Elise Skelton

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Asia

The Great Firewall of China

[Architect of China’s ‘Great Firewall’ Bumps Into It](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/07/world/asia/china-internet-great-firewall-fang-binxing.html?ref=world)

Apr. 6, 2016

NY Times

In China, there is a project running called the *Golden Shield*, often nicknamed the “Great Firewall”. Started in 2003, it blocks access to websites that are unapproved by the government. For example, ones that support democracy or undermine the government itself. There are also blocks on news websites, sites connected to the Dalai Lama, and community blogs. The New York Times once posted a story about the family of a Chinese prime minister, and was blocked in the country after that. Using this filter gives the government power to monitor what’s viewed by servers both inside and outside the country, and there have been reports that China could use this to steal information. However, there are ways that people can get around the filter. They use Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to log in using overseas servers. Ironically, the self-pronounced creator of the Great Firewall, Fang Binxing, uses VPNs in order to look out at the world himself. During one of his presentations about digital security, he even used one to reach websites in South Korea. However, the VPN worked spottily, and he adlibbed some of his presentation. In 2011, he even stated that he uses 6 VPNs. It seems like the Firewall is just a pain for everyone, with the possibility of being a threat to other countries.

A lot of people feel like the Great Firewall is going to be a big threat to our country. An article I read about it seemed biased because it had sketchy quotes from a “National Intelligence Estimate” and accused Chinese of attacking the US, so I name this topic controversial and untrustworthy. Personally I think that the Great Firewall is wrong, and the only thing keeping it in action is the Chinese government and some crazies who made it. I don’t think they’re going to directly attack the US, like some people are afraid of. However, we should remember that this country is managing its citizens by *blocking out the entire internet*. My team could use this event if we go with Macbeth--the king uses a Great Firewall in order to keep people from finding out what he’s done, but some have VPNs and get information.

Asia

Chinese In the Panama Papers

[Relatives of China’s Top Leaders Are Identified in Panama Papers](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/07/world/asia/china-panama-papers.html?ref=world)

Apr. 6, 2016

NY Times

The Panama Papers are millions of leaked documents from a single law firm called Mossack Fonseca in Panama. They consist of information from over 200,000 offshore companies from countries around the world. Rich people use these companies to store their money with lower taxes than they would get in their own country. For example, family members of China’s top leaders. Now, it’s pretty bad for politically powerful people in countries like Argentina or Britain to be seen doing this, but in China the leaders of the communist party have promised to eradicate corruption and maintain equality. When their family members or business partners are discovered to have shareholdings in offshore companies, there is a lot of investigation from all angles. The question now is what the leaders will do. Xi Jinping, the communist party president, has a brother-in-law with ties to multiple companies. What’s worse, those ties have been known since 2012, but now everyone’s focus is on it. There might be an uproar in the Chinese government, or something completely different. No one knows.

I think all the drama from the Panama Papers is hilarious. I’m not surprised that people were found storing money this way, but I want to know what they’re going to do now that they’ve been discovered. I am worried about what’s going to happen to Chinese government now that their leaders (if they adhere to their communist party’s ideals) need to stop their family members from having wealth pockets outside the country. An event like the Panama Papers would be cool to use in a play. Offshore companies would be a good thing to put in Macbeth--I feel like a corrupt leader would do that kind of thing.

Sub Saharan Africa

The Zika Virus

[In a Remote Ugandan Lab, Encounters With the Zika Virus and Mosquitoes Decades Ago](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/06/world/africa/uganda-zika-forest-mosquitoes.html?ref=world)

Apr. 5, 2016

NY Times

There has been a recent outbreak of a virus called Zika in much of Latin America, especially Brazil. This virus is spread through mosquitoes and was originally discovered in Uganda in 1947. Most people who have the disease don’t actually show symptoms, but the most common ones are fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis, and they don’t last for more than a week. Recently, there has been an increase of Guillain-Barré Syndrome cases, which can be fatal, connected to Zika virus patients. Aside from this, Zika virus also causes microcephaly in infants born to mothers who had Zika during their pregnancy. Some fetuses die before they’re born, and some are born with smaller heads and brains. Zika virus is a major problem in Latin America, and more cases are being found in the US. These cases are travel-based, meaning you had to go to a different country to catch it.

After reading more than 4 articles connected to this topic, I have concluded that you should not go to Latin America anytime soon. Also that Brazil is having a really hard time right now. I think that Zika in the United States is blown out of proportion (Texas has had a grand total of 27 cases, all travel-based), so anyone with rational thinking isn’t at risk of being infected and having deformed children. I don’t have any good ideas about where to stick the Zika virus in a Shakespeare play, but I guess you could say Viola brought it when she washed up in the Twelfth Night, and proceeded to spread it throughout the town in some miraculous way.