|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Jihad ReportAug 01, 2020 -Aug 07, 2020 | |
| Attacks | **38** |
| Killed | **221** |
| Injured | **141** |
| Suicide Blasts | **2** |
| Countries |  |

Well, North Carolina started its week with a hurricane and ended it with an earthquake. I think we’re going to have a great month.

**Flynn Letter**

We are witnessing a vicious assault by enemies of all that is good, and our president is having to act in ways unprecedented in decades, maybe centuries.

(Article by Michael Flynn republished from [WesternJournal.com](https://www.westernjournal.com/exclusive-gen-flynn-letter-america/))

The biblical nature of good versus evil cannot be discounted as we examine what is happening on the streets of America.

It’s Marxism in the form of [antifa](https://www.westernjournal.com/ted-cruz-kicks-off-antifa-hearing-video-groups-violent-reality/) and the [Black Lives Matter](https://www.westernjournal.com/lone-nba-player-refuses-kneel-doesnt-wear-blm-shirt-gives-perfect-response-critics/) movement versus our very capable and very underappreciated law enforcement professionals, the vast majority of whom are fighting to provide us safe and secure homes, streets and communities.

When the destiny of the United States is at stake, and it is, the very future of the entire world is threatened.

As [Christians](https://www.westernjournal.com/christians-get-around-newsom-church-lockdown-5000-show-ca-beach-worship/), shouldn’t we act? We recognize that divine Providence is the ultimate judge of our destiny. Achieving our destiny as a freedom-loving nation, Providence compels us to do our part in our communities.

It encourages us in this battle against the forces of evil to face our fears head-on. No enemy on earth is stronger than the united forces of God-fearing, freedom-loving people.

We can no longer pretend that these dark forces are going to go away by mere prayer alone. [Prayers](https://www.westernjournal.com/1000-christians-gather-pray-riots-continue-across-country/) matter, but action is required.

This action is needed at the local, state and federal levels. Action is also required in the economic, media, clerical and ecclesiastical realms.

Decide how you can act within your abilities. Stand up and state your beliefs. Be proud of who you are and what you stand for. And face, head-on, those community “leaders” who are willing to allow dark forces to go beyond peaceful protests and destroy and violate your safety and security.

Churches and houses of worship must return to normal. We invite everyone of goodwill to not shirk their responsibilities and instead act in a fraternal fashion. If for no other reason or with no other ability, act in a spirit of charity.

We cannot disrespect or disregard natural law along with our own religious liberties and freedoms.

I am witnessing elderly people lose their connection to all that is good in their lives: connections to their faith, their families and their individual freedoms, especially the simple act of [attending church](https://www.westernjournal.com/john-macarthur-issues-stark-reminder-church-christ-not-caesar-head-church/), something they’ve been doing for decades.

Let us not be intimidated or fear those who cry out that we are in the minority; we are not.

Good is always more powerful and will prevail over evil.

However, evil will succeed for a time when good people are divided from each other and their personal lives — children away from their teachers, preachers from their congregations, customers from their local businesses.

America will never give in to evil. Americans work together to solve problems.

We do not and should not ever allow anarchy and the evil forces behind it to operate on any street in our nation.

No one should have to fear for their very life because some dark, disturbed force is challenged by the very essence of what America stands for.

We are “one nation under God” and it is our [individual liberties](https://www.westernjournal.com/de-blasio-trashes-1st-amend-says-protests-church-apples-oranges/) that make us strong, not liberties given to our government. Our government has no liberty unless and until “we the people” say so.

God bless America and let’s stand by everything that was and is good in our lives, in our communities and in our country.

Otherwise, America as the true North Star for humanity will cease to exist as we know it.

**The Truth about Hiroshima**

[*Authored by John Denson via The Mises Institute,*](https://mises.org/library/hiroshima-myth)

***Every year during the first two weeks of August the mass news media and many politicians at the national level trot out the "patriotic" political myth that the dropping of the two atomic bombs on Japan in August of 1945 caused them to surrender, and thereby saved the lives of anywhere from five hundred thousand to 1 million American soldiers, who did not have to invade the islands.***

*[](https://www.zerohedge.com/s3/files/inline-images/bomb1_0.png?itok=3aH3DT8s)*

***Opinion polls over the last fifty years show that American citizens overwhelmingly (between 80 and 90 percent) believe this false history which, of course, makes them feel better about killing hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians (mostly women and children) and saving American lives to accomplish the ending of the war.***

The best book, in my opinion, to explode this myth is *The Decision to Use the Bomb* by Gar Alperovitz, because it not only explains the real reasons the bombs were dropped, but also gives a detailed history of how and why the myth was created that this slaughter of innocent civilians was justified, and therefore morally acceptable. The essential problem starts with President Franklin Roosevelt's policy of unconditional surrender, which was reluctantly adopted by Churchill and Stalin, and which President Truman decided to adopt when he succeeded Roosevelt in April of 1945. Hanson Baldwin was the principal writer for the *New York Times* who covered World War II and he wrote an important book immediately after the war entitled *Great Mistakes of the War*. Baldwin concludes that **the unconditional surrender policy**

***was perhaps the biggest political mistake of the war****….Unconditional surrender was an open invitation to unconditional resistance; it discouraged opposition to Hitler, probably lengthened the war, cost us lives, and helped to lead to the present aborted peace.*

**The stark fact is that the Japanese leaders, both military and civilian, including the emperor, were willing to surrender in May of 1945 if the emperor could remain in place and not be subjected to a war crimes trial after the war.** This fact became known to President Truman as early as May of 1945. The Japanese monarchy was one of the oldest in all of history, dating back to 660 BC. The Japanese religion added the belief that all the emperors were the direct descendants of the sun goddess, Amaterasu. The reigning Emperor Hirohito was the 124th in the direct line of descent. After the bombs were dropped on August 6 and 9 of 1945, and their surrender soon thereafter, the Japanese were allowed to keep their emperor on the throne and he was not subjected to any war crimes trial. **The emperor, Hirohito, came on the throne in 1926 and continued in his position until his death in 1989. Since President Truman, in effect, accepted the conditional surrender offered by the Japanese as early as May of 1945, the question is posed, "Why then were the bombs dropped?"**

The author Alperovitz gives us the answer in great detail which can only be summarized here, but he states,

*We have noted a series of Japanese peace feelers in Switzerland which OSS Chief William Donovan reported to Truman in May and June [1945]. These suggested, even at this point, that the U.S. demand for unconditional surrender might well be the only serious obstacle to peace. At the center of the explorations, as we also saw, was Allen Dulles, chief of OSS [Office of Strategic Services] operations in Switzerland (and subsequently Director of the CIA). In his 1966 book The Secret Surrender, Dulles recalled that "On July 20, 1945, under instructions from Washington, I went to the Potsdam Conference and reported there to Secretary [of War] Stimson on what I had learned from Tokyo — they desired to surrender if they could retain the Emperor and their constitution as a basis for maintaining discipline and order in Japan after the devastating news of surrender became known to the Japanese people."*

It is documented by Alperovitz that Stimson reported this directly to Truman. Alperovitz further points out in detail the documentary proof that **every top presidential civilian and military advisor, with the exception of James Byrnes, along with Prime Minister Churchill and his top British military leadership, urged Truman to revise the unconditional surrender policy so as to allow the Japanese to surrender and keep their emperor.** All this advice was given to Truman prior to the Potsdam Proclamation which occurred on July 26, 1945. This proclamation made a final demand upon Japan to surrender unconditionally or suffer drastic consequences.

Another startling fact about the military connection to the dropping of the bomb is the lack of knowledge on the part of General MacArthur about the existence of the bomb and whether it was to be dropped. Alperovitz states,

***MacArthur knew nothing about advance planning for the atomic bomb's use until almost the last minute.****Nor was he personally in the chain of command in this connection; the order came straight from Washington. Indeed, the War Department waited until five days before the bombing of Hiroshima even to notify MacArthur — the commanding general of the U.S. Army Forces in the Pacific — of the existence of the atomic bomb.*

**Alperovitz makes it very clear that the main person Truman was listening to while he ignored all of this civilian and military advice was James Byrnes, the man who virtually controlled Truman at the beginning of his administration.**Byrnes was one of the most experienced political figures in Washington, having served for over thirty years in both the House and the Senate. He had also served as a United States Supreme Court Justice, and at the request of President Roosevelt, he resigned that position and accepted the role in the Roosevelt administration of managing the domestic economy. Byrnes went to the Yalta Conference with Roosevelt and then was given the responsibility to get Congress and the American people to accept the agreements made at Yalta.

**When Truman became a senator in 1935, Byrnes immediately became his friend and mentor and remained close to Truman until Truman became president.** Truman never forgot this and immediately called on Byrnes to be his number-two man in the new administration. Byrnes had expected to be named the vice presidential candidate [to FDR] to replace [Henry A.] Wallace and had been disappointed when Truman had been named, yet he and Truman remained very close. Byrnes had also been very close to Roosevelt, while Truman was kept in the dark by Roosevelt most of the time he served as vice president. Truman asked Byrnes immediately, in April, to become his secretary of state but they delayed the official appointment until July 3, 1945, so as not to offend the incumbent. Byrnes had also accepted a position on the interim committee which had control over the policy regarding the atom bomb, and therefore, in April 1945 became Truman's main foreign policy advisor, and especially the advisor on the use of the atomic bomb. It was Byrnes who encouraged Truman to postpone the Potsdam Conference and his meeting with Stalin until they could know, at the conference, if the atomic bomb was successfully tested. **While at the Potsdam Conference the experiments proved successful and Truman advised Stalin that a new massively destructive weapon was now available to America, which Byrnes hoped would make Stalin back off from any excessive demands or activity in the postwar period.**

Truman secretly gave the orders on July 25, 1945, that the bombs would be dropped in August while he was to be en route back to America. On July 26, he issued the Potsdam Proclamation, or ultimatum, to Japan to surrender, leaving in place the unconditional surrender policy, thereby causing both Truman and Byrnes to believe that the terms would not be accepted by Japan.

**The conclusion drawn unmistakably from the evidence presented is that Byrnes is the man who convinced Truman to keep the unconditional surrender policy and not accept Japan's surrender so that the bombs could actually be dropped, thereby demonstrating to the Russians that America had a new forceful leader in place**, a "new sheriff in Dodge" who, unlike Roosevelt, was going to be tough with the Russians on foreign policy and that the Russians needed to "back off" during what would become known as the "Cold War."

**A secondary reason was that Congress would now be told about why they had made the secret appropriation to a Manhattan Project and the huge expenditure would be justified** by showing that not only did the bombs work but that they would bring the war to an end, make the Russians back off, and enable America to become the most powerful military force in the world.

If the surrender by the Japanese had been accepted between May and the end of July of 1945 and the emperor had been left in place, as in fact he was after the bombing, this would have kept Russia out of the war. Russia agreed at Yalta to come into the Japanese war three months after Germany surrendered. In fact, Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945, and Russia announced on August 8, (exactly three months thereafter) that it was abandoning its neutrality policy with Japan and entering the war. Russia's entry into the war for six days allowed them to gain tremendous power and influence in China, Korea, and other key areas of Asia. The Japanese were deathly afraid of communism and if the Potsdam Proclamation had indicated that America would accept the conditional surrender allowing the emperor to remain in place and informed the Japanese that Russia would enter the war if they did not surrender, then this would surely have assured a quick Japanese surrender.

The second question that Alperovitz answers in the last half of the book is how and ***why the Hiroshima myth was created.*** The story of the myth begins with the person of James B. Conant, the president of Harvard University, who was a prominent scientist, having initially made his mark as a chemist working on poison gas during World War I.

During World War II, he was chairman of the National Defense Research Committee from the summer of 1941 until the end of the war and he was one of the central figures overseeing the Manhattan Project. Conant became concerned about his future academic career, as well as his positions in private industry, because various people began to speak out concerning why the bombs were dropped.

**On September 9, 1945, Admiral William F. Halsey, commander of the Third Fleet, was publically quoted extensively as stating that the atomic bomb was used because the scientists had a "toy and they wanted to try it out." He further stated,*"The first atomic bomb was an unnecessary experiment….It was a mistake to ever drop it."*** Albert Einstein, one of the world's foremost scientists, who was also an important person connected with the development of the atomic bomb, responded and his words were headlined in the *New York Times*: "Einstein Deplores Use of Atom Bomb." The story reported that Einstein stated that "A great majority of scientists were opposed to the sudden employment of the atom bomb." In Einstein's judgment, the dropping of the bomb was a political-diplomatic decision rather than a military or scientific decision.

Probably the person closest to Truman, from the military standpoint, was**Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral William Leahy, and there was much talk that he also deplored the use of the bomb and had strongly advised Truman not to use it**, but advised rather to revise the unconditional surrender policy so that the Japanese could surrender and keep the emperor. Leahy's views were later reported by Hanson Baldwin in an interview that Leahy "thought the business of recognizing the continuation of the Emperor was a detail which should have been solved easily." Leahy's secretary, Dorothy Ringquist, reported that Leahy told her on the day the Hiroshima bomb was dropped,***"Dorothy, we will regret this day. The United States will suffer, for war is not to be waged on women and children."***Another important naval voice, the commander in chief of the US Fleet and chief of naval operations, Ernest J. King, stated that the naval blockade and prior bombing of Japan in March of 1945 had rendered the Japanese helpless and that the use of the atomic bomb was both unnecessary and immoral. Also, the opinion of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, given in a press conference on September 22, 1945, was reported as: "The Admiral took the opportunity of adding his voice to those insisting that Japan had been defeated before the atomic bombing and Russia's entry into the war." In a subsequent speech at the Washington Monument **on October 5, 1945, Admiral Nimitz stated, "The Japanese had, in fact, already sued for peace before the atomic age was announced to the world with the destruction of Hiroshima and before the Russian entry into the war."**

**NEVER MISS THE NEWS THAT MATTERS MOST**

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It was learned also that on or about July 20, 1945, General Eisenhower had urged Truman, in a personal visit, not to use the atomic bomb. Eisenhower's assessment was, ***"It wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing….[T]o use the atomic bomb, to kill and terrorize civilians, without even attempting [negotiations], was a double crime."*** Eisenhower also stated that it wasn't necessary for Truman to "succumb" to Byrnes.

***James Conant came to the conclusion that some important person in the administration must go public to show that the dropping of the bombs was a military necessity,*** thereby saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers, so he approached Harvey Bundy and his son, McGeorge Bundy. It was agreed by them that the most important person to create this myth was Secretary of War Henry Stimson. It was decided that Stimson would write a long article to be widely circulated in a prominent national magazine. This article was revised repeatedly by McGeorge Bundy and Conant before it was published in *Harper's* *Magazine*in February of 1947. **The long article became the subject of a front-page article and editorial in the *New York Times,*and in the editorial it was stated, "There can be no doubt that the president and Mr. Stimson are right when they mention that the bomb caused the Japanese to surrender."** Later, in 1959, President Truman specifically endorsed this conclusion, including the idea that it saved the lives of a million American soldiers. This myth has been renewed annually by the news media and various political leaders ever since.

It is very pertinent that in the memoir of Henry Stimson entitled *On Active Service in Peace and War*,he states, ***"Unfortunately, I have lived long enough to know that history is often not what actually happened but what is recorded as such."***

To bring this matter more into focus from the human tragedy standpoint, I recommend the reading of a book entitled *Hiroshima Diary: The Journal of a Japanese Physician, August 6–September 30, 1945,*by Michiko Hachiya. He was a survivor of Hiroshima and kept a daily diary about the women, children, and old men that he treated on a daily basis in the hospital. The doctor was badly injured himself but recovered enough to help others and his account of the personal tragedies of innocent civilians who were either badly burned or died as a result of the bombing puts the moral issue into a clear perspective for all of us to consider.

Now that we live in the nuclear age and there are enough nuclear weapons spread around the world to destroy civilization, we need to face the fact that America is the only country to have used this awful weapon and that it was unnecessary to have done so. ***If Americans would come to recognize the truth, rather than the myth, it might cause such a moral revolt that we would take the lead throughout the world in realizing that wars in the future may well become nuclear and therefore all wars must be avoided at almost any cost.*** Hopefully, our knowledge of science has not outrun our ability to exercise prudent and humane moral and political judgment to the extent that we are destined for extermination.

**The Plot to Smash the Trump Economy**

**From the beginning of time, humans have used mythology to make sense of a chaotic natural world.** Myths are actually “the science of a pre-scientific age.” Folklore provided pre-scientific people a comforting sense of control over nature. To address dry spells, they deployed rain dances. Sunless stretches hindering crops prompted offerings to Helios. Then, our ancestors sat back and waited. The rains always came. The sun always reappeared, validating their “wisdom,” the illusion of control reinforced.

**Thanks to science, we know this was pure superstition. But we still fall for them.** Though the same outcomes would have occurred had the tribe taken no action, the tribe’s leader would still have received credit or blame from his constituents. In truth, there is no way to go back and see what the Trump economy would have done with no lockdown. We cannot run the clock back, redeposit all the losses, or restart all the semesters of school anymore than we can get those 150 thousand dead back.

**Similarly, today’s politicians knock out and climb over one another to take credit - or place blame - for COVID-19 “results.” Do politicians really control these outcomes, or are they simply exploiting our ingrained tendencies?**

When China first deployed lockdown in January to “defeat COVID-19,” The Washington Post approvingly quoted a Georgetown University professor [as saying](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/corona-simulator/),

***“The truth is those kinds of lockdowns are very rare and never effective…”***

In March, Imperial College London's dire projections influenced the White House, but a careful reading of the advice contained in the Imperial College report reveals that its authors knew **lockdown alone could not eliminate any infections, only delay them**:

*“The more successful a strategy is at temporary suppression,”*[*it stated*](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/medicine/sph/ide/gida-fellowships/Imperial-College-COVID19-NPI-modelling-16-03-2020.pdf)*, “the larger the later epidemic is predicted to be in the absence of vaccination,****due to lesser build-up of herd immunity.”***

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention pandemic planning documents state **non-pharmaceutical interventions such as social distancing are ineffective once a disease infects 1% of a region's population.** Literature on this subject is unanimous worldwide. [According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/guide-public-health-measures-reduce-impact-influenza-pandemics-europe-ecdc-menu):

*“****There are no historical observations or scientific studies that support the confinement by quarantine of groups of possibly infected people for extended periods in order to slow the spread.***

*It is hard to imagine that measures like those within the category of social distancing would not have some positive impact by reducing transmission of a human respiratory infection...*

*However, the evidence base supporting each individual measure is often weak.”*

**Decades of evidence corroborates this.** In 1969, a group of men overwintering in Antarctica experienced a spontaneous respiratory virus outbreak during their 17th week of isolation. [Similarly](https://www.batimes.com.ar/news/argentina/surprise-over-covid-19-cases-onboard-fishing-vessel-after-35-days-at-sea.phtml), COVID-19 appeared on an Argentinian naval ship on the 35th day of its voyage, following a 14-day isolation of captain and crew.

**Nature always finds a way.**

Although the CCP virus can be traced to a single lab and to a very short list of scientists, including Dr. Falsi, where this could have originated, we still have the same conclusion. The Trump economy was smashed without firing a single shot. I warned you. For almost a year I warned you that the bomb was in play, and that you shouldbe prepared for a shutdown, and that you should watch your eyes.

In fact, no lockdown every stopped a respiratory disease from spreading.  Every flu season, the virus of the day races around the world in a matter of hours, and NiQuil is bought up by the barrels. The commercials are expertly timed to meet the demand.

The only thing that has ever stopped a virus is [herd immunity](https://www.spiked-online.com/2020/04/29/delaying-herd-immunity-is-costing-lives/), preferably sooner than later, preferably developed by the young and healthy to minimize mortality. Unfortunately, with the CCP virus, it attacks primarily the old and the infirm. In many cases their immune systems are what kill them, indirectly allowing pneumonia to bloom and poison their bloodstreams.

Politicians know the disease will eventually leave, yet they strive to convince a critical mass that their actions -- modern-day versions of the rain dance -- brought about that result. Wrose, they attribute the ravages of the disease to one demon or another, in this case Donald Trump, to accomplish their goals through hysteria and mayhem.

They count on us behaving like renowned psychologist B.F. Skinner’s superstitious pigeons.

*“A pigeon is … put into a cage. A food hopper may be swung into place … so that the pigeon can eat from it … If a clock is [set] to present the hopper at regular intervals with no reference whatsoever to the bird’s behavior, operant conditioning usually takes place. The bird tends to learn whatever response it is making when the hopper appears.*[*The experiment*](https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1948-04299-001)*might be said to demonstrate a sort of superstition. The bird dances, or coos, or flaps its wings, or scratches at the floor as if there were a causal relation between its behavior and the presentation of food, although such a relation is lacking.” Humans do exactly the same thing.*

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Publicly available data shows no causal relationship between government orders and COVID-19 mortality outcomes.

Sweden's [all-cause, per-capita mortality for 2020](https://www.scb.se/en/finding-statistics/statistics-by-subject-area/population/population-composition/population-statistics) is approximately 290 per millionabove the prior five-year average, while [lockdown-loving New Jersey's](https://nj.gov/health/chs/documents/2015-2020%20Deaths%20by%20Month%20and%20County%20of%20Residence.pdf) is almost 1,900 per million above the prior five-year average, and [Michigan's](https://www.mdch.state.mi.us/osr/Provisional/MontlyDxCounts.asp) is over 700 per million. *(In case you suspect Sweden “naturally” locked down on its own, mobility data reveals it didn’t.)*

The mainstream media does not report this. Instead, its energetic smearing of Sweden, coupled with its pseudo-scientific insistence that lockdowns do anything more than delay the inevitable, helps politicians exploit the human tendency to mythologize.

***We are faced with a virus with a 997-out-of-1,000 survival rate. We have vanquished fiercer adversaries. We can rid ourselves of this plague less painfully by remembering one simple truth: neither we, nor our politicians, have control over death.***

**Julian Assange May Testify**

Imprisoned Wikileaks founder Julian Assange has been ordered to testify in a lawsuit concerning the unresolved murder of Democratic National Committee employee Seth Rich. The case was brought by Rich's family against Fox News for publishing a now-retracted May 2017 report citing allegations that Rich was murdered as part of a plot to conceal the leak of DNC emails to WikiLeaks.

Fox News invoked the Hague Convention in its request for Assange's testimony, [according to court documents](https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/7014777/Memo-Endorsement.pdf). Assange, said to be in poor health, is incarcerated in a top-security British prison. He is fighting a U.S. effort to extradite him from Britain on charges filed under the Espionage Act.

The order was signed by a U.S. judge on Wednesday, with Fox News agreeing to bear costs, [reported CD Media](https://creativedestructionmedia.com/investigations/2020/08/06/breaking-julian-assange-ordered-to-testify-in-seth-rich-lawsuit/).

The Rich family charges that Fox News' promotion of what it deems a groundless conspiracy caused them serious distress. Fox News has said that while "we extend the Rich family our deepest condolences for their loss, we believe that discovery will demonstrate that FOX News did not engage in conduct that will support the Riches' claims."

Police in Washington, D.C., have concluded Rich's death in July 2016 was the result of a botched robbery. Critics of the finding argue he was shot in the back and his wallet and other valuables were not taken.

While the conventional belief is that Russia was behind the leak, Assange has denied the claim. It may be that it was Rich, not Russian hackers, who purloined the emails. We already know that the data was copied form the server at a speed that is impossible even with the fastest connection in the world. This was a direct download to an external hard drive by someone with access to the DNC server itself. There was a hack, but it was through a USB device, and not the Russians over the web.

He has cited some of Assange's public statements to make his case. Veteran news reporter Ellen Ratner [said at a symposium at Embry Riddle University the day after the 2016 election](https://bit.ly/2UPylV4) that on the previous Saturday she had spent three hours with Assange at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. More than an hour into the conversation, she said, Assange disclosed that "the leaks were not from, they were not from the Russians," referring to the DNC emails.

"They were an internal source from the Hillary campaign."

Ratner told him that Assange disclosed to her that Seth Rich and his brother, Aaron, "were responsible for releasing the DNC emails to Wikileaks."

Rich, 27, was shot and killed as he walked home in the early morning hours of July 10, 2016. Assange told Dutch TV after the shooting: "Whistleblowers go to significant efforts to get us material and often very significant risks. There's a 27-year-old, works for the DNC, was shot in the back, murdered just a few weeks ago for unknown reasons as he was walking down the street in Washington."

**2020: The Year of High Strangeness**

2020 is undoubtedly the strangest – and most pivotal – year in modern American history.

The year started with a presidential impeachment trial, the culmination of three years of nonstop accusations that President Donald Trump had committed treasonous “high crimes” and must be removed from office immediately.

Every part of the Democratic Party’s attempted *coup d’etat* against the legally elected president – from “Russia collusion” to “Ukraine-gate” – turned out to be [not just untrue, but straight-up projection:](https://www.wnd.com/2019/01/democrats-and-the-dark-art-of-projection/) The Democrats had committed precisely the crimes they ascribed to Trump.

It was Hillary Clinton’s campaign, not Trump’s, that “colluded with the Russians” before the 2016 election, having [funded the infamous “Steele dossier” composed of lurid disinformation about Trump](https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/446736-hillary-clintons-russia-collusion-iou-the-answers-she-owes-america) largely from Kremlin-based intelligence sources. Likewise, it was Joe Biden, not Trump, who corruptly dealt with high Ukrainian government officials for his personal benefit, explicitly [threatening to withhold $1 billion in promised U.S. foreign aid](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/ukraine-prosecutor-biden-burisma-back-off-state-department-files) if the Ukrainian prosecutor investigating Biden’s corrupt son Hunter wasn’t fired – a textbook case of extortion [Biden later bragged about on video.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXA--dj2-CY)

Despite all this, the Trump economy was roaring. Job creation, GDP, real household wealth and the stock market were up, while taxes had been cut and unemployment reduced to the lowest levels on record for virtually every demographic, [including blacks and Hispanics.](https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/04/black-and-hispanic-unemployment-is-at-a-record-low.html) Trump was cruising to easy reelection victory.

Then came the coronavirus pandemic. Trump assembled an impressive science and policy team and addressed the extraordinarily daunting problem with what most Americans regarded as admirable executive decisiveness. His daily coronavirus briefings were must-see TV and his approval ratings soared. Yet, while the initial lockdown goal of “flattening the curve” to avoid overwhelming the nation’s healthcare system succeeded, it came at a very high economic and societal cost, including the loss – at least temporarily – of 40 million jobs.

Whatever the pandemic’s various ups and downs since then, Democrats and their media allies have steadfastly promoted public fear and hysteria while pushing to extend the nation’s shutdown as long, deep and painful as possible. Why? [Not because they “follow the science and data,”](https://superstore.wnd.com/whistleblower-digital-version-may-2020/) but because in this near-apocalyptic election year they calculate that America remaining in crisis mode maximizes their chances for victory in November. In addition to the crisis of lockdown-induced recession and record-high unemployment, which they believe will hurt Trump, they also hope continued panic will force the adoption of [universal vote-by-mail – with its notoriously high vote-fraud potential.](https://www.heritage.org/election-integrity/commentary/potential-fraud-why-mail-elections-should-be-dead-letter)

In a nutshell, Democrats realize their “virtual nominating convention” in August and the virtual election they hope for in November will somehow enable them to elect their virtual presidential candidate, Joe Biden.

Indeed, the 77-year-old Biden is [disintegrating mentally right before the world’s eyes.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRmSTb0NIJQ) Everybody knows it – *everybody.* Which is why Biden’s handlers and [strategists prefer to keep him “in his basement.”](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/top-biden-surrogate-says-dems-preferring-that-former-vp-stay-in-the-basement) Their strategy is to somehow get a harmless-looking Trojan horse across the election finish line, when the *real* powers will finally emerge, assume power and utterly transform America, having ousted the one person standing in their way – Donald Trump.

All of this was the situation *before* the nationwide mass rioting and chaos began.

**‘Abolish the police!’**

Like a raging mega-forest fire started by a single spark, the Memorial Day death of George Floyd ignited a nonstop conflagration of violent social upheaval, arson, rioting, looting, assault, shootings, desecration of historic monuments, demands to abolish the police and release incarcerated criminals – and explicit threats from ringleaders to “burn down” the American system.

Yet their alleged grievances – “systemic racism” and rampant “police brutality,” strenuously reinforced daily by Democrats politicians, media organizations, “woke” corporations, “black leaders,” college professors and radical groups – are cynical inventions of power-obsessed leftists.

In reality, as anyone honestly surveying the rest of the world knows, America is the *least* racist, most diverse, multi-ethnic, tolerant and welcoming society on earth, which is precisely why [America remains the world’s No. 1 destination for immigrants](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/17/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/) of every nationality, ethnicity, color and religion.

Yet, suddenly calls to “defund the police” – some even use the more direct wording, “abolish the police,” a manifestly insane proposal – were seemingly on everyone’s lips. Top leaders in Los Angeles and New York City promised to radically slash their police departments’ budgets, while the [Minneapolis City Council unanimously voted to abolish their police department altogether.](https://nypost.com/2020/06/26/minneapolis-city-council-approves-measure-to-abolish-police-force/)

Understandably, morale among law enforcement nationwide has plunged to an all-time low as [resignations skyrocket,](https://nypost.com/2020/07/08/nypd-limits-retirement-applications-amid-411-surge-this-week/) senior personnel retire and recruitment grinds down dramatically. And little wonder – when [Virginia Democrats conspire to downgrade physical assaults on law enforcement officers to a mere misdemeanor,](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/virginia-dems-downgrade-assault-on-police-to-misdemeanor) thereby literally encouraging people to violently attack their police.

Reality check: The premise of widespread police brutality is absurdly false and defamatory toward America’s 800,000 law enforcement officers. As Heather Mac Donald, bestselling author of “The War on Cops,” has [reported](https://www.manhattan-institute.org/white-cops-dont-commit-more-shootings):

*A new study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences demolishes the Democratic narrative regarding race and police shootings, which holds that white officers are engaged in an epidemic of racially biased shootings of black men. It turns out that white officers are no more likely than black or Hispanic officers to shoot black civilians. It is a racial group’s rate of violent crime that determines police shootings, not the race of the officer. The more frequently officers encounter violent suspects from any given racial group, the greater the chance that members of that racial group will be shot by a police officer.*

America’s police are very much like U.S. soldiers deployed overseas, risking their lives every day to defend and protect others in what amount to quasi-war zones, particularly America’s large cities. Indeed, the murder rate in Chicago has for years *exceeded* the death rate of American service members during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined. “Since 2001,” [reported Forbes,](https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2016/09/08/homicides-in-chicago-eclipse-u-s-death-toll-in-afghanistan-and-iraq-infographic/#4a8f12897d75) “Chicago has experienced 7,916 murders (as of September 6, 2016). The number of Americans killed in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq was 2,384 and 4,504 respectively since 2001.”

Reviling and demonizing all police because of the bad behavior of a very few is chillingly reminiscent of the treatment U.S. military personnel received when, upon finally returning home from duty in Vietnam, they were attacked as “baby killers” because of the bad actions of a very few, when over 2.7 million Americans served honorably in that war.

**‘We will burn down the system and replace it!’**

While the nation’s police are reviled, mocked and abused – almost 2,000 have been injured so far during the riots – most Americans watching the daily spectacle don’t realize the “protests” have been engineered and largely coopted by openly Marxist revolutionary groups like Antifa and Black Lives Matter.

All three co-founders of Black Lives Matter proudly admit they are “Marxists,” including Patrisse Cullors, who [said on video:](https://nypost.com/2020/06/25/blm-co-founder-describes-herself-as-trained-marxist/) “We actually do have an ideological frame. Myself and Alicia [her lesbian partner and BLM co-founder] are particularly trained organizers – we are trained Marxists. We are super versed on ideological theories …”

Meanwhile, New York’s BLM leader Hawk Newsome openly promised a violent revolution, [telling Fox News’ Martha MacCallum,](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ClaPgXpOag) "If this country doesn't give us what we want, then we will burn down the system and replace it." To which [President Trump responded](https://www.wnd.com/2020/06/trump-accuses-blm-leader-treason/) by tweeting, "This is Treason, Sedition, Insurrection!"

Antifa, the violent, masked revolutionary alliance Trump has called a “domestic terror group,” has existed for many years and is [made up largely of communists and anarchists.](https://www.discoverthenetworks.org/organizations/antifa/) Ironically, though the name "Antifa" is a contraction of "anti-fascist," the violent, intimidating paramilitary organization is strikingly reminiscent of Mussolini's notorious Black Shirts.

Another group, Refuse Fascism, which has held recent rallies in Los Angeles, Cleveland, Chicago, Tulsa and elsewhere across the U.S., [was formed by the Revolutionary Communist Party.](https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/refuse-fascism/) Led by open communists, it is headquartered in the RCP's Revolution Books store in Harlem.

Major media organizations are, of course, well aware of all these radical, anti-American, revolutionary affiliations, but never breathe a word of it to the public, instead pretending that what Americans are witnessing amounts to grassroots protests of the death of a black man, widespread police brutality and a nation so profoundly racist it might have to be “burned down” before it can be set right.

**Boot camps creating millions of America-hating foot soldiers**

The OFA was set up in 2013. Tens of thousands of soldiers were trained and deployed throughout dozens of Democrat-controlled cities, where they unleased havoc on local communities. Portland, Oregon has been under siege for many years, as it seems to be the headquarters for the largest and most public of the groups, ANTIFA and BLM.

In the early days of the war against the Trump economy, reasonable observers tried to distinguish between peaceful protesters – and there were many – and the mobs of rioters engaging in vandalism, arson, looting, assault, vicious attacks on property (including many black-owned businesses), shootings and murder. Their confusion was compounded when the destruction of statues started. *Well,*many thought, *maybe we shouldn’t celebrate Civil War heroes of the Confederacy,* so they essentially approved the unfolding desecration of America’s historical monuments.

But then city after city saw statues of Christopher Columbus torn down, along with America’s founding fathers from George Washington to Thomas Jefferson. Radicals in Portland, Oregon, tore down a nearly 100-year-old George Washington statue and draped it with a burning American flag. The Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., was defaced. In San Francisco, a statue of Francis Scott Key, who wrote America’s national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," was toppled.

Still, some thought, *These historical figures did own slaves, so while I really don’t agree with tearing down their statues, I can understand the rage of the protesters.*

That delusion finally evaporated when wild mobs turned to attacking statues of Abraham Lincoln, the president who freed the slaves by signing the Emancipation Proclamation, and Ulysses S. Grant, the general (and later president) who led the Union to victory over the Confederacy. In Boston, rioters defaced the Shaw Memorial, a monument honoring the first all-volunteer black regiment of the Union Army in the Civil War, and in Madison, Wisconsin, they tore down a statue of Hans Christian Heg, an abolitionist who died trying to end slavery.

*What on earth is going on?* people asked? *Why are they tearing down monuments to anti-slavery heroes?*

Then Shaun King, co-founder of Real Justice PAC, [called for tearing down statues of Jesus Christ,](https://www.wnd.com/2020/06/tear-blm-says-jesus-statues-white-supremacy/) along with “all murals and stained glass windows of white Jesus, and his European mother, and their white friends,” insisting their very existence constitutes "a form of white supremacy." At least two [statues of the Virgin Mary have since been set ablaze.](https://www.wnd.com/2020/07/torching-begins-virgin-mary-statue-set-ablaze/)

By now, many Americans have realized this sustained violent campaign to destroy their country’s culture, memorials, history and core religion is *not* really about combatting “systemic racism” at all.

The far left – which today entirely possesses the Democratic Party, body and soul – has long used racism as a cover for its true agenda. This includes the Communist Party USA, whose [website](http://cpusa.org/) is perpetually dominated by articles decrying “police brutality” and “rampant racism” in America. It’s all a pretext. Their actual agenda is dismantling America's constitutional government and vital institutions, eliminating free-market capitalism and instituting a totalitarian socialist system in America.

For precisely the same reason – the obsession (as Barack Obama put it) with [“fundamentally transforming the United States of America”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKxDdxzX0kI) – the Democratic Party focused its 2020 presidential primary campaign on the proposition that America is irredeemably racist, each candidate striving to outdo the other in expressing just how bigoted, predatory and immoral America is. [Bernie Sanders insisted](https://myspiritdc.com/1491551/bernie-sanders-tries-to-woo-evangelical-christian-voters-says-america-was-created-on-racist-principles/) the United States was “created” largely “on racist principles,” while [Kirsten Gillibrand lectured audiences](https://freebeacon.com/2020-election/woke-cost-gillibrand-primary/) about their “white privilege” and [Beto O’Rourke boldly declared:](https://dailycaller.com/2019/08/18/beto-orourke-america-racist/" \t "_blank) “This country, though we would like to think otherwise, was founded on racism, has persisted through racism, and is racist today.”

Magnifying the Democrats’ “America-is-a-racist-nation” narrative has been the elite news media, led by the New York Times which last year launched its notorious [“1619 Project,”](https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/01/1619-project-top-historians-criticize-new-york-times-slavery-feature/) recasting American history as having begun in 1619 when settlers first brought African slaves to the New World. The Times reporter who won a Pulitzer Prize for heading up the “1619 Project,” Nikole Hannah-Jones, [wrote in a recently unearthed letter,](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/author-of-new-york-times-1619-project-called-white-race-barbaric-devils-in-unearthed-letter) "The white race is the biggest murderer, rapist, pillager, and thief of the modern world."

To understand today’s all-out cultural revolution, one more huge factor must be considered: Millions of young Americans have been brainwashed – and yes, that's the correct term – in the nation’s colleges and universities, long the most far-left institutions in the country, some of which amount to little more than boot camps for creating militant leftwing activists.

In elite universities, young people take on tremendous debt to fund their “education.” There, living in in a homogeneous, cult-like environment cut off from the outside world, where dissent is both discouraged and punished, they’re indoctrinated by radical Marxist, America-hating professors and rewarded for absorbing the far left’s bizarre identity-politics, social-justice worldview.

“Higher education” has thus been “fundamentally transforming” many young people into an army of angry, arrogant, historically ignorant, morally confused, America-hating foot soldiers – and now they have been called to active duty.

**Cultural revolution**

Ultimately, of course, the problem confronting America is not primarily political, nor even cultural, but spiritual. “Politics is downstream from culture,” goes the saying, but culture is downstream from a society’s spiritual and moral beliefs and values. And since politics and culture abhor a vacuum, the absence of America’s traditional and foundational Judeo-Christian values – which for more than a century the atheistic, progressive left has labored to overthrow – throws the national door wide open to immoral, corrupt, deranged, and in some cases (*i.e.* abortion) barbaric values.

“Men must be governed by God, or they will be ruled by tyrants,” warned William Penn, founder and first governor of Pennsylvania.

Americans are facing a truly do-or-die election just around the corner, one that will determine their and their children’s future for decades, if not generations. As the revered 90-year-old economist Thomas Sowell recently put it, [a Biden win in November could represent “the point of no return for this country.”](https://www.wnd.com/2020/07/thomas-sowell-u-s-reach-point-no-return-biden/)

Surely there’s never been a more crucial time for those “governed by God” in their hearts to get down on their knees and pray for the strength, wisdom and courage to do everything they possibly can to stop the deranged Marxist takeover and transformation of their beloved country. It’s time to throw off all the fear, intimidation, guilt trips and lies that have given the left so much power in America. It’s time for moral, clear-headed Americans to stand up and boldly speak the truth as never before, with love and without fear, to their fellow citizens – and especially to their leaders. And it’s time to pray that God will, once again, have mercy on our nation and save us from the unthinkable horror that is now preparing to remake America in its unholy image.

**Sturgis**

Thousands of bikers poured into the small South Dakota city of Sturgis on Friday as the 80th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally rumbled to life despite [fears](https://apnews.com/0d75610e63ef911674297c509be80d4b) it could lead to a massive coronavirus outbreak.

The rally could become one of the largest public gatherings since the pandemic began, with organizers expecting 250,000 people from all over the country to make their way through Sturgis during the 10-day event. That would be roughly half the number of previous years, but local residents — and a few bikers — worry that the crowds could create a “super-spreader” event.

Many who rode their bikes into Sturgis on Friday expressed defiance at the rules and restrictions that have marked life in many locales during the pandemic. People rode from across the country to a state that offered a reprieve from coronavirus restrictions, as South Dakota has no special limits on indoor crowds, no mask mandates and a governor who is eager to welcome visitors and the money they bring.

“Screw COVID,” read the design on one T-shirt being hawked. “I went to Sturgis.”

Bikers rumbled past hundreds of tents filled with motorcycle gear, T-shirts and food. Harley Davidson motorcycles were everywhere but masks were almost nowhere to be seen, with an Associated Press reporter counting fewer than 10 in a crowd of thousands over a period of several hours.

For Stephen Sample, who rode his Harley from Arizona, the event was a break from the routine of the last several months, when he's been mostly homebound or wearing a mask when he went to work as a surveyor.

“I don’t want to die, but I don’t want to be cooped up all my life either,” he said.

Still, Sample, who is 66, feared what could happen if he caught COVID-19 at the rally. He said he was trying to avoid indoor bars and venues, where he felt the risk of infection was greater. But on the opening day of the rally, he said he ate breakfast at an indoor diner.

As Sample weighed the risks of navigating the crowds, the same thrill-seeking that attracted him to riding motorcycles seemed to win out.

“I think we’re all willing to take a chance,” he said.

Republican Gov. Kristi Noem has taken a largely hands-off approach to the pandemic, avoiding a mask mandate and preaching personal responsibility. She supported holding the Sturgis rally, pointing out that [no virus outbreak was documented](https://apnews.com/ff54edc68fbdb302b00719702af228ee) from the several thousand people who turned out to see President Donald Trump [and fireworks at Mount Rushmore](https://apnews.com/e4725ee4f6c777273a4b5dc83ab57823) last month.

Daily virus cases have been trending upward in South Dakota, but the 7-day average is still only around 84, with fewer than two deaths per day.

The rally attracted crowds of retirees and people in age ranges considered to be at higher risk from the coronavirus. But for many who see the rally as an annual pilgrimage, the camaraderie and atmosphere couldn’t be missed.

“I fell in love with the rally. I love the sound of the bikes,” said Bill Sudkamp, who was making his 20th consecutive rally appearance.

He and his wife, who declined to give their ages but said they were at elevated risk for COVID-19, were among the handful of people seen wearing masks in downtown Sturgis, a community of about 7,000 that's roughly 25 miles (40 kilometers) northwest of Rapid City. They were also planning to avoid bars. Sudkamp felt it was inevitable that infections would spread in the packed bars and concert venues.

**The Real American Revolution**

The long ordeal for Cliven Bundy his sons, Ryan, Ammon, Mel and Dave, and the peaceful protesters who came to their defense during the successful standoff of government thugs in 2014 at the Bundy ranch in Bunkerville, Nevada, is over only in so far as the appeal by the Trump Justice Department (DOJ) of the eventual dismissal of their indictment is concerned. Yesterday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit affirmed the dismissal of the case by Obama-appointed federal Judge Gloria Navarro, who, despite her animus toward the Bundys and me, was forced to jettison it after it was revealed during trial that DOJ prosecutors had engaged in prosecutorial abuse that rose to the level of crimes.

As chronicled at [www.clivenbundydefensefund.org,](http://www.clivenbundydefensefund.org/) Cliven and his sons had been indicted years earlier after their successful standoff, by an Obama DOJ that was obviously carrying out the orders of then-President Barack Hussein Obama and his evil white twin, then-Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada. Reid reportedly had designs to sell the land to Communist Chinese environmental interests, with likely kickbacks.

To implement the scheme, Reid had Obama appoint the senator's former chief of staff, Neil Kornze, to head the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which ironically has the same acronym as the violent Black Lives Matter. Once in charge, Kornze, along with a corrupted FBI and its hired mercenaries, waged a vicious assault on the Bundy family – threatening the Bundys' lives, assaulting family members, killing their cattle and committing a host of other felonies. The raid was replete with sharpshooters surrounding the Bundy homestead, with the phony purpose of seizing the Bundys' cattle. In reality, the armed assault was meant to drive the Bundys from the land they had ranched for over 150 years, when Cliven's grandfather began the family legacy on over 400,000 acres of magnificent terrain in and around Lake Mead.

This federal government operation was a sting, set up and coordinated against official DOJ policy and norms, by the U.S. Attorney for the District of Nevada, with its principal office in Sin City. At the time, the U.S. Attorney was Daniel Bogden and his assistant U.S. Attorneys were Steven Myhre, Daniel Schiess and Nadia Ahmed. Before the raid began, these corrupt DOJ lawyers actually went out to the Bundy Ranch to plan and then implement this illegal entrapment, by which it would be falsely claimed that the Bundys and the other peaceful protesters threatened BLM and FBI agents at gunpoint. This was the principal underlying basis for the criminal charges that ultimately would be brought.

If this were not enough, during the ensuing criminal trial, it was revealed by a BLM whistleblower, Larry Wooten, that some BLM agents even had a kill list on the heads of the Bundys, largely as a result of them hating persons of the Mormon faith. Wooten, who had initially been a supervisory agent over the operation, is a Mormon and was outraged – provoking him to come forward at great risk. When Wooten did, he was told to keep his mouth shut by the DOJ's Myhre and then retaliated against.

After Navarro was compelled to dismiss the indictment, having previously denied Cliven Bundy his Sixth Amendment rights of counsel and to a speedy trial, as well as having committed many other unconstitutional acts by sending my client to solitary confinement without bail (Cliven, his sons and the peaceful protesters were wrongfully imprisoned for nearly two years), I filed complaints with the DOJ's Office of Professional Responsibility and its inspector general to seek disciplinary action against Bogden, Myhre, Schiess and Ahmed. When no action appeared typically to be at hand by the Trump DOJ, I filed suit to force a bona fide investigation. The complaint landed before an Obama-appointed federal judge in the highly politicized U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, the aptly named Rudolph Cantreras. He wasted no time in dismissing the case, and I quickly appealed to an equally politicized court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. Once on appeal, the Trump DOJ, headed then by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, told the Court to affirm the dismissal of Judge Cantreras because it was claimed that the OPR and IG were indeed now conducting a real investigation of the prosecutorial misconduct. The appeals court bought his phony argument and dismissed the appeal.

However, even under the new Trump attorney general, Bill Barr, nothing transpired. This is typical as my alma mater, which has become the Department of Injustice, traditionally circles the wagons for its own. This explains, in part, Blowhard Bill's (as I have nicknamed Barr) refusal to have prosecuted former FBI Director Jim Comey, former Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, former head of the DOJ crime task force Bruce Ohr, the former FBI special agents and "love birds" Stzruk and Page, and of course Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, over the Russian collusion caper.

In the face of all of this, I am sending to Punxsutawney Bill – another nickname I have given the AG, for his penchant to retreat into a dark hole like a groundhog and his striking physical similarity to the animal – the 58-page opinion of the 9th Circuit, which reads like an indictment of the prosecutors.

If Barr does not get his considerable rear in gear and take action against these DOJ lawyers, then Freedom Watch will empanel its citizens grand jury and have them indicted and then tried, convicted and sentenced.

The crimes against the Bundys that the Obama Justice Department perpetrated, and furthered at the department during the Trump years, must not be swept aside, if the nation is ever to have any semblance of a return to law and order. And, President Trump, above all, who has supported ranchers like the Bundys in the past, even if his rogue DOJ also tried to have them thrown in the slammer for life, should now demand the prosecution of the prosecutors. This is important if Trump, after his recent ill-advised commutation of the sentence of Roger Stone's prison sentence, is to have any credibility that he is the law-and-order president in taking on Joe Biden this fall.

**CERN Update**

### SCIENTISTS at CERN are one step closer to understanding how the Higgs boson interacts with the Universe, after observing the never-seen-before decay of the so-called God Particle.

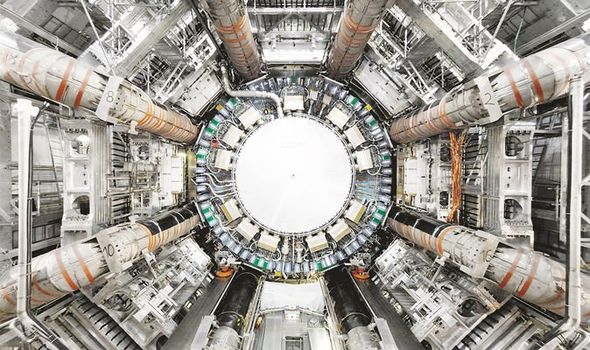
The Higgs boson is believed by particle physicists to play a fundamental role in the forces that shape the Universe. The particle, which is named after British physicist Peter Higgs, interacts with the Higgs field - an energy field that imparts mass on particles that fly through it. And yet very little is still known about the Higgs, which was only confirmed by scientists in 2012 after half-a-century of theoretical work. The discovery filled a gap in the Standard Model of Particle Physics that explains how elementary particles gain mass.

This is a crucial problem as without mass, matter as we know it would not exist.

As a result, the Higgs boson has been popularly known as the God Particle since the 1990s.

Scientists at CERN have now announced a breakthrough in Higgs boson research, observing the particle's decay into two elementary particles, muons.

The ultra-rare decay was observed by physicists at the [Large Hadron Collider](https://www.express.co.uk/latest/large-hadron-collider) (LHC) at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland.



CERN breakthrough: Physicists have observed an ultra-rare decay of the Higgs boson (Image: CLAUDIA MARCELLONI/CERN)



CERN breakthrough: The Large Hadron Collider runs for 17 miles under France and Switzerland (Image: GETTY)

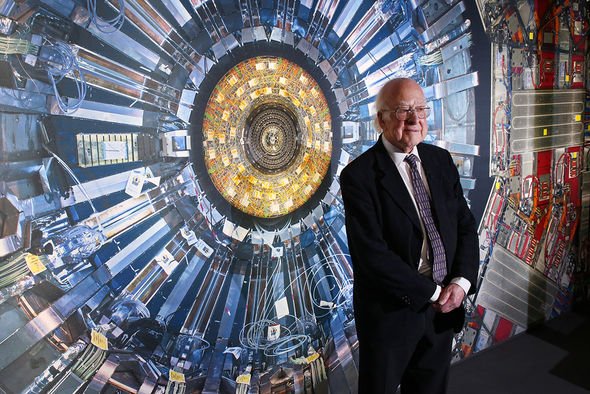
The results were announced by the ATLAS and CMS experiments, which are part-funded by the UK's Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC).

Muons, just like electrons, are elementary particles that make up matter.

But muons are heavier and are considered second-generation particles, unlike electrons, which are considered first-generation particles.

And the processes behind the Higgs boson decaying into muons are incredibly rare, with only one Higgs boson in 5,000 decaying into the particles.

The discovery is pivotal as it indicates the Higgs boson interacts with second-generation elementary particles.



CERN breakthrough: The Higgs boson is named after Professor Peter Higgs (Image: GETTY)

The scientists believe this discovery will shed more light on the mysteries of the Universe.

Professor Claire Shepherd-Themistocleous from STFC’s Rutherford Appleton Laboratory said: "The extraordinary capabilities of the CMS experiment and the ingenuity of the members of the collaboration from around the world, including, of course, the UK, have once again produced a beautiful result.

"The observation of Higgs boson decays to the second generation of fundamental particles enables tests of the standard model and opens up a new avenue of exploration for evidence of physics beyond our current understanding."

Leader of the Higgs CMS group Dr Nicholas Wardle, Imperial College London, said: "Neither of these results would have been possible without the excellent calorimetry, trigger or tracking sub-systems at CMS.

"The UK plays a huge role in the design and construction of these systems."

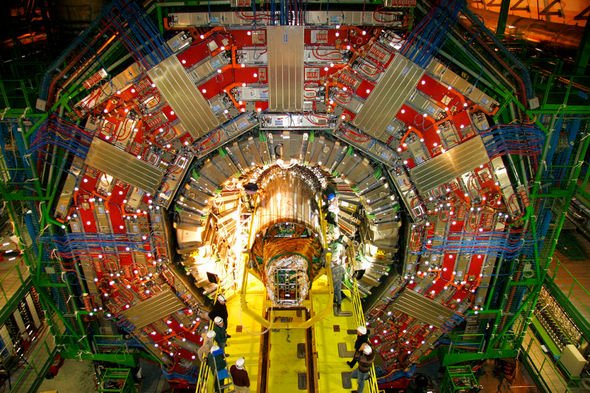
Physicists have been studying the Higgs boson since 2012, by accelerating and smashing together particles at the LHC.

The world's largest particle accelerator pushes protons along a 17-mile (27km) track to near the speed of light, before smashing them together in giant particle detectors.

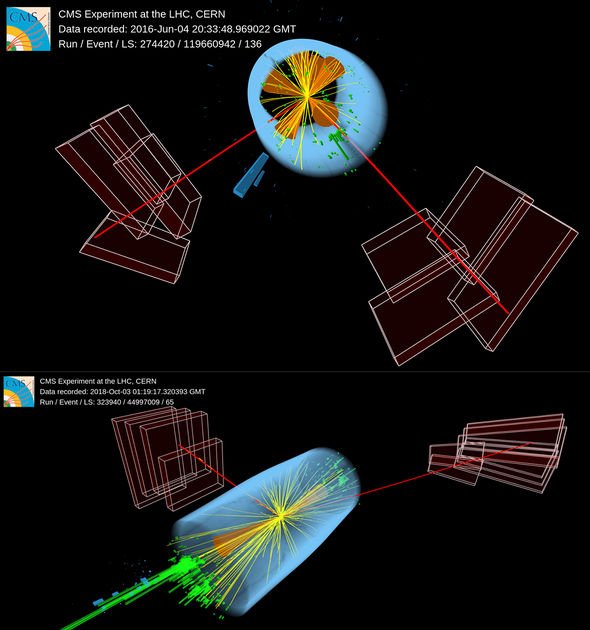
When the protons collide, they are almost instantly broken up into smaller parts, including the Higgs boson.

The physicists at CERN can then observe how these smaller particles behave and decay, all within fractions of a second.

The CMS experiment at CERN found evidence of the Higgs boson decaying into muons with 3 sigma, meaning the odds of the results being a statistical fluctuation are less than one in 700.



CERN breakthrough: The CMS experiment at the Large Hadron Collider (Image: HOCH, M/CERN)



CERN breakthrough: The Higgs boson decay into muons in extremely rare (Image: CMS COLLABORATION)

The 2 sigma result observed by the ATLAS experiment, means the odds are one in 40.

The detected decay is all the more impressive because for every predicted Higgs boson decay into a muon, thousands of muon pairs are produced through other processes.

Professor Sinead Farrington, University of Edinburgh, Spokesperson for the UK institutes on ATLAS, said: "Seeing this type of decay for the first time is an exciting landmark that opens a completely unexplored domain for characterising the Higgs sector."

The results were announced during the 40th International Conference on High-Energy Physics (ICHEP 2020).

Professor Victoria Martin, ATLAS collaborator, at the University of Edinburgh said:"Finding out more about the Higgs boson is always an exciting occasion for the ATLAS experiment collaboration, especially so for the over 500 collaboration members from the UK.

"After 25 years of effort to plan, build, operate and collect and analyse data from the ATLAS experiment, we now have a better answer to one of the questions that the LHC and ATLAS was designed to explore: how and why matter (stuff) gets mass.

"Taken together, the new observations announced this week by ATLAS provide a lot of extra weight to the theory that fundamental subatomic particles obtain their mass through interactions with the Higgs boson."

And said Roberto Carlin, spokesperson for the CMS experiment, said: "CMS is proud to have achieved this sensitivity to the decay of Higgs bosons to muons, and to show first experimental evidence for this process.

"The Higgs boson seems to interact also with second-generation particles in agreement with the prediction of the Standard Model, a result that will be further refined with the data we expect to collect in the next run."

The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) co-ordinates and manages the UK’s involvement and subscription with CERN.

**Wealth is the Target**

I know the armed American is the enemy of the Global Syndicate. But what is the goal. What do they want? For now, the target is wealth. Oh, they don’t want to earn it. They want to steal it.

During Wednesday’s episode of her new [podcast](https://open.spotify.com/episode/0ASSMnYfKKdTpsyUUPHbli?si=n2U5RtqbQwSjI7o3FKMf_w), former First Lady Michelle Obama slipped up and appeared to reveal the Left’s true agenda behind the coronavirus pandemic. While talking to journalist Michele Norris, Obama said that the coronavirus pandemic was actually an opportunity to think about “how wealth is distributed” to lower-income essential workers.

“There’s kind of a new COVID vocabulary, isn’t it,” Norris said to start off the conversation. “There are also words that have always had some meaning, but that take on different meaning now, the word hero, the word essential.”

“I think we will forever think about the word ‘essential’ in a different way,” she added. “And, when we were told to stay home, they got up, got dressed, and went out into the world, risking their lives, to drive garbage trucks, to work in warehouses, to work in grocery stores, to work in hospitals. Often doing invisible, but yes, essential work, and I struggle with it because I’m not sure that we treat them like they’re essential.”

Obama immediately took this and ran with it with her response, showing once again that Democrats have no intention of letting this crisis go to waste.

“And that’s something that we need to, that’s a part of that reflection, that we need to do, you know. With ourselves, and, and as a community,” the former First Lady said. “And we have to think about that, in terms of how wealth is distributed.”

Top of Form

Do you agree that protesting is acceptable, but rioting is not?

Bottom of Form

Later on in the podcast, Obama made it clear once again that she sees the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed millions of people around the globe, as yet another opportunity to shove her leftwing agenda down the throats of the American people.

“It’s not enough to just acknowledge that the pain exists, to acknowledge the struggle, we actually have power we can, we can change so much of what we do, we can sacrifice a little more, we can, we can shift priorities, uh, and not just in our own lives, cause it’s not enough, to just do it in your own life if you’re not willing to do it in our broader policy,” she said. “You know, if that, if that, if those conversations aren’t going to happen, then we’re just giving lip service to it. You know.”

Obama even managed to shift the conversation to her precious school lunch agenda, which was [widely panned](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/schools-want-out-of-michelle-obamas-lunch-rules-kids-say-yuck) during her time as First Lady:

*“We’ve seen these times in our history before, not just like this, but, but, but when things are good, it’s easy to forget about that. To take it for granted. To start thinking, yeah, how much, do I really want my taxes going to that, and school lunches? Eh. You know, that’s a lot of money. What does it matter — let’s cut this, let’s chop that.*

*But, all of that came, all the things that we look to cut were put in place in response to some crisis. That revealed to us that, hey, there are a lot of hungry kids, at home, because their parents are poor, so what’s the best way to feed them, we’re going to provide them with nutrition, at school. So, we, we have it, in our country’s DNA to step up.*

*Always with great opposition, because you’re asking people to sacrifice, to give up, things that, that they think they deserve, that they’re entitled to for the sake of the greater good.”*

**FRB Getting Closer?**

Thirty thousand years ago, a dead star on the other side of the Milky Way belched out a powerful mixture of radio and X-ray energy. On April 28, 2020, that belch swept over Earth, triggering alarms at observatories around the world.

The signal was there and gone in half a second, but that's all scientists needed to confirm they had detected something remarkable: the first ever "[fast radio burst](https://www.livescience.com/mysterious-fast-radio-burst-repeater.html)" (FRB) to emanate from a known star within the Milky Way, according to a study published July 27 in[The Astrophysical Journal Letters](https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/2041-8213/aba2cf).

Since their discovery in 2007, FRBs have puzzled scientists. The bursts of powerful[radio waves](https://www.livescience.com/50399-radio-waves.html) last only a few milliseconds at most, but generate more energy in that time than Earth's sun does in a century. Scientists have yet to pin down what causes these blasts, but they've proposed everything from colliding black holes to the pulse of[alien starships](https://www.livescience.com/58213-could-mysterious-cosmic-light-flashes-be-powering-alien-spacecraft.html) as possible explanations.  So far, every known FRB has originated from another galaxy, hundreds of millions of light-years away.

This FRB is different. Telescope observations suggest that the burst came from a known[neutron star](https://www.livescience.com/neutron-star.html) — the fast-spinning, compact core of a dead star, which packs a sun's-worth of mass into a city-sized ball — about 30,000 light-years from Earth in the constellation Vulpecula. The stellar remnant fits into an even stranger class of star called a magnetar, named for its incredibly powerful [magnetic field](https://www.livescience.com/38059-magnetism.html), which is capable of spitting out intense amounts of energy long after the star itself has died. It now seems that magnetars are almost certainly the source of at least some of the universe's many mysterious FRBs, the study authors wrote.

"We've never seen a burst of radio waves, resembling a fast radio burst, from a magnetar before," lead study author Sandro Mereghetti, of the National Institute for Astrophysics in Milan, Italy,[said in a statement](http://www.esa.int/Science_Exploration/Space_Science/Dead_star_emits_never-before_seen_mix_of_radiation). "This is the first ever observational connection between magnetars and fast radio bursts."

The magnetar, named SGR 1935+2154, was discovered in 2014 when scientists saw it emitting powerful bursts of gamma rays and [X-rays](https://www.livescience.com/32344-what-are-x-rays.html) at random intervals. After quieting down for a while, the dead star woke up with a powerful X-ray blast in late April. Sandro and his colleagues detected this burst with the European Space Agency's (ESA) Integral satellite, designed to capture the most energetic phenomena in the universe. At the same time, a radio telescope in the mountains of British Columbia, Canada, detected a blast of radio waves coming from the same source. Radio telescopes in California and Utah confirmed the FRB the next day.

A simultaneous blast of radio waves and X-rays has never been detected from a magnetar before, the researchers wrote, strongly pointing to these stellar remnants as plausible sources of FRBs.

Crucially, ESA scientist Erik Kuulkers added, this finding was only possible because multiple telescopes on Earth and in orbit were able to catch the burst simultaneously, and in many wavelengths across the[electromagnetic spectrum](https://www.livescience.com/38169-electromagnetism.html). Further collaboration between institutions is necessary to further "bring the origin of these mysterious phenomena into focus," Kuulkers said.

**Blanets: More to the Black Hole That Meets the Eye**

Supermassive [black holes](https://www.livescience.com/63436-llm-how-black-holes-form.html) dot our universe, monstrous gravity wells that bind galaxies together and wreath themselves in whirling cocoons of dust that emit bright [X-ray](https://www.livescience.com/32344-what-are-x-rays.html) beams. Sometimes, bright columns of matter burst up from their poles, forming jets visible across space. And now some scientists suspect these gravitational monsters might host blanets — tens of thousands of them.

Nope, that's not a typo: Scientists suggest calling these black hole planets by the name "blanets." Such blanets would form from the clouds of whirling dust that circle black holes. And they wouldn't be too different from planets that orbit normal stars. Some would be hard and rocky, like [Earth](https://www.livescience.com/earth.html), though likely as much as 10 times larger. Some would be gas giants, like our [solar system](https://www.livescience.com/our-solar-system.html)'s Neptune. They'd almost certainly be invisible to us, hidden in the disk of matter that birthed them and dwarfed by their supermassive parents. But in a pair of papers published in [The Astrophysical Journal](https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/1538-4357/ab4cf0) in November 2019 and on [arXiv](https://arxiv.org/pdf/2007.15198.pdf) in July 2020, respectively, a team of researchers laid out the case that these black hole planets must exist.

Not every supermassive black hole (SMBH) would host blanets. Morphing into a hard ball of matter is trickier around a black hole than in the protoplanetary disk around a young star. The swirling dust and gas around an SMBH is far less dense, and the corona of infalling matter at the edge of its event horizon might be so hot and bright that ice can't form anywhere in the whirling disk.

And ice is one of the key ingredients for planet formation.

Ice-covered dust particles tend to clump together when they collide — think of how two ice cubes might stick together when smashed into each other, versus two pebbles that definitely do not, said lead author Keiichi Wada, an astrophysicist as Kagoshima University in Japan. Over time, those clumps grow and develop enough [gravity](https://www.livescience.com/37115-what-is-gravity.html) to pull in even more dust. Clumps that grow big enough then form rocky planets.

Similarly, without frozen water or carbon dioxide ("dry ice"), it's very hard to build a blanet, Wada told Live Science. Some black holes have "snow lines" in their disks of orbiting matter, regions beyond which space is cool enough for ice to form, the researchers found.

"Beyond the line, the dust particles are covered with [ice]," Wada told Live Science. "As a result, they are easily stuck together when they collide."

Beyond the snow line, rocky blanets could form from progressively larger clumps in about 10 million years. If these rocky proto-blanets attracted enough gas, they'd eventually form gas giants. But none of that can happen without a thin film of ice on the dust grains. So dimmer, cooler SMBHs (like the one at the center of the Milky Way) are the most likely homes for these strange planets.

In a sense, Wada said, blanets aren’t especially surprising. Protoplanetary disks are similar to the swirls of matter around black holes. But no one had investigated whether planets could form around an SMBH before, "probably because researchers in the field of planet formation do not know much about active galactic nuclei, and vice versa," Wada said. (An "active galactic nucleus" is the region around a SMBH at the center of a galaxy.)

**Related:**[**9 facts about black holes that will blow your mind**](https://www.livescience.com/65170-9-weird-facts-black-holes.html)

Wada and his co-authors are still working out the details of their blanet theory. In the 2020 paper, the team corrected and updated the model published in 2019. Their original blanet model, he said, was too "fluffy," forming big, low-density puffball planets. Their updated model produces denser, more realistic planets. And they refined their understanding of how the dust around a SMBH, where it is distributed much more diffusely than it is around a star, would behave as it clumped together in the thin gas environment of a SMBH disk, Wada said.

It's difficult to imagine what the surface of these blanets might look like, he said. Leave aside the strangeness of orbiting a supermassive black hole: The blanets themselves would orbit much farther from one another and from the black hole than Earth does from its siblings or the sun; a dozen light-years could separate a blanet from its host black hole, making them oddly solitary.

As of now, Wada said, there's no way to know whether life might exist on blanets. Would the strange [ultraviolet light](https://www.livescience.com/50326-what-is-ultraviolet-light.html) and X-ray radiation emitted from a black hole's corona allow alien beings to thrive in such a lonely portion of the cosmos? Are there blanet denizens looking up at the stars and wondering if they too are orbited by balls of rock and gas?

And do they call those star-planets "slanets"?

**Antarctic Strange Physics**

here's something mysterious coming up from the frozen ground in Antarctica, and it could break physics as we know it.

Physicists don't know what it is exactly. But they do know it's some sort of cosmic ray — a high-energy particle that's blasted its way through space, into the Earth, and back out again. But the particles physicists know about — the collection of particles that make up what scientists call the Standard Model (SM) of particle physics — shouldn't be able to do that. Sure, there are low-energy neutrinos that can pierce through miles upon miles of rock unaffected. But high-energy neutrinos, as well as other high-energy particles, have "large cross-sections." That means that they'll almost always crash into something soon after zipping into the Earth and never make it out the other side.

And yet, since March 2016, researchers have been puzzling over two events in Antarctica where cosmic rays did burst out from the Earth, and were detected by NASA's Antarctic Impulsive Transient Antenna (ANITA) — a balloon-borne antenna drifting over the southern continent.

ANITA is designed to hunt cosmic rays from outer space, so the high-energy neutrino community was buzzing with excitement when the instrument detected particles that seemed to be blasting up from Earth instead of zooming down from space. Because cosmic rays shouldn't do that, scientists began to wonder whether these mysterious beams are made of particles never seen before.

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Since then, physicists have proposed all sorts of explanations for these "upward going" cosmic rays, from sterile neutrinos (neutrinos that rarely ever bang into matter) to "atypical dark matter distributions inside the Earth," referencing the mysterious form of matter that doesn't interact with light [The 18 Biggest Unsolved Mysteries in Physics]

All the explanations were intriguing, and suggested that ANITA might have detected a particle not accounted for in the Standard Model. But none of the explanations demonstrated conclusively that something more ordinary couldn't have caused the signal at ANITA.

A new paper uploaded today (Sept. 26) to the preprint server arXiv changes that. In it, a team of astrophysicists from Penn State University showed that there have been more upward-going high-energy particles than those detected during the two ANITA events. Three times, they wrote, IceCube (another, larger neutrino observatory in Antarctica) detected similar particles, though no one had yet connected those events to the mystery at ANITA. And, combining the IceCube and ANITA data sets, the Penn State researchers calculated that, whatever particle is bursting up from the Earth, it has much less than a 1-in-3.5 million chance of being part of the Standard Model. (In technical, statistical terms, their results had confidences of 5.8 and 7.0 sigma, depending on which of their calculations you're looking at.)

Breaking physics

Derek Fox, the lead author on the new paper, said that he first came across the ANITA events in May 2018, in one of the earlier papers attempting to explain them.

"I was like, 'Well this model doesn't make much sense,'" Fox told Live Science, "but the [ANITA] result is very intriguing, so I started checking up on it. I started talking to my office neighbor Steinn Sigurdsson [the second author on the paper, who is also at Penn State] about whether maybe we could gin up some more plausible explanations than the papers that have been published to date."

Fox, Sigurdsson and their colleagues started looking for similar events in data collected by other detectors. When they came across possible upward-going events in IceCube data, he said, he realized that he might have come across something really game-changing for physics.

**The Cube Ship Orbiting the Sun**

We are living in a golden age of Sun pictures. While our star is not particularly easy or safe to image, given that it is a blindingly bright ball of nuclear fusion, scientists have still managed to snap the [closest pictures ever taken](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/ep4aew/these-are-the-closest-pictures-of-the-sun-ever-taken) of it, as well as the [most detailed shots](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/wxejpb/these-are-the-highest-resolution-images-of-the-sun-ever-taken) of the solar surface, all within the past year.

These new missions follow on the success of veteran shutterbugs such as the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO), a spacecraft developed by NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) that has been taking breathtaking images of the Sun since its launch in 1995.

If you were to search for SOHO’s latest Sun pictures this week, however, you might be surprised to find tabloid reports that the spacecraft has now taken a picture of an ALIEN CUBE SHIP that is TEN TIMES bigger than Earth.

Bernhard Fleck, SOHO project scientist and mission manager, has a simple response to this wild speculation of Borg-like UFOs in our solar system.

“This is of course complete and utter nonsense,” Fleck said in an email. “The black square is due to a missing (corrupted) telemetry block.”

In other words, the weird dark cube in the image is not an object, let alone a massive alien spaceship. It’s an image artifact—a glitch in the picture itself—caused by transmission errors between SOHO and Earth.

SOHO is located in a halo orbit about a million miles from Earth, and the images it sends to us across that distance understandably leak a few pixels from time to time. Those gaps are normally plugged when the spacecraft resends its data.

“Most missing blocks are indeed filled by our pipeline processing, but this doesn't always work, and not all missing blocks are filled correctly,” Fleck explained. “The final level-0 science data are not affected by this.”

NASA shares [the “very latest” SOHO images](https://soho.nascom.nasa.gov/data/realtime-images.html) with the public in a frequently updated gallery. These images are arriving fresh off of light waves from space, which is why NASA warns that the data is “intended just for visual inspection, not analysis as it is not of science quality” on the gallery website.

The missing blocks are common in new SOHO images, including the recent one, [taken on July 15](https://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/data/REPROCESSING/Completed/2020/eit171/20200715/20200715_0100_eit171_1024.jpg), that reignited the imagination of some UFO believers.

“I can send you tens, if not hundreds of similar images (with even bigger ‘UFOs’),” Fleck said.

“Missing blocks are multiples of 32x32 pixels, which is the smallest unit of a telemetry block,” he added. “So even if only one byte was corrupted, a whole 32x32 block is blacked out.”

The blank pixels are not the only imaging artifact from SOHO that has attracted the attention of alien hunters. In 2003, NASA posted [an explainer called](https://soho.nascom.nasa.gov/hotshots/2003_01_17/) “How to Make Your Own UFO” that outlined why SOHO images of completely natural phenomena end up with features that resemble flying saucers, or can be enhanced to look like alien spacecraft.

“Ever since launch, there's been a number of people who've claimed to have seen flying saucers and other esoteric objects in SOHO images,” NASA said in the 2003 article. “Although some of these supposed pictures of UFOs can seem quite intriguing, they have always turned out to have a quite ordinary cause when examined by experienced SOHO scientists.”

Likewise, Fleck said he is not sure that “our tin-foil wearing conspiracy theorists will be convinced” by pedestrian telemetry gaps when it is so much fun to believe that extraterrestrial cubists are on the prowl.

Fortunately, all camps can agree on one thing: SOHO imagery is awesome, and checking out the [mission’s photo galleries](https://soho.nascom.nasa.gov/gallery/) is well-worth your time.

**Election Wars: The CCP Attacks Are Ramping Up**

Whenever an attack is being planned, scouts are always sent out to see just how well defended the enemy might be. They test the perimeters to see just how well the fences are working. National security adviser Robert O’Brien said the Chinese Communist Party ([CCP](https://www.theepochtimes.com/t-ccp)) is targeting U.S. election infrastructure with cyberattacks leading up to the November election, suggesting a more active level of CCP interference.

His comments came after a statement released by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said that the [CCP is trying to expand its influence on the election](https://www.theepochtimes.com/china-prefers-trump-doesnt-win-a-second-term-intelligence-official_3454129.html). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) does not want President Donald [Trump](https://www.theepochtimes.com/t-trump) to win reelection in November, according to a new intelligence assessment.

“We assess that [China](https://www.theepochtimes.com/t-china) prefers that President Trump—whom Beijing sees as unpredictable—does not win reelection,” William Evanina, director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, said in a statement on Friday.

The CCP is working hard to influence the election and policy arguments, including putting pressure on elected officials and candidates party leaders view as being opposed to China’s interests.

“They’d like to see the president lose,” O’Brien [said](https://twitter.com/FaceTheNation/status/1292474096421396480?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1292474096421396480%7Ctwgr%5E&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fthehill.com%2Fhomenews%2Fsunday-talk-shows%2F511224-trumps-national-security-adviser-says-us-countering-russian) on CBS’ “Face the Nation,” referring to the CCP.

“China—like Russia, like Iran—is currently engaged in cyberattacks and phishing and that sort of thing with respect to our election infrastructure, with respect to websites and that sort of thing,” the adviser said on Sunday.

Given that both the Kremlin and the CCP have attempted to access state websites to collect data, O’Brien stated, “It’s a real concern … But it’s not just Russia, it’s the Chinese don’t want the president reelected.”

In elaborating, O’Brien said U.S. officials have seen hackers attempt to infiltrate Secretary of State websites that belong to offices positioned around the nation. Those offices are responsible for administering elections at the local level, while collecting data.

[](https://img.theepochtimes.com/assets/uploads/2020/07/23/president-donald-trump-1200x921.jpg)

President Donald Trump talks to journalists during a news conference about his administration’s response to the ongoing global CCP virus pandemic in the Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House in Washington, on July 22, 2020. (Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

“It is a real concern and it’s not just Russia,” he said. “There will be severe consequences for any country that attempts to interfere in our free and fair elections.”

O’Brien said that it doesn’t matter whether Russia or China prefers Trump or presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

“Whether their leaders prefer Joe Biden or prefer Donald Trump, it doesn’t matter. We’re Americans. We’re not going to have foreign countries deciding who our next president is going to be. That’s outrageous,” he told CBS.

Last week, William Evanina, director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, [made the assessment](https://www.theepochtimes.com/china-prefers-trump-doesnt-win-a-second-term-intelligence-official_3454129.html) that China “prefers that President Trump—whom Beijing sees as unpredictable—does not win reelection.”

The CCP is working hard to put pressure on elected officials and candidates party leaders view as being opposed to China’s interests.

“Although China will continue to weigh the risks and benefits of aggressive action, its public rhetoric over the past few months has grown increasingly critical of the current Administration’s COVID-19 response, closure of China’s Houston Consulate, and actions on other issues,” Evanina said. He noted that recent statements from Beijing support his assessment.

“For example, it has harshly criticized the Administration’s statements and actions on Hong Kong, TikTok, the legal status of the South China Sea, and China’s efforts to dominate the 5G market. Beijing recognizes that all of these efforts might affect the presidential race,” he said.

The Trump administration has placed sanctions on officials over rights abuses in China’s western Xinjiang region and curbing freedoms in Hong Kong. He also barred transactions with the CCP-linked owners of WeChat and TikTok.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, a frequent critic of the CCP, recently highlighted the decades-long persecution of the Falun Gong spiritual practice. “Extensive evidence shows the PRC [People’s Republic of China] government continues to repress and abuse this community to this day, including reported torture of Falun Gong practitioners and detention of thousands,” he said on July 20, the 21st anniversary of the start of Beijing’s persecution campaign.

**The Beirut Blast**

Lebanese authorities are reporting that the site of the explosion contained a storage of  2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, apparently confiscated from a ship. The material, which is a component of fertiliser is also used for bomb making.

Whilst the exact cause of Tuesday’s huge explosion in the Port of Beirut hasn’t yet been confirmed, links between the explosion site and Lebanese-based terror group Hezbollah haven’t been ruled out.

The Lebanese terrorist group also stored hundreds of kilograms of ammonium nitrate in southern Germany, which were uncovered earlier this year, [reports](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/hezbollah-stockpiled-chemical-behind-beirut-blast-in-london-637578) the Jerusalem Post.

The Iran-backed terrorists kept the explosive in thousands of ice packs in four properties in northwest London. The ice pack deception tactic was used in Germany, as well.

A source was quoted in The Telegraph at the time saying the ammonium nitrate was to be used for “proper organized terrorism” and could have caused “a lot of damage.”

CUFI reported last year that the MI5 and the Metropolitan Police raided four properties in North West London in 2015 after receiving a tip from a foreign intelligence agency. They discovered thousands of disposable ice packs containing ammonium nitrate, which is a common ingredient in homemade bombs.

A man in his forties was arrested, according to The Telegraph, on suspicion of plotting terrorism, but was eventually released without charges. The paper quoted “well placed sources” as saying that “the plot had been disrupted by a covert intelligence operation rather than seeking a prosecution.”

According to the report, the plot was part of a wider Hezbollah plan to lay the groundwork for future attacks and noted foiled Hezbollah operations in Thailand, Cyprus and New York. All those plots were made public and were believed to have targeted Israeli interests around the world.

The Telegraph said the Cyprus case was strikingly similar to the one in London. In 2015 in Cyprus, confessed Hezbollah agent Hussein Bassam Abdallah was sentenced to six years in jail after he was found with 8.2 tons of ammonia nitrate in his home. He had reportedly planned to attack Israeli targets.

The Telegraph said its information came after a three-month investigation in which more than 30 current and former officials in Britain, America and Cyprus were approached and court documents were obtained.

The Telegraph said that in Cyprus the ammonia nitrate was also stored in ice packs, saying that they were a convenient, seemingly harmless and easy to transport.

Sources told The Telegraph that the UK plot was at a very early stage and no targets had been selected. It said UK intelligence used to opportunity to try and establish what Hezbollah was up to and so did not disrupt it immediately.

In 2019, the UK banned Hezbollah, making it a criminal offense to support or be a member of the group, carrying a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, although at the time CUFI raised concerns regarding why it took four years for Hezbollah to be banned outright in the UK, despite authorities’ knowledge of the plot along with other clear evidence that Hezbollah was and remains a threat to the UK.

 Then-home secretary Savid Javid said the Lebanese terrorist group “is continuing in its attempts to destabilize the fragile situation in the Middle East – and we are no longer able to distinguish between their already-banned military wing and the political party. Because of this, I have taken the decision to proscribe the group in its entirety.”

**The “Port of Hezbollah”**

In July 2019, the then Israel Ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, [shared](https://www.cufi.org.uk/news/israel-reveals-iran-hezbollah-weapons-smuggling-into-lebanon-using-civilian-ports) Israeli intelligence information with the UN Security Council showing Iran-backed Hezbollah’s exploitation of the civilian maritime channels, specifically the Port of Beirut, which he described as the “Port of Hezbollah”.

“In the years 2018-2019, Israel found that dual-use items are smuggled into Lebanon to advance Hezbollah’s rocket and missile capabilities,” Danny Danon revealed to the Security Council.

Danon said that Iran’s Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), which directs Iranian interventions abroad, had begun “to advance the exploitation of the civilian maritime channels, and specifically the Port of Beirut.”

“The Port of Beirut has become the Port of Hezbollah,” Danon said.

Danon disclosed that Iran and Hezbollah were aided by Syrian agents who purchased the dual-use equipment — meaning it can be used for both civilian and military purposes — from foreign civilian companies and transferred it to Lebanon. These agents misled the companies when they officially unloaded the equipment at the Port of Beirut, Danon said, which was then transported to Hezbollah’s missile production facilities.

Danon said that Hezbollah regularly uses civilian centers in Lebanon to illegally transport arms, in “flagrant violation” of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for the disarming of the terrorist organization. Danon also presented the Security Council with a map of various weapons transfer routes.

The Israeli envoy urged UN member states to take extra precautions with regard to the sale of dual-use equipment.

“Are you absolutely sure your companies are not the ones selling dual-use equipment to the hands of Hezbollah?” Danon asked. “Are you sure your citizens know the end-users of these dual-use items?”