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Newly-elected President Xi steers China toward prosperity



Inside C2

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Academic in Facebook storm worked on Russian ‘dark’ personality project

MOSCOW/FRANKFURT (Reuters) - The psychologist at the center of a scandal over the misuse of millions of Facebook users’ personal data worked with Russian researchers on a study of toxic personality traits.

Aleksandr Kogan advised a team at St Petersburg State University that was exploring whether psychopathy, narcissism and machiavellianism - dubbed the ‘dark triad’ by psychologists - were linked to abusive online behavior, said Yanina Ledovaya, senior lecturer at the university’s department of psychology.

“We wanted to detect (internet) trolls in order to improve in some way the lives of people suffering from trolling,” Ledovaya told Reuters.

Kogan, a lecturer at Britain’s Cambridge University who also goes by the married name of Spectre, has come under fire for passing data culled via a Facebook personality quiz to political consultancy Cambridge Analytica.

The test was taken by a few hundred thousand people but the app on which it ran also collected details about all of their Facebook ‘friends’ without their knowledge or consent.

That data was then used in a targeted digital ad campaign in support of Donald Trump’s successful run for the U.S. presidency, Cambridge Analytica’s CEO Alexander Nix told an undercover reporter from Britain’s Channel Four news.

Nix was suspended on Tuesday in a spiraling scandal over how the data came into his company’s hands, in violation of Facebook’s own rules. The saga has wiped nearly \$50 billion off the social network’s market value.

Kogan did not respond to an emailed request to comment on his work in St Petersburg, but told the BBC on Wednesday he was being made a scapegoat by both Facebook and Cambridge Analytica. The latter firm has no link to the university.

Ledovaya said Kogan had advised the St Petersburg team on the project - which was funded by a university grant - between 2015 and 2017, visiting rarely and mainly interacting from abroad.

The team built a Facebook app using a 61-question survey for Russian-speaking users that sought to determine to what degree they had the ‘dark triad’ traits.

The app collected answers, as well as the public data of respondents, after securing their consent. Separately, the researchers analyzed the text of users’ public Facebook posts.

Ledovaya said the data gathered was not passed to anyone outside the five-member research team - nor was it shared with Kogan.

“We don’t have the right to share the data of these 10,000 or so people with anyone - it’s a matter of ethics and we are sticking to it,” she said.

Research into personality traits viewed as malevolent goes back at least to Sigmund Freud, the Viennese pioneer of psychiatry who identified narcissism - or excessive self-love.

Machiavellianism, named after the Italian diplomat and writer of the Renaissance era, represents manipulative behavior, while psychopathy manifests a lack of empathy.

Ledovaya said one goal of the project was to ascertain the mental wellbeing of the respondents and, as appropriate, offer free counseling.

The emergence of Kogan’s St Petersburg con-



A 3D-printed Facebook logo is seen in front of displayed stock graph

nection comes as relations between Moscow and the West plumb new lows. Kogan, a U.S. citizen, was born in the former-Soviet republic of Moldova but moved to the United States as a child, Britain’s Guardian newspaper said.

U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller has indicted 13 Russian individuals and three Russian companies for criminal and espionage conspiracy to tamper with the U.S. presidential campaign.

One line of inquiry being pursued by Mueller is the suspected use of targeted Facebook messages by Russian groups - including the St Petersburg-based Internet Research Bureau.

The St Petersburg State University research team has nothing to do with the Internet Research Bureau, said Ledovaya.

“I know the people involved in the research project very well - they are the last people I can imagine taking part somehow in such an activity,” said Vladimir Volkonsky, who worked at the psychology faculty until 2011.

Cambridge University said Kogan had correctly sought the permission of the head of the psychology department to do the work with St Petersburg.

“It was understood that this work and any associated grants would be in a private capacity, separate to his work at the university,” it said in a statement.

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Newly-elected President Xi steers China toward prosperity

BEIJING, March 18 (Xinhua) -- As ceremonial music echoed throughout the Great Hall of the People, Xi Jinping took his place on the podium.

The music stopped as he reached a large red-bound copy of the country's Constitution.

The 64-year-old, in a dark suit, placed his left hand on the Constitution, raised his right hand to his temple and made a fist of solidarity.

"I pledge my allegiance to the Constitution," Xi began.

"[To] safeguard the Constitution's authority, fulfill my legal obligations, be loyal to the country and the people, be committed and honest in my duty, accept the people's supervision and work hard for a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful."

He bowed, and the nearly 3,000 National People's Congress (NPC) deputies reacted with a spontaneous burst of thunderous applause.

It was the first time a Chinese president had ever taken such an oath upon assuming office. The ceremony was watched by tens of millions of Chinese on television or on their smartphones.

On Saturday, Xi was unanimously elected as president of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and chairman of the Central Military Commission of the PRC.

Xi first took over the presidency five years ago, pledging to push forward the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive for great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

"In face of the mighty trend of the times and earnest expectations of the people for a better life, we cannot have the slightest complacency, or get the slightest slack at work," he said back then.

China has made historic achievements under Xi's leadership. The unanimous vote shows the strong support he enjoys among the people.

Nearly five months ago, Xi was re-elected general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee. The Party's 19th National Congress enshrined in the CPC Constitution Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

The thought was added into the country's Constitution at the 13th NPC session as a guiding principle of the state. People have

high expectations for the years ahead. The blueprint laid out at the Party congress is being turned into action plan.

Led by Xi, China is becoming strong. The size of the economy has expanded to more than 82 trillion yuan (around 13 trillion U.S. dollars) from 54 trillion yuan over the past five years, growing by 7.1 percent a year on average. More than 66 million urban new jobs have been created.

The economy is healthier. Xi's supply-side structural reform worked. Consumption has become a major growth driver, contributing to 58.8 percent of economic growth last year, up from 54.9 percent five years ago. The share of service sector has climbed to 51.6 percent from 45.3 percent.

People live a more comfortable life. More than 68 million people escaped poverty. Personal income increased by 7.4 percent annually on average. Life expectancy reaches 76.7 years, leading developing countries. The environment improves as strict rules on water, soil and air pollution control have been enforced. A remarkable change: over the five years, the number of heavily-polluted days in major cities was halved.

Xi made this happen through reform. He is regarded as the chief architect. In the five years, more than 1,500 reform measures were issued, affecting economic, political, social, cultural, environmental fields, national defense and Party building. Government red tape was cut. Foreign investment was made easier.

Xi has said happiness comes out of arduous work.

A week after the 19th Party congress, Xi took leading officials to the Party's birthplace in Shanghai and Zhejiang, a "roots-tracing" trip to remind cadres of the Party's original aspiration.

"The CPC seeks happiness for the Chinese people," Xi said in an NPC session panel discussion. "Whatever issues the people are unhappy about or dissatisfied with, we must work hard to solve them."

Xi's deep connection to the people was formed early in his life.

Son of a revolutionary leader, Xi, at the age of 15, joined numerous "educated youth" bidding farewell to urban life and heading to the countryside to learn from peasants.

Xi was sent to a small, isolated village in Shaanxi Province and stayed on for seven years. These formative years taught him the real situation on the ground and shaped his belief in pragmatic approach and the mass

line.

In the following decades, Xi rose from the grassroots to the very top. His work experience in the military, a poor rural county, and wealthy coastal regions enriched his leadership skills.

Xi entered the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in 2007 and was elected general secretary of the CPC Central Committee in 2012. He has become the core of the CPC Central Committee and the whole Party.

In Xi's view, for China to achieve the goals in the new era, the Party's leadership over every area is the key.

To keep the Party clean, he launched an unprecedented anti-corruption campaign, investigating 440 senior officials -- who held provincial or corps level positions or above, among others.

Overall, more than 1.5 million officials were punished.

"If we had not offended hundreds of corrupt officials, we would have offended 1.3 billion Chinese people," Xi said.

While the campaign has built into a crushing tide, Xi said it could not stop.

The action to "take out tigers" and "swat flies" continued after the 19th Party congress. Latest fallen high-ranking officials included former head of cyber-space administration Lu Wei, army generals Zhang Yang and Fang Fenghui, as well as former state counselor Yang Jing.

He also pushed forward the supervisory system reform, strengthening a centralized and unified leadership of the CPC over the graft fight.

Xi has called on officials in charge to "bite the hardest bones and catch the hottest potatoes" to tackle problems.

Xi is in the spotlight at the annual sessions of the NPC and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, commonly known as the "two sessions."

He stressed adherence to a system of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation, saying it was a new type of party system growing from China's soil and contributed to the political civilization of humanity.

Political advisor and entrepreneur Yu Minhong couldn't agree more. Yu is a member of the China Democratic League (CDL), one of the eight non-communist parties in China.

But he is better known as the chairman of



Xi Jinping takes a public oath of allegiance to the Constitution in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, March 17, 2018. Xi was elected Chinese president and chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China earlier Saturday at the ongoing first session of the 13th National People's Congress, the national legislature. (Xinhua/Ju Peng)

New Oriental, a leading education company. For years, Yu has been helping poor rural students get proper schooling. His proposal for rural teacher pay rises led to government policy change.

Ding Zhongli, chairman of the CDL Central Committee, said the ruling party and the non-communist parties cooperated quite well under the system, working toward a common goal of national development.

Fred Teng, president of the America China Public Affairs Institute, said through the multiparty cooperation system policymakers could draw the best policies and achieve the best results.

While joining lawmakers from Guangdong Province in a panel discussion, Xi highlighted development, talent and innovation. Guangdong has been at the front-line of the reform and opening-up.

The year 2018 marks the 40th anniversary of the drive, which resulted in consistent and fast economic growth for decades.

During an inspection to Jiangsu Province last December, Xi said more emphasis needed to be placed on the economy's quality rather than speed and every industry, every enterprise should follow the change.

China is setting sail toward a modernized economy with Xi at the helm.

"Xi Jinping Thought on Socialist Economy with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" was raised at the Central Economic Work Conference last December.

The Wall Street Journal reported that China had made "Xiconomics" a guiding principle, with a focus on innovation and high-quality growth.

Areas to deepen reform include public institutions, state-owned enterprises, industrial monopolies, property rights protection, taxation, finance, rural development, social security and ecology. A modernized economy is the goal.

Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech at the opening of the 2017 annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, Jan. 17, 2017. (Xinhua/Lan Hongguang)

At the "two sessions," Xi's speeches touched more fields than economy, from Party building, rule of law, poverty reduction to environmental protection, social governance and military-civilian integration.

Internet tycoon, Tencent chairman Pony Ma said Xi's speeches were so rich that he took six full pages of notes.

"The general secretary said we should make innovation a powerful driver of quality development, and I think it is an insightful remark," he said. "It will be a new opportunity for our innovative enterprises."

Li Shumu, an NPC deputy and a village Party chief in the county of Yinan, Shandong Province, said farmers in his village feel encouraged as Xi has drawn a beautiful blueprint for the countryside.

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A Snapshot Of The World



U.S. Secret Service police officer clears his car from snow in front of the White House during a snowstorm in Washington



Russian President and Presidential candidate Vladimir Putin delivers a speech at his election headquarters in Moscow



Self-driving car is parked at the Renesas Electronics autonomous vehicle test track in Stratford



People drive cars down the street, in the city where autonomous vehicles are being researched, in Stratford



People take part in a march to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Madrid



A woman holds an umbrella against the snow in Washington



Figure Skating - World Figure Skating Championships



NCAA Basketball: NCAA Tournament-South Regional Practice



Most flights are canceled at the Ronald Reagan National airport in Washington



U.S. Small Business Administration SCORE and the U.S. Small Business Administration will honor the best small business owners and champions in Houston at an awards event to be held Wednesday, May 2, 2018, at the Westin Galleria 5060 West Alabama in Houston. The event will includes a workshop titled, “Insights into Entrepreneurial Success”, a small business expo and celebratory luncheon with a keynote address.

The keynote speaker for the event will be Johnny Carrabba III.



Keynote Speaker

Proudly born and raised in the East End of Houston, Texas, Johnny Carrabba III was raised in his parent’s family-owned grocery store, Carrabba’s Friendly Grocery, and attended St. Thomas High School. In 1986, Johnny opened The Original Carrabba’s on Kirby Drive. The second location on South Voss Road opened its doors in 1988. In 1993, Outback Steakhouse created a joint venture partnership consequently opening over 250 Carrabba’s Italian Grill Restaurants nationwide. Johnny and his family continue to own and operate the two original Carrabba’s locations. Johnny and his wife, Randi, are philanthropists at heart and give back to the community through many venues and charities.

SCORE/SBA Small Business Awards Event To Honor The Best Entrepreneurs In Houston

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Master of Ceremonies

Master of Ceremonies for the event will be Bob Charlet. Bob Charlet became the publisher of the Houston Business Journal in 2005 where he joined a veteran team of professionals who have distinguished the HBJ as one of the leading business journals in the country.

Charlet joined the Pacific Business News, a sister publication, in 2009 as advertising director and was promoted to publisher three years later. Prior to PBN, he was North American group sales manager at Canon Communications, overseeing sales and marketing for a group of B2B media properties. He is a graduate of Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana.

Event Workshop (9 AM - 11 AM) “Insights into Entrepreneurial Success” Workshop

Attendees will gain an in-depth understanding of the resources available to the entrepreneur in Houston. Meet the distinguished panelists and learn about their programs to promote small, minority, and women-owned businesses. Learn about SBA’s 3 C’s, Capital, Contracting and Counseling plus programs to spur innovation and exports. Meet SBA’s resource partners, UHSBDC and SCORE, who provide education and mentoring to help you succeed. Listen and learn from other successful entrepreneurs during a panel

discussion.



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The Small Business Administration (SBA) is a United States government agency that provides support to entrepreneurs and small businesses. The mission of the Small Business Administration is

“to maintain and strengthen the nation’s economy by enabling the establishment and viability of small businesses and by assisting in the economic recovery of communities after disasters”. The agency’s activities are summarized as the “3 Cs” of capital, contracts and counseling. SBA loans are made through banks, credit unions and other lenders who partner with the SBA. The SBA provides a government-backed guarantee on part of the loan. Under the Recovery Act and the Small Business Jobs Act, SBA loans were enhanced to provide up to a 90 percent guarantee in order to strengthen access to capital for small businesses after credit froze in 2008. The agency had record lending volumes in late 2010. (Source: Wikipedia)

SCORE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides free business mentoring services to prospective and established small business owners in the United States. More than 10,000 volunteers provide these services, with all volunteers being active and retired business executives and entrepreneurs. In addition to mentoring, SCORE also offers free and low-cost educational workshops each year, both online and in-person. SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration. It operates out of 300 chapters across the U.S., with national headquarters in Herndon, Virginia. (Source: Wikipedia)

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Which U.S. companies and industries will suffer if President Donald Trump’s plan to impose stiff tariffs on aluminum and steel imports comes to fruition? It may depend on how other countries react, and whether a trade war ensues.

Mr. Trump’s proposal to launch across-the-board tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum last week is still drawing strong reaction from trading partners and Corporate America alike.

Companies from brewer Miller Coors (TAP) to professional associations like the National Association of Homebuilders warned the tariffs will push prices higher for them, and by extension, Americans. “You can win a trade war if your narrow objective is to protect one very small sector of the economy,” said GZERO Signal writer Alex Kliment. “But the question that we have to ask, and which everyone is asking, is at what cost to other sectors of the economy, to U.S allies?”

European officials are preparing to target \$3.5 billion in American goods through a 25 percent “tit-for-tat” levy across consumer, agricultural and steel imports, Bloomberg reported, citing a list compiled by the European Commission. This came after EC President Jean-Claude Juncker on Friday mentioned targeted products like Harley-Davidson (HOG) motorcycles, Levi’s jeans and bourbon if the U.S. tariffs are implemented. Canada President Justin Trudeau called Mr. Trump Monday evening to register his “serious concern.



Which U.S. Companies Would Suffer In A Trade War?

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



“Retaliation by trading partners is likely,” Goldman Sachs (GS) economists wrote in a note. “In the past, retaliatory tariffs have focused on the product in dispute (in this case steel and/or aluminum), consumer goods with a particular focus on luxury items and agriculture. We expect a similar pattern this time.” While retaliation is likely to come in tariff form, “more subtle changes to tax and regulatory policies targeting U.S. companies could also follow,” the economists wrote.

Ford (F) and GM (GM) could feel a pinch of about \$1 billion each, or 12 percent and 7 percent of each company’s respective operating income for 2017, if the 25 percent steel tariff is implemented and prices rise at a similar rate, Goldman Sachs analysts estimated in a recent separate report. U.S.-based machinery companies would get squeezed as costs increase. Well-known brands with good distribution, like Deere (DE) and Caterpillar (CAT)

might do better than Terex (TEX) and Oshkosh (OSK), Goldman said. Oshkosh is based in House Speaker Paul Ryan’s home state of Wisconsin. Ryan said Mr. Trump’s plan was “more prone to retaliation” and today urged the administration to take a more “surgical” approach to tariffs because some Republicans argue the duties could have negative impacts on the U.S. economy. The plea comes after Mr. Trump on Monday said Mexico and Canada may be able to avoid tariffs -- if they agreed to make concessions during renegotiations of the North American Free Trade Agreement, known as NAFTA.



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There is clearly abuse occurring, clearly there is overcapacity dumping in transshipping of steel and aluminum by some countries, particularly China, but I think the smarter way to go is to make it more surgical and more targeted,” Ryan said. Canada was America’s second-biggest trading partner last year, while Mexico was third. China was the first. The U.S. is the world’s biggest steel importer. Last year, China was the 11th-biggest steel exporter to the U.S., according to the Department of Commerce’s International Trade Administration. China has been accused of flooding the market with cheap exports. Yet steel and aluminum make up less than 3 percent of total U.S. imports, according to Capital Economics. So trading partners like Canada, Mexico and the EU aren’t happy with the proposed across-the-board tariffs. Industrial firms with a high percentage of sales from outside the U.S. include

Expeditors International (EXPD), 3M (MMM) and Boeing (BA), Goldman said in the report. Boeing, typically the U.S.’s biggest exporter, has rebounded slightly after its stock slipped on Mr. Trump’s announcement. Suppliers to the planemaker, which competes directly with Europe’s Airbus in the large commercial aircraft market, could have a harder time coping as the company looks to trim costs, according to a recent note from Melius Research.



Defense companies Lockheed Martin (LMT), General Dynamics (GD) and Raytheon (RTN) should have “limited” problems because of the way long-term supply contracts are structured, Melius analysts wrote. Private-jet makers Textron (TXT) and Gulfstream, a division of General Dynamics, may run into trouble if the global economy slows. Countries can be expected to immediately appeal the tariffs to the World Trade Organization under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, or GATT agreement, said Jennifer Hillman, a former member of the WTO’s appellate body. She spoke on a call with reporters organized by the Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank.

“The challenges will come immediately and will come from all affected countries,” Hillman said. The WTO, seen largely as a U.S. created entity, will then form a panel of three people that aren’t from the U.S. or any of the involved parties.

How that plays out, she said, may depend on how the U.S. claim that the tariffs are needed as part of America’s national defense is viewed. (Courtesy cbsnews.com)

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