

COLAB

San Luis Obispo County



The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

WEEKLY UPDATE AUGUST 22 -28, 2021

COLAB
San Luis Obispo County

12th Annual
DINNER & FUNDRAISER

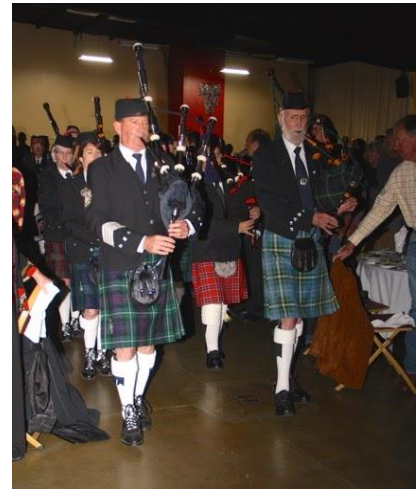
2020-2021 What the Heck Happened?
There has never been a more crucial time
To Raise the Lantern of Liberty

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2021
ALEX MADONNA EXPO CENTER

5:00 pm Social Hour, Open Bar
6:15 pm Filet Mignon Dinner including Wine

\$125 a person
\$1,250 a table, seating for 10

For tickets:
On-Line Reservations & Payment can be made **HERE** at
www.colabslo.org/events.asp
or
Mail your check to
COLAB SLO County, PO Box 13601, SLO, CA 93406
Cocktail Attire Optional
More info at (805) 548-0340 or colabslo@gmail.com



THIS WEEK

**SLO PENSION TRUST
INVESTMENT RETURNS GOOD SO FAR THIS YEAR**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**NEW WATER SUSTAINABILITY DEPT. TO BE CREATED
WHY, WHAT COST, WHAT PROBLEMS WILL IT SOLVE?
IS THIS A COSTLY PART OF A PERSONNEL DEAL?**

**WOMENS' JAIL PROJECT OVER BUDGET AGAIN
PLUS THERE IS CONTRACTOR LITIGATION**

**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN PROJECTS BEGIN
\$15 MILLION OF \$55 MILLION ON TABLE
(YOU WILL BE PAYING OFF THE \$1.9 TRILLION DEBT FOR
GENERATIONS)**

**SAN LUIS/EDNA VALLEY SGMA PLAN READY
WILL THE CITY TRY TO SQUEEZE THE COUNTY?**

**EXTENSION OF PASO BASIN WATER MORATORIUM
PLUS A TRICKY WATER GRAPE GRAB**

LAST WEEK

NO BOS MEETING

SLO LAFCO LIGHT

EMERGENT ISSUES

COVID ON RISE IN COUNTY

AMERICA IN CRUELY BOTCHED RETREAT

COLAB IN DEPTH

SEE PAGE 17

**ARE WE IN A REVOLUTION AND DON'T EVEN
KNOW IT?**

*We are in the midst of a revolutionary epoch and probably most don't
even know it.*

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

**TALK ABOUT BAD TIMING: BIDEN TO VISIT
CALIFORNIA TO SAVE NEWSOM FROM RECALL**

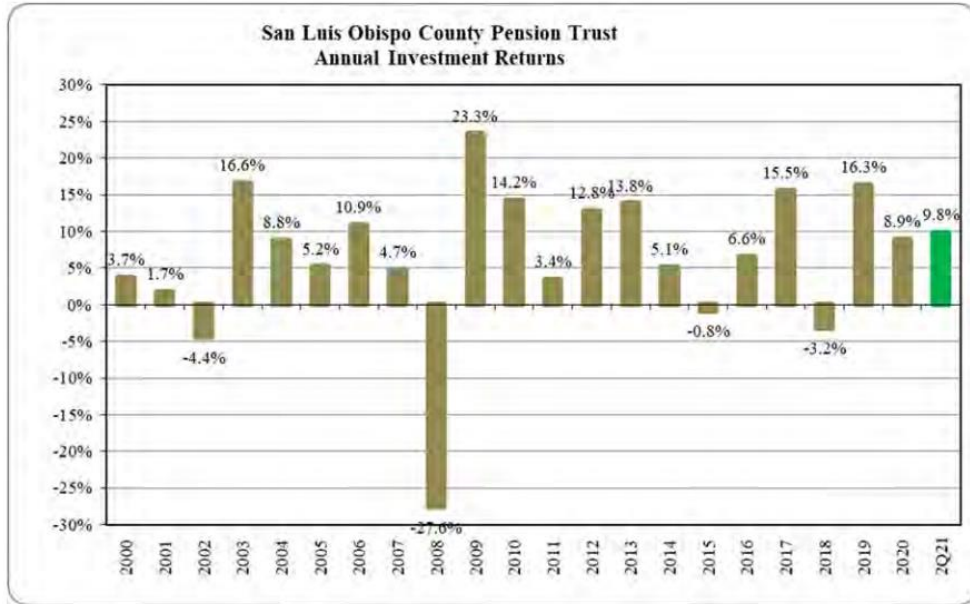
BY LEE OHANIAN

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

ALL MEETINGS ARE 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

**San Luis Obispo Pension Trust Board Meeting of Monday, August 23, 2021 (Scheduled)
9:30 AM**

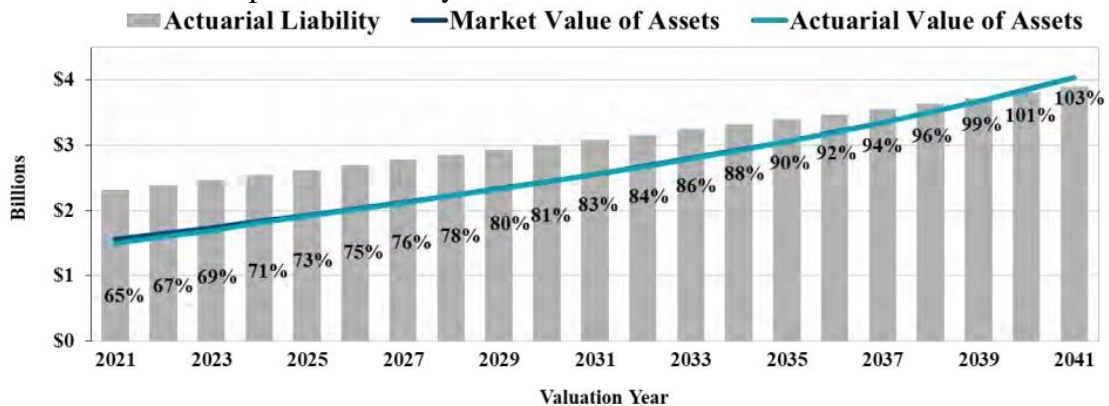
Item 11 - Quarterly Investment Report for the 2nd Quarter of 2021. Investment returns have been good so far this year.



Item 12 - Monthly Investment Report for July 2021.

	July	Year to Date 2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Total Trust Investments (\$ millions)	\$1,743		\$1,552 year end	\$1,446 year end	\$1,285 year end	\$1,351 year end	\$1,196 year end
Total Fund Return	0.5% Gross	10.4% Gross	8.9 % Gross	16.3 % Gross	-3.2 % Gross	15.5 % Gross	6.6 % Gross
Policy Index Return (r)	0.5%	8.2%	10.0 %	16.4 %	-3.2 %	13.4 %	7.7 %

If the investment returns hit 6.75% or higher each year for the next 18 years, the County’s unfunded accumulated pension liability of \$808 million would be eliminated.



Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, August 24, 2021 (Scheduled)

Item 1 - Introduction of ordinances to amend the County Code by adding Chapter 2, Title 2.02, Sections 2.02.010-2.02.030 to create the Groundwater Sustainability Department and the position of Groundwater Sustainability Director and amending Chapter 2, Title 2.40, Section 2.40.060 to add the Groundwater Sustainability Director to the unclassified service. Hearing date set for September 14, 2021. This item sets a formal hearing for September 14th, during which the Board will consider creation of a new County Department of Groundwater Sustainability and a new Director of Groundwater Sustainability position. The item write-up does not present data on the ultimate size, staffing, or costs of the new proposed Department. Nor does it contain information on any parallel reductions in the Public Works Department, as its Water Division functions are shifted to the new Department.

The write-up is confusing in that the item presents an in-house staffing model. The Board had directed the staff to research an outside consultant model. No detail is presented on the outside consultant model.

New Departments usually require administrative, clerical, and financial control support. No information is presented as part of this item on any of those details and what the total annual budget might contain. No organization chart for the new Department detailing the staffing or functions is provided.

The Groundwater Sustainability Director (GSD) will lead, plan, organize and direct the overall operations and activities of groundwater resources management and is responsible for the department's budget development, accounting, and administration. Additional responsibilities include working with local agencies, consultants, the public, and Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to carry out the implementation of the GSP and groundwater management actions in other basins (e.g. San Luis Obispo and Los Osos), managing and directing resources for the efficient performance of operations, and communicating with local and state agencies. This position will also manage consultants providing various technical, administrative, financial, regulatory, legal, Page 3 of 4 and environmental support for GSP and groundwater management implementation activities such as funding management, area-specific mandatory pumping management, monitoring, reporting, and outreach.

A review of the Budget document demonstrates that limited staffing summary information is presented for Fund Center 405 as well as only summary funding information. Funding contained in the Fund Center seems to be a catch all of about \$45 million for Public Works activities. As noted in the paragraph below, \$767,109 of the \$45 million is apparently allocated for water management activities. The write-up seems to suggest that this generates matches, but the amount is not estimated. Only one performance measure is included for FC 405, but it is not related to the issues at hand here.

Groundwater Basin Management Provide cost match, cost share with partner agencies, or full costs for professional services related to sustainable groundwater management in eight local groundwater basins, including the development of groundwater sustainability plans and various

*coordination and administrative activities with partner agencies. Total Expenditures: \$767,109
Total Staffing (FTE): * * Staffing is reflected in Fund Center 405 – Public Work*

Why would the board consider this item absent that data? This situation seems all too similar to the approval of a reorganization of the Planning and Building Department two weeks ago that lacked a description of the problems which the effort is meant to correct.

Code Sections to be Amended	
Code Section	Summary of Changes
2.40.060 - Classified and unclassified service	Add the Groundwater Sustainability Director position to the list of unclassified service.
Code Sections to be Added	
Code Section	Summary of Changes
2.02.010 - Office and department created	Creates the Groundwater Sustainability Department and Groundwater Sustainability Director position. The Director will be appointed by and serve at the will and pleasure of the County Administrative Officer, at a salary to be set by the Board.
2.02.020 - Qualifications for groundwater sustainability agency director	Establishes qualifications for the Groundwater Sustainability Director.
2.02.030 - Duties of Groundwater Sustainability Agency Director	Establishes the duties of the Groundwater Sustainability Director.

What’s Really Happening? Is this proposal possibly part of a deal by the administration to allow the CAO to have appointed John Diodati as Public Works Director in exchange for transferring water management functions out of the Department? It is known that Supervisors Arnold and Compton were not keen on having Diodati appointed as permanent Public Works Director due to his alleged past support of Paso Basin water districts controlled by large operators who favor water banking. However, as of this writing, several Supervisors indicated that they were not aware that this proposal was being brought forward. Last month Diodati was appointed as permanent Public Works Director without any Board objection or public controversy.

Item 24 - Request to authorize a budget adjustment using General Fund Contingencies to increase appropriation in Fund Center 230-Capital Projects, WBS 300034-Women's Jail Expansion Project in the amount of \$175,000, to fund efforts to defend against claims asserted by the contractor, by 4/5 vote. According to the write-up, the primary contractor and several of the subs on the \$45 million dollar project have filed claims against the County requesting higher than contracted payments. These contractors have now sued the County. The request is for a new \$175,000 increased appropriation to pay for specialized outside Counsel to defend the County.

The write-up does not divulge the amount of money in dispute or the why the contractors are asserting that the County owes it. It must be substantial to justify hiring the outside lawyers. Over time, these contracts tend to be increased. The request is reminiscent of the \$10 million that

the County paid to one of the Contractors on the Los Osos sewer system who asserted that the plans were defective, which resulted in extra work. The County never divulged the facts.

Item 33 - Request to approve various water, wastewater and broadband infrastructure projects to be funded with American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding; amend the fixed asset list for Fund Center 405 – Public Works Internal Service Fund (ISF) to add a Cyanotoxin Detection System for an estimated amount of \$150,000 and water billing software for an estimated amount of \$50,000; and authorize a budget adjustment in the amount of \$15 million to increase appropriations. The County expects to receive \$55 million under the \$1.9 trillion Federal American Rescue Plan. The Board set general priorities for use of the funding back on June 15, 2021, per the table below:

Eligible Use Category	Sub area	BOS direction 6/15/2021
Public Health and Negative Economic Impacts Response		
	Public Health Emergency	\$14M
	Business, Non-Profit, Childcare Grants	\$9M
	Housing / Homelessness	\$6M
	ARPA administrative costs	\$1M
	Total Category	\$30M
Restoration of Government Services		\$10M
Water, Sewer, Broadband		\$15M
		\$55M

At this meeting they will be recommending certain specific capital projects in accordance with the Board priorities and the Federal rules for use of \$15 million of the funding. It is not clear if the \$14 million for the Public Health Emergency will be taken in as revenue against expenditures already incurred for COVID or whether more new projects are to come.

Attachment 4 - Presentation

Water Priorities

Project Number	Department	System/Community	Project Name/Description	Estimated Cost
1	Public Works	CSA 16 / Shandon	Install New Storage Tank	\$3,100,000
2	Public Works	CSA 16 / Shandon	Centre St Waterline Upgrade	\$1,400,000

Attachment 4 - Presentation

Water Priorities

Project Number	Department	System/Community	Project Name/Description	Estimated Cost
3	Public Works	Cayucos, Shandon, Santa Margarita, Salinas Reservoir, Los Osos Water Recycling Facility, Lopez Project, Nacimiento Water Project,	Cyanotoxin Detection System - System includes sampling and analytical equipment for monitoring cyanotoxins in raw water (surface water or groundwater under the influence of surface water), treated water, recycled water systems with open reservoirs, and monitoring wells.	\$150,000

Water Priorities

Project Number	Department	System/Community	Project Name/Description	Estimated Cost
4	Public Works	CSA 23 / Santa Margarita	Replace Bolted Water Tank	\$1,000,000
5	Public Works	CSA 12 / Avila Area	Install Water Storage Tank	\$1,000,000
6	Public Works	Operations Center	Install Water Storage Tank	\$2,750,000
7	Public Works	All Water Locations (CSA 10A, 12, 16, and 23 and Operations Center)	New Water Billing Software/ Hardware	\$50,000

Water Priorities

Project Number	Department	System/Community	Project Name/Description	Estimated Cost
8	Parks	Lopez Lake	Install New Storage Tank	\$1,480,000
9	Environmental Health	All County	Environmental Health Permit Fee Waivers for dry well Replacements	\$100,000

Waste Water Priorities

Project Number	Department	System/Community	Project Name/Description	Estimated Cost
11	Public Works	LOS OSOS	Effluent Pump Station VFDs - units would provide pressure control operation to recycled water system	\$275,000
12	Public Works	LOS OSOS	Cl2 Analyzer at the gate of treatment plant to measure residual after reaction period	\$150,000
13	Public Works	LOS OSOS	Leachfields Improvements Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broderson Cla-Val upgrades - reduce Cla-Val size - Flowmeter at Broderson Leachfield - Bayridge Cla-Val Upgrades 	\$130,000

Waste Water Priorities

Project Number	Department	System/Community	Project Name/Description	Estimated Cost
14	Public Works	LOS OSOS	Connections to other REW users	\$350,000
15	Public Works	CSA 7A- Oak Shores	Polishing Pond & Effluent Pump Station Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effluent Meter - Replace Effluent Wet Well (CIP) - Sludge Removal (Maintenance) 	\$365,000
16	Public Works	CSA 7A- Oak Shores	CSA 7A Interceptor Design Development Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interceptor Condition Assessment - Geotechnical Evaluations - Interceptor Final Design 	\$600,000

Drainage and Flood Priorities

Project Number	Department	System/Community	Project Name/Description	Estimated Cost
22	Public Works	Avila Beach	Study Alternatives to mitigate community flooding from increasing high tide levels	\$100,000

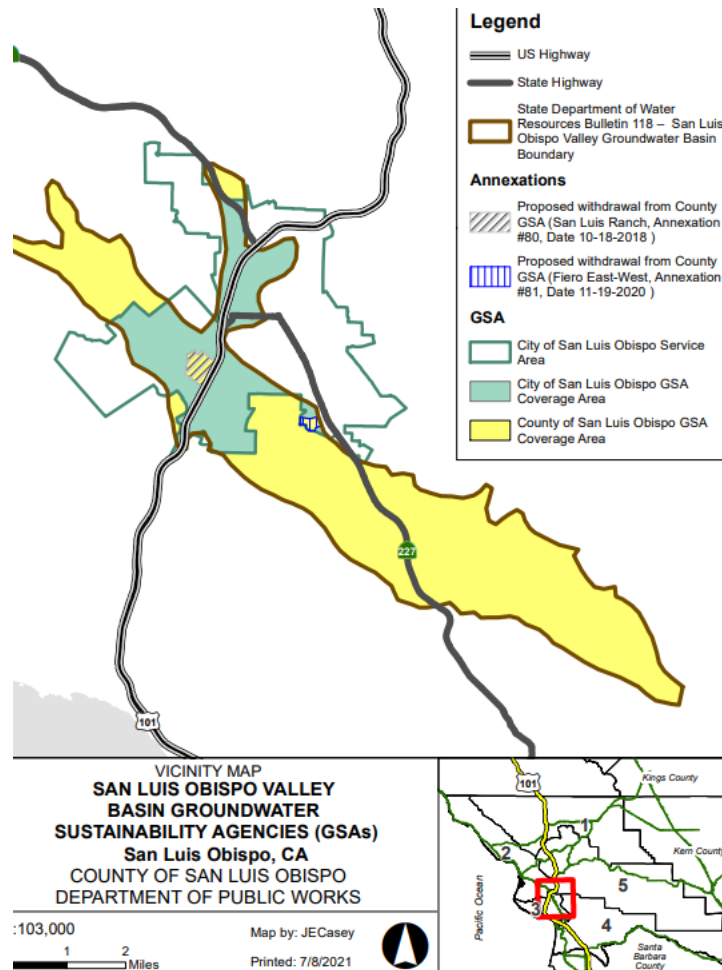
Broadband Priorities

Project Number	Department	System/Community	Project Name/Description	Estimated Cost
23		IT Paso Robles	Fiber to DSS Paso Robles	\$270,000
24		IT Arroyo Grande	Extend fiber to DSS in Arroyo Grande	\$650,000
25		IT Arroyo Grande	Fiber to South County Regional Center	\$240,000
26		IT Atascadero	Fiber to DSS Atascadero	\$740,000
27		IT Morro Bay	Fiber to DSS Morro Bay	\$100,000

You will be paying this off as an expanded portion of the increasing national debt for generations to come (assuming there is a nation left to have a debt). As you can see, most of the expenditures are targeted at small County operated utilities. Theoretically, these entities build up reserves for the types of replacements which are listed above. To the extent that this increases balances in these entities, how will those be used?

Matters After 1:30 PM

Item 37 - Request to 1) receive and file a presentation on the San Luis Obispo Valley Groundwater Basin Draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (Draft GSP), and 2) authorize and direct the Director of Public Works, or designee, to provide notice to the City of San Luis Obispo (City) of the Draft GSP. The County has completed the state mandated (by SGMA) Ground Water Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the San Luis Valley Basin. As noted, a portion of the Basin underlies the City of SLO. By State law, the County must give the City 90 days to review the Plan. It is not clear from the write-up what happens if the City objects to the Plan.



The key finding is that the Basin overlies are pumping more water each year than flows into the basin from natural sources.

Chapter 6 Water Budget

Basin Area	Sustainable Yield Estimate	Pumping Estimate	Difference
San Luis Valley	2,500 AFY	1,800 AFY	+ 700 AFY
Edna Valley	3,300 AFY	4,400 AFY	- 1,100 AFY

These estimates are consistent with the trends found in measured groundwater well levels for each area.

Some of the recommended actions to correct the situation include:

Chapter 9 Projects and Management Actions

PROJECTS

- State Water Project (SWP) used for
 - Direct delivery – agricultural irrigation
 - Direct delivery – Edna Valley purveyors
 - Recharge basins
- Recycled water for agricultural irrigation
- Varian Ranch MWC's Arroyo Grande basin wells
- Price Canyon discharge relocation

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

- Expansion of monitoring network
- Groundwater Extraction Metering & Reporting Plan
- Demand Management Plan
 - Water conservation measures
 - Irrigation efficiency improvements
 - Volunteer water efficient crop conversion
 - Volunteer land fallowing
 - Pumping reductions

- Startup phase (first 5 years) activities, including
 - *Establish administration approach & governance*
 - *Conduct fee study for funding mechanism options*
 - *Expand monitoring network*
 - *Develop groundwater extraction metering & reporting plan*
 - *Develop demand management plan*
 - *Update integrated model & refine water budget*
- Estimated costs basin-wide during startup phase
 - \$965,000 per year
 - Excludes costs associated with projects
- Continue GSP implementation through 2042

Item 38 - Hearing to consider an ordinance amending the Agricultural Offset Requirements for the Paso Basin (County Land Use Ordinance Section 22.30.204) to 1) extend the requirements termination date from January 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022, and 2) change the water duty factor for table grapes from 1.25 acre-feet per year per acre to 3.0 acre-feet per year per acre. An addendum to the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Countywide Water Conservation Program in 2015. This item was set for this hearing during the meeting of August 10, 2021, providing time for people to study the issue and prepare to comment.

The proposed ordinance amendments would extend the water moratorium to August 31, 22. The urgency ordinance adopted in 2013 was converted to a permanent ordinance that restricts the use of water in the Paso Basin. If a farmer or homeowner wishes to increase water use, that person must first find a way to reduce use on another part of the holdings or pay someone else to reduce their use. These are termed offsets.

The ordinance was originally supposed to sunset when the State Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Basin was completed in January 2020. At that time everyone realized that completion of the plan would actually do nothing to save water or protect the Basin, as it will take decades for the various authorities over the Basin to actually begin to implement the various measures contained in the Plan. Securing cooperation on phased reductions in pumping by large users and construction of works to move water around to recharge the Basin will require time.

The staff is working on major amendments to the ordinance, which will be brought back for Board consideration next spring in an effort to determine how to manage the Basin in the near-term decade. The key action here is to extend the Ordinance until August 2022 to provide time for the work.

Separately from the major issues outlined above is a proposal to amend the ordinance to recognize that table grapes use more water than wine grapes. This requires that table grapes be assigned a higher use factor. The wine grapes use 1.8 acre-feet per year. The table grapes use 3.0 acre-feet but had previously been charged the wine grape number. The table grape issue is a ploy to assign greater past use to certain property owners (the look back period) who can then pull out the grapes, claim higher water use for the look back period, and then sell water credits, which will be generated based on their “savings.”

Why staff dropped this grape business into this much broader item is a question.

The whole issue is a huge train wreck, which will culminate in August of 2022 unless they kick the can down the road again. Meanwhile, a number of agriculturalists are trapped in limbo because they suspended pumping during the last drought, and then when it ended, they were told that they could not resume their historical pumping. This is an immediate problem.

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, August 26, 2021 (Cancelled)

Many applicants are probably away on vacation and did not wish to come in to push their projects. On the other hand, there may be few projects other than cannabis.

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 (Not Scheduled)

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 24th.

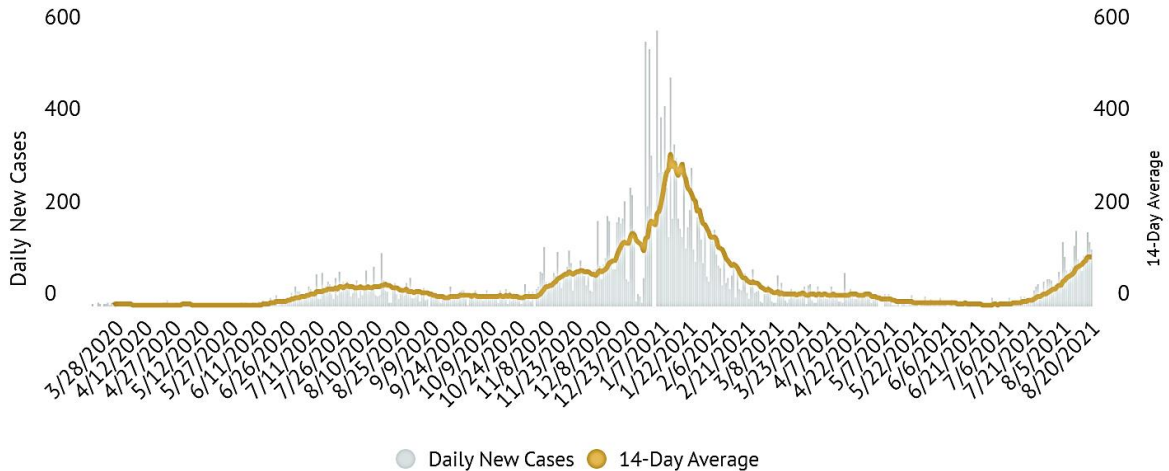
Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of Thursday, August 19, 2021 (Completed)

The agenda was short and contained housekeeping and administrative items. There were informational reports on possible applications for various annexations, which may come forward in the future.

EMERGENT ISSUES HIGHLIGHTS

Item 1 - COVID Status. The infection rate clicked up for the 4th week in a row. Should this trend continue, there will be pressure to resume various restrictions and precautions.

Daily New Cases (and 14-Day Average)



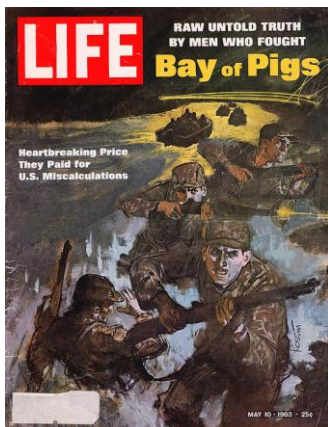
42 Hospitalized (10 in ICU)

SLO County Residents with COVID-19 in Hospital

Item 2 - The Deliberate Collapse of the US in Afghanistan Plus the Botched Evacuation Operation is Emblematic of the Failure of the Progressive Left at all Levels. In most military defeats the losers destroy the weapons and material to prevent the enemy from capturing them. The fact that we are watching TV videos of Taliban fighters loading up on infantry weapons, armored vehicles, trucks, ammunition, artillery, radar systems, electronics, tools, construction equipment, and tons of stores demonstrates that the DOD had no plan to systemically evacuate the Country. Kabul is not the only example .

How much did they seize at the huge fortified air base outside of Kandahar in the South part of the Country? How much material was left a Bagram Air Base outside of Kabul? Why weren't these huge resources either evacuated or destroyed? What does our Congressman, Member of the House Armed Services, Committee Carbajal have to say about this?

Gutless Politicians: For months we have been saying we have seen this movie before, as detailed below. They feed the 19-year-olds into conflicts but refuse to back the policy up when it gets unpopular or tough.



The US failed to provide the air support or logistical backup to the Cuban counter revolutionaries who wanted to boot Castro out in April 1961. In North Korea in December 1950, when 100,000 Chinese Army soldiers attacked our first Marine Division, the Marines had to fight their way out. Truman would not bomb the support bases in China north of the Yalu River.





Saigon 1975



Kabul, last week



One month-old infant abandoned and shoved through the razor wire. Your Federal tax dollars at work.

The Taiwanese, Philipinos, South Koreans, Ukrainians, Israelis, and Texans are now all more nervous than ever (Texas Border below).





They jumped to escape burning to death.

NYC September 11, 2001

From the San Luis Obispo City Hall to Sacramento to Washington DC, the socialist left is daily destroying our nation, culture, and civilization. The problem extends from the outhouse to the White House. There exists a psychotic disconnect in the liberal mind (really the enviro-socialist mind) which rejects logic and observed reality. As has been pointed out by others, it is a mental disorder.



Benghazi, 2016, Obama wouldn't send the planes. In the US, they betray the police, 2020-21.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, AUGUST 21-22, 2021

A 'Pitiful, Helpless Giant' in Afghanistan

President Biden provided an update Friday on the emergency evacuation effort in Kabul, and as usual he was his own worst advocate. The President's optimistic view doesn't fit the chaos on the ground or the fact that the mission continues to be hostage to the goodwill of the Taliban.

"We've made significant progress," Mr. Biden said, taking credit for "one of the largest, most difficult airlifts in history." If you didn't know better, you'd think he was describing a humanitarian airlift in Haiti rather than the desperate rescue of Americans trapped behind enemy lines.

* * *

It's good news that U.S. troops finally control the Kabul airport and its single runway, though that's all the allies control. It's also good that 18,000 people have been evacuated since the Taliban took control of the capital. But the U.S. still doesn't know how many Americans are in the country, and the U.S. Embassy warned this week that "the United States government cannot ensure safe passage to the Hamid Karzai International Airport."

Mr. Biden said Friday that "we're in constant contact with the Taliban," who he says are letting Americans with passports through their checkpoints. But it's distressing to hear a Commander in Chief admit that he's relying on the promises of jihadists who have spent years killing Americans. Mr. Biden even suggested they'll let Americans pass because, well, they need to make a good impression on the world community. Lovely.

The situation is worse for the thousands of Afghans who have applied for entry to the U.S. through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program. Including families, they total 50,000 or more. Mr. Biden vowed to evacuate them as well, as a matter of national honor.

But the Taliban have set up checkpoints throughout Kabul, making it difficult or impossible for some to reach the airport. Americans and Afghans trapped in other provinces face an even more daunting journey. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, asked Wednesday whether the U.S. could rescue Americans who can't reach the airport, replied, "I don't have the capability to go out and extend operations currently into Kabul." What an extraordinary expression of American helplessness.

Some of America's European allies have taken a less defeatist approach. Elite French police

units left the airport and rescued their citizens and Afghans from the French embassy. Media reports say British troops left the airport as well,

and two German helicopters will be arriving in the country this weekend to assist with evacuations.

Mr. Biden boasted Friday about the U.S. coordination with these NATO countries, though our sources say there is much frustration over U.S.

risk-aversion. If Mr. Biden believes what he says, he should organize a joint military operation to go beyond the airport and get people out. It isn't clear that the U.S. can complete a rapid and successful evacuation of foreigners and loyal Afghans without an aggressive military component.

Joint NATO forces can expand the airport perimeter and create a corridor into Kabul city with more points of access to the airport for Americans, NATO nationals and Afghan SIV candidates. Special forces can conduct rescue missions in difficult to reach areas. The U.S. can establish military hubs outside the airport and around the country where evacuees can assemble for transport. Why should the U.S. and its allies limit themselves to the Kabul airport, which the Taliban could cripple by bombing the runway?

Such a joint military operation would send a message of resolve to the Taliban and evacuate people on U.S. terms, not the Taliban's. The alternative is to remain captive to Taliban forbearance, which could end at any time.

Such an operation is risky, and on Friday Mr. Biden spoke about the risks of unspecified "unintended consequences." That tells the Taliban they're in charge. Mr. Biden no doubt fears the Taliban will take foreign hostages. But trapped Americans and allies are already de facto prisoners. If Secretary Austin needs more troops, then send them in. If Mr. Biden refuses, Mr. Austin should resign over not getting the force to fulfill his mission. The U.S. has enough combat brigades to do the job.

In 1970, in explaining a military offensive in Cambodia, Richard Nixon put the stakes this way: "If, when the chips are down, the world's most powerful nation, the United States of America, acts like a pitiful, helpless giant, the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy will threaten free nations and free institutions throughout the world."

A nation that hesitates to rescue its people for fear of the Taliban is behaving like a pitiful, helpless giant.

Time for a NATO military operation to rescue those trapped behind Taliban lines.

COLAB IN DEPTH

IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME, LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES

ARE WE IN A REVOLUTION AND DON'T EVEN KNOW IT?

We are in the midst of a revolutionary epoch and probably most don't even know it.

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Institutions are being absorbed not just by the woke apparatus, but by an array of ideologies that seeks to destroy them.

The collective madness that ensued from the pandemic, the quarantine, the self-induced recession, the George Floyd killing and subsequent months of exempted riots, the election year, and the resurgence of variants of the Chinese-engineered coronavirus, all ignited the fuse of formerly inert socialist dynamite. And the ensuing explosion of revolutionary fervor in just a few months has made America almost unrecognizable.

“Workers of the world unite!” was the old Marxist internationalist war cry. The perceived enemies of coerced socialism were nationalism— and the idea of singular countries defined by borders containing unique citizens legally distinct from mere migratory residents, and sharing ties and traditions that transcended race and class. All that is now problematic.

If it is true that two million illegal aliens will cross the southern border with impunity in the current fiscal year, then the Biden agenda is apparently to help erode the idea of citizenship and anybody defined as an American. Under the socialist ethos, the indigent in Yucatan and the impoverished migrant from Nigeria have as much right to enter and live in the United States as U.S. citizens. And their respective rights under the living Constitution are now nearly identical.

In just seven months, our southern border has vanished. Apparently, it was an artificial construct that obstructed the migrations of the global community. We are back to a natural, pre-civilizational and Rousseauian idea of freeing migrating tribes from the chains of civilization. And what better way to start than dispensing with unique borders, citizenship, and the idea of a nation state?

Socialism aligns foreign policy with the interests of the global oppressed rather than the citizens of a particular nation. In reductionist terms, what do lifting sanctions on Iran and appeasing its theocracy, reaching out to Hamas and snubbing Israel, and allowing the Taliban to overrun Afghanistan have in common? Just as the United States is trying to rebrand itself as a sort of new, non-Western nation, so it clumsily seeks to recalibrate its foreign policy to cease support for the overdog, the American client, and the more Westernized. We are to believe that an empowered Persian Shiite crescent offers equity to the silenced of the Middle East. The Taliban, perhaps regrettably, better represents indigenous Afghan culture than does the Westernized bourgeois elite in Kabul. Hezbollah and Hamas are the more authentic Middle Easterners than the Western Zionist interlopers of Israel. In other words, our foreign policy is in a revolutionary flux.

Liberals try to yank capitalism to the left; but true revolutionaries seek to dismantle the very tenets upon which it is based. No wonder that a recent poll showed most Democrats had a more favorable view (59 percent) of socialism than of capitalism (49 percent).

So, the Right shouts “They are socialists!” And the Left fires back “smears and lies!” while quietly the Biden Administration has already begun systematically to warp the rules of free-market capitalism. In other words, we are apparently all to be socialists now.

By continuing to suspend rental payments to landlords who have no redress to the courts for violations of their contractual leases, the government essentially has redefined private property as we know it. Who really owns an apartment or a room in a house if the occupant has not paid rent since last spring? Is the *de facto* owner the renter in physical control of the unit, or the increasingly impotent title holder who must still pay the insurance, taxes, and upkeep?

Do we still recognize the principle that those who owe money must pay it back? Biden is talking about vastly expanding any prior idea of student loan debt cancellations by massive new amnesties. As capitalism transitions into socialism, what about the parents who saved to pay their children’s tuition, the students who worked part-time and took only the units they could pay for, or the working-class youths who decided loans were too risky and preferred instead at 18 to go straight to work?

Are they hapless Kulaks? And what do we name the indebted students and the loan-sharking universities who finagled a collective \$1.7 trillion in student debt? Revolutionaries? Who pays for what others have incurred?

Supply and demand under capitalism adjudicate wages and thus the rate of unemployment. But have we ever seen an expanding economy seeking to meet pent-up consumer demands for goods and services without the labor to meet that need? The workers are everywhere and nowhere, but the government has deliberately persuaded millions not to return officially to work, given rising unemployment compensation is more remunerative than the wages of working. Have we now finally embraced the old Marxist canard, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”?

Inflation and the devaluation of the currency are now seemingly a good thing; printing dollars erodes the savings of the thrifty and money spreads to those who allegedly need and deserve it.

Note we owe nearly \$30 trillion in national debt. Yet as the Biden Administration runs a \$2 trillion annual deficit, it pushes an “infrastructure” bill that will mean additionally somewhere between \$2 to \$4 trillion of more printed cash. Ronald Reagan talked of “starving the beast”—cutting taxes to deprive the voracious bureaucratic state of its fiscal food.

Now instead we are “gorging the beast”: exponentially expanding government with so much debt that higher taxes are inevitable. And with the red ink comes redistribution in the socialist sense of borrowing more to give to the deserving, and taking more from the undeserving—to borrow even more for the more deserving still.

Socialism does not believe in the construct of “merit,” given it is predicated on free will that trends supposedly towards selfishness, and results in an absence of “equity”: that is why colleges have dropped standardized tests for applicants, and are jettisoning traditional ideas of “exclusionary” honors programs.

Remember, under socialism, in T-ball style, we all win—or lose. Our shared purposes are not to help meet and surpass purportedly artificially constructed standards of excellence to ensure greater prosperity, security, and comfort, but to demolish such ossified constructs, and rebrand the formerly failed as the now successful.

The revolution has already redefined crime as a construct in the eye of the bourgeois beholder. Our woke elite told us to cool it for 120 days of last summer’s riots, looting and arson, since in the words of the “1619 Project” architect and former *New York Times* reporter Nikole Hannah-Jones, “Destroying property, which can be replaced, is not violence.” Torch a federal courthouse, a church, or police precinct and why worry over mere “brick and mortar”? Take over a few city blocks and, presto, we have a “summer of love.”

“Defund the police” became a socialist slogan supposedly to remind us that “crime” is what the rich call going into Walgreens to grab something they never fret about needing. COVID-19 is not the *real* reason why prisoners are freed from jails and prison to commit new crimes at an alarming rate. Indeed, those people didn’t *really commit crimes* so much as reflect society’s bad karma of arbitrarily labeling what they did as “crimes” in the first place, which in truth were often simply cries from the heart.

Two years ago, it would have been considered absurd that youth would ride bikes into drug stores and steal with impunity as security guards watched, or thieves could enter into Neiman-Marcus department stores and skip out with thousands of dollars of rich people’s favorites. Over \$2 billion in “stuff” was destroyed in 2020. And almost none of the violence was ever properly investigated, the perpetrators arrested, charged, tried, convicted, sentenced, or incarcerated.

In such revolutionary times, no one knows any more what is and is not a crime. Illegally storming the border when positive for COVID-19? Destroying a public statue of George

Washington or Thomas Jefferson? Looting a corporate chain store? Knocking out an Asian-American septuagenarian? Or turning over the tables of Jewish-Americans as they eat? Taking over municipal blocks and declaring the confiscation an autonomous zone? Not crimes. “Illegal parading” inside the U.S. Capitol building? Crime.

Twenty years ago, on the eve of 9/11, there were earlier heated debates over cash reparations. The acrimony has now again resurfaced after the rioting that followed the death of George Floyd.

Yet the Left this time around did not envision reparations as just monetary gifting for the distant descendants of the enslaved and the generations who grew up under Jim Crow. Rather, it is already recalibrating the Great Society doctrine of “proportional representation” quotas, achieved through “disparate impact,” into new reparatory and disproportionate quotas and allotments.

We are jettisoning the old idea under our Lebanese-like system of racial spoils that each group deserved representation in hiring and admission commensurate to its percentages of the population—trumping many traditional meritocratic criteria of examination scores, grades, or prior work experience.

No more. If one examines current fall 2021 entering classes at many of our elite universities, many minority groups will enroll with numbers disproportionate to their current demographic percentages but proportionate to the idea of reparatory “overrepresentation.”

The same holds true of the racial make-up of new television shows and commercials, pilot training programs, and corporate board room representation. Again, the idea is that blacks, for example, should be represented in percentages exceeding 12 percent in any coveted honors or awards—to make up for past underrepresentation, given prior mere proportionality offers no reparatory justice.

In a strange way, for all the furor over reparation payments, the issue already is beginning to be settled quietly by our major institutions. Note class consideration will have no role in such disproportionate and compensatory action.

Another revolutionary crackpot idea was ending nuclear power and fossil fuels and replacing them with wind and solar generation that would power our homes and our new envisioned national fleet of electric cars. No one quite believed the revolutionary Left would be so suicidal as to spike the energy costs of the middle class, make the United States dependent again on imported oil from the autocratic Middle East and Russia, and strangle the oil and gas industry that had enriched America.

But without much debate, Joe Biden has cancelled the huge ANWR oil and gas project in Alaska. He shut down the Keystone Pipeline and destroyed Alberta’s export of oil to the United States. He nixed all new fossil fuel leases on federal lands. He discouraged frackers from using their full inventory of rigs. As gasoline heads to \$5 a gallon, Joe Biden, in the months before the

next midterm elections, asks OPEC to send us its hated carbon fuel to help our addicted, but suddenly furious, commuter-voters.

Here is a final reminder of why the revolution has already turned society upside down. The canniest elements of the aristocracy always cut deals with the revolution and indeed often remain the nomenklatura. What unites Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and the Silicon Valley billionaire crowd are the exemptions they purchased from revolutionary justice.□

In the old days they would have gotten dachas on the Black Sea coast and three dial phones on their desks. These days they keep their billions if they give a hundred million dollars in “civility” bounties *here* to Van Jones (ex-truther and expert on why white people are supposedly responsible for mass shootings) or *there* seed \$500 million to key voting precincts to help ensure the good people defeat the bad.□

In 1961, Cubans were not quite aware that they were experiencing a Marxist takeover. Nor were Russians fully cognizant in 1917 of the plans that the Bolsheviks had for them over the next few decades. It is hard to see during anarchy, chaos, and collapsing institutions that leftists still have an agenda for what will emerge on the other side.

In other words, we are in the midst of a revolutionary epoch and probably most don’t even know it.

Victor Davis Hanson is a distinguished fellow of the Center for American Greatness and the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution. He is an American military historian, columnist, a former classics professor, and scholar of ancient warfare. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush. Hanson is also a farmer (growing raisin grapes on a family farm in Selma, California) and a critic of social trends related to farming and agrarianism. He is the author most recently of The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won and The Case for Trump.



Talk About Bad Timing: Biden To Visit California To Save Newsom From Recall

BY LEE OHANIAN

Gavin Newsom is fighting for his political life as he faces a recall election next month with declining support among Californians. But just last week, the Newsom campaign breathed a sigh of relief when learning that Joe Biden and Kamala Harris would visit California to campaign for him to turn out the “no to recall” vote on Newsom’s behalf.

While California is one of the bluest states in the union, Democrats thus far aren’t sufficiently excited by Newsom to turn in their ballots. Among likely voters, it is now roughly a coin flip as to whether Newsom is recalled. And if Newsom is recalled in California’s two-stage recall process, then the next governor will almost certainly be a Republican, as Newsom will not be on the replacement ballot.

The Biden-Harris announcement should be great news for Newsom, yes? Well, perhaps not so great, or even not so good, at least not nearly as good as it would have been as recently as last month. Or even earlier this month, before Americans became painfully aware of our horrendous exit from Afghanistan.

The potential loss of California’s governorship to a Republican would be devastating to the Democratic party, so it is not surprising that the national party has tapped its heavyweights to fight the recall. [The decision to seek help from Biden and Harris follows an ineffective ad campaign that featured Senator Elizabeth Warren speaking on Newsom’s behalf.](#)

But Warren was an incredibly odd choice, having received only 13 percent of the vote in the state’s Democratic presidential primary last year. And the Warren ad doubled down on the Newsom campaign’s existing strategy, which is to paint anyone who signed the recall petition as an extremist given to white supremacy, as anti-vaccination, and as a lover of all that is Donald Trump.

In what would otherwise be terrific news for Newsom, Biden will instead arrive in California—if he still does arrive—as a damaged surrogate for the governor, having presided over what can only be called a completely botched withdrawal from Afghanistan, followed by a press conference earlier this week in which he failed to take any responsibility for perhaps the most poorly executed foreign policy decision in recent memory.

Straining to read from the teleprompter, Biden argued for 20 minutes about our failures in Afghanistan, how there would never be a good time to leave, and that the debacle that has unfolded before us is to be blamed on Trump, the former Afghani president, the Afghani military, and even the Afghani people.

And after the press conference, Biden predictably refused to answer any questions, and for good reason. All the questions would have been about the chaotic withdrawal, one that he missed even days before the Taliban ran roughshod over province after province. And he would have had no legitimate answers to those questions. Because there aren’t any, at least none that would place our poorly executed withdrawal in a better light.

Politically, it is obvious Biden would do whatever he could in Monday’s press conference to blame Trump, who negotiated a deal with the Taliban before he left office. But the Trump deal

required the Taliban to cut ties with terrorists, including al-Qaeda. A United Nations report from last spring indicated that this requirement had not been satisfied, and Biden's own team had been investigating Taliban compliance since Biden first took office in January. And lack of compliance on the part of the Taliban certainly means there was no reason for Biden to feel the need to honor his predecessor's agreement.

What about the lack of performance from the Afghan military? The failure of Afghani security forces to engage is clearly an important reason why the Taliban consolidated power so quickly. But the security forces were heavily dependent on foreign (mostly US) contractors for maintenance of equipment, training, and support. Nearly all those contractors left last month. For whatever reasons the Afghan military had not learned to be independent after so many years, it is nevertheless very shortsighted to have not expected what happened when such crucial support personnel were removed. Why remove such key personnel if we wanted the security forces—69,000 of whom gave their lives during the war—to be able to perform?

If Biden still finds the time to visit California, he will not be the popular president that is needed by Newsom to thrill crowds and turn out the vote. And if Harris visits instead, well, she seems to have all but disappeared in her job as vice president. At this point, Newsom may well be on his own, unless he can somehow convince Barack Obama to come to his aid.

But Obama has been very selective in offering his support, particularly to struggling politicians. And Obama doesn't have nearly as easy a target now as he did last fall, when he campaigned as much against Trump as he did for Biden. This time, the target will be African American Larry Elder, the leading recall candidate, who grew up very poor in South Central Los Angeles, and who has succeeded enormously despite the challenges he has faced in his lifetime.

If Newsom is to avoid recall, he must make the case himself by pointing to his accomplishments since he took office in January 2019. But he has not done this. And less than a month before the recall election, every voter should ask themselves why we haven't heard about those accomplishments from the governor who is now running for his political life. And who is running out of time to salvage his governorship.

Lee E. Ohanian is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of economics and director of the Ettinger Family Program in Macroeconomic Research at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

He is associate director of the Center for the Advanced Study in Economic Efficiency at Arizona State University and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, where he codirects the research initiative Macroeconomics across Time and Space. He is also a fellow in the Society for the Advancement of Economic Theory.

His research focuses on economic crises, economic growth, and the impact of public policy on the economy. Ohanian is coeditor of [Government Policies and Delayed Economic Recovery](#) (Hoover Institution Press, 2012). He is an adviser to the Federal Reserve Banks of Minneapolis and St. Louis, has previously advised other Federal Reserve banks, foreign central banks, and the National Science Foundation, and has testified to national and state legislative

committees on economic policy. He is on the editorial boards of Econometrica and Macroeconomic Dynamics. He is a frequent media commentator and writes for the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, and Investor's Business Daily. He has won numerous teaching awards at UCLA and the University of Rochester. This article first appeared in the August 19, 2021 edition of the Hoover Institution of Stanford University Daily Report.



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