



LESSONS FROM CHINA

Since 1868, Memorial Day has been set aside to honor those brave Americans who dedicated their lives for the freedoms that we enjoy. Their sacrifices are a part of what has made America great – the building of America into its independence and prosperity. Today, most American families also celebrate this holiday as the unofficial beginning of summer with food, fun, and outdoor activities.

This year Memorial Day will be very different as we look back at the past several months and wonder, question, and begin to move forward out of this uncertain time. How can we celebrate? What indulgences or even necessities will be available to us?

The pride Americans have for this country has its roots secured in the tough, independent generations of the past that have sacrificed not only their lives in wars, but years of toil on the land, building prosperity and independence. Many of us have taken for granted the freedoms we have been handed and the ability to purchase anything we want without any thought of where it comes from. We Americans have lived in a world of prosperity never before created or imagined.

COVID-19 has changed all of that. It has shown that none of us are above hoarding and thereby disrupting supply chains so that we can feel safe and secure, so that we will have everything we need to “shelter in place,” and so that we do not have to give up the comforts we have known. It has been with great pain and angst that Americans have begun to understand that the supply chains that have previously brought us whatever we wanted are fragile and have been disrupted. And it has been even more shocking for us to learn how much of what we need or want is outsourced internationally, especially from China.

As the economy begins to open up, people will be looking forward to returning to a sense of normalcy. We will have the opportunity to gradually begin shopping and socializing, first, within boundaries. The shelves in the supermarkets will begin to be replenished, broader markets will reopen, and we will be allowed to gather with friends to celebrate Memorial Day and other important holidays, almost as usual.

As they say, “There is no great loss without some small gain,” so as we navigate through this disruption, maybe we can remember a lesson learned – that we can no longer allow our national security to be jeopardized by dependency upon foreign products. We should demand and support products from our own country and from U.S. workers who still provide the best quality and the safest products in the world.

When you shop for groceries, do you support purchases that are domestically grown and produced? Have you ever looked at the labels to understand which products have been shipped from other countries? Do you realize that most countries do not have the labor, safety, and environmental measures in place with which farmers and ranchers in the United States are required to comply?

When was the last time you thought about the minerals that go into the electronic device you are using to read this article? Do you understand why we have affordable energy primarily from coal, natural gas, and nuclear power to heat and cool our homes and offices? How well do you understand where the critical minerals come from that will be required to achieve the aspirational green energy goals that some embrace? Do you understand the domestic supply chains and how they work? How many of the products you consume are not domestically produced but are supplied from foreign sources; do you really want to be at the mercy of China for those products?

America has a great wealth of critical minerals that will secure a clean independent technological and energy future, but only if we support and help develop the domestic mineral production and processing of our mineral resources.

Please, when you ask the question, “What should I do from now on to be safer and more secure?”, let part of your answer be, “I will support food, electronics, and energy that is domestically produced!”

Co-Authored by Women’s Mining Coalition (WMC) and American Agri-Women

WMC is a grassroots organization with over 200 members nationwide. Our members work in all sectors of the mining industry including hardrock and industrial minerals, coal, energy generation, manufacturing, transportation, and service industries. We hold annual Washington, D.C. Fly-Ins to meet with members of Congress and their staff and federal land management and regulatory agencies to discuss issues of importance to both the hardrock and coal mining sectors. For more information about WMC, please visit our website at www.wmc-usa.org, e-mail at emily.arthun@gmail.com.

American Agri-Women is the nations’ largest coalition of farm, ranch and agribusiness women with more than 50 state, commodity and agribusiness affiliate organizations, united to communicate with one another and with other consumers to promote agriculture. AAW members have been advocating for agriculture since 1974. For more information about about AAW please visit our website at <https://americanagriwomen.org>, or email AAW Government Affairs Co-Chair: karen@nutralix.com