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Prices in Canada may be higher \$4.00

UNDER ZELENSKY, FRAUD HAS FOUND SPACE TO FESTER

SYSTEMATIC SABOTAGE

Inner Circle Is Accused of
Taking Millions While
Ducking Oversight

By CONSTANT MÉHEUT
and KIM BARKER

KYIV, Ukraine — When Russian troops invaded Ukraine, Kyiv's Western allies faced a dilemma: how to spend billions supporting a government fighting Russia without watching the money vanish into the pockets of corrupt managers and government officials.

The stakes were high because Ukraine's vital wartime industries — power distribution, weapons purchases and nuclear energy — were controlled by state-owned companies that have long served as piggy banks for the country's elite.

To protect their money, the United States and European nations insisted on oversight. They required Ukraine to allow groups of outside experts, known as supervisory boards, to monitor spending, appoint executives and prevent corruption.

Over the past four years, a New York Times investigation found, the Ukrainian government systematically sabotaged that oversight, allowing graft to flourish.

President Volodymyr Zelensky's administration has stacked boards with loyalists, left seats empty or stalled them from being set up at all. Leaders in Kyiv even rewrote company charters to limit oversight, keeping the government in control and allowing hundreds of millions of dollars to be spent without outsiders poking around.

Supervisory boards serve an essential oversight function, allowing independent experts, typically from other countries, to scrutinize major decisions inside Ukrainian state-owned companies.

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CLAUDIO BRESCIANI/TT NEWS AGENCY, VIA A.P.
Herman Halushchenko, Kyiv's
energy minister who resigned.

A Covid Claim, a Torn Marriage And a Scientist Hiding in Fear

By KATIE J.M. BAKER

One morning in April 2020, Ranawaka Perera cooked fried eggs and tomatoes for his wife, Li-Meng Yan. When she said she wasn't hungry, he pressed her to eat anyway. Lately, Dr. Yan had been so anxious that at times she felt she could barely breathe, and Dr. Perera was worried about her health.

Everyone they knew was stressed in early 2020. The couple both worked at a prestigious lab at the University of Hong Kong, where they researched viruses, including an alarming new coronavirus that was spreading around the globe.

But Dr. Yan was convinced that the prevailing theory that Covid-19 had emerged from a live-

animal market in the city of Wuhan was false, and that the truth was much darker. She believed the Chinese government had purposefully grown the virus in a lab and released it to set off a deadly pandemic.

Dr. Perera, an experienced virologist, didn't rule out the possibility of a lab accident. But that would have been far different from a deliberate release, and he told Dr. Yan, who was relatively new to their field, that it was too soon to know where the virus had come from, if they ever would. He resolved to spend less time at the lab so he could care for his wife.

After breakfast, he told her, he had planned a journey to a secluded bit of local lore: a couple who

claimed they were abducted by aliens while driving back from their honeymoon in 1961.

Betty and Barney Hill said they were seized on a stretch of U.S. Route 3 by gray aliens with long bodies and large heads. Their tale was one of the first U.F.O. stories to capture national attention, inspiring the 1975 movie "The U.F.O. Incident," starring Estelle Parsons and James Earl Jones. A new movie, "Strange Arrivals," is being developed with Demi Moore and Colman Domingo.

The simple version of the Hills' story — if reported U.F.O. sightings can be simple — is that a strange, bright light began to follow them on the dark roads in the White Mountains, eventually hovering above their car, a 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air. By the time they got home to Portsmouth, N.H., they could not account for hours of

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INTERNATIONAL A4-8
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Several Venezuelan officials and opposition politicians might rise in a transition, but all would face difficulty. PAGE A4

A Vote as Hong Kong Mourns
The government urged participation in an election expected to be dominated by pro-Beijing candidates. PAGE A5

NATIONAL A9-17, 20
Fewer U.S. Grants to Science
A quiet policy change increasing funding but reducing total recipients means the government is making fewer bets on long-term research. PAGE A10

Hands Off Our DNA
Ancestry, a genealogy site, is deterring law enforcement agencies from using its records to crack cold cases. PAGE A17

The Author of 'Winter's Bone'
Daniel Woodrell, whose tales of violence and squalor in his native Ozarks inspired several movies, was 72. PAGE B6



BUSINESS B1-5
All (4,500) Sales Final!
After the store Rags to Riches closed, Vicky Szuflita got one last look inside. She bought everything. PAGE B1

Angst and Anger in Hollywood
Many fear that Netflix's deal will mean fewer boundary-pushing movies, plus job losses and theater closings. PAGE B1

SPORTS D1-8
Bracket That Needs Busting
There is no way to avoid controversy, but the College Football Playoff committee did a bad job, a columnist says. Here's how to fix it: more access, transparency and accountability. PAGE D1

New Era for Miami and Messi
With Inter Miami's first M.L.S. Cup in hand, a new stadium on the way and Lionel Messi signed to a three-year contract extension, the champions are pivoting to what's next. PAGE D7

OPINION A18-19
David French
PAGE A19

THE WEATHER
Today, a mixture of sun and clouds, colder, breezy, high 31. Tonight, clear, cold, low 21. Tomorrow, partly cloudy, becoming breezy, not as cold, high 36. Weather map, Page D8.



ADAM KUEHL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

After Trump Eases Some Tariffs, More Importers Hope for Relief

By ANA SWANSON

WASHINGTON — Before President Trump's tariffs took effect this year, the Chicken of the Sea factory in Lyons, Ga., was running its production lines full speed, canning enough imported tuna to build up four to six months of inventory in warehouses around the United States.

It was an effort to mitigate the effect of tariffs, and it worked — temporarily. But once the president imposed those high levies globally, the costs of the fish, olive

oil and steel cans the factory needs all rose. Production has now slowed, with the factory cutting its operating hours to four days a week instead of five. Chicken of the Sea has sold off all the inventory it had stockpiled before the tariffs. Company executives say that has left them with few options other than raising prices, unless they can secure a tariff reprieve.

"It is squeezing us, and it forces us to really make some tough decisions," said Andy Mees, the president of Chicken of the Sea International. "Inevitably, I think you will

Saying They Can't Get Materials or Willing Workers in U.S.

see some inflation coming if we don't see some relief pretty soon."

A move by the Trump administration last month to exempt tariffs on some products not made in the United States, like coffee and bananas, gave Chicken of the Sea and other importers paying tariffs some hope. The company and the

Georgia lawmakers that represent its district have argued to White House officials that there should be tariff exemptions for foreign products that have no American substitute, like the frozen tuna that the company imports from Thailand, Vietnam, Ecuador and Indonesia. The type of tuna typically used for canning is caught in warm waters around the Equator.

"It's not like there's just tuna swimming along in Ohio," Mr. Mees said. About tariffs, he added, "I would hope that we have hit the

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JOHN TULLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

One Final Step For Citizenship Proves Elusive

By JAZMINE ULLOA
and ORLANDO MAYORQUÍN

Raouf Vafaei followed all the rules.

He obtained his green card, passed his civics test and his naturalization interview, and underwent multiple background checks.

After eight years in the United States, Mr. Vafaei, an Iranian-born mental health worker who emigrated from Austria, was just days away from becoming an American citizen when he learned in a four-sentence email that his naturalization ceremony scheduled for Friday had been canceled.

"I was so excited," Mr. Vafaei, 41, said in an interview last week, referring to the honor of officially calling himself an American. His mother had even bought a new dress for the occasion. "This is one wish that many people have all over the world."

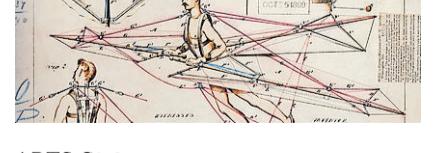
That honor is now paused, indefinitely.

After an Afghan refugee was charged in last month's shooting of two National Guard members in Washington, the Trump administration has made sweeping changes to limit legal immigration, including halting the entire process for people from 19 countries that the White House put under a travel ban earlier this year.

From Massachusetts to California, people seeking citizenship and their lawyers say, federal im-

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PRISON A Nebraska facility that rehabilitated inmates is now an ICE detention center. PAGE A9



ARTS C1-8
Telling the American Story
A new National Archives exhibit uses technology to explore the billions of items it possesses. Above, "Patent Drawing for a Flying Machine," 1869. PAGE C1

