

World

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#METOO MOVEMENT

Weinstein surrenders to police on sex charges

UNITED STATES

Jocelyn Noveck

NEW YORK: Harvey Weinstein turned himself in to police yesterday to face the first criminal charges to be filed against him after months of sexual abuse allegations from scores of women that destroyed his career and set off a national reckoning known as the #MeToo movement.

Weinstein, 66, stepped from a black SUV wearing a blazer and carrying books under his arm, and lumbered into a Manhattan police station before a crowd of news cameras. He didn't respond to shouts of "Harvey!"

The exact charges against Weinstein still had not been made public last night. Two law enforcement officials said the case will include allegations by Lucia Evans, an aspiring actress who has said the Hollywood mogul forced her to perform oral sex on him in his office. She was among the first women to speak out about the producer.

"At a certain point, you have to think about the greater good of humanity, of womankind," she told the magazine.

Evans told *The New Yorker* in a story published in October that Weinstein forced her to perform oral sex during a daytime meeting at his New York office in 2004, the summer before her senior year at Middlebury College.

"I said, over and over, 'I don't want to do this, stop, don't,'" she told the magazine. "I tried to get away, but maybe I didn't try hard enough. I didn't want to kick him or fight him."

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance had been under enormous public pressure to bring a criminal case against Weinstein. Some women's groups, including the Hollywood activist group Time's Up, accused the Democrat of being too deferential to Weinstein and too dismissive of his accusers.

A grand jury has been hearing evidence in the case for weeks.

In March, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo took the extraordinary step of ordering the state's attorney general to investigate whether Vance acted properly in 2015 when he decided not to prosecute Weinstein over a previous allegation of unwanted groping, made by an Italian model. That investigation is in its preliminary stages.

More than 75 women have accused Weinstein of wrongdoing around the globe. Several actresses and models accused him of criminal sexual assaults, but many of the encounters happened too long ago for any prosecution. Film actress Rose McGowan said Weinstein raped her in 1997 in Utah, *Sopranos* actress Annabella Sciorra said he raped her in her New York apartment in 1992 and Norwegian actress Natassia Malthe said he attacked her in a London hotel room in 2008.

McGowan said she is gratified but "still in shock" that Weinstein was expected to surrender.

"The justice system has been something very elusive," McGowan said. "I hope in this case it works. Because it's all true. None of this was consensual."

Harvey and his brother Bob Weinstein started his now-bankrupt company after leaving Miramax, the company they founded in 1979 and which became a powerhouse in '90s indie film with hits like *Pulp Fiction* and *Shakespeare in Love*.

AP



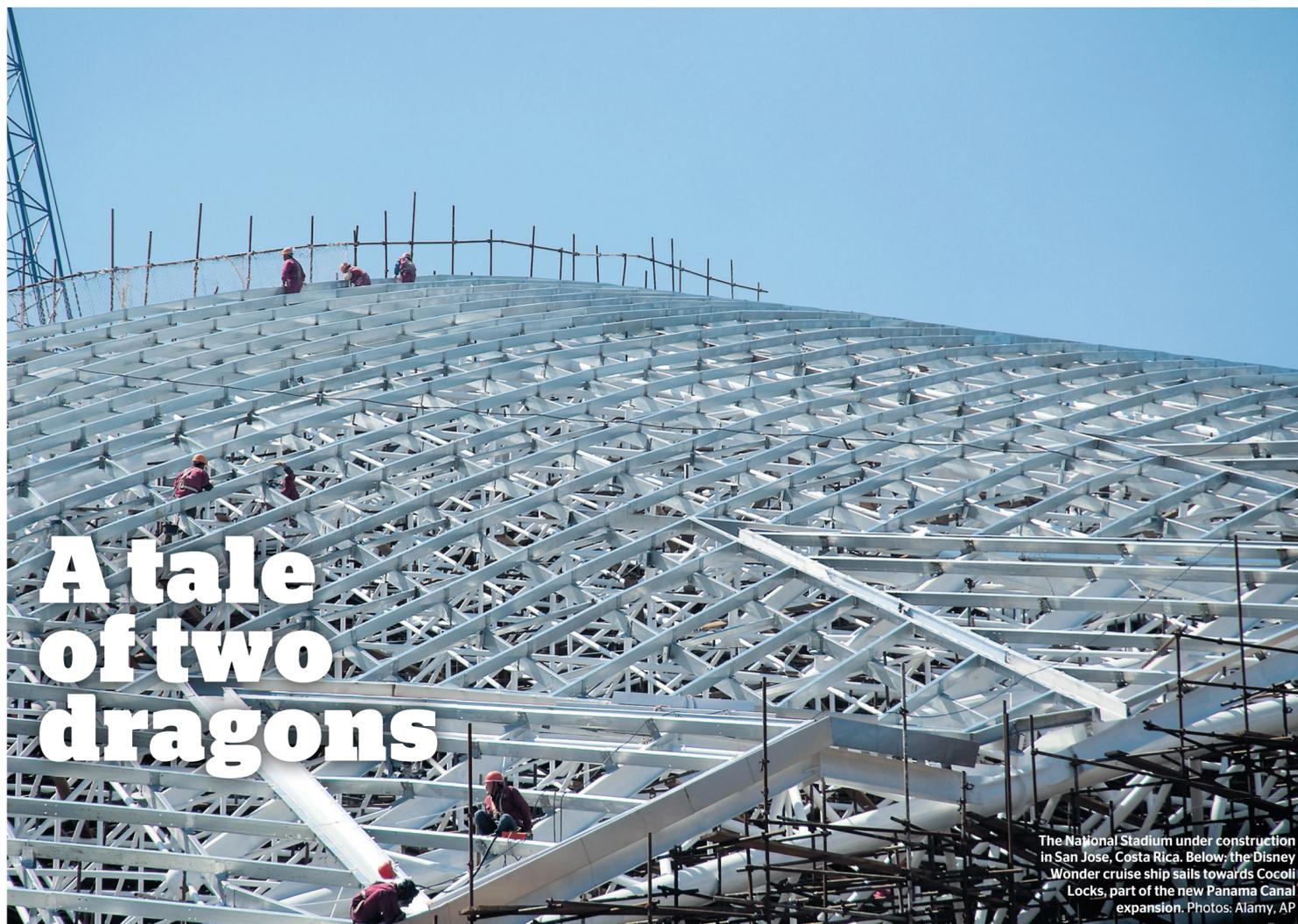
Disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein arrives at the first precinct in New York yesterday.

One official said it's likely the case also will include at least one other victim who has not come forward publicly.

Weinstein was expected to be charged at least with criminal sexual act, a crime that carries up to 25 years in prison, the officials said.

Weinstein's attorney, Benjamin Brafman, declined to comment when first contacted about the charges, but previously said in court paperwork that the allegations that Weinstein forced himself on women were "entirely without merit" and that he never knowingly broke the law.

Evans confirmed to *The New Yorker* that she was pressing charges.



A tale of two dragons

China and Taiwan are stepping up to fill the void left by the US in Latin America, writes Andrew Wight.

BOGOTA: It's October of 2017 and the crowd goes wild as the home side scores against a baseball team from Taiwan in Managua, capital of Nicaragua, during a friendly game to inaugurate the city's brand new stadium.

But baseball, the national sport in both countries, isn't the only tie between the two: Nicaragua is one of only 18 states in the world that still recognises the Taiwan-based government as separate from China. Against a backdrop of waning American soft power in South and Central America, Taiwan and China are using a mix of diplomacy and money to advance their agendas in the region.

For decades, Central American and Caribbean nations have been bastions of support for Taiwan, but in the past decade several have changed sides.

In 2007, Costa Rica switched allegiance to China. Last year, Panama adopted the One China policy. This month alone, two more countries have followed: the Dominican Republic (just weeks after a port call by a flotilla of modern Taiwanese warships tried unsuccessfully to secure the friendship) and, on Thursday,

Burkina Faso (following intense pressure by China on African countries to break with what it regards as a wayward province).

"China and Taiwan kind of had a truce up until the new president of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen, came into power in 2016. She did not capitulate to the Chinese attitude to interstrait relations," says Sean Miner, associate director and China fellow at the Atlantic Council, a foreign relations think-tank based in Washington.

"[China] wanted overt statements saying [Tsai] wouldn't pursue independence. She ruffled some feathers there."

Back in Nicaragua, the new Dennis Martinez National Stadium, reportedly built with the help of a \$US30-35 million (\$39-46 million) donation from Taiwan, is a reminder of the country's diplomatic ties.

Monica Dehart, professor of anthropology at the University of Puget Sound, has studied China and Taiwan's actions on the ground in Guatemala, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. She says what started after a port call by a flotilla of modern Taiwanese warships tried unsuccessfully to secure the friendship) and, on Thursday,

"US funding comes with strings attached," she said. "Taiwan offers

flexible aid, rather than Chinese investment.

"I don't think there's a strong ideological or cultural link, either for the elites or the ordinary people, but Taiwan has been a good friend [to Central America]."

"There are still Chinese companies in the countries that recognise Taiwan, but when they have a labour issue, it is harder to resolve without a [Chinese] embassy," she said.

Where recognition changes, major infrastructure projects or new trade deals often emerge.

Panama switched allegiance to China in June 2017, and in the same week China Landbridge announced it had started work on a \$US1 billion new deepwater port at Margarita Island on the Caribbean side of the Panama Canal. China Landbridge hit Australian headlines in 2016 when it acquired a 99-year lease on the Port of Darwin for \$506 million.

Costa Rica received a Friendship Bridge from Taiwan in 2003, but in 2007 dumped the island's loyalty in favour of China. Four years later, in 2011, it opened a new 35,000-seat national stadium, at the staggering price tag of \$US100 million, reportedly paid for by Beijing.

In Chile, China last week spent \$US4 billion to buy a 24 per cent stake in one of the world's largest lithium producers, SQM. Lithium is a key component in batteries that power electronics and electric vehicles.

Only an ambitious \$US10 billion, 3755-kilometre "two-ocean railway" linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans via Peru, Bolivia and Brazil is taking time to come to fruition, after it was proposed as a more efficient goods and commodities export link to China. As of last month, despite the backing of Chinese banks, only Bolivian President Evo Morales had committed to kickstarting the project next year.

In 2015, delegates from 33 countries from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) gathered in Beijing where they heard Chinese President Xi Jinping pledge \$US250 billion in foreign direct investments (FDI) in Latin America by the year 2025.

"Most leaders don't say to a region, 'I want companies from my country to invest in this region'," says Miner. But in China it happens.

According to an Atlantic Council report, Chinese foreign direct investments topped \$US25 billion in Latin America's oil and gas sector from 2004 to 2016, including mergers and acquisitions, joint

ventures and some greenfield projects. As of 2018, China is halfway to reaching its goal, with more than \$US100 billion invested in Latin America by Chinese state-owned enterprises.

The council also found that Chinese direct investment was highest in Brazil, which attracted \$US61 billion spread across 180 deals from 2003-2016. Peru attracted \$US18 billion across 16 deals. Argentina, Bolivia, Chile,

'China is loading up many of these smaller countries with debt.'

Sean Miner, Atlantic Council



The National Stadium under construction in San Jose, Costa Rica. Below: the Disney Wonder cruise ship sails towards Cocoli Locks, part of the new Panama Canal expansion. Photos: Alamy, AP



Venezuela, Antigua, Jamaica, Guyana, Cuba and Colombia attracted upwards of \$US1 billion each across the same time period.

Those deals include infrastructure projects that aid China's imports, such as a port dedicated to soy in Brazil.

"What we are finding in Latin America is that previously they were taking the bauxite [aluminium ore] or iron ore and turning it into products higher up the chain," Miner says.

"South American countries are now going back down the value chain, and going back to exporting lightly processed raw materials to China."

"This can be dangerous in the long term, as you're not developing an economy based on manufacturing or services. Countries are then tied to commodity prices and the rate of Chinese growth."

Miner pointed to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's invitation to Latin American countries to take part in the Belt and Road project as part of the strategy to tie economies

together. "China is loading up many of these smaller countries with debt. If at some point they can't pay, China will hold a tremendous amount of power over them," Miner said.

Fulton Armstrong, a senior faculty fellow at the Centre for Latin American and Latino Studies at American University, who worked as a senior official in the Clinton administration, says Latino hearts and minds have never been with China, given the proximity and influence of the United States.

One finding of a report by the Brookings Institution appears to support this. In their United Nations voting record from 2006 to 2015, countries from Latin America and the Caribbean were much more aligned politically with Washington than Beijing.

"It's not that the Chinese have brilliantly found a way to suborn an entire hemisphere, it is that the US has withdrawn. The US now has a reputation as a less than trustworthy country. You can see it with the Iran deal," Armstrong says.

"We've moved off the playing field in a number of countries, so it's very easy for [Beijing]. This isn't the Chinese giving us a beating, this is the US giving itself a beating."

Geoff Thale, vice-president of programs at the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), a think-tank focused on policy and development in Latin America, says that China's goals are more commercial than hegemonic.

"They're not trying to build security relations, or challenge the US through their relationships in the Western Hemisphere; they need the raw materials, and they're willing to buy them," he says.

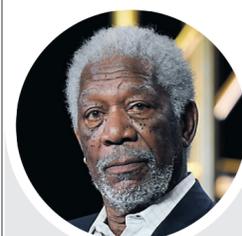
"On the Latin American side, countries want positive relations with major commercial partners, and so recognising [Beijing's] sovereignty over Taiwan is, for most countries, a relatively easy and cost-free way to do that."

IN SHORT



BRITAIN PRANKSTERS DUPE BORIS

The British Foreign Office has criticised "childish" Russian hoaxers Alexei Stolyarov and Vladimir Kuznetsov, who phoned Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, pictured, and pretended to be new Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan. A recording of the call, said to have taken place last week, was posted on YouTube. The office believes the hoaxers, known as Lexus and Vovan, made the call with the blessing of the Kremlin, but they denied this. Agencies



UNITED STATES FREEMAN SAYS SORRY

Actor Morgan Freeman has apologised to "anyone who felt uncomfortable or disrespected" by his behaviour, after CNN reported eight women have accused the actor of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour on movie sets and in other settings. One woman said Freeman, pictured, lifted her skirt and often subjected her to unwanted touching. AP



CANADA POLICE HUNT FOR BOMBERS

Canadian police are hunting for two unidentified men who walked into a restaurant in the city of Mississauga and set off a bomb, wounding more than a dozen people, and then fleeing. The blast went off in the Bombay Bhel restaurant at around 10.30pm local time. Fifteen people were taken to hospital, three of them with critical injuries, paramedics said. Reuters