Disney’s ‘Mulan’ Was Filmed Where Uyghur Muslims Are Kept In Concentration Camps

By: Aysha Qamar

It seems Disney is willing to go to no end to increase profits. First, the company came under fire for ignoring social distancing measures and hosting a grand fireworks celebration prior to closing, then the company reopened amidst the pandemic, warning customers to enter at their own risk. Now Disney is in the hot seat for filming its new live-action film Mulan in parts of China where the government has committed serious human rights abuses. To top it all off, the final credits of the film thanked the bodies involved in the alleged abuses. That’s right: Producers not only shot Mulan, a movie with the underlying theme of empowerment, in a controversial place, but thanked agencies involved in horrific violence. Both the Chinese Communist Party Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Committee and the Bureau of Public Security in Turpan thanked in the film’s credits have been involved in a number of human rights abuses toward ethnic minorities. Not only are these agencies responsible for policing the region but for also spreading propaganda. Since 2016, more than one million Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities have been detained in at least 500 prison camps.

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Padma Kuppa: Hindutva’s Mouthpiece In Michigan

By: Pieter Friedrich

"Democracy dies in darkness," said Padma Kuppa in March 2020. "The minute you stop paying attention and stop being aware of what’s going on, you let other people take over things that impact your daily life." Kuppa, who was elected to the Michigan State House of Representatives in 2018, is seeking a second term. As she does, few voters in the suburban region of Detroit that she represents are aware that some of her largest campaign donations come from out-of-state donors who are executives in affiliates of India’s Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Even less of the voters in her district have the slightest awareness of the extent to which RSS affiliates in India directly — and negatively — impact the daily lives of citizens in India, particularly religious minorities. "A lot of South Asians don’t see politics as a ‘clean’ thing," Kuppa said in April 2019 as she hit the fundraising circuit mere months after first

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Donald Trump Condemns And Cancels Diversity Trainings

By Yousuf Ali

The president of the United States Donald Trump caused more controversy on Sept. 5 when he announced the canceling of diversity training programs. According to him, these cost millions of dollars and went on to say that they are
The world’s largest humanitarian crisis, now going on five years of devastating war, has left 80% of Yemen’s population in need of humanitarian help. We have faith in Yemen, and that’s why our visionary help not only gives food for survival today, but sustainability for tomorrow through the gift of mating livestock which quickly produce herds and a reliable source of food and income.

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PASS INTERFERENCE:
The Playbook Against Muslim Voter Mobilization
By Nadia Ahmad
We have been had. And we will continue to be had unless we step up our A-game.
The best defense is a good offense. For the past two decades, we have always been playing defense. Establishment Muslim Democrats have been steering the conversation and direction of Muslim political engagement for decades. It’s why we have become so ineffective in any level of true policy changes. If we don’t have the courage to speak truth to power, then power is just going to get out and eat us alive. Organizations like Emgage, CAIR, ISNA, ICNA, and MPAC have failed to offer any meaningful reformulation of Muslim American priority goals. They have just become political clubs by immigrant men in late middle-age. Instead of Corvettes and skydiving, they decided to become politically disengaged.

According to Sporting News, the concept of pass interference from football can be illustrative of understating what has happened to our communities. In 2019, the pass interference rule was updated. Proponents of the NFL making pass interference reviewable will point to the aforementioned potential to avoid poor calls or non-calls. Those who oppose the idea might point to reports about how NFL coaches have been scheming to “weaponize” pass interference. In the context of pass interference being reviewable, though, it’s worth revisiting what the NFL actually defines as PI. Here are the standards, straight from the NFL rule book.

Acts that are pass interference include, but are not limited to: Contact by a player who is not playing the ball that restricts the opponent’s opportunity to make the catch; Playing through the back of an opponent in an attempt to make a play on the ball; Grabbing an opponent’s arm(s) in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass; Extending an arm across the body of an opponent, thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, and regardless of whether the player committing such act is playing the ball; Cutting off the path of an opponent by making contact with him, without playing the ball; Hooking an opponent in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that it causes the opponent’s body to turn prior to the ball arriving; or Initiating contact with an opponent by shoving or pushing off, thus creating separation.

What this looks like in the political arena for progressive Muslim voices. Contact by Muslims serving narrow interest groups putting up the facade as being representative of the entire community. Playing backroom deals against the Muslim community to advance their own selves and their organizations which do not align with majority Muslim political aspirations. Grabbing anyone who is critical of Establishment Democrats and censoring and silencing them. Blocking efforts of other organizations to associate and actually engage. Cutting off the path of progressive Muslim voices by serving as gatekeepers and campaign surrogates. Hooking up militarism in Israel, India, and Saudi Arabia with calls for democracy. Avoiding contact with any critical voices. Intercepting any potential actionable work being done.

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By: TMO Staff

Dr. Muqtadar Khan, a Political science professor at the University of Delaware and an immigrant from Hyderabad, India, recently interviewed Sri Preston Kulkarni running for congressional district 22 of Texas on his show that he calls Khanver- sation.

It reminded me of the interview a Bollywood actor, Akshay Kumar, had with Indian Prime Minister Modi. Kumar asked Modi about his favorite fruit. “Mango,” responded the PM. Of course, the country was witnessing a fall in economy and law and order situation. Communal tensions were rife, and the lynching of Muslims had become common. Yet, the Indian actor was keen to know about Modi’s favorite fruit as if the solution to India’s problem lies in Modi’s choice of fruit.

Khan was also keen to know Kulkarni’s favorite cricket player and the famous actor of Bollywood and his liking of cricket. Does it matter to voters who are seri- ous about their representation in US Congress? Why is Kulkarni accepting the money from those people who have supported a fascist ideology in India and the US? Who are his backers? He cleverly avoided answering these questions.

But the Kahnver-sation is consultatively done. TMO’s view is that no submissions be made on behalf of others. By submitting articles you are promising us that the views and opinions are suit- able to hate mongers. If anyone wants to see an example of hate mongers, they can study India under their rule.

His question about the RSS was meaning- less. Even a sixth-grader knows that receiving money from a foreign entity for electioneering is illegal. Asking a problem with an obvious answer was a mockery of viewers intelligence. Questions about Kulkarni’s governance values brought the most fun part of the conversation. The Democratic candidate, instead of presenting his party’s position on this issue, said that we were trying to build a coalition of Hindus, Muslims, and others, for the first time in Texas history. He is not familiar with the history of Houston. MJ Khan, a Mus- lim candidate, won a very cleverly equated his presence at the ISNA convention with his meeting with Modi. ISNA is a national body of Muslims and Christians. The vote in Congress? Will he provide the viewers and community. In democracies, people take different positions based on their understanding. Differences of opinions are suit- able for a healthy polity. But one must make a dis- tinction between propaganda and an educated opinion. Khan’s interview comes in the category of free commercial for Kulkarni.
Rohingya Genocide:
Strengthening The U.N. Response Three Years On

by Nadira Kourt for the Center of Global Policy

In the three years since Myanmar began perpetrating genocide against the Rohingya, little has been done to ease the suffering of the Rohingya, address the causes of the atrocities, or bring their perpetrators to justice. It is imperative that the United States use its influence on the U.N. Security Council to put pressure on Myanmar to end the violence and prevent similar crimes from happening in the future, which threaten to erode international norms, and with it global security. This month marks three years since Myanmar’s soldiers drove nearly 800,000 Rohingya, members of a Muslim ethnic minority group, from their homes in Rakhine State to neighboring Bangladesh. The Rohingya fled indiscriminate killings, sexual violence, torture, beatings, and arbitrary detention. They witnessed their houses burned to the ground and their fellow villagers killed en masse in what was later declared by a U.N. investigation to be genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Today, nearly 1 million Rohingya refugees find themselves in overcrowded camps in Bangladesh, and hundreds risk their lives in an attempt to reach other countries in the region. Meanwhile, none of the root causes of genocide in Myanmar have been addressed, including the issues of citizenship and freedom of movement. U.S.-led international action, particularly via the U.N. Security Council, is needed more than ever to address the ongoing impunity for mass atrocities, prevent future violence and restore the rights of this vulnerable community.

Inadequate U.N. Response

The response of the United Nations to these unconscionable crimes has been slow, uneven and overall inadequate, particularly at the U.N. Security Council level. The Rosenthal report, formally known as “A Brief and Independent Inquiry into the Investigation of the United Nations in Myanmar from 2010 to 2018,” describes the United Nations’ failure to respond to the escalating situation in Myanmar and notes that due to the “absence of the support of the Security Council ... the options of the United Nations to address the challenge in a manner consistent with its values and principles is often rather limited.” Some parts of the United Nations have spoken out about the situation in Myanmar and taken action in response to the discrimination and violence against the Rohingya. The Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, for example, has provided regular reports that included sharp recommendations for actors within and outside the United Nations. The General Assembly has asked Secretary-General António Guterres to appoint a Special Envoy on Myanmar. The Human Rights Council, which arguably has been the most proactive body in the U.N. system, has created the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, mandated to “prepare files in order to facilitate and expedite fair and independent criminal proceedings,” which is crucial for the further advancement of accountability efforts, which the U.N. General Assembly has fully funded.

The Human Rights Council also created the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, whose findings have played a crucial role in advancing accountability efforts. The information provided by the fact-finding mission was instrumental for both the filing of the case at the International Court of Justice and the authorization of the investigation by the International Criminal Court.

These actions by various U.N. bodies and their interaction with one another demonstrate that different parts of the United Nations can act constructively and complementarily in response to atrocities. However, despite the efforts from these agencies, ultimately it was insufficient to change Myanmar’s behavior. On June 30, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet issued a statement noting that the situation in Rakhine has not improved and conditions for a “safe, dignified and sustainable return from Bangladesh are still not in place.” All the while, the perpetrators of atrocities are not only walking free, but continue attacking vulnerable populations in Rakhine State and beyond.

Given this grim reality, how can the U.N. strengthen its response to the Rohingya genocide and other atrocities in Myanmar? U.N. Security Council Actions

One U.N. body notably missing from the above outline of actions is the Security Council. The only official product adopted by the Council on Myanmar was a presidential statement from nearly three years ago. While many of its recommendations were valuable, they did not carry the legal
Christchurch Mosque Shooter Sentenced To Life In Prison

By Yousuf Ali

Brandan Tarrant, the white-supremacist terrorist who murdered at least 50 Muslims during Friday prayers in 2019 in Christchurch was sentenced to life in prison by a New Zealand Court on August 27. The sentence considered the harshest available in New Zealand, comes as the first of its kind to be imposed under the current set of laws in the country. Tarrant will never leave jail and is expected to die in prison under this sentence. During the incident in question, he live-streamed the attack on Facebook for the world to see. The week leading up to the sentence was marked by the testimony of victims and their families who recounted their memory of the attack and explained the harm that the terror inflicted upon them and their families. In addition to the victims, the judge had strong words for Tarrant regarding his crimes and lack of regret for them. “Your crimes are so wicked that even if you are detained until you die it will not exhaust the requirements of punishment and denunciation.” High Court Judge Cameron Mander said when delivering the sentence, according to Al Jazeera. He added: “The hatred that lies at the heart of your hostility to particular members of the community that you came to this country to murder has no place here – it has no place anywhere.” Mander added that Tarrant showed no remorse for his actions and crime. “We respect our justice system and in New Zealand Muslim community, and the non-Muslim as well – we stood together against hate. And with it, our own model for the world. Extremists are all the same. Whether they use religions, nationalism or any other ideology” a spokesperson for the Al Noor Mosque said.

In addition to the victims, the judge had strong words for Tarrant regarding his crimes and lack of regret for them. “Your crimes are so wicked that even if you are detained until you die it will not exhaust the requirements of punishment and denunciation.” High Court Judge Cameron Mander said when delivering the sentence, according to Al Jazeera. He added: “The hatred that lies at the heart of your hostility to particular members of the community that you came to this country to murder has no place here – it has no place anywhere.” Mander added that Tarrant showed no remorse for his actions and crime. “We respect our justice system and in New Zealand Muslim community, and the non-Muslim as well – we stood together against hate. And with it, our own model for the world. Extremists are all the same. Whether they use religions, nationalism or any other ideology” a spokesperson for the Al Noor Mosque said.

The country’s prime minister joined in with supportive words following the hearing. “The trauma of March 15 is not easily healed, but today I hope is the last where we have any cause to hear or utter the name of the terrorist behind it. His deserves to be a lifetime of complete and utter silence,” Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said.

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Teachers In 5 States Have Died Of COVID-19. Trump Is Still Demanding All Schools Open Their Doors

By: Aysha Qamar

Deadly consequences are the result of schools resuming in-person learning amid the novel coronavirus. Teachers have died as a result of COVID-19 in at least five states since the beginning of the new school year. As the U.S. continues to fail its residents in responding to the coronavirus pandemic, educators worry about the impact that opening schools will have across the country. Since the start of the pandemic, many teachers have expressed their fear of returning back to their classrooms.

According to the Associated Press, while it is unclear how many teachers have been infected with COVID-19 nationwide since the school year began, in Mississippi alone at least 600 cases have been reported among school teachers and staff. Without mandatory safety guidelines and measures in place to stop the spread of coronavirus, this number is sure to increase as students head back to campus.

According to the American Federation of Teachers, at least 210 union members have died of coronavirus.

“If community spread is too high as it is in Missouri and Mississippi, if you don’t have the infrastructure of testing, and if you don’t have the safeguards that prevent the spread of viruses in the school, we believe that you cannot reopen in person,” Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, told the AP.

While in-person learning is ideal, reopening schools under current circumstances would not only create potential hotspots for the novel coronavirus but reverse any progress made, especially with mask mandates not being present in each state. A lack of safety measures in place has caused many teachers to reconsider whether or not they should quit their jobs. Unfortunately, this choice is not available to all teachers as many have no other source of income and are thus left with no choice but to teach and risk their lives. And as schools reopen, those who come in contact with the staff, teachers, and children participating in in-person learning initiatives are also put at risk.

While COVID-19-related deaths are not new to this school year, recently reported deaths have renewed fears of the virus among all age groups. According to the AP, at the start of the pandemic, the novel coronavirus claimed the lives of dozens of teachers. Despite this, Donald Trump consistently pushed for schools to reopen, claiming that the virus did not affect young people. Without a national plan in place to protect teachers and students, Trump and his administration threatened to defund and penalize already underfunded schools that don’t reopen under the misconception that children and the young are less susceptible to the virus.

“The lower they are in age, the lower the risk,” Trump said at a news briefing at the White House on July 30. “We have to remember that there’s another side to this. Keeping them out of school and keeping work closed is causing death also. Economic harm, but it’s causing death for different reasons, but death. Probably more death.”

Like other statements made by Trump, this too is false. Reports have repeatedly indicated that children and young adults across the country are falling ill and dying as a result of COVID-19. Recent data shows that more than 500,000 children in the U.S. have tested positive for COVID-19 since the pandemic began. According to The Washington Post, nationwide at least six teachers have died in the last month, with some of them being notably young. Among them was 28-year-old South Carolina third-grade teacher Demetria “Demi” Bannister, who died from coronavirus complications Monday. The State reported She had tested positive for the virus on Friday.

Administrators described Bannister as the school’s “Songbird.” “My heart is so heavy right now. We lost an Amazing young Teacher this week in Richland Two. My condolences and prayers go out to Demetria Bannister’s family, friends and school family,” Richland Two district board member Dr. Teresa Holmes said on Facebook. “God has gained another Angel. Please be safe and careful in these trying times of Covid-19.”

Another death this week occurred in Missouri in which 34-year-old Aash Lee DeMarinis died of COVID-19 complications after spending three weeks in the hospital. “She taught special education, and it was just her calling,” her sister Jennifer Heissenbuttel told The Washington Post. “Her students loved her and her colleagues loved her.” While DeMarinis was already in the hospital by the time in-person classes began, her sister shared she had been in the school preparing for the year a couple of weeks earlier.

As of this report, teachers in Missouri, Mississippi, South Carolina, Iowa, and Oklahoma have died since the start of this fall semester from coronavirus, The Washington Post reported. Yet Donald Trump still demands that schools reopen. “Democrats, OPEN THE SCHOOLS (SAFE-LY), NOW! When schools are closed, let the money follow the child (FAMIL- IY). Why should schools be paid when they are closed? They shouldn’t,” Trump tweeted Thursday.

Grade schools are not the only educational institutions being affected by the coronavirus. Colleges and universities across the nation have opened only to close within days due to COVID-19 clusters and outbreaks found on campus. At least 36 states across the country have seen coronavirus cases on school campuses, Daily Kos reported. Schools of all levels are struggling to enforce social distancing measures in addition to implementing safety precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19, and with some states lacking mask mandates, this task becomes even more difficult.

As of Sept. 9, at least 1,176 new coronavirus deaths and 33,200 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in the U.S. As of this report more than 6.3 million in the U.S. have been infected with COVID-19 and at least 191,000 have died as a result, according to The New York Times database.

Reposted from Daily Kos

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'Words Matter': Powerful Ad Addresses Trump’s Anti-Asian Rhetoric And Calls For Immigrants To Vote

by Aysha Qamar

Since the start of the pandemic, Asians across the globe have been subject to racism and xenophobia as misinformation continues to spread about the novel coronavirus. In the U.S., misinformation about how the virus spread has led to racist verbal and physical attacks on people who appear to be East Asian. As Donald Trump and his administration continue to fuel this fire by using language like the “Kung Flu” to refer to COVID-19, Asian Americans continue to face discrimination both in their homes and in public.

Following increased reports of violence against Asian Americans and other people of color, Immigrants’ List Civic Action is releasing a video ad entitled “Words Matter” in battleground states. The ad calls out Trump for his racist and xenophobic language.

According to NBC News, the pro-immigrant group hopes to appeal to people of color and recent immigrants who have not voted before. The 60-second ad has already been shared on social media and is expected to air on local stations in Pennsylvania, Florida, Michigan, and Wisconsin leading up to the presidential election.

“The point of ‘Words Matter’ is to highlight the kinds of racist rhetoric that Trump is using when he calls the coronavirus ‘kung flu’ or calls it the ‘Chinese virus,’” Ira Kurzban, founder of Immigrants’ List Civic Action, told NBC News. Kurzban added that the states his team selected were places Trump won by a very small margin in 2016. “We’re trying to get people out to vote because we believe if new Americans vote, we will have a new person in the White House in January 2021,” he said.

Trump has repeatedly referred to COVID-19 as the “Chinese virus,” “Wuhan virus,” and other dehumanizing rhetoric. Instead of apologizing and retracting his offensive words, Trump has defended his statements, claiming they were not racist. “Cause it comes from China. It’s not racist at all, no, not at all. It comes from China, that’s why. I want to be accurate.” Trump said according to CNN.

The powerful ad features horrific news headlines about crimes committed as a result of Trump’s anti-Asian rhetoric in addition to headlines highlighting the fear present in Asian American communities. It ends with a powerful yet simple request: “Tell Donald Trump words matter.” Around the same time as Trump refused to accept the role his influence had in the rise of crimes against Asian Americans, he issued a statement on Twitter to protect the Asian American community in March: “It is very important that we totally protect our Asian American community in the United States, and all around the world,” Trump wrote on Twitter. “They are amazing people, and the spreading of the Virus is NOT their fault in any way, shape, or form. They are working closely with us to get rid of it. WE WILL PREVAIL TOGETHER!”

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plans. At the time, I tweeted that Otaiba’s statements seemed more about potential UAE-Israeli relations than Abu Dhabi trying to play mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. After all, the Emirates are well aware that there isn’t much they can do to unfreeze this conflict, which has become deeply complicated – due both to intensifying intra-Palestinian rifts and to domestic Israeli politics. Now it’s all too clear that the Palestinian issue was just a way for the UAE to advance a much bigger initiative.

While this move is not about the Palestinians, it is also not about aligning with Israel to counter Iran, either. It is unlikely that Abu Dhabi will spend their resources to protect the UAE or any other Gulf Arab state in a potential future conflict with Iran. Israel lacks the conventional military capability to project power that far out. More importantly, Israel is currently more concerned about its own strategic environment and is attempting to manage the growing Iranian footprint in Syria and Iraq via tactical strikes. Not only are the Emirates well aware of this, they too have no desire for a conflict with Iran, given their country’s geographic location.

Regional Aspirations

Thus far, the UAE has enjoyed the US security umbrella, but that umbrella is becoming increasingly unreliable as Washington has been moving away from heavy lifting vis-à-vis regional security needs. Abu Dhabi knows that the U.S. strategy for the Middle East increasingly relies on regional players to take the lead, and this is driving Emirates behavior. Since the days of the Obama administration, Saudi Arabia has been making a series of unilateral foreign policy moves – enhancing its role as the leader of the Arab world, given its wealth and the fact that it was the only major Arab state unaffected by the autocratic meltdown sparked by the Arab Spring. However, Saudi Arabia is also a latecomer to regional leadership, and it has proven quite ineffective in the role under the Crown Prince (and soon-to-be monarch) Mohammed bin Salman. The UAE leadership, especially Crown Prince Mohammad bin Zayed, should know because they groomed him Sal- 

Put differently, the UAE has slowly been trying to fill this vacuum of Arab regional leadership, as is clear from its involvement in Syria, Yemen, Egypt, and Libya, among others. It is executing a very complex regional calculus and has engaged in a rethink on a number of issues. For example, Abu Dhabi decided to disengage itself from backing the Syrian rebels and accept the As- sad regime as a reality, at least for the foreseeable future. Likewise, it has opened strategic conversations with Iran – despite Washington’s policy of maximum pressure. This would explain the foreign minister-level UAE-Iran meeting that took place just four days before the announcement of the UAE’s opening re- lations with Israel. There is no way that the Emir- atis did not – at the very least – give the Iranians a heads-up of their moves vis-à-vis Israel. It is very likely, in fact, that the UAE told Iran that its ties with Israel were actually in Tehran’s interest as Abu Dhabi could serve as a go-be- tween the two adversaries and manage the standoff in the Levant. The UAE would also not want Oman to play this role, especially given Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s recent state visit to Muscat and the fact that the Omani serves as the principal backchannel between the United States and Iran. These considerations are part of a bigger threat per- cept of Israel and the Arab states, which is informed by Turkey’s aggressive push into the broader Middle East and North Africa region, es-

pecially given that rival Gulf state Qatar is allied with the Turks. In other words, the Emir- atis are more worried about Turkey’s ingress into the Arab world than Iran’s. This makes sense given Iran’s identity as the ethno-nationalist “other,” which imposes natural limits on how far the Iranians can go in terms of inroads in the Arab world. Besides, Iran is contained given the toll that sanctions are taking, not just on Iran’s external power projec- tion capabilities but also on its domestic political and economic stability. Tehran does have a deep footprint on its western flank extending to the Eastern Mediterranean, but not much can be done about it.

Turkey is also challeng- ing Iran, albeit in a sub- tle way, and herein lies the problem for the UAE and the Arab sides. They do not want to contain Iran at the cost of em- powering Turkey. That is a huge price to pay, given that the Turks are on the Arab side of the geosec- tarian struggle in the region. Ankara is also appealing to the broader Muslim sensibilities of Arab masses, which it is leveraging through the use of soft-power tactics. What is more alarming from the UAE point of view is Turkish back- ing for Islamist forces, particularly those affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. These are principal partners of the Turks and proxies of the Qatars. Muslim Brother- hood-style Islamists are the only organized group that has close to forming governments in the aftermath of the Arab spring, which UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt have struggled to con- tain.

A Balancing Act

Therefore, the UAE strategy is to use Iran and Israel to counter Turkish inroads into the Arab world. One key aspect of this is to have a working relationship with Tehran and make sure that the Turks are not able to punch through the Iranians blocking them in Syr- ia and Iraq. The other leg of this strategy is to ensure that Turkey, which has decades-old diplomatic relations with Israel, does not reach an understanding with the Jewish state that has an interest in partnering with the Turks to counter Iran putting down roots on its northern frontier. Thus, UAE is seeking to balance between Iran and Israel as a way to prevent the Turks from a deep ingress into Arab lands.

This is a very ambitious strategy that is akin to juggling too many balls at a time, but it is the best UAE can hope to do given that it is punching well above its weight in this game of major power politics. What this means is that the UAE has to simul- taneously manage war threats and redefine its own role as the leader of the Arab world and UAE and reframe for influence in the Arab world and UAE and other similar Arab actors will have a secondary role.

The next U.S. adminis- tration will need to find a way to balance its need to work with Turkey to counter Iran with the security concerns of the Arab states; otherwise, moves like the ones UAE is engaged in threaten to undermine U.S. strategy for regional players to take the lead in man- aging security in the Middle East.

Dr. Kamran Bokhari is the Director of Analyti- cal Development at the Center for Global Policy (CGP). Dr. Bokhari is also a nationally recognized expert and foreign policy speci- alist at the University of Ottawa’s Professional Development Institute. Bokhari has served as the coordinator for Central Asia Studies at the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in 2019. Follow him on Twitter at @Kamran- Bokhari.
Campuses Nationwide Report High Numbers Of COVID-19 Cases Within A Month Of Reopening

By: TMO Staff

Schools nationwide are continuing to open amid the pandemic, despite the U.S. government’s lack of response handling the novel coronavirus. While many teachers and professors have been urging schools to go remote for the fall, some have opened anyway only to close days later. Others have opted for complete online or remote learning for the remainder of the year due to COVID-19 concerns.

Reports of COVID-19 outbreaks on campus have been reported in at least 36 states across the country. As students return to dormitories and in-person classes a rise in cases is no surprise, especially with a lack of testing and virus plans in place. At the University of Alabama alone more than 1,000 students tested positive for coronavirus since classes resumed in August, Daily Kos reported. Other schools have followed a similar pattern with a high number of COVID-19 cases being reported within a week or two of students arriving back on campus.

With a lack of a national plan to address the virus, schools are left to create their own rules. Many schools have created guidelines including the mandatory use of masks and social distancing, with suspensions as a result of breaking these rules. But students aren’t the only ones to blame; even if students follow these rules on campus there is no guarantee that they will not get infected elsewhere.

Some universities have been conducting entry testing, but this does not guarantee that the virus will not spread on campus. Outside of social events—commuting, off-campus living, and even essential trips like going to the grocery store can contribute to a spread. “Over a third of US colleges and universities fully reopened in August. It was risky […] with no federal covid-19 control plan or coordinated vision for safely reopening universities. Today, the national reopening experiment already looks to have been a disaster,” the BMJ noted. The journal added that most schools opened at a time where the U.S. saw an average of about 55,000 cases a day.

Without frequent testing, containing community transmission is not possible. Outbreaks have occurred in a number of large universities including in the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with at least 130 cases within a week, the University of Notre Dame with more than 140, more than 200 at Auburn University, 111 at the University of Iowa and many more. Should they choose to remain open, universities have the responsibility to publish and update the number of tests, cases, and deaths associated with COVID-19 at their school.

“The decision to pivot in large part was the disease. It’s a horrible pandemic that we face. We couldn’t stand by any longer,” Ron Mitchelson said in an announcement, East Carolina University interim chancellor. The university’s decision to switch to remote-only learning followed 263 reported positive cases in one week. Prior to the announcement, Mitchelson also blamed students for being irresponsible and parties for the COVID-19 outbreak. “Last Wednesday we tested 165 students with 5 positive results (about 3%). The low number of positives gave me hope that everyone was doing their part,” Mitchelson said. “But then, the weekend comes and we see a small but visible fraction of our total student body scare us and the community with parties that are too large, too dense, unmasked, and irresponsible.”

While students living off-campus and in sorority and fraternity houses have been blamed for outbreaks by schools and their associated administrations, they aren’t the only ones experiencing transmission. Students in both dormitories and off-campus housing have tested positive for the virus, including at least 43 students at the University of Southern California resulting in more than 100 people requiring quarantine. With students from all over the world returning to campus, opening schools and dormitories result in more than 40% of service and medical faculty and other staff.

According to BMJ, more than 40% of service and maintenance staff, including cafeteria workers and housekeeping staff, are people of color—a group that has been disproportionately affected by the virus.

As my colleague Marissa noted, as cases continue to be reported on campuses, schools are now adapting online models that will affect not only campus life but sports and other recreations, in addition to enhancing possible technological barriers to education. Colleges are not alone in this decision, high schools and grade schools are also opting for online learning amid the pandemic as teenagers and children grow increasingly at risk. Online learning seems to be the only safe option for students in the U.S. as the Trump administration continues to downplay the severity of this virus and fail to address it. Since March, colleges nationwide have reported more than 26,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in at least 750 schools, The New York Times reported.

Should Sports Return Amid The Novel Coronavirus?

By: Zain Ahmed

The novel coronavirus pandemic has postponed many events globally, including sports. Several months have passed since the pandemic struck resulting in lockdowns to have eased down across the world, according to NBC News. Conversations on whether or not sports should resume despite COVID-19 concerns are now in the works.

Sports restrictions, including breaks, amid the pandemic, have set back major sports leagues in many ways. According to NBC News, the salary cap for most leagues and its teams is predicted to go down dramatically. Leagues have already seen a drop in salaries and income resulting from tension in U.S. and China relations. Teams are expected to lose millions of dollars as games continue to be postponed and arenas stay vacant.

A reduction in games and attendance results in fewer ticket sales and in-person arena purchases to be made creating a profit deficit. Financial concerns have been a reason why most returning leagues and players have opted into playing. Those on expiring contracts are trying to prove that they are worth more money, additionally, players who are playing for a spot in the future are trying to show that they can be a productive body on a team and deserve a roster spot, The New York Times reported.

Many other players are also coming back to simply play a game that they love. At the end of the playing their game is not just a job, but a hobby as well for these athletes. Passion fuels these athletes to play and compete in competitive sports even despite the presence of a global pandemic. However, while some are willing to take this risk, not all athletes are for a variety of reasons. One being that one positive test for COVID-19 could easily be spread to hundreds if not thousands, including players to the coaching staff, medical trainers, arena workers, and outside. Even though less than ten percent of athletes from major sports leagues have contracted the virus already, data from The New York Times found, there is still some potential that this number could increase dramatically and dangerously. Bringing the virus home and infecting families is also another fear that deters athletes from

Cont on page 12.
Election 2020: Battleground Congressional Districts-2

by Dr. Aslam Abdullah

Every week this column focuses on four battleground districts. Last week featured districts AZ-06, CA-21, FL-26, and TX-21. A separate article was about TX-22. This week the focus is on IA-01, IA-02, IA-03, and IN-05.

IA-01

Iowa’s 1st Congressional District covers the north-eastern part of the state. It includes Worth, Mitchell, Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Bremer, Black Hawk, Buchanan, Delaware, Jackson, Jones, Linn, Benton, Iowa, Poweshiek, Marshall, and Tama counties. Its population is 763,903. 49.5% are Male, and 50.5% Female. 92.1% are White, 3.2% Black, 1.1% Asian and 3.2% Hispanic. The High school graduation rate is 91.1%, and the College graduation rate is 24.9%.

Abby Finkenauer (Incumbent) (Democratic Party), and Ashley Hinson (Republican Party) are contesting the election. The Democrats got 170,342 votes, and her Republican opponent, a sitting representative Rod Blum got 153,442 votes. The victory margin was narrow. The Democrats are relying on a massive turn of Black, Hispanic, and Asian voters. Muslim voters are about 3,000, and if the race gets closer, their vote may become crucial.

IA-02

In IA-02, Rita Hart (D) and Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R) are contesting the election. The incumbent Dave Loebsack (D), first elected in 2006, would not seek re-election.

Iowa’s 2nd district covers most of its southeastern part, and it includes Davenport, Iowa City, Muscatine, Clinton, Burlington, Ottumwa, Fort Madison, Oskaloosa, Bettendorf, Newton, and Pella. Its population is 783,983. 85% white; 6% Hispanic; 4% Black; 2% Asian. Muslims are in good numbers to impact the outcome. In the last election, the Democrats secured 171,446 votes while the Republicans got 133,287 votes.

IA-3

Iowa’s 3rd congressional district includes Des Moines to the borders with Nebraska and Missouri. Its population (2018 est.) is 843,598. 83% white; 7% Hispanic; 4% Black; 3% Asian; 2% other. Incumbent Cindy Axne, David Young, and Bryan Holder are running in the general election. In 2018, Cindy Axne (D) got 175,642, and David Young (R) got 167,953. The race is close, and Muslim voters may play a significant role. They participated in large numbers in the caucus and are active in the electoral process. Somali Muslims make a large segment of the Muslim population.

IN-5

Indiana’s 5th Congressional District takes in portions of central Indiana, including Grant, Madison, Tipton and Hamilton counties, and Blackford, Marion, Boone, and Howard counties. Its population is 731,702. 48.7% are Male, and 51.3% Female. 84.9% White, 7.8% Black, 2.7% Asian and 4.6% Hispanic.

General election candidates are Christina Hale (Democratic Party), Victoria Spartz (Republican Party), Ken Tucker ( Libertarian Party), Vernon Moore (Independent) and Ellen Kizik (Independent) (Write-in).
Dr. Fathi Osman And Social Justice: A Tour Through The Decades

by Dr. Ghada Osman

Ghada Osman holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University and is the daughter of Fathi Osman. In this article she describes Dr. Osman’s ideas on social justice. Dr. Osman is one of the most respected scholars of this century. He passed away in 2010.

At a time when world events have catapulted discussions on equity and social justice to the forefront of community and national discourses, it is crucial for Muslims to reexamine their approaches to and actions on the fundamental rights. Among those who have advocated fervently for them has been an author and scholar: Mohammed Fathi Osman, whose death was precisely a decade ago (2010). While Osman’s 40 books and hundreds of articles/papers in English and Arabic vary in their specifics, “the thrust of his lifelong work was human rights,” arguing vehemently “against all forms of … abuse of power” (Abdel-wahab Al-Affendi, Re-thinking Islam & Modernity, p.141). Throughout his life, Osman unequivocally championed human rights and human dignity as the cornerstones of the call to Islam.

Here we will take a brief tour of some pictures of his writing, each penned almost two decades apart, that highlight this advocacy.

Born in Egypt in 1928, as a teenager Osman joined the Society of Muslim Brothers (Jama’a al-Ilkhwan al-Muslimin, often referred to as the “Muslim Brotherhood”). Of particular significance to him was the group’s attention to social justice, which he reflected in sermons and lectures he gave as a high schooler and college student in the 1940s. During these college years, the theme expanded into writings for the Broth ers’ periodicals, culminating in the publication of his first book at age 18. In it, Osman discussed distributive justice in the Islamic system, with focus on charity, inheritance rules, and examples from the time of the Prophet and early caliphs, followed by an evaluation of these principles in contemporary times.

Almost two decades after his first book, Osman’s ideological shift away from that of the Brothers, and towards an emphasis on the engagement of one gift from God, the human mind, with another gift from God, the Quran. After completing a trailblazing 1961 volume, Al-Fikr al-Islami wal-Tasawwur (Islamic Thought and Change), the following year, Osman authored Progressive Views from the Heritage of Islamic Thought (Aaraa’ Taqal-dumyya min Turath al-Fikr al-Islami). Of particular emphasis in these progressive views was the engagement of the mind with texts from the Quran, Sunna, and juristic works on the theme of freedom, in particular as related to the application of social and distributive justice.

Examples were discussed regarding women’s rights, justice towards non-Muslims, and constit utional and international rights. The sentence concluding the volume was a poignant one: “How beautiful (is)… truth and justice” (p. 111).

Twenty years later, by the 1980s, Osman had left Egypt, lived in three countries on three continents, and just arrived in London to become editor in chief of a new magazine: Arabia: The Islamic World Review. He saw the publication as a chance for Muslims both to collectively assess the results of current activism, and to dialog with the rest of the world on global issues such as human rights, resources inequity, and the environment. Rather than being a dogma-heavy publication, Arabia would provide the freedom to theorize, criticize, and analyze. Social justice was at the heart of its conceptualization in terms both of organization and content, with Osman penning a monthly column that critiqued the topic in a global context, with many examples ranging from an assessment of the 1984 U.S. presidential elections as they affected the blue-collar worker, to the South African struggle against apartheid (Sep tember 1984, pp. 32-37; May 1985, pp. 9, 41).

Almost 20 years after that, at the dawn of the new millennium, Osman was now living in Los Angeles, where he had resided for over a decade, and had just completed a second edition of his magnum opus Concepts of the Quran. Described by The Los Angeles Times as “a milestone in Islamic scholarship,” (01/15/2010), the 995-page book discussed Quranic verses topic-by-topic, relying on exegesis from both medieval and modern fiqh scholars.

Two years later, perhaps one of the key arguments that remains relevant to this day, is that, at the dawn of the 21st century, global context, with fairly clear ideas on human rights, “badly needs ‘qualitative’ change in its thinking and practices” (Islam and Human Rights, p. 65). In this era of global pandemic and mass uprisings, the need for that qualitative change is all the more apparent. Perhaps the writings of Fathi Osman that have been “a beacon of commitment and enlightenment in times of difficulty and turmoil” (El-Affendi, p. 143) can serve as guidance during these times. As his daughter, I would say that they have definitively served as guidance for me.

Dr. Ghada Osman holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University and is author of A Journey in Islamic Thought: The Life of Fathi Osman.

Cont. from page 10.

Sports Return

participating in sports amidst the pandemic.

According to The Times, some sports may have underlying conditions or family members that have weakened immune systems that make them more susceptible to the virus. Despite the fact that it may possibly affect the financially and career-wise, for many their health and family are much more important. For leagues that are expected to return, rules and regulations have been implemented for players and staff to follow. One is that they are encouraged to participate in bubbles. In these bubble campuses, players are required to practice social distancing as well as wearing a mask at all times unless they are eating, in their own space or partaking in their sports activities. The Washington Post reported.

The NBA and NHL both have created bubbles in which teams can stay at for the remainder of the season and have implemented mandatory short quarantine times. Players must partake in should they leave the bubble and return. Food, rooms, basic needs and entertainment are being provided for players who are staying in these spaces. Moreover, players and team staff will have to get tested for COVID-19 daily in hopes to help monitor the virus and prevent any further outbreaks. Returning leagues have limited or even banned fans and media members from attending. Organizations such as the Premier League have sent authorities to prevent fans from gathering outside stadiums, according to CBS News. Commentators and the media play a vital role when it comes to broadcasting games and interviewing players. However, many leagues have decided to make commentators and interviewers present virtually on online calls in an effort to keep as little people in the arena as possible.

Leagues have also decided to play fewer games in efforts to keep fans engaged and have players in game shape, while also decreasing the chances of players and staff contracting the virus. ESPN reported. The Olympics, Euroleague, Copa America and others have decided to remain canceled for the remainder of 2020 and plan to move their seasons to the following year or possibly even later.

Although some disagree, most sports are coming back under strict circumstances to help prevent upsurges in the novel coronavirus. Even though there are some canceled, a vast majority of leagues and organizations have decided to restart their season eventually in the near future or already have.
weight of a resolution, and the Council failed to follow up on their implementation. Three years after Myanmar’s security forces expelled the majority of Myanmar’s Rohingya from their villages, there is still time for the United States to strengthen the position of the Security Council and uphold its responsibility to protect.

First, it is important for the Security Council to urgently hold a formal session on the situation in Myanmar. The last formal session was held by the Council almost two years ago. Given the lack of progress and the ongoing threat to vulnerable populations, it is imperative for the Council to resume discussions on Myanmar in a formal format.

Second, it is time for the secretary-general to address the Council. Such a briefing would be in line with Guterres’ commitment to implement the Rosenthal report recommendations and address the global cease-fire calldue to the COVID-19 pandemic. While Myanmar responded to the secretary-general’s appeal and announced unilateral national cease-fire in May, it left out the areas of Rakhine and Chin States where the fighting is ongoing, endangering civilians from the Rohingya, Rakhine, and other armed groups.

Moreover, the clashes between the military and various armed groups have increased in Shan State, making the cease-fire meaningless. If the secretary-general’s global cease-fire call is to carry any weight, it is important for him to urge the Security Council to ensure that it is observed in Myanmar.

Guterres has the authority to help the Security Council refocus on the situation in Myanmar: Under Article 99 of the U.N. Charter, he can “bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security.” He did so in September 2017, shortly after the “clearance operations” against the Rohingyas began, urging members in a letter “to press [Myanmar] for restraint” and full respect of human rights and international humanitarian law. Three years later, and with the ongoing threat of genocide, the secretary-general should use his authority once again to pressure the Council to finally take action.

Third, despite the challenging environment in the council and the looming threat of a veto by China, it is imperative to restart resolution negotiations with a view to advance accountability, address existing discriminatory structures against the Rohingyas. Countries like the United States have been outspoken on the Rohingya issue and have imposed some of the toughest sanctions against Myanmar, should help restart the resolution process. Together with other sympathetic council members, including Belgium and Germany, they should actively encourage and support the penholder United Kingdom in drafting a new outcome document.

It is essential for the United States and others to spend their political capital at the highest levels to recruit the support of the council’s Asian members, Indonesia and Vietnam (with India replacing Indonesia in 2021). Voices from the same region as the country in question carry a lot of weight at the Security Council, so securing their support would make the possibility of a successful resolution much more likely.

Security Council action would bring us closer to any possibility of a safe, dignified, and voluntary return of the Rohingyas to Myanmar. With an International Criminal Court referral being problematic for several permanent members, the council should explore the possibility of creating an ad hoc tribunal, an action supported by the fact-finding mission, which anticipated this challenge. It also is incumbent upon the Security Council to ensure Myanmar’s compliance with the International Court of Justice/provisional measures order. It can do so by monitoring concrete actions Myanmar takes to address the root causes of genocide and speaking out when it fails to do so. While a resolution negotiation process is a challenging and often protracted endeavor, simply restarting the process would put pressure on Myanmar to change its ways during this critical time.

Meanwhile, Washington can steer other parts of the United Nations to continue its efforts in drawing attention to the ongoing risks to populations in Myanmar and support ongoing accountability processes. The General Assembly, for example, will soon start negotiating its annual resolution on Myanmar. It would be important for the assembly to express support for the International Court of Justice case and call on Myanmar to comply with the provisional measures order. The General Assembly should also ensure the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar has enough funds to continue its operations.

It is crucial for Myanmar to be on the agenda of all relevant U.N. entities for as long as the risk of genocide and other atrocities persists. The United States has a critical role to play here; without U.S. action, the other major powers in the Security Council are unlikely to act. A genocide anniversary is not only a solemn moment for the international community to remember those who perished and suffered but also a call to action to prevent future crimes and hold perpetrators accountable.

Nadira Kourt is Program Manager and Myanmar expert at the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect in New York. Ms. Kourt focuses on multilateral advocacy and the United Nations’ response to mass atrocities, including by the UN Security Council, General Assembly, Human Rights Council, and the Office of the Secretary-General. Kourt also leads the Global Centre’s work on international networks aimed at preventing mass atrocities, including the Global Network of R2P Focal Points and Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes. Follow her on Twitter at @arid13.

The views expressed here are the author’s and do not necessarily reflect those of CGP.
taking office. “Money is required (to win office). There’s nothing dirty about money — it should just be transparent.”

For the sake of transparency, it should be noted that $4,400 of Kuppa’s campaign donations in 2020 came from the Bhutada family. Based in Houston, Texas, the family is headed by Ramesh Bhutada, who is the vice-president of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh — the international wing of the RSS. Bhutada is also a key organizer for the Overseas Friends of the BJP (OFBJP), the international wing of India’s ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

In September 2019, the Bhutadas were instrumental in organizing “Howdy, Modi,” a mega-reception in Houston for BJP Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Kuppa not only joined the event, but led a post-reception panel discussion. Meanwhile, outside the venue, thousands of Indi-ans and Americans were protested throughout the day, chanting “Modi, Modi, you can’t hide, you committed genocide” in reference to the controversial politician’s role in an anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat, India in 2002.

From 2005 to 2014, when Modi became Prime Min-ister of India and gained diplomatic immunity, he was banned from entering the US under a law prohibiting foreign offi-cials who are “responsible for or directly carried out, at any time, particularly severe violations of religious freedom.” In the months before Modi was elected in May 2014, the Hindu American Foun-dation — of which Kuppa was a board-member — was actively lobbying on Capitol Hill to, in the words of one senator, “undermine anyone in Washington who is criti-cal of Modi.”

At the same time, Bhu-tada was organizing OFBJP phone banks in Houston to call Indians and urge them to vote for the BJP as well as fielding teams of volunteers to physically travel to India and serve as booths on the ground to support Modi’s election. Among those who trav-eled to India was Vijay Pallod, Bhutada’s cousin-in-law and fellow activist. Pallod, like Bhutada, a frequent donor to the campaigns of US politicians perceived as sympathetic to Modi, the BJP, and the RSS. Despite living in Texas, he has donated $200 in the 2020 election cycle to Kuppa’s campaign in Michigan.

Are such donations prompted by Kuppa’s past apologetics for Modi?

In August 2014, just as the head of the BJP’s Foreign Affairs Cell launched a 12-day tour of the US to promote Modi’s first mega-reception at Madison Square Garden in New York City, Kuppa complained, “Reporting on India has focused primarily on the 2002 violence against Muslims in Gujarat — making it the centerpiece of any story on India or its newly elected prime minister, Narendra Modi.” Despite on-camera confessions by BJP Gujarat state legislators who participated in the violence and fingered Modi as authorizing it — saying “he had given us three days to do whatever we could” — Kuppa denounced “efforts to implicate then-newly elected Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi” and, parroting a typical RSS talking point, argued that “he was acquitted of having been responsible for the riots in 2012.”

The reality is that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) appointed by the Supreme Court reported that there was “not enough evidence” to prosecute Modi — a find-ing that, as social activist Harsh Mander notes, “is at best a technical clearance in the absence of cast-iron evidence that he actively or explicitly directed the carnage.” Nevertheless, Kuppa continued to complain about attempts to “attribute sectarian divisions in In-dia to the BJP or Hindu nationalism.” In 2015, she dismissed reports about Indian Christian fears of violence by Hin-du nationalists as “the Western bias that incites fear of Hindu activism and attack[s] Hindu na-tionalism,” dismissing that “Western media must understand what Hindu nationalism means, and that it is not a siren calling distance sees.” Oddly enough, as a progressive Democrat, she refused to acknowledge that “Hindu national-ism” rather obviously means the mixture of religion and politics and what Hindu nationalists seek is the territorialization of India as a Hindu nation from which non-Hindus are excluded.

Is that why she has received donations this year from people like Subhash Gupta (President of HSS-Houston and Naiman Desai (President of HSS-Tam-pa)? The RSS, according to the writings of its first two leaders — KB Hedgewar and MS Gol walkar — seeks to create a “Hindustan of Hindus” and views non-Hindus like Christians and Mus-lims as “internal threats” and “foreign races” who must either be “fused into the Hindu way of life” or else be stripped of citizenship rights. The RSS adheres to an ideology known as “Hindutva,” which Amnesty International reported in 2005, “is the political ideology of an exclusively Hindu nation.”

In line with the RSS’s goal of fashioning India into an exclusively Hindu nation, Kuppa sup-portsthepracticeofanti-conversion laws passed by various governments in multi-pleregions — including Gujarat and proposed nationally by BJP lead-ership. Comparing the sharing of one’s religion to “sexual harassment and school bullying,” she writes, “When India sought to defend against unethical tactics by pass-ing its Anti-Fraudulent Conversion Laws, it was under fire from the VHP.” Americans reacted by placing India on the annual Watch List of the United States Commission on Interna-tional Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

The various laws — which typically require that one choose to switch from one religion to another rather than notify the government or actu-ally receive permission from the government to do so — are framed as supposed attempts to prevent “fraudulent” or “forced” conversions. Yet, according to the USCIRF, “While the laws purportedly protect religious minorities they are, in fact, forced conversions, they are one-sided, only con-cerned about conversions away from Hinduism but not towards Hin-duism. Observers note that these laws create a hostile, and on occasion violent, environment for religious minority com-munities because they do not require any evidence to support accusations of wrong-doing.”

However, the BJP — which is essentially the political wing of the RSS — has proposed passing national “anti-conver-sion” legislation. Perhaps Kuppa’s justification for laws criminalizing freedom of religion in India is the reason that top OFBJP leaders have donated to her campaign. OFBJP National Coun-cillors like Atri Machheria and Sudhir Shah as well as former president Ramesh Shah — none of whom live in Michigan — have donated generously.

“The reality of Hindu majority India is that there is poverty, years of oppression to contend with and a constant onslaught from evan-gelicals,” writes Kuppa.

Faced with aggressive conversion tactics, some Hindus may become intolerant or defensive, but that is no reason to exclude all Hindus from the conversation.”

Her rhetoric mirrors the standard RSS jus-tification offered for an anti-Christian pogrom in Odisha, India in 2008. In August 2008, a promi-nent activist of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) — the religious wing of the RSS — was assassinated in Odisha, a state with one of the oldest “anti-conversion” laws in the country. He was known for his efforts against conversion of tribes into Christianity.” Although Maito insur-gents claimed respon-sibility for his murder, the RSS and its allies blamed Christians. Over a period of several weeks, they launched a pogrom against Christians, mas-sacring approximately 100, displacing tens of thousands, and burning their homes and church-es. Throughout the year, the state’s chief minister reported, “Members of VHP and Bajrang Dal [the VHP wing] were involved in the violence that took place last year.”

In 2018, the year that Kuppa was first elected, the Central Intelligence Agency declared the VHP a “religious militant organization.” Four years before that, Kuppa was in New Delhi to speak at the World Hindu Congres-s, an event organized by the RSS and featuring keynote speeches from people like RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and VHP chief Ashok Singhal. Singhal — who once described the 2002 Gujarat Pogrom as a “successful experiment which will be repeated all over the country” — spoke about Modi’s rise to power, declaring: “Proud Hindus have finally come to rule Del-hi…. It’s time to create a Hindu superpower in the world.”

A featured speaker her- self, Kuppa spoke about how “Hindus have to learn to speak up when their rights as minori-ties are violated.” Her presence at the Hindu nationalist conclaves in India was unsurprising considering Kuppa is a long-time associate of and organizer for the VHP of America (VHPA).

Perhaps that explains why Gaurang Vaish-nav — a former VHPA General Secretary who is currently on the group’s Governing Council — donated to the Michigan politician’s campaign in 2018 despite the fact that he lives in New Jersey.
also strongly stated that call out China, and he Trump is not afraid to campaign defended his Americans,” the Trump ued to blame China for 09.18.2020 Words Matter contracts or other agency to begin to identify all the document said, “All that these were counter published by the White furthermore, the document waste of money. Furthis isn’t the first call to boycott the film. Despite the widespread love of the character. Asian activists called for a boycott of the film following comments made by the lead actress Liu Yifei on supporting the police. “I support Hong Kong’s police. You can all beat me up now, Outside of the human rights violations mentioned, China has been accused of other horrific crimes against Uyghurs, including harvesting their organs for medical reasons. Several individuals who have managed to escape the camps have verified they are not vocational skill-building centers as China claims but detention camps. Those Uyghurs who are not in the camp are subject to 24/7 surveillance in addition to being cut off from their family and friends. Leaked documents and testimonies also confirm the environment and abuse detainees are subject to. Mulan is considered one of the Disney princesses, and fans eagerly waited for Asian representation to be seen on the widescreen in the form of the film’s remake. But this isn’t the first time China reporter for Axios, tweeted Monday. Human rights abuses in the region have caught the attention of international powers, including the United Nations (UN), who has scrutinized China for its treatment of Muslim minorities. China in response claims these camps are needed as a peaceful effort to improve the region’s security and fight “extremism.” Of the human spending related to any training on ‘crtical race theory,’ ‘white privilege,’ or any other training or propaganda effort that teaches or suggests either (1) that the United States is inherently racist or evil, or (2) that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil,”. These points, according to the White House only serve to cause resentment and tension amongst people of diferent races. The move was done in the name of purging critical race theory from government training according to one of Trump’s tweets. CRT says that society is inherently racist and because of its racist groups even if the individual stakeholders are not personally racist, the fact that they are part of institutions built on the suffering of minorities only helps perpetuate that suffering. According to Vox, “Critical race theory is a school of thought that examines how race and racism is perpetuated through existing legal and cultural systems.” This anti-CRT backlash comes on the heels of Trump’s stated opposition to the #BlackLivesMatter movement as a symbol of hate. These and many of the other actions of the president have been attacked by his critics as trying to appeal to racist elements within his voting base as his bid for re-election becomes increasingly more unlikely.

CONTINUED STORY

Cont. from page 1. Disney’s ‘Mulan’

Disney’s ‘Mulan’

Cont. from page 1. Diversity Trainings

Waste of money. Furthermore, the document published by the White House went on to say that Chinese officials were conducing propaganda in an attempt to further spread Chinese culture. The government aims to increase the influence of Mandarin Chinese. Because the government views the Turkic-speaking ethnic minorities as a threat, in these camps women are sterilized or forced to have abortions. Forced to work in pro-

Cont. from page 8. Words Matter

Yet, despite this state-
ment, Trump has contin-
ued to blame China for the pandemic. When asked about the consequences of Trump’s “attacks against Asian Americans,” the Trump campaign condemned his comments. “President Trump is not afraid to call out China, and he also strongly stated that we must protect Asian Americans because they bear no responsibili-
ty whatsoever for the Chinese virus,” campaign spokesperson spokeswoman Sanders said in a statement to The Hill. “The fault lies with China alone, and when Chinese officials tried to blame American troops for the virus, Pres-

President Trump fought back against their disinforma-
tion campaign by saying it very clearly where the virus originated.” Despite what Trump, his campaign, and his administration argue, words matter. By mis-

information continues to spread, Asian Americans face discrimination not only by racist violence but economically as well, with the public afraid to work with or purchase from their businesses. These inci-
dents resemble historical racism that can be traced back to when scholars call the “yellow peril” ideology from the 19th century that claims that things from Asia are a greater threat to the white world. “It’s not just the hostile things he’s said, it’s the outcomes as a result of that — the anti-Asian discrimination and attitude that it creates … and allows those people who are racially biased to begin with to feel free,” Kurbzan told The Hill. “Because they see the president of the country doing it, they may feel free to go out and not only say horrible things but to actually do things and some of this has already had consequences.” Within four weeks of the March launch of Stop API Hate, an online anti-Asian bias tracker, almost 1,500 cases of violence towards Asian Americans were report-
ed. Months later the website continued to receive reports of discrimination and violence, including physical assault and being refused entrance to public spaces. Our lead-
ers should not be condon-

ing violence but instead condemning it.
Join the American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin (AFMI)’s
30th Annual Convention (Virtual This Year)

Learn about the challenges being faced by the largest Muslim minority in the world.

October 10-11, 2020

Saturday, October 10
SESSION 1: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. EST.  
(8:30 pm - 10:30 p.m. Indian time)

TITLE:
• Safety through Strength and Solidarity

SESSION 2: 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. EST.

TITLE:
• Human Rights issue (first hour)
• Challenges and Opportunities for Muslims (Second Hour)

Sunday, October 11
SESSION 1: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. EST.  
(8:30 pm - 10:30 p.m. Indian time)

TITLE:
• Developing a youth leadership (first hour)
• Women empowerment through education (second hour)

We have a great lineup of international speakers. Please register and also forward it to your contacts.

Free registration:
https://afmi.org/2020-convention/

info@afmi.org