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Xi Jinping Urges 'Unity of Thinking' and End to 'Vulgar' Internet in Propaganda Conference

August 23, 2018 Breitbart.com reported: "Chinese Communist Party leader Xi Jinping demanded his officials 'reject the vulgar, the base and the kitsch' on the internet during a two-day meeting on how to improve state-sponsored propaganda, government media reported Wednesday.



According to Reuters, which cites the original Chinese language report on the meeting at Xinhua, the state news agency, Xi Jinping insisted that the internet must be 'clean and righteous,' devoid of content that upsets the Communist Party's preferences.

The remarks reflect a years-old policy under Xi of censoring political criticism, Western culture, and anything that could lead to Chinese people questioning the wisdom of their leadership..."



Iranian spies arrested in Chicago

August 23, 2018 World Net Daily reported: "Two Iranians have been arrested for spying in the United States on behalf of the Islamic regime.

Ahmadreza Mohammadi-Doostdar, 59, and Majid Ghorbani, 38, were arrested on charges of conducting surveillance and collecting intelligence on individuals and groups considered to be enemies of the Iranian regime, the Justice Department said.

Officials said they were collecting photographic evidence of Chabad and Hillel Jewish centers in Chicago..."

UN's IAEA: No indication North Korea nuclear activities stopped

August 22, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "The UN's nuclear watchdog said it had not seen any indication that nuclear activities in North Korea have stopped despite its pledges to denuclearise.

'The continuation and further development of the DPRK's nuclear programme and related statements by the DPRK are a cause for grave concern,' said a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), referring to North Korea's official name.

The report, published late Monday, by director General Yukiya Amano is to be submitted to an IAEA board meeting in September.

In 2009 Pyongyang expelled IAEA inspectors from its Yongbyon nuclear site and has since refused to allow IAEA inspections on its territory.

The watchdog has stepped up monitoring through open source information and satellite imagery, it said..."

Russia to deliver S-400 system to Turkey in 2019

August 22, 2018 Arutz Sheva 7 reported: "Russia plans to deliver its sophisticated S-400 anti-ballistic missile defense systems to Turkey in 2019, state arms exporter Rosoboronexport announced on Tuesday, according to the Turkish daily Hurriyet.

'The contract is implemented within the agreed time limits. In 2019 we will start implementing the contract,' said Alexander Mikheev, the CEO of Rosoboronexport, according to the report.

Turkey and Russia have sealed an agreement on the procurement of the S-400 missiles with Turkey making a down payment for the \$2.5 billion cost. Turkish officials said earlier the systems would be deployed in July 2019.

The S-400 anti-missile system, known to NATO as the SA-21 'Growler,' is said to have a maximum range of 250 miles, and can bring down airplanes at up to 90,000 feet – more than double the height of a cruising commercial airliner..."

'Bible ban' closer to law for Californians

August 21, 2018 WND.com reported: "'Pro-family activists in California are asking citizens to urge Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown to veto a bill some critics say would effectively ban the sale of the Bible in the state.

AB 2943 classifies as 'consumer fraud' any financial transaction – such as selling a book or charging for a seminar – related to counseling people to overcome same-sex attractions.

The bill has been disputed hotly for months and last month was delayed voluntarily in the state Senate. But now the Senate has voted 25-11 to adopt it, sending it back to the Assembly where Senate changes must be approved.

It then could go to the governor.

The legislation comes amid the release of a Liberty Counsel study showing that such therapies overwhelmingly are effective.

The study is "Effects of Therapy on Religious Men Who Have Unwanted Same-Sex Attraction," and authors Paul Santero, Neil Whitehead and Dolores Ballesteros, all PhDs, found the American Psychological Association and other organizations "have formally claimed that sexual orientation change therapies should not be used because they are probably ineffective and may cause harm."

"A survey asking for negative and positive experiences of 125 men with active lay religious belief who went through sexual orientation change efforts (SOCE) strongly conflict with those claims. In our study, most of those who participated in group or professional help had heterosexual shifts in sexual attraction, sexual identity and behavior with large statistical effect sizes, similarly moderate-to-marked decreases in suicidality, depression, substance abuse, and increases in social functioning and self-esteem. Almost all harmful effects were none to slight..."

Sprawling galaxy cluster found hiding in plain sight

August 20, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "MIT scientists have uncovered a sprawling new galaxy cluster hiding in plain sight. The cluster, which sits a mere 2.4 billion light years from Earth, is made up of hundreds of individual galaxies and surrounds an extremely active supermassive black hole, or quasar.



The central quasar goes by the name PKS1353-341 and is intensely bright - so bright that for decades astronomers observing it in the night sky have assumed that the quasar was quite alone in its corner of the universe, shining out as a solitary light source from the center of a single galaxy.

But as the MIT team reports in the *Astrophysical Journal*, the quasar's light is so bright that it has obscured hundreds of galaxies clustered around it. In their new analysis, the researchers estimate that there are hundreds of individual galaxies in the cluster, which, all told, is about as massive as 690 trillion suns. Our Milky Way galaxy, for comparison, weighs in at around 400 billion solar masses.

The team also calculates that the quasar at the center of the cluster is 46 billion times brighter than the sun. Its extreme luminosity is likely the result of a temporary feeding frenzy: As an immense disk of material swirls around the quasar, big chunks of matter from the disk are falling in and feeding it, causing the black hole to radiate huge amounts of energy out as light.

"This might be a short-lived phase that clusters go through, where the central black hole has a quick meal, gets bright, and then fades away again," says study author Michael McDonald, assistant professor of physics in MIT's Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research.

"This could be a blip that we just happened to see. In a million years, this might look like a diffuse fuzzball."...

South Africa begins seizing white-owned farms

August 20, 2018 news.com.au reported: "The South African government has begun the process of seizing land from white farmers.

Local newspaper City Press reports two game farms in the northern province of Limpopo are the first to be targeted for unilateral seizure after negotiations with the owners to purchase the properties stalled.

While the government says it intends to pay, owners Akkerland Boerdery wanted 200 million rand (\$18.7 million) for the land — they're being offered just 20 million rand (\$1.87 million).

"Notice is hereby given that a terrain inspection will be held on the farms on April 5, 2018 at 10am in order to conduct an audit of the assets and a handover of the farm's keys to the state," a letter sent to the owners earlier this year said.

Akkerland Boerdery obtained an urgent injunction to prevent eviction until a court had ruled on the issue, but the Department of Rural Development and Land Affairs is opposing the application.

"What makes the Akkerland case unique is that they apparently were not given the opportunity to first dispute the claim in court, as the law requires," AgriSA union spokeswoman Annelize Crosby told the paper.

It comes as the South African government pushes ahead with plans to amend the country's constitution to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation.

The seizures are intended to test the ability of the government to take land under existing laws, which the ruling African National Congress has previously stated is allowable if "in the public interest".

Earlier this month, City Press reported the government had drawn up a list of 139 farms it planned to seize "to test out" section 25 of the constitution. The newspaper said employees at the department had been ordered to press ahead with the process at the Land Claims Court."...

Putin strikes blow against Russia's isolation by Europe

August 20, 2018 EUObserver.com reported: "Russian leader Vladimir Putin has joined forces with Germany against the US over a new gas pipeline. His weekend trip, which included a visit to Austria, also struck a symbolic blow against EU diplomatic sanctions over his invasion of Ukraine.

German chancellor Angela Merkel and Putin defended the Nord Stream 2 gas project at their meeting in Meseberg Castle, outside Berlin, on Saturday (18 August) in Putin's first bilateral visit to Germany since the invasion in 2014.

'In connection with Ukraine, we will also talk about gas transit. In my view, even if Nord Stream 2 exists, Ukraine has a role to play in gas transit to Europe,' Merkel said ahead of their three-and-a-half hour talks..."

US 'concerned' with 'abnormal' Russian satellite

August 19, 2018 spacedaily.com reported: "The US is raising hue and cry about a Russian satellite exhibiting what it considers 'abnormal' behavior, heavily implying it is a weapon of some sort. However, the US has repeatedly rejected out of hand attempts to prevent a space arms race via an international treaty and is developing its own hypersonic weapons capable of reaching space.

'We are concerned with what appears to be very abnormal behavior by a declared 'space apparatus inspector,' 'US Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Yleem Poblete said Tuesday at a UN conference on disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland.

'Its behavior on-orbit was inconsistent with anything seen before from on-orbit inspection or space situational awareness capabilities, including other Russian inspection satellite activities.'

The only certainty we have is that this system has been 'placed in orbit,' 'the diplomat noted, lamenting, 'We don't know for certain what it is, and there is no way to verify it.'..."

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