

The Theresa and Donald show

The US briefing is very positive for the first Trump/May meeting. They have happy memories of President Reagan's achievement, and fond recollections of the part Margaret Thatcher played alongside the US. Together they pursued and won the Cold War. Together they faced down the opposition of many Europeans to the Star Wars initiative which brought the USSR to the conclusion they could not longer compete without major reform. Together they cut taxes and promoted growth.

I remember well the day I took a translation of one of Mr Gorbachev's speeches to Margaret Thatcher. At first she could not believe that Gorbachev would have made statements in favour of free enterprise economics in the way he did. Once she accepted the source, she realised the opportunity that dialogue might bring. It was the reward for the strong stance she and the President had taken in earlier years, as the failing USSR strained every sinew to try to keep up with the space and arms race. It did so only at the expense of a huge expenditure of resource from its relatively low income per head. It fell behind when computer and digital technology and its related creativity came to the fore.

The UK will want to argue that today is a different global agenda and Mrs May and Mr Trump are different people from the then Prime Minister and President. Where Reagan and Thatcher had to deal with the cold war, the armed threat to the west from the USSR, and the plight of the countries of Eastern Europe under Soviet control, President Trump and PM May have the complex threats of terrorism and aggressive movements in several countries around the world. Where the Soviet Union prevented the movement of people in Eastern Europe under threat of death for those who tried, today we have the worry of excessive movements of people fleeing economic failure and civil war elsewhere.

There are some similarities. In the USA Mr Trump like Mr Reagan does want to cut and simplify taxes on a large scale. He does want to pump up the US growth rate as Mr Reagan did. All US Presidents are persuaded to say the US/UK relationship is special, but only a few mean it. Ronnie did. I think Mr Trump will too.

Global Crude oil price of Indian Basket was US\$ 54.53 per bbl on

26.01.2017

The international crude oil price of Indian Basket as computed/published today by Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas was US\$ 54.53 per barrel (bbl) on 26.01.2017. This was higher than the price of US\$ 54.34 per bbl on previous publishing day of 24.01.2017.

Fairer funding for schools

On Wednesday we debated the government's proposals for fairer funding for schools. The Conservative Manifesto drew attention to the large gap between the best financed and worst financed state schools and promised action to provide fairer and more balanced levels of funding. The scheme includes a higher individual pupil amount that will be the same across the country, with continued additional payments for areas of deprivation, rural areas and other matters increasing the costs of education.

I raised with the Minister the question of how far the rebalancing would go. The Wokingham and West Berkshire schools have been short changed for many years by the old formula and need several years of increments to put things right.

Honouring Holocaust victims, UN chief Guterres pledges to battle anti-Semitism, all forms of hatred

27 January 2017 – The world has a duty to remember that the Holocaust was a systematic attempt to eliminate the Jewish people and so many others, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said today, noting that building a future of dignity and equality for all will honour the victims of this "incomparable tragedy in human history [...] who we will never allow to be forgotten."

Marking the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, Mr. Guterres said in video message that it would be a dangerous error to think of the Holocaust as simply the result of the

insanity of a group of criminal Nazis.

On the contrary, the Holocaust was the culmination of millennia of hatred, scapegoating and discrimination targeting the Jews, what we now call anti-Semitism, he emphasized, adding that tragically and contrary to the international community's resolve, anti-Semitism continues to thrive.

Moreover, the world is also witnessing a deeply troubling rise in extremism, xenophobia, racism and anti-Muslim hatred. Irrationality and intolerance are back, said the UN chief.

Stressing that this is in complete contrast to the universal values enshrined in the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he said: We can never remain silent or indifferent when human beings are suffering. We must always defend the vulnerable and bring tormentors to justice. And as the theme of this year's observance highlights, a better future depends on education.

After the horrors of the 20th century, there should be no room for intolerance in the 21st. I guarantee you that as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I will be in the frontline of the battle against anti-Semitism and all other forms of hatred, said Mr. Guterres.

Also today, in his remarks, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said the day of remembrance for the victims of the Nazi Holocaust forces the world to contemplate the horrors to which bigotry, racism and discrimination ultimately lead.

The sadistic brutality of the atrocities inflicted by the Nazi regime on Jews, Roma, Slavs, persons with disabilities, political dissidents, homosexuals and others was nourished by layer upon layer of propaganda, falsifications and incitement to hatred, he said, adding that they were denigrated and smeared; one after another, their rights were refused, and finally, even their humanity was denied.

'It happened, therefore it can happen again,' wrote Primo Levi, who endured and survived the concentration camp at Auschwitz Birkenau. As we honour the victims of the Holocaust, we must also acknowledge the need to prevent the recurrence of anti-Semitism and all forms of racial and religious hatred and discrimination today, the UN rights chief stated.

It is therefore essential to uphold independent rule of law institutions and a free press, which can hold leaders to account and establish a truthful record of the facts. It is crucial to maintain respect for human rights, especially in respect of the right to life and wellbeing of all people regardless of their origin or ethnicity.

Above all, education must be at the core of all efforts to combat anti-Semitism, racism, and all forms of discrimination. Although an important part of that work must be centred on schools and other academic fora, education in this sense must extend far more broadly, so that we can undo the stereotypes which generate so much injustice and prejudice throughout society,

stressed Mr. Zeid.

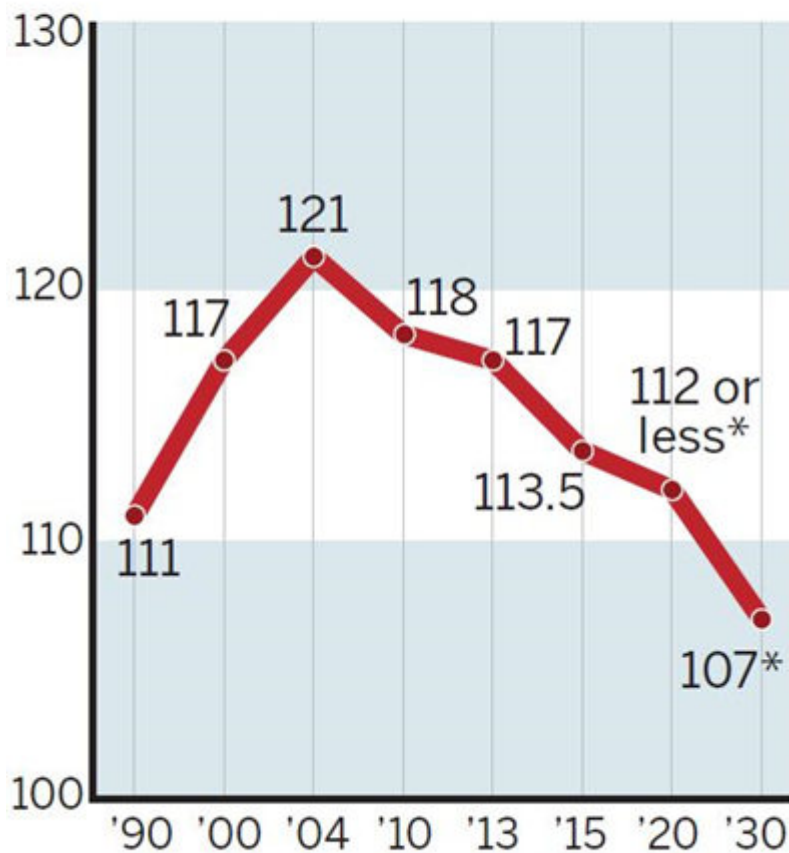
A Holocaust Memorial Ceremony is taking place today at UN Headquarters in New York, hosted by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Cristina Gallach. Speakers are expected to include Peter Thomson, President of the UN General Assembly; Danny Danon, Permanent Representative of Israel to the UN; and Michele J. Sison, United States Deputy Representative to the UN.

Noah Klieger, a 90-year old Holocaust survivor, will be keynote speaker. Cantor Israel Singer, of Congregation Temple Emanu-El of Closter, New Jersey, will recite the memorial prayers and be accompanied by violinist Artur Kaganovskiy. The ceremony will include music by guitarist Gary Lucas and vocalist Rachel Joselson, Doctor of Music Arts and Associate Professor at the University of Iowa.

Report: China's sex ratio to balance out by 2030

Sex ratio at birth

Number of men to every 100 women
* forecast



Source: National Health and Family Planning Commission

China's sex ratio at birth will keep falling and eventually reach a balance within 15 years due to economic and social development and the relaxed family planning policy, the central government has predicted.

The ratio, which was 113.5 men to every 100 women in 2015, one of the highest in the world, is forecast to drop below 112 by 2020 and 107 by 2030, according to the National Population Development Outline released Wednesday by the State Council.

The normal range is between 103 and 107.

China's sex ratio has been skewed by a traditional preference for boys. Population experts have estimated that the imbalance over the past 30 years has resulted in between 24 million and 34 million more men than women.

Wang Pei'an, vice-minister of the National Health and Family Planning Commission, has warned that the gender imbalance could result in serious social problems.

However, thanks to rising social awareness and government efforts, China's

sex ratio at birth has declined in recent years. A national guideline released this month said the authorities will continue to intensify the fight against fetus gender identification and sex-selective abortions.

Wednesday's outline estimated that China will see its population peak at 1.45 billion around 2030.

To better monitor demographic changes, the country plans to establish a population forecast system based on censuses and samples surveys that will produce regular reports, the outline said.

It also said governments will continue to monitor the effect of the universal second-child policy as well as closely follow changes in the fertility rate to decide on possible adjustment to the family planning policy.

Yuan Xin, a professor of population studies at Nankai University in Tianjin, said the second-child policy will contribute to a lower sex ratio at birth because it will result in a higher fertility rate, but he added, "The family planning policy should be further relaxed so the ratio can be reduced to a balanced level."

He agreed with predictions that the second-child policy will result in a peak in births in the next few years, but he warned the effect may decline gradually due to the reduced number of women of childbearing age.

About 90 million women became eligible to have another child when the second-child policy was introduced early last year. However, half were aged 40 or older, meaning they are less likely to give birth again, Yuan said.

"Adjustment to the policies should be based on consistent monitoring of the population. A scientific evaluation should be made," the professor added.