

# March 30 global Q&A: National characteristics

This week, Epoch Times reporters around the world received some very revealing answers to the question: What common characteristics do you see in people of your country?

## Timisoara, Romania

**Adriana Vulpan, 25, Sales Manager**  
In my opinion, Romanians are characterized by their developed sense of hospitality. So with a little bit of help from the authorities, we could develop an exemplary tourism sector, because, after all, nature was very generous with Romania.



Adriana Vulpan, Timisoara, Romania. THE EPOCH TIMES

## Santiago, Chile

**Andrés Pinto Espinosa, 26, Student**  
We are very quiet but cheerful and friendly; we are also curious about people and things that come from the outside. Chile is a very large country, with different climates and environments so people are different from one part to another, but generally we are very lovable, as is the rest of our continent.



Andrés Pinto Espinosa, Santiago, Chile. THE EPOCH TIMES

## Givataim, Israel

**Ora Binur, Musicologist**

The common characteristics of people in my country are: warmth towards each other; very caring in friendships; they are quite involved in politics; not polite enough; quite nervous because of the need to survive and not really supportive of other people's success.



Ora Binur, Givataim, Israel. THE EPOCH TIMES



Amjad Chaudhry, Islamabad, Pakistan. THE EPOCH TIMES

## Islamabad, Pakistan

**Amjad Chaudhry, 38 Information Technology Sector**

A common characteristic I find all Pakistanis to have is that they are committed to their beliefs and opinions; those beliefs and opinions are derived from the community in which they dwell.

## Sabinov, Slovakia

**Miriam Seirmannova, 19, Student**

I think Slovaks are a very joyful nation. They know how to enjoy themselves and can see beauty in simple things. They have a natu-

ral gift for music, so we have very lovely traditional music instruments. On the other hand, I think they are rather conservative and

it's difficult for them to accept anything new. Regrettably, my impression is that they are still influenced by the spirit of the former [com-

munist] regime. It is manifested on their way of raising children.



Paul McCormack, Burleigh Heads, QLD, Australia. THE EPOCH TIMES

are skillful. We are good people but on the other hand, Italian people lie. This is not, for example, how English or German people are. Normally when English and German people say "yes" it is true, but when Italian people say "yes"... there are different sides and faces.

## Burleigh Heads, Queensland, Australia

**Paul McCormack, 36, Manufacturing Jeweler/Business Owner**

Australia being a multicultural country, it's a very difficult question to answer in regards to the fact that there are so many different people from so many different parts of the world. And I think everybody is quite individual so it would be a very generalizing type of statement, if I am to make a comment on that question. I've traveled a lot and I think that people normally hold Australians as hardworking, but then again there are a lot of people who don't like hard work as well. Probably fairly easy to get along with as well, Australians. We tend to be fairly welcomed in most countries wherever I've traveled in the past. We're fairly friendly accommodating sort of people in general.

## Athens, Greece

**Anastasios Koutsodimitropoulos, 69, Retired Aircraft Mechanic**

Greek People always like to have fun till late at night and have long conversations among friends.

*Look for the Global Q&A column every week, when Epoch Times correspondents interview people around the world to learn about their lives and perspective on local and global realities.*

# GhostNet: Massive China-based Internet spy network unearthed

By **SUMAN SRINIVASAN**  
Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—On March 29, a Canadian research group unveiled a chilling report confirming fears that Chinese dissident communities have harbored for years—the presence of a vast, unrivaled online spy network that is able to track highly specific data and send it back to control servers based in China.

The research was conducted by the Information Warfare Monitor, a public-private research group that comprises researchers from two institutes in Canada: the SecDev Group, an operational think tank based in Ottawa, and the Citizen Lab at the Munk Center for International Studies, University of Toronto.

Their 53-page report, titled "Tracking 'GhostNet': Investigating a Cyber Espionage Network," documents their findings of a global online espionage network that relies on cleverly forged e-mails to infect target computers, control them, and then send reports back to control servers, most of which are based in China.

The group reported that their work started when they began investigating computers in Tibetan exile centers in Dharmasala, India, for possible compromises. The work they did "led to the discovery of insecure, web-based interfaces to four control servers" which allowed attackers to control compromised machines.

Scouting these control servers resulted in their finding a vast network of compromised computers across the world—the report counted "at least 1,295 infected computers in 103 countries."

Most interestingly, a large number of compromised computers were extremely high-profile targets: close to 30 percent of the compromised computers belonged to "ministries of foreign affairs of Iran, Bangladesh, Latvia, Indonesia, Philippines, Brunei, Barbados, and Bhutan; embassies of India, South Korea, Indonesia, Romania, Cyprus, Malta, Thailand, Taiwan, Portugal, Germany, and Pakistan; the ASEAN (Association of South-east Asian Nations) Secretariat, SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), and the



A screenshot of the GhostNet report released by the Information Warfare Monitor group in Canada. SUMAN SRINIVASAN/EPOCH TIMES

Asian Development Bank; news organizations; and an unclassified computer located at NATO headquarters."

## Leveraging social means

The researchers found that GhostNet spread by infecting computers with a Trojan known as "gh0st RAT" that gave the attackers complete control over the infected system. They found that the Trojan was capable of "taking full control of infected computers, including searching and downloading specific files, and covertly operating attached devices, including microphones and web cameras."

Such complete takeovers would allow the attackers to even hear and see events happening on the compromised computers.

The Trojans were obfuscated malware, resulting in their being difficult to detect in commercial

anti-virus and anti-malware programs. "Only 11 of the 34 anti-virus programs provided by Virus Total recognized the malware embedded in the document. Attackers often use executable packers to obfuscate their malicious code in order to avoid detection by anti-virus software," the report said.

The attackers used "social means" to spread the Trojan. For instance, "contextually relevant emails are sent to specific targets" and these e-mails, once opened, installed the Trojan on the unsuspecting user's computer.

## Targeting Chinese dissidents?

The unearthed global Trojan network is only the latest in a series of massive cyber-attacks that have been based out of Communist-ruled China. In 2003, the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and numerous defense companies came

under heavy attack in an operation that the DoD called "Titan Rain," and has been under attack ever since.

Attacks originating from China have also targeted non-governmental groups and Chinese dissident groups. The report said that the attacks have targeted "organizations advocating on the conflict in the Darfur region of Sudan, Tibetan groups active in India, and the Falun Gong."

The Citizen Lab has previously been involved in other studies involving Chinese cyber espionage. In October 2008, they published a report called "Breaching Trust," which focused on the behind-the-scenes surveillance of chat sessions by TOM-Skype in China. The lab is also behind "psiphon," which allows uncensored Internet access in countries where the Internet is filtered.

# Fair trial evades former Taiwanese president

By **DON ROBERTSON**  
Epoch Times Staff

Passing his days in the Taipei Detention Centre must bring an awful sense of déjà vu to Taiwan's former president Chen Shui-bian. He spent eight months there in 1986 as a young democracy campaigner for publishing an article critical of a professor with close links to the ruling Nationalist Party (KMT).

A lot has changed since those one-party days and Taiwan has been proclaimed a beacon of democracy and rule of law in the region. After more than half a century in power, the old, corrupt KMT was voted out in 2000, and a renewed KMT re-elected last year under President Ma Ying-jeou. The fact that a former president could be tried for corruption has also been hailed by some as evidence of the impartiality of Taiwan's judicial system.

But looking at the specifics of the case, a lot of Taiwan watchers are concerned. The principal reason is that Mr. Chen is in jail, yet has not been found guilty yet. He and a number of former colleagues in the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) have been held in "preventive detention" while their cases are investigated and there are allegations of mistreatment in custody.

This and other concerns were raised in several open letters written in November last year to Taiwan's Minister of Justice Wang Ching-feng, signed by 22 international scholars and published in the Taipei Times. The letters stated that when present and former DPP officials were detained, they were interrogated for up to 20 hours without being formally charged.

They said that when those detained held discussions with their lawyers, these were recorded and videotaped, with the information then given to their respective prosecutors, violating the lawyer-client privilege.

They said prosecutors have continuously leaked information about the proceedings leading to a "trial by press", compromising the defendant's right to a fair trial and giving "the distinct impression that the Kuomintang (KMT) authorities are using the judicial system to get even with members of the former DPP Government".

Elected president in 2000, Mr Chen moderated his pro-independence stance, made concessions to the new opposition and cut his own

salary in half. Carrying the nation's hopes for a new era of clean government, his popularity soared.

But things started to go wrong. Mr Chen's overt moves towards further autonomy infuriated China and caused headaches for the US, Taiwan's main ally, as tension across the Taiwan Strait grew. His policy initiatives were also continually blocked by a KMT-dominated legislature, leading to a political stalemate that quickly took the shine off Taiwan's new democracy.

His popularity plunged in May 2006 when his son-in-law was arrested for insider trading and embezzlement. Mr Chen was alleged to be an accomplice but was protected by his immunity as president.

Mr Chen and his wife resigned from the DPP on August 15, 2008. He stated: "Today, I have to say sorry to all of the DPP members and supporters. I let everyone down, caused you humiliation and failed to meet your expectations. My acts have caused irreparable damage to the party. I love the DPP deeply and am proud of being a DPP member."

Taiwanese society now simmers with hatred for Mr Chen, borne of dashed hopes and frustration with politics. That frustration extends to former supporters of Mr Chen, including freelance journalist Lu Caiqian, who is following the case closely.

"These days, a lot of people really hate Chen Shui-bian and I do too," Ms Lu said, "because he harmed the solidarity of people who love Taiwan and turned back the progress of Taiwan's democracy."

But she still believes he has not been given a fair trial owing to a judicial apparatus and media that has been heavily stacked in favour of the KMT since 1947.

"In 2000, the corrupt KMT had almost gutted Taiwan, empty and widespread dissatisfaction gave Chen the chance to get elected. But after his election, the entrenched forces turned against him and sealed off the media, causing his support to fall.

"Now, whenever something benefits Chen, like when he was set free, all the media and Parliament denounce it."

The trial continues and Mr Chen is as defiant as always, calling his arrest "political persecution" and going on a hunger strike in prison.

He now has plenty of time to reflect on how it has all gone full circle.