let the vehicle pass as he zoomed through.

Afterward, Thelma Gomez, of Migrant Justice, said what happened was a clear example of what happens when the people rise up to defend their rights. "Not everybody's going to like it, but we can't be scared and we can't retreat," she said through an interpreter.

Burlington police arrived a short time later, and an officer talked with an activist. Police said later that nobody was willing to make a statement about what they observed.

One of the three plaintiffs, Zulily Palacios Rodriguez, said when the lawsuit was filed that she and a fellow Migrant Justice member were arrested by armed undercover agents as they were leaving the group's office in Burlington in 2017.

Before the arrest, she said, ICE tried to enter her email account and used a confidential informant to spy on the group's members and gather information about them. □

Road, logging restrictions to end in largest national forest



In this July 31, 2013, file photo, tourists visiting the Mendenhall Glacier in the Tongass National Forest are reflected in a pool of water as they make their way to Nugget Falls in Juneau, Alaska.

Associated Press

By BECKY BOHRER
Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — The federal government announced plans Wednesday to lift restrictions on logging and building roads in a pristine rainforest in Alaska that provides habitat for wolves, bears and salmon. Conservation groups vowed to fight the decision.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said it has decided to exempt the Tongass National Forest, the country's

largest national forest, from the so-called roadless rule, protections that ban road construction and timber harvests with limited exceptions. It applies to nearly one-quarter of all U.S. Forest Service lands.

The rule, dating to 2001, has long been a focus of litigation.

Alaska in 2018, under then-Gov. Bill Walker, asked the federal government to consider the exemption, a decision supported by cur-

rent Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy. Members of Alaska's congressional delegation also have pushed for the exemption.

About 9.4 million of Tongass' 16.7 million acres are considered roadless areas, according to the Forest Service, which falls under the USDA. That number differs slightly from the 9.2 million acres the agency cited in its draft environmental review last fall. The majority of Tongass is in a natural condition, and the forest is one of the largest, relatively intact temperate rainforests in the world, the agency said.

Many of the roadless areas are wildlife habitats, ecosystems and natural areas like old-growth temperate rainforests, ice fields and glaciers, and islands facing the open Pacific Ocean "that exist nowhere else in the National Forest system," according to the Forest Service.

The USDA, in a notice released Wednesday, said

it concluded that a policy change for Tongass "can be made without major adverse impacts to the recreation, tourism, and fishing industries, while providing benefits to the timber and mining industries, increasing opportunities for community infrastructure, and eliminating unnecessary regulations."

In a separate statement, the USDA said the exemption itself doesn't authorize any specific work and that proposed projects still must comply with the forest's management plan and are subject to federal environmental review.

U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, an Alaska Republican, said on social media that a full exemption from the roadless rule is about access "to recreation, renewable energy and more while ensuring good stewardship of our lands and waters."

Conservation groups criticized the decision as shortsighted and driven by politics.

"The decision to roll back the roadless rule on the Tongass was made in spite of, not in support of, southeast Alaskans and our communities," said Meredith Trainor, executive director of the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council. "In making this decision, the Trump administration and the sham rulemaking process they undertook in our region ignored economic realities, environmental imperatives, and worst of all, the will of the people who actually live here."

Randi Spivak, public lands director at the Center for Biological Diversity, referred to the forest's old-growth trees as giants.

"As sure as the sun rises in the east, with our allies, we will sue to keep these magnificent giants standing for centuries to come," Spivak said.

An official notice of the change at Tongass is expected to be published in the Federal Register on Thursday. □

Pompeo brings anti-China roadshow to Indian Ocean islands

By **MATTHEW LEE**

AP Diplomatic Writer

MALE, Maldives (AP) — U.S.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday brought the Trump administration's anti-China campaign to two Indian Ocean island nations considered particularly at risk for what American officials allege is Chinese exploitation. In one significant step, Pompeo announced that the United States would for the first time open an embassy in the Maldives.

Pompeo visited Sri Lanka and the Maldives to press the two countries to be on guard against potential predatory lending and investment by China. He was making the case less than a week before the American election in which President Donald Trump is seeking to paint his rival, former Vice President Joe Biden, as weak on China and beholden to it.

Even before Pompeo arrived, China had fired back at the U.S. message, accusing Washington of bullying smaller nations. Pompeo, who will also visit Indonesia, pressed each country to push back against increasing Chinese assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific.

U.S. officials complain that development and infrastructure projects benefit China more than the presumed recipients — a refrain Pompeo repeated with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena. Pompeo said the country could be "a beacon" for freedom and democracy in the region as long as it retained its "full sovereignty." "That is quite a contrast to what China seeks," Pompeo said. "The Chinese Communist Party is a predator. The United States comes in a different way. We come as a friend and a partner."

President Gotabhaya Rajapaksa told Pompeo that he is not ready to compromise his country's sovereignty in relations with other nations, the president's office said. He defended Chinese-funded projects, saying Beijing has helped develop his country's infrastructure and that Sri Lanka has not been

caught in a "debt trap" as a result, it said.

Cooperation between the U.S. and the Maldives has

Critics like the U.S. say that the Chinese-funded proj-

contributions to regional peace and stability," Wang said. The U.S.-China tug-of-war plays out against concerns that the Sri Lankan government is backsliding on democratic reforms. Last week, Parliament by a large majority approved a constitutional amendment concentrating powers under Rajapaksa and reversing efforts a previous government had made to curb authoritarianism.

With the change, Rajapaksa will be able to hold ministries, as well as appoint and sack ministers. He will also be the appointing authority of the elections, public service, police, human rights, bribery or corruption investigation commissions.

In his meeting with Rajapaksa, Pompeo "stressed the importance of strengthening democratic governance, human rights protections, and of fundamental freedoms to ensure long-term stability and prosperity," the State Department said in a statement.

Sri Lanka has been ruled under a powerful executive presidential system since 1978, but a reformist government in 2015 clipped much of the president's powers and gave them over to Parliament and independent commissions, saying successive presidents had been more authoritarian.

Pompeo arrived in Sri Lanka late Tuesday from India, where he and Defense Secretary Mark Esper had stepped up the Trump administration's anti-China message by playing on Indian suspicions about the Chinese to shore up a regional front against Beijing in the Indo-Pacific.

Just hours before the meetings in New Delhi began, the Trump administration notified Congress of plans for a \$2.37 billion sale of Harpoon missile systems to Taiwan — the second major arms sale in two weeks to the democratic island that Beijing regards as a renegade province. China angrily reacted to the first sale by announcing sanctions on U.S. defense contractors. □



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo greets the gathering before his meeting with Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, right, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020.

Associated Press

Gunawardena also appeared unwilling to get involved in the spat with China, and said Sri Lanka is willing to cooperate with all friendly countries.

"Sri Lanka is a neutral, non-aligned country committed to peace," he said. "We hope to continue in our relations with the United States and with other parties." Earlier this month, Beijing announced that it would provide Sri Lanka with a \$90 million grant to help rural development, after Rajapaksa sought help from a visiting Chinese delegation in disproving a perception that China-funded megaprojects are "debt traps." Similarly, the Maldives, a tiny archipelago nation in the Indian Ocean known for its luxury tourist resorts, is facing major debt of more than \$1 billion for Chinese infrastructure projects. President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has expressed concern about the amount.

In a nod to U.S. concerns about Chinese influence, Pompeo announced that the U.S. would open an embassy in the Maldives for the first time since the countries established diplomatic relations in 1966.

"taken on new importance as the Chinese Communist Party continues its lawless and threatening behavior," Pompeo said. He accused China of encroaching into sovereign economic zones, "trashing the environment" and massive illegal fishing. "America is different," he said. "We respect sovereignty."

The Maldives' foreign minister, Abdulla Shahid, made no mention of China by name but said his country needs "more flexibility" in international debt relief and urgent international consensus on climate change, which he called an existential threat to his nation. He also said that security in the Indo-Pacific depends on strengthened cooperation between the Maldives and the United States.

China considers Sri Lanka and, to a lesser extent, the Maldives to be a critical link in its massive "Belt and Road" global infrastructure building initiative and has provided billions of dollars in loans for projects over the past decade. The projects include a seaport, airport, port city, highways and power stations in Sri Lanka and roads and bridges in the Maldives.

ects are not financially viable, and that Sri Lanka and the Maldives will face difficulties in repaying the loans. In 2017, Sri Lanka leased out a Chinese-built port located near busy shipping routes to a Chinese company for 99 years to recover from the heavy burden of repaying the Chinese loan the country received to build it. Responding to Pompeo's remarks in Sri Lanka, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the secretary of state's true intention was to "let China fall back to an era of poverty and undevelopment, and let the world fall into the abyss of confrontation and division."

"This is just the biggest threat facing the world today. But regrettably, Pompeo was born in the wrong time. The trend of peace, development, cooperation and win-win in this era is irresistible," Wang told reporters at a daily briefing on Wednesday.

China will "continue to work with Sri Lanka to unswervingly expand the strategic cooperation and partnership between the two countries, benefit the two peoples and make our own

Spain: judge probes Catalan separatism links with Russia

By JOSEPH WILSON

Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP)

— A judge in Barcelona is probing possible links between some of the promoters of Catalonia's 2017 attempt to declare independence from the rest of Spain with an alleged misinformation campaign and overall effort to destabilize Europe that Spanish investigators link to Russia.

The probe authorized by judge Joaquín Aguirre led on Wednesday to the arrest of 21 suspects on suspicions of corruption and promoting public disorder. Aguirre partly based the probe on police evidence that purported Russian agents allegedly offered to provide military aid to Catalan separatists at the height of their failed secession bid in 2017. On the recording, one of the detainees mentions an offer by the alleged Russian agents to provide former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont with 10,000 soldiers, apparently to help in a theoretical armed conflict with Spanish authorities. The court document provided no indication that the offer was ever considered by Puigdemont, nor does it provide additional evidence that the offer was even genuine, or feasible. The Catalan separatist



Demonstrators holding placards reading in Catalan "stop repression, Independence" take part in a protest to condemn a police raid on Catalan separatists in Barcelona, Spain, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020.

Associated Press

movement has always proclaimed non-violent beliefs, even though last year there were violent clashes with police after several top leaders were sentenced to prison for their roles in the 2017 breakaway bid. Besides the putative military aid, the probe also targets the alleged misuse of public funds for the separatist movement in Spain as well as the allegedly active role of Russian-backed disinformation campaigns to discredit Spain. "Russian interference as a

geopolitical strategy was a fact during the fall of 2017 when (the Russians) spread fake news and disinformation," the judge said, citing online items backing the Catalan separatists spread by Russian news platforms. The Spanish government had accused Russia in 2017 of meddling in the Catalan conflict, a charge that Russian officials denied then. There was no immediate reaction from Russian officials Wednesday about the probe authorized by Aguirre.

Spain's interior ministry said the individuals arrested on Wednesday were being investigated for alleged embezzlement and money laundering. Investigations revealed that money intended for Barcelona's provincial government and a regional entity for promoting sports teams had been diverted illegally, the ministry said. Josep Lluís Alay, a close collaborator of Puigdemont who runs an office of the ex-leader in Barcelona, was one of the detained. Others included

David Madi and Oriol Vendrell, two former politicians for Catalonia's major separatist parties. Puigdemont said on Twitter that Alay and the others "must be immediately release(d). Acting against political dissidents is a huge violation of fundamental rights."

After the breakaway bid collapsed, Puigdemont fled Spain to Brussels, where he has campaigned to raise support for his cause internationally. Puigdemont is currently a European Parliament member.

Another detainee, Oriol Soler, is a publisher who is considered one of the top strategists of the separatist movement. He is being investigated for allegedly meeting with Wikileaks founder Julian Assange and with Russian contacts to promote the separatist cause and discredit Spain internationally.

The court document said the alleged meeting between Soler and Assange in Sept. 2017 "falls within the strategy of misinformation and destabilization in which the Kremlin has also participated as part of its general narrative that the European Union is on the brink of collapse, the principal message of the news outlets controlled by the Kremlin." □

U.S., Israel extend science accords into West Bank settlements



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, second right, and U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, second left, attend a ceremony to sign amendments to a series of scientific cooperation agreements, at Ariel University, in the West Bank settlement of Ariel, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020.

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The United States and Israel amended a series of sci-

entific cooperation agreements on Wednesday to include Israeli institutions in

the West Bank, a step that further blurs the status of settlements widely considered illegal under international law.

Until now, three U.S.-Israeli science cooperation agreements excluded projects in areas captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war — including the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

Israeli and American officials signed protocols amending the Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation, the Binational Science Foundation, and Binational Agricultural Research and Development Foundation at a ceremony in the West Bank settlement of Ariel.

Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war, and in the decades since have built dozens of settlements that are now home to some 500,000 Israelis. The Palestinians seek the West Bank and east Jerusalem as part of a future independent state. Most of the international community considers Israeli settlements illegal under international law and supports the establishment of a Palestinian state based on the 1967 boundaries.

Breaking with decades of American policy, the Trump administration recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moved the U.S. Embassy there. It also recognized Israeli sovereignty in the

Golan Heights, which was captured from Syria in the 1967 war. In another reversal, the administration also said the U.S. does not consider settlements illegal.

In a statement, the U.S. Embassy in Israel said that "these geographic restrictions are no longer consistent with U.S. policy," and that updating the agreements to remove them "further strengthens the special bilateral relationship" between the two countries.

"This geographic restriction within the three agreements was an anachronism, it had no place within our evolving region," U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman said at a ceremony at Ariel University. □

Cubans fret as U.S. sanctions threaten Western Union closures

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — More than 400 Western Union offices that Cubans heavily rely on for remittances sent by family abroad are in danger of closing amid a growing number of sanctions the U.S. government has placed on the island. Cuba's government said all 407 offices could close by late November, a move that would potentially affect millions of people who depend on money sent by relatives for daily expenses if no alternatives are found. "I invite the president to live here in Cuba for one day without the family remittances we receive from Western Union, just for one day," homemaker Karina Hidalgo said in reference to U.S. President Donald Trump as she waited in line with her daughter Wednesday to pick up the \$70 her husband in Miami sends monthly. The potential closures stem from a recent U.S. sanction that prohibits Cuban government agency Fincimex from handling such financial transac-



In this June 12, 2020 file photo, people stand outside a Western Union in the Vedado neighborhood of Havana, Cuba.

tions. Fincimex, which coordinates remittances via Western Union and other entities, has ties to Gaesa, a military-run company that has far-reaching economic interests throughout the island. The sanction aims to deny income to any company linked to

Cuba's military, and comes as the pandemic crushes the earnings of hundreds of thousands of residents who rely on tourism. Fincimex criticized the sanction in a Facebook post late Tuesday. "To do so in the midst of a pandemic underscores

the cynicism, contempt for the Cuban people and the opportunism of the U.S. government," the company stated. The sanction is one of several imposed by Trump as he courts Cuban-American voters in Florida ahead of the election. Last week, U.S. Secretary

of State Mike Pompeo said the goal was to cut the flow of money to Cuba's military, which he accused of supporting Venezuela and systematically violating human rights.

Overall, Cuba's government says it has lost nearly \$5.6 billion in one year as a result of the sanctions.

"Politics aside, I ask that they think of the people," said Daynela Pupo, who is renting her home to make up for the drop in tourism revenue.

Experts estimate that up to \$3.5 billion in remittances are sent yearly to Cuba on average, an important source of income for many who rely on the cash to pay for food and services, as well as to finance private business. In a statement that Western Union sent to The Associated Press, it said it would explore ways to keep operating while complying with the new rules and regulations. Their offices in Cuba remain open for now, and the company said it would provide additional information once it formalizes new plans. □

Associated Press

Nigeria's army admits its soldiers were at Lagos shootings

By SAM OLUKOYA

Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — Nigeria's army has admitted its soldiers were deployed at the Lekki Toll Plaza in Lagos where live rounds were fired last week, killing several peaceful protesters prompting global outrage. At least 10 protesters were killed in the Lekki plaza shooting on Oct. 20, according to Amnesty International, which charged Wednesday that army troops opened fire on protesters without provocation.

The army had previously maintained that its troops were not at the site of the shooting, but Tuesday night a military spokesman, Maj. Osoba Olaniyi, reversed that position, saying soldiers had been deployed there to enforce a curfew. However, he denied that



In this Wednesday Oct. 21, 2020 file photo, police officers detain a protester at the Lekki toll gate in Lagos, Nigeria.

Associated Press

the troops shot at the protesters. The military's admission of its presence at the plaza came after Lagos State governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu said security camera footage showed Nigerian soldiers firing at the peaceful protesters at Lekki plaza. Olaniyi said soldiers were

deployed on orders from the Lagos state government, but the governor has said the state has no authority over the national army. Many Nigerians question why the soldiers were deployed at the peaceful protest, in which thousands had gathered at the Lekki plaza. □

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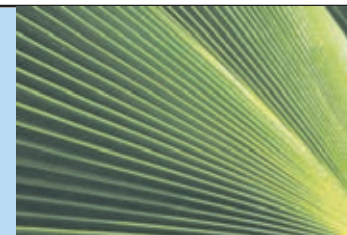
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LOCAL



Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort Aruba: First hotel in world to win Global United Nations 2020 Climate Neutral Now Award *UN signals world hospitality plays significant role in combatting climate change*



EAGLE BEACH — The Caribbean's most eco-certified hotel is now setting the world standard as Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba is the first-ever hotel in the world to win the prestigious Global United Nations 2020 Climate Action Award for Climate Neutral Now. The United Nations made the announcement 9 a.m. CET at the UNFCCC secretariat (UN Climate Change) in Bonn, Germany.

For the first time in the award's history, a hotel is a winner. Past recipients include global giants and household names such as Apple and Infosys and projects backed by major banks. With Bucuti & Tara as the first hotel, the UN is signaling to the world the significantly positive affect every member of the hospitality sector – more than 10% of the world's GDP – can and must have to combat climate change.

The UN's Momentum for Change program is a highlight of the annual United Nations Climate Change Conference. This year is the 10th anniversary of the awards and 510 organizations and business worldwide answered the call for submissions.

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort, Aruba: Excelling Beyond Carbon Neutrality is the winning case study submission. At just 104 rooms, indepen-

dently owned Bucuti & Tara is not a stereotypical chain resort backed by corporate finances. On its own, Bucuti & Tara researched, sought and implemented sustainability initiatives that can be easily replicable and scalable, which drew the UN to the resort's success. Due to this, Bucuti & Tara will also serve as a Lighthouse Activity among the UN's collection of inspiring, action-oriented resources the organization invites others to reference for their own sustainability journeys.

"I congratulate the winners of the 2020 UN Global Climate Action Awards, who provide tangible proof that climate action is under way around the world," said UN Secretary-General António Guterres. "It is exciting to see these climate solutions, which reinforce my call for decisive leadership on climate change by governments, businesses and cities, and for a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us keep pressing ahead to build a more sustainable and equitable future for all."

"The last eight months have been a nightmare for many throughout the world," said UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa. "COVID-19 has altered lives, economies and the nature of business on every continent—from the largest cities to the

smallest villages. It is the most urgent threat facing humanity today, but we cannot forget that climate change is the biggest threat facing humanity over the long term." "The convergence of these two crises has opened a window of opportunity to build forward—to build cities and communities that are safe, healthy, green and sustainable," Ms. Espinosa added. "Nothing exemplifies this better than the efforts of our 2020 award-winning activities to address climate change."

Sustainability is not an add-on

"We are not in the tourism business; we are in the nature business." Bucuti & Tara Owner/CEO Ewald Biemans often shares this perspective whether he is talking with industry colleagues or speaking from a world stage. It is this difference in mindset combined with passion and the relentless pursuit of providing a well-rounded, high-quality vacation that has led Bucuti & Tara to be TripAdvisor's No. 1 Hotel in the Caribbean while simultaneously being the Caribbean's most eco-certified, and first and only carbon-neutral resort.

From the first step, to the world stage

While Bucuti & Tara is on the largest swathe of Eagle Beach, with sea level rise predictions, the turquoise waters could be lapping at the resort's backdoors in 20-30 years. Ewald is known to soberly say, "If we do not stop global warming, guests will need snorkels to see our world-famous beach!"

Having lived in Aruba the past 50 years, Austrian-born Biemans opened Bucuti in 1987. He soon noticed construction cranes touching the skyline further down the powdery white sand beach and grew concerned about the small island's natural resources. As Aruba quickly grew into an international vacation spot (today, 90% of its GDP is from tourism), Biemans knew the vacation experience had to be in harmony with the planet, otherwise, the small island would be ruined. He looked within his own



property and rallied the community and actively engaged with the government.

He busied himself, just as he still does, with researching and implementing forward-thinking initiatives. In a "think globally, act locally" approach, a key driver for Ewald was the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio. With Agenda 21 being adopted by more than 170 heads of state worldwide, momentum was afoot. Years of initiatives followed and with the sustainability success came invitations to share with others how to achieve the same. Fast-forward to 2019 and Biemans was accepting the World Travel & Tourism Council's Tourism for Tomorrow Climate Action Award. At the WTC Global Summit, keynoted by former U.S. President Barack Obama, Biemans was asked to present "The Path to Carbon Neutrality/Net Zero" so the world could learn.

At the adults-only enclave, three cornerstones prevail: romance, wellness and sustainability. Each day guests hail from one of 25 countries worldwide and the resort hums at 97%+ occupancy year-round. Bucuti & Tara proves a memorable vacation and sustainability are mutually inclusive.

Relatability: scalable, replicable initiatives

Like every sustainability journey, Bucuti's earliest days included its tangible first step. A German guest was bewildered that Bucuti was pouring cans and bottles of beer into disposable plastic cups. That left a significant impression and shortly after, Bucuti began with banning single-use plastic and Styrofoam, long before it was ever discussed in mainstream media.

Continued on Page 9

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Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort Aruba

Continued from Page 8

Soon, every resort project was more carefully viewed, and a full-time sustainability & certifications manager was added to the staff. Biemans soon sought eco-certifications viewing them as a management structure providing the framework of the platform to build and grow a successful program that continues providing a safe setting for guests and staff while protecting the environment for generations to come. Over the years, the resort has earned certifications for LEED Gold, ISO 14001 and 9001, Travelife Gold, Green Globe Platinum with this year marketing the first perfect score in Green Globe's history.

Achieving climate neutrality required a careful examination of every standard operating procedure at the resort, both direct and indirect for emissions such as energy smart appliances to business travel. While the

resort is home to the largest solar panel project in the island's private sector, climate neutrality required far beyond the obvious such as fossil-fuel dependency. Some aspects include:

- Gifting every guest with a refillable water canteen, which avoids the potential of 290,000 single-use plastic water bottles being destined for Aruba's landfill
- Gray water is sanitized and used for irrigation
- Healthy Portions sensibly sized meals reduced plated food waste by 30%
- Eco-fitness treadmills and bicycles let guests burn calories while simultaneously generating kilowatts that are sent directly to the resort's power grid
- Streamlined procurement and transportation reduce unnecessary shipments and local purchasing is key
- Staff are incentivized to take public transportation or carpool
- Ozone-based laun-



dry equipment requires shorter cycles to wash, less water and less hot water

- In-room energy management system and sensors. Triggered by motion and doors to regulate energy consumption and limit temperature range. Average savings: 32-38%.
- Waste diversions. 62% diverted from landfill by donating all food waste to pig farmers, recycling glass and cardboard, repurposing/donating linen/towels.

- Sustainable cooling system. Variable Refrigerant Flow A/C installed allowing system use only as needed. In August 2018, it became the Caribbean's first carbon-neutral hotel and remains the only one to this day. The resort does not see this as crossing the finish line, rather the very day after it was certified carbon neutral, it began its pursuit of carbon negative.

Achieving climate neutrality and journeying beyond Bucuti & Tara's sustainability success is one Biemans openly invites others to use as a resource. The property routinely hosts professors, students and researchers just as easily as foreign dignitaries and industry associates seeking knowledge for implementing eco-friendly initiatives.

Continued on Page 10

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort Aruba

Continued from Page 9

Every staff member is trained and part of the resort's green operations, every vendor must comply, and each guest is invited to participate. Even with the current pandemic, Bucuti & Tara's sustainable standard operating procedures put it ahead of others in testing and implementing a hospital-grade, high-tech COVID-19 safety protocol that is as safe for guests and staff as it is the planet.

"I am deeply grateful Bucuti & Tara Beach Re-

sort is the recipient of a Global United Nations 2020 Climate Action Award for Climate Neutral Now," shares Ewald Biemans, owner/CEO of Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort. "I invite every hospitality industry colleague to use us as a resource to start somewhere and make sustainability an equal part of your operations. I guarantee delivering a memorable vacation and sustainability can be – and must be – mutually inclusive."

Upcoming Ceremony

Due to COVID-19, the UN's internationally rec-

ognized, annual Climate Change Conference will feature virtual events for 2021 at the UNFCCC Climate Change Dialogues, taking place Nov. 23 – Dec. 4, 2020. Bucuti & Tara will be recognized in-person at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, is the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference. It is scheduled to be held in Glasgow, Scotland from November 1-12, 2021.

To learn more, visit Bucuti.com. □

The Aruba Tourism Authority publishes its 2021 Tourism Recovery Marketing Plan

ORANJESTAD — The Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) recently published its Corporate Plan for 2021 entitled Tourism Recovery Marketing Plan.

The plan is divided into five sections:

- A description of the evolution of Aruba's tourism sector with reference to past crises.
- A set of Tourism Recovery

Scenarios for both 2020 and 2021.

- The proposed strategic direction for 2021.
- A marketing and promotional plan for 2021.
- A destination development plan focusing on servicing a high value, low impact tourism growth model.

The ATA offers three scenarios for the volume of stopover arrivals for



calendar year 2020.

Aruba received 1,118,944 stopovers in 2019.

- Optimistic – 434,000 stopovers, down 61% compared to 2019.
- Conservative – 374,000 stopovers, down 67% compared to 2019.
- Worst-case – 224,000 stopovers, down 80% compared with 2019.

Through the end of September 2020 Aruba has seen the volume of stopovers fall by 68% compared with the first nine months of 2019. The ATA then offers three scenarios for stopover traffic for calendar year 2021.

- Optimistic – 658,184 stopovers, down 41% compared to 2019.
- Cautiously Optimistic – 611,555 stopovers, down 45% compared to 2019.
- Conservative – 515,190 stopovers, down 54% compared to 2019.

The core of the plan is to target the North American market which is projected to comprise 87% of all stopover arrivals in 2021. The ATA indicates that its recovery goals for 2021 are:

- Recover stopover visitor arrivals to between 45% - 60% when compared to 2019.
- Recover tourism credits (expenditures) to between 45% and 60% when compared to 2019.

- Recover the average daily room rates of the commercial accommodation sector to 75% of the rates achieved in 2019.

- Recover cruise visitor arrivals to between 45% - 67% when compared to 2019.

In 2019 Aruba received 832,001 cruise visitors. The ATA's funding is derived from the hotel room tax and from a levy on arriving air passengers. With the dramatic decline in both air arrivals and hotel stays seen in 2020 the ATA's income is, and will continue to be, substantially less than it received in 2019. Consequently, the ATA states that the successful implementation of its 2021 marketing plan is contingent upon additional funds being provided to the ATA for marketing purposes and further states that with the additional funding, the North American market is projected to recover by 60% when compared to 2019 visitor arrivals. However, without the funding, the recovery would only reach a recovery of 51% of the total achieved by North America in 2019.

Equally, in the event additional funding is not made available for 2021, the budgets for the Latin American and the European markets will be further reduced to a bare minimum, so as to safeguard funding for North America, and for airlift endeavors. □

Source: tourismanalytics.com

Blowout U.S. economic growth in summer is already fading

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Americans may feel whiplashed by a report Thursday on the economy's growth this summer, when an explosive rebound followed an epic collapse.

The government will likely estimate that the economy grew faster on an annualized basis last quarter than in any such period since record-keeping began in 1947.

Just be forewarned: The sizzling pace won't last.

The economy is weakening and facing renewed threats. Confirmed viral cases are surging. Hiring has sagged. Government stimulus has run out. And even last quarter's outsize growth will leave the economy far below its level before the pandemic struck in March. "The strength of this figure is an optical illusion,"

Nancy Vanden Houten, an economist at Oxford Economics, wrote in a research note. "Growth has since slowed, and we expect markedly weaker activity" in the October-December quarter and beyond.

In the last major report on the U.S. economy before Election Day, economists have forecast that growth in the July-September quarter soared to a 31% annual rate, according to data provider FactSet. That would follow a plunge of 31.4% in the April-June period — by far the worst quarterly drop ever — when the eruption of the coronavirus closed businesses and threw tens of millions out of work.

If the analysts' outlook proves roughly accurate, the economy, as of last quarter, will have recovered only a bit more than two-thirds of the output it lost to the pandemic recession. The economy shrank at a 5% annual rate in the first three months of the year.

Mathematically, a bounceback that equals or even slightly exceeds an earlier drop doesn't mean the economy has fully recovered. The reason is that the rebound comes off a small-



A passer-by walks past a store closing sign, right, in the window of a department store, Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020, in Boston.

Associated Press

er numerical base. To use a simple example: A drop from 100 to 70 is a 30% fall. Yet a 30% rebound from 70 gets you only back to 91. You'd need a 43% gain to get back to 100.

There are deeper reasons, too, for viewing Thursday's report on gross domestic product with skepticism. It reflects huge gains last quarter that resulted from simply reopening many businesses after the virus had paralyzed the economy in March and April.

Since August, the economic outlook has darkened as hiring has slowed. Consumers may spend warily during winter. And if the rise in COVID cases were to cause widespread business shutdowns or restrictions, the economy would struggle to sustain a solid recovery. Economists at Goldman Sachs have already slashed their growth forecast for the fourth quarter to a 3% annual rate from 6%. The seven-day rolling average for confirmed new cases in the U.S. soared over the past two weeks from 51,161 to 71,832, according to Johns Hopkins University data, and confirmed infections are rising in 47 states.

"The basic reality is that the

virus remains out of control, and the risks of social and economic activity are maybe even higher than in the spring," said Aaron Sojourner, a labor economist at the University of Minnesota.

Americans are showing growing concern about the economy. Consumer confidence slipped in October after having risen sharply in September. Consumers' outlook for the economy over the next six months fell particularly hard, according to the Conference Board, a business research group.

"There is little to suggest that consumers foresee the economy gaining momentum in the final months of 2020, especially with COVID-19 cases on the rise and unemployment still high," said Lynn Franco, the board's senior director of economic indicators.

The pandemic has also complicated the job hunt for many of the unemployed. One of them is Annette Tayama, who lost an administrative temp job in March. She was fired because she didn't want to return to the office for fear of infecting her 16-year old son, who was recovering from knee surgery. He has

undergone three surgeries this year, including two related to a burst appendix, leaving the family with \$98,000 in medical bills.

Her husband still has his job at a warehouse. And Tayama, who lives near Sacramento, California, at first received a \$600-a-week jobless benefit that Congress provided in a \$2 trillion aid package it passed in the spring. But the \$600 benefit expired in July. Tayama's state jobless aid of \$75 a week has also lapsed. As a consequence, her family has fallen behind on their utility bills, and the medical debt is in collections.

Despite 25 years of experience in office administrative work, Tayama is looking for jobs outside an office, with little or no customer contact, like delivery driving.

"It's just very scary to go back" to an office, she said. "I don't want to be in contact with a lot of people."

But finding work may be a challenge. Though the unemployment rate, at 7.9%, is down significantly from 14.7% at the outset of the pandemic recession, it is still historically high. And hiring has slowed for three straight months. The economy is still roughly 10.7 mil-

lion jobs short of recovering all the 22 million jobs that were lost to the pandemic.

"We bounced off the bottom really aggressively, but since then, there is this deceleration," said Seth Carpenter, chief U.S. economist at UBS. "The big issue is not how big the third quarter rebound is, but how fast is the next phase of the recovery coming?"

Carpenter said he thinks growth is slowing to just a 2.5% annual rate in the current quarter, and that the economy won't return to its pre-pandemic levels of output until late next year or early 2022.

The job market may take longer to fully recover, Carpenter said. Millions have dropped out of the work force and are no longer looking for work, artificially reducing the unemployment rate. They includes many women who have had to leave jobs to care for children now attending school online from home. The proportion of Americans who are either working or looking for work has sunk to 61.4%, the lowest level since 1976.

"That's the real measure from my perspective as to whether we're recovered," Carpenter said. □

AP Explains: The rule that made the modern internet

By BARBARA ORTUTAY

AP Technology Writer

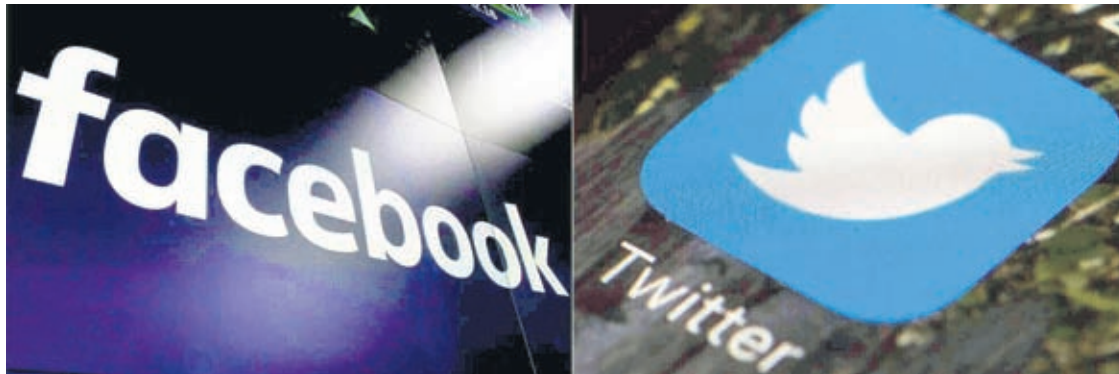
OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) —

Twenty-six words tucked into a 1996 law overhauling telecommunications have allowed companies like Facebook, Twitter and Google to grow into the giants they are today.

Those are the words President Donald Trump's administration has challenged directly via executive order, one that would strip those protections if online platforms engaged in "editorial decisions." The CEOs of the three internet companies face questioning Wednesday by the Senate Commerce Committee about Republican claims of anti-conservative bias.

Beyond questioning the CEOs, senators are expected to examine proposals to revise long-held legal protections for online speech, an immunity that critics in both parties say enables the companies to abdicate their responsibility to impartially moderate content. Under the U.S. law, internet companies are generally exempt from liability for the material users post on their networks. Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act — itself part of a broader telecom law — provides a legal "safe harbor" for internet companies.

But Trump and other poli-



This combination of photos shows logos for social media platforms Facebook and Twitter.

Associated Press

ticians, including Democrats, though for different reasons than Republicans argue that Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms have abused that protection and should lose their immunity — or at least have to earn it by satisfying requirements set by the government.

Section 230 probably can't be easily dismantled. But if it was, the internet as we know it might cease to exist.

QUESTION: Just what is Section 230?

ANSWER: If a news site falsely calls you a swindler, you can sue the publisher for libel. But if someone posts that on Facebook, you can't sue the company — just the person who posted it.

That's thanks to Section 230, which states that "no provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any informa-

tion provided by another information content provider."

That legal phrase shields companies that can host trillions of messages from being sued into oblivion by anyone who feels wronged by something someone else has posted — whether their complaint is legitimate or not. The legal interpretation of section 230 also allows social platforms to moderate their services by removing posts that, for instance, are obscene or violate the services' own standards, so long as they are acting in "good faith."

QUESTION: Where did Section 230 come from?

The measure's history dates back to the 1950s, when bookstore owners were being held liable for selling books containing "obscenity," which is not protected by the First Amendment. One case eventually made it to the Supreme Court, which held that it created

a "chilling effect" to hold someone liable for someone else's content.

That meant plaintiffs had to prove that bookstore owners knew they were selling obscene books, said Jeff Kosseff, the author of "The Twenty-Six Words That Created the Internet," a book about Section 230.

Fast-forward a few decades to when the commercial internet was taking off with services like CompuServe and Prodigy. Both offered online forums, but CompuServe chose not to moderate its, while Prodigy, seeking a family-friendly image, did.

CompuServe was sued over that, and the case was dismissed. Prodigy, however, got in trouble. The judge in their case ruled that "they exercised editorial control — so you're more like a newspaper than a newsstand," Kosseff said.

That didn't sit well with politicians, who worried that

outcome would discourage newly forming internet companies from moderating at all. And Section 230 was born.

"Today it protects both from liability for user posts as well as liability for any claims for moderating content," Kosseff said.

QUESTION: What happens if Section 230 is limited or goes away?

ANSWER: "I don't think any of the social media companies would exist in their current forms without Section 230," Kosseff said. "They have based their business models on being large platforms for user content." There are two possible outcomes. Platforms might get more cautious, as Craigslist did following the 2018 passage of a sex-trafficking law that carved out an exception to Section 230 for material that "promotes or facilitates prostitution." Craigslist quickly removed its "personals" section altogether, which wasn't intended to facilitate sex work. But the company didn't want to take any chances.

"If platforms were not immune under the law, then they would not risk the legal liability that could come with hosting Donald Trump's lies, defamation, and threats," said Kate Ruane, senior legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union. □

Microsoft says Iranian hackers targeted conference attendees



In this Nov. 10, 2016, photo, people walk near a Microsoft office in New York.

Associated Press

REDMOND, Wash. (AP) —

Microsoft says Iranian hackers have posed as

conference organizers in Germany and Saudi Arabia in an attempt to break

into the email accounts of "high-profile" people with spoofed invitations.

The tech company said Wednesday it detected attempts by the hacking group it calls Phosphorus to trick former government officials, policy experts and academics.

The targets included more than 100 prominent people invited by the hackers to the Munich Security Conference, which is attended by world leaders each February, and the upcoming Think 20 Summit, which begins later this week in Saudi Arabia but is online-only this year. "We believe Phosphorus is engaging in these

attacks for intelligence collection purposes," said Tom Burt, Microsoft's security chief, in a prepared statement. "The attacks were successful in compromising several victims, including former ambassadors and other senior policy experts who help shape global agendas and foreign policies in their respective countries."

Microsoft didn't identify the nationalities of the people targeted. It said the activity is unrelated to the upcoming U.S. elections.

Wednesday's announcement refers to the hacking group as an "Iranian actor" but doesn't explicitly tie it

to the Iranian government. Microsoft calls it Phosphorus, while others call it APT35 or Charming Kitten.

The Redmond, Washington tech company has been tracking the group since 2013 and has previously accused it of trying to snoop on activists, journalists, political dissidents, defense industry workers and others in the Middle East.

Cybersecurity researchers have said the group typically tries to infiltrate a target's personal online accounts and computer networks by luring them into clicking on a link to a compromised website or opening a malicious attachment. □

New program allows soldiers to innovate from the bottom up

By SARAH BLAKE MORGAN
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — In combat, U.S. Army Maj. Evan Adams is a tank officer responsible for leading intricate cavalry and reconnaissance operations. But more than a decade ago, he was a graphic design major in college, a skill he put to use in a new Army effort aimed at gathering innovative ideas from within.

On Wednesday, the 18th Airborne Corps announced Adams as the winner of their inaugural Dragon Innovation Challenge. Amid government red tape and military bureaucracy, the "Shark Tank" like competition hopes to harvest new ideas from the bottom up. Col. Joseph Buccino, spokesman for the 18th Airborne Corps, sees this as a way of unlocking hidden, untapped talent.

"Our soldiers see inefficiencies in their daily lives and, in many cases, develop solutions," he said.

The challenge plans to address various shortcomings across the Army. Soldiers have submitted ideas to an online platform detailing solutions for tackling issues such as unit morale, ammunition storage and the behavioral health provider shortage.

The first round of the competition asked soldiers to address the challenges associated with training and

shooting ranges on base. The current software used to do so is more than a decade old.

Of 84 initial submissions, Adams' idea for a mobile application to schedule and



U.S. Army Maj. Evan Adams pitches his idea of a new mobile app to manage training areas on bases in real time on Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020, at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Associated Press

manage gun ranges and land on Army installations across the country in real time took the top spot. □

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Solution on Page 14

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Entertainers discuss disability representation in Hollywood

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

It's an old cliché that if an actor wants to win an Oscar, he or she should consider playing a character with a disability. And it's not entirely unfounded advice: 61 actors have been nominated for playing a character with a disability and 27 have walked away winners. But only two of those actors actually had a disability — Marlee Matlin in "Children of a Lesser God" and Harold Russell in "The Best Years of Our Lives."

That's just one of the things that needs to change, according to a group of entertainment industry professionals with disabilities including actors Danny Woodburn, "A Quiet Place's" Millicent Simmonds and "Peanut Butter Falcon's" Zack Gottsagen. They and other creatives with disabilities, from directors to VFX artists, spoke about the state of representation in front of and behind the camera in series of virtual panels organized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences that debuted Monday night. The panels, funded in part by a grant from the Ruderman Family Foundation, coincides with the 30th anniversary year of the Americans with Disabilities Act. "It would be really helpful to have a disabled (Disney)



In this combination photo, Marlee Matlin, from left, arrives at the 38th Annual Daytime Emmy Awards on June 19th, 2011 in Las Vegas, Millicent Simmonds arrives at the 24th annual Critics' Choice Awards on Jan. 13, 2019, in Santa Monica, Calif., Danny Woodburn attends the premiere of "Dead Ant" on Oct. 10, 2017, in Los Angeles and Maysoon Zayid attends the Women's Media Awards on Oct. 22, 2019, in New York.

Associated Press

princess," said actor and comedian Maysoon Zayid, who has cerebral palsy.

Zayid noted that people with visible and invisible disabilities make up about 20% of the American population but a miniscule number of characters on television and in film.

"The message being sent out to disabled kids is you do not belong in this world," Zayid said. "People with disabilities face enormous amounts of bullying, violence and discrimination. Positive images of disability can stop that."

Part of that is casting actors with disabilities to play characters with disabilities. Simmonds, who is deaf, said she's had to go up against non-disabled actors for disabled roles. She recalled that her "A Quiet Place" director John Kra-

sinski had to fight to cast a deaf actor and that producers wanted someone who was hearing.

"Deaf roles should be played by deaf actors," she said through an interpreter. At times she's even taken it a step forward to advocate for herself.

"I'm not above calling directors or producers and suggesting that they have a deaf actress for a particular role," she said.

But another part of the equation is giving actors rich and nuanced storylines that go beyond the three they usually get: "You can't love me because I'm disabled," "heal me" or "kill me," said Zayid.

Woodburn, who has dwarfism, remembers watching actors like Michael Dunn when he was young and seeing only stereotypes

and tropes like the "sad little man" or the "devious little man" and storylines that were the same.

There is also the issue of working and how productions can be more accommodating to people with disabilities both on screen and behind the scenes. Many noted that they don't want to ask for special accommodations.

"Adam Sandler saw and said, 'What is happening? Make her trailer accessible!' I said I didn't want to be high maintenance," she said.

"He said 'look around, we're in Hollywood.'"

Jim LeBrecht, who directed the Netflix documentary "Crip Camp," said it could help if the industry rethought its own barriers to entry, like starting as a production assistant who has

to carry 14 cups of coffee and work 20 hour days to get a foot in the door.

"Instead of asking what you won't be able to do, ask is there anything I can do to help you do the best work you can," LeBrecht said.

"None of us got to your door by being oversensitive and mad at everybody...we are comfortable with our disability."

VFX supervisor Kaitlyn Yang said that people with disabilities can be particularly effective in post-production roles. She's also found a silver-lining in the video conferencing realities of COVID-era filmmaking: She doesn't have to wonder now if she should address her wheelchair.

"Video conferencing is taking away the uncomfortableness that people might have if I were to take a meeting and roll into the conference room," Yang said. "It puts us on an equal playing field."

Talent manager Eryn Brown hopes that disability representation reach the same level of discussion as LGBTQ and racial and ethnic diversity. She said the ingrained stigma around it has even made her reticent to discuss it with her clients.

"A raised awareness in this moment of cultural reckoning is imperative," Brown said. "Anyone at any moment can become disabled so it's in everyone's best interests in the world to be accommodating."

The film academy, which puts on the Oscars, has been working to increase diversity in its own ranks and in the industry and recently set inclusion standards for best picture nominees. □

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Questlove's quest: To find woman who bought him a turntable

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Ahmir Thompson, founder of The Roots and drummer for the "Tonight Show" band, wants to find the kind stranger who bought him a turntable and several records at the tender age of 5. Thompson — better known as Questlove — posted on social media that he was traveling with his parents, who made their living playing gigs, when he made friends with "Ellie" in 1976 in Portland, Maine.

"Being the irresistible cat that I was, I talked an older woman named Ellie into buying me a stereo and a record collection," Questlove posted on Facebook and Instagram.

Ellie wrote the youngster's order on a napkin: "Bad Blood" by Neil Sedaka, "Dance With Me" by Rufus, and the Jackson 5.

"I knew talking to strangers was a no-no, but my instincts paid off," he wrote. His parents were upset that he'd been chatting



Questlove arrives at the Oscars on Sunday, Feb. 24, 2019, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

up a stranger when Ellie returned the next day bearing gifts.

But he says his new friend told his parents "please

don't have him get in trouble on my behalf!! He's so cute of course I wanted to start his record collection!!!" □

Fitting finale: Dodgers win title, Turner tests positive

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**

AP Baseball Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)

— No large dogpile, no champagne and a mask on nearly every face — the Los Angeles Dodgers celebrated their first World Series title since 1988 in a manner no one could have imagined prior to the coronavirus pandemic.

They started the party without Justin Turner, too, after their red-headed star received word of a positive COVID-19 test in the middle of their clinching victory.

Turner was removed from Los Angeles' 3-1 win over the Tampa Bay Rays in Game 6 on Tuesday night after registering Major League Baseball's first positive test in 59 days. He wasn't on the field initially as the Dodgers enjoyed the spoils of a title earned during a most unusual season.

He returned to the diamond about an hour after the game, hugging longtime teammate Clayton Kershaw and sitting front-and-center for a team photo next to manager Dave Roberts with his mask pulled down under his bushy beard.

"Thanks to everyone reaching out!" Turner said on Twitter. "I feel great, no symptoms at all. Just experienced every emotion you can possibly imagine. Can't believe I couldn't be out there to celebrate with my guys! So proud of this team & unbelievably happy for the City of LA."

Major League Baseball insulated postseason teams in neutral-site bubbles after traveling them across the country during a shortened 60-game season. Turner was the first player since the playoffs began to be flagged for the coronavirus.

MLB received Turner's Monday sample from the Sports Medicine Research and Testing Laboratory in Utah in the bottom of the second inning, when lab president Dr. Daniel Eichner called deputy commissioner Dan Halem, who was in New York, a person familiar with the call said, speaking to The Associ-

ated Press on condition of anonymity because details were not released. Eichner told Halem the result was inconclusive. MLB receives many inconclusive results, so Halem told Eichner to run Tuesday's pregame sample from Turner. That result came back positive in the sixth inning, the person said. Halem called Chris Young, MLB's senior vice president of baseball operations, who was in Manfred's box at Globe Life Field, then called Dodgers president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman. He notified the dugout or clubhouse, and Turner was removed from the game after the seventh inning.

"It was obviously a really unfortunate endpoint of this incredible series and definitely affected some of the joy of winning just because of what JT has meant to us," Friedman said.

When asked about what happened after the game, Friedman said Turner wanted to take a picture with the trophy. Friedman stated several times that those around Turner had previously been in close contact and said the team would take another round of tests before determining when to leave Texas.

"Now the subsequent tests we're going to take are really important," Friedman said.

The 35-year-old Turner has been a staple in the Dodgers' lineup for seven of their eight consecutive NL West titles. A late-blooming slugger who helped reshape the game by succeeding with an upper-cut swing, Turner is LA's career leader with 12 postseason home runs, including a pair in this Series, in which he hit .364 and also played stellar defense.

"It's gut-wrenching," World Series MVP Corey Seager said. "If I could switch places with him right now, I would. That's just not right." "We're not excluding him from anything," teammate Mookie Betts said.

Commissioner Rob Manfred confirmed Turner's positive test moments after presenting the World Se-

ries trophy to Los Angeles — a jarring reminder of all that's been different in this season where the perennially favored Dodgers finally broke through.

The end of a frustrating championship drought for LA — and perhaps just the start for Betts and the Dodgers, whose seventh World Series title was their sixth since leaving Brooklyn for the West Coast in 1958.

"I had a crazy feeling that came to fruition," Roberts said. "It's just a special group of players, organiza-



Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts and third baseman Justin Turner pose for a group picture after the Dodgers defeated the Tampa Bay Rays 3-1 in Game 6 to win the baseball World Series, Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020, in Arlington, Texas.

Associated Press

tion, all that we've kind of overcome."

Betts bolted from third for the go-ahead run on Seager's grounder in the sixth, even with the infield playing in, then had a punctuating homer leading off the eighth.

"It was absolutely phenomenal. This team was incredible," said Seager, also the NLCS MVP who set franchise records with his eight homers and 20 RBIs this postseason. "We were ready to go as soon as the bell was called. Once it did, we kept rolling."

Kershaw was warming in the bullpen when Julio Urías struck out Willy Adames to end it and ran alongside teammates to celebrate in the infield, later joined by family who had been in the bubble with them in North Texas.

Players were handed face masks as they gathered, although many of their embraces came mask-free even after Turner's positive test.

The Dodgers had played 5,014 regular-season games and were in their 114th postseason game since Orel Hershiser struck out Oakland's Tony Phillips for the final out of the World Series in 1988, the same year Kershaw — the three-time NL Cy Young Award winner who won Games 1 and 5 of this Series — was born in nearby Dallas.

Los Angeles had come up short in the World Series twice in the previous three years. Betts was on the other side two years ago and

in the league," Cash said. "Mookie coming around for the third time through, I value that. I totally respect and understand the questions that come with it. They're not easy decisions." Randy Arozarena, the powerful Tampa Bay rookie, extended his postseason record with his 10th homer in the first off rookie right-hander Tony Gonsolin, the first of seven Dodgers pitchers. The Rays never got another runner past second base as LA's bullpen gave reliever-reliant Tampa Bay a taste of its own medicine while allowing only two hits and no walks over 7 1/3 innings.

About 2 1/2 weeks after the Lakers won the NBA title while finishing their season in the NBA bubble in Orlando, Florida, the Dodgers gave Los Angeles another championship.

The MLB season didn't start until late July and was abbreviated for the shortest regular season since 1878. The expanded postseason, with 16 teams making it instead of 10, ended when Urías got the last two outs on called third strikes, with catcher Austin Barnes stuffing the last pitch in his back pocket. The Rays had 16 Ks and the Dodgers 11, the most combined strikeouts in a nine-inning World Series game.

Chants of "M-V-P!, M-V-P!" broke out when Betts hit his double in the sixth off reliever Nick Anderson, who allowed runs in seven consecutive relief appearances, the longest streak in MLB postseason history. Those chants got even louder — even with the limited crowd of 11,437 — when Betts went deep on an 0-2 pitch by hard-throwing right-hander Pete Fairbanks.

There were plenty of fans in Dodgers blue at the new \$1.2 billion home of the Texas Rangers, the stadium with the retractable roof where they played 16 games over three weeks. And the roof was closed for the final one, with misty conditions and a game-time temperature of 39 degrees outside. □

Breeders' Cup Classic may feature Triple Crown race winners

By **BETH HARRIS**
AP Racing Writer

Kentucky Derby winner Authentic heads a field of 11 horses, possibly including filly and Preakness winner Swiss Skydiver against males, for the Breeders' Cup Classic, with trainer Bob Baffert entering three horses in the \$6 million race that includes Belmont winner Tiz the Law.

Besides Authentic, second to Swiss Skydiver in the Preakness, Baffert has Improbable and Maximum Security in the 1 1/4-mile Classic at Keeneland in Lexington, Kentucky. The Hall of Fame trainer has won the race a record three times.

Baffert is glad horse racing is getting to stage its world championships in a year where sports have been turned upside down by the coronavirus. When the pandemic struck in mid-March, racing was shut down in hard-hit California.

"It was looking so gloomy. I feel really fortunate that we got to reopen and this is happening," Baffert said. "Don't complain and just enjoy that we're running. That's one thing I learned from it."

Baffert is the all-time leader among trainers in Breeders' Cup earnings with over \$30 million. He's currently under the microscope for multiple positive drug tests involving some of his horses, including filly Gamine, who is pre-



In this June 20, 2020, file photo, Tiz the Law, center, with jockey Manny Franco up, crosses the finish line to win the 152nd running of the Belmont Stakes horse race at Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y.

Associated Press

entered in the \$1 million Filly & Mare Sprint.

The Classic field was among a total of 201 horses pre-entered Wednesday for the \$28 million, 14-race world championships on Nov. 6-7. "What I love about the Breeders' Cup is it's all about the best horses and best jockeys," Baffert said. Swiss Skydiver is also pre-entered in the Distaff, for which she is first preference to run against her own gender.

"That's the first logical choice," trainer Ken McPeck said of the Distaff. "It isn't a decision set in stone yet. We're not going to rule out the other race."

McPeck said he likes his filly at the Classic distance of 1 1/4 miles and noted she would receive a break in the weights in that race. In the 1 1/8-mile Distaff, Monomoy Girl is expected to be the heavy favorite. Swiss Skydiver has five graded stakes wins at as many different tracks. She defeated males in the Preakness on Oct. 3. If Swiss Skydiver runs in the Classic, she would try to become the first female to win the race since superstar Zenyatta did so 11 years ago.

"She's just a real tough filly. It seems every race she seems to keep coming at them stronger and stron-

ger," McPeck said.

Tiz the Law won the Belmont, which opened this year's reconfigured Triple Crown, and then finished second to Authentic in the Kentucky Derby for his lone defeat this year.

Others entered in the Classic are: By My Standards, Global Campaign, Higher Power, Tacitus, Title Ready, and Tom's d'Etat.

"It looks like a tremendous race," said Jack Knowlton, owner of Tiz the Law. "Just about everyone recognizes there's not an awful lot that's going to separate the top horses."

In the \$2 million Juvenile, whose winner is tabbed as

the winter Kentucky Derby favorite, 14 were pre-entered.

Steve Asmussen, McPeck and Dale Romans each have two entries; Baffert and Todd Pletcher have one each.

Keeneland is hosting the richest two days in North American racing for a second time. As it was with the Triple Crown races, no fans will be allowed on site because of the coronavirus.

Trainer John Gosden will send his best horses, but the 69-year-old Brit will stay home.

"With everything going on, I've got a lot to run here," he said. "It's been a bit of a nightmare year."

A total of 39 foreign horses were pre-entered. Trainer Aidan O'Brien is bringing 10 horses from Ireland, which imposed a 14-day quarantine on incoming visitors.

"The Breeders' Cup is the championship race of the whole season worldwide," O'Brien said. "Very important for everyone to keep making a living."

O'Brien has two pre-entries in the \$4 million Turf: Magical and Mogul. He's won the race six times.

Final entries and the post-position draw will be Monday.

The world championships will open with five races for juveniles in what's billed as Future Stars Friday on Nov. 6, followed by nine races on Nov. 7. □

Roglic wins 8th stage of Vuelta, closes gap to Carapaz



Jumbo's Primoz Roglic, celebrates after winning the eight stage of La Vuelta between Logroño and Alto de Moncalvillo, in Logroño, northern Spain, Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020.

Associated Press

ALTO DE MONCALVILLO, Spain (AP) — Defending champion Primoz Roglic made a strong attack on

the demanding final climb to win the eighth stage of the Spanish Vuelta on Wednesday, closing the gap to overall leader Richard Carapaz.

Roglic finished 13 seconds in front of Carapaz on the 164-kilometer (102-mile) stage from Logroño to the Alto de Moncalvillo.

"It was a boring slow start but then the pace went up and it was super hard and fast after the second last climb," Roglic said. "If there's an opportunity, I take it."

Luckily I had the legs and I'm happy to win. It's also

nice to get some time back but most of all it's just nice to win the race."

The Jumbo-Visma rider moved from fourth to second in the overall standings, closing to within 13 seconds of Carapaz, who rides for Ineos.

"It's been a very animated stage and we've seen a strong Roglic, but we're still in the fight," Carapaz said.

"The truth is this duel has been quite nice and it motivates me because it makes it more for an exciting race, mostly for the fans but also for us with the level we're riding at. It seems like

we have a couple of easier days ahead of us but we're racing and we don't know what's coming."

Dan Martin, of team Israel Start-Up Nation, was third on Wednesday and is also third overall, 28 seconds off the lead.

On Thursday, riders will face a flat 157-kilometer (97-mile) stage that will favor the sprinters.

The Vuelta is taking place amid tight health restrictions as Spain endures a surge in coronavirus cases. The race was postponed from earlier in the year because of the pandemic. □