

## [Transcript] The Intelligence from The Economist / Blown speaker: Kevin McCarthy is out

Hello, I'm Emma Twin. I'm a virtual twin for Dassault System.

My job? Simulate multiple medical conditions on myself to develop new treatments for all.

Basically, I'm like a crash test dummy for healthcare. It may sound like science fiction, but in fact, it's just science.

I explain it all on my LinkedIn account. Look up Emma Twin from Dassault System.

Hello and welcome to The Intelligence from The Economist. I'm your host, Jason Palmer.

Every weekday, we provide a fresh perspective on the events shaping your world.

In a lot of ways, the divides between Northern and Southern India make them seem like entirely different countries,

but Our Correspondent watches a rollicking new film that reveals how those divides are being bridged, Bollywood style.

And some parts of the world are renowned for their preponderance of really old people.

What is it about these places that leads to so many centenarians and super-centenarians?

Turns out, it may be no fountain of use, just bad bookkeeping.

First up, though.

The Yays are 216. The Nays are 210. The resolution is adopted.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

The Office of Speaker of the House of the United States House of Representatives is hereby declared vacant.

From the moment Kevin McCarthy struck a deal with Democratic help to avoid a government shutdown this weekend,

his job as leader of the House of Representatives was in danger.

And after plenty of warning that he would do so, it was Matt Gaetz,

an elaborately quaffed congressman from Florida who forced a vote on the matter.

Chaos is Speaker McCarthy. Chaos is somebody who we cannot trust with.

Chaos is somebody who we cannot trust with their word.

Most House Republicans fell in behind Mr. McCarthy,

but eight of the party's hardliners joined the Democrats in a history-making vote to chuck him out.

Mr. McCarthy doesn't regret striking the deal that kept the government open,

even though it meant the beginning of the end for his tenure.

I was raised to solve problems, not create them.

So I may have lost a vote today, but as I walk out of this chamber,

I feel fortunate to have served the American people.

Mr. McCarthy doesn't regret striking the deal that kept the government open,

even though it meant the beginning of the end for his tenure.

And on his way out, he took a swipe at the situation and the institution.

Unfortunately, 4% of our conference can join all the Democrats

and dictate who can be the Republican Speaker in this House.

I don't think that rule is good for the institution, but apparently I'm the only one.

So what happens now, and is there any chance things will get less messy than they have been lately?

Well, this is a really big deal.

Daniel Franklin is the Economist's Deputy United States Editor.

It's never happened before in all American history.

I think the last time an effort was made to oust a sitting Speaker was in 1910,

and that failed, and this time it succeeded.

So that's a huge moment, and it also comes at a time where there are two critical questions, keeping the government going and securing longer-term funding for Ukraine.

And so the clock is ticking on both those matters.

And when we spoke to you just a couple of days ago,

it was very unclear whether or not this motion to vacate would go ahead, whether it would succeed.

How surprised are you?

I'm not surprised that it went ahead.

I'm a bit surprised that it went ahead with apparently no plan by Kevin McCarthy of how to ride through it

or try to ride through it or even seek some democratic support to keep his job.

It's happened very suddenly, but it's been on the cards since the start of the year

that there would be at some point a challenge to him.

It was written into the rather unseemly deal that led to his getting the job in the first place.

If you remember, it took 15 rounds of voting, rather humiliating fashion to get in the job.

And one of the concessions he made was that anybody could move such a motion to oust him at any time.

So when you have a determined bunch of wreckers on the right of his own party,

at some stage I think it was pretty clear that this was going to happen,

and it's now happened after his working with Democrats to secure a stopgap deal to keep the government going.

And about the two matters on which you say the clock is ticking, let's talk about the budget discussions.

We only just narrowly avoided a shutdown.

Yes, and it was avoided by keeping the government going for another 45 days.

So in just a matter of a few weeks, we'll have exactly the same problem facing the Congress of whether they can manage to keep things going on a longer term basis.

And so that's going to be the pressing matter facing whoever is elected the new speaker, and there's some urgency to this.

And it's linked to the question of Ukraine because one way that deal was done was by keeping out the contentious issue of funding for Ukraine.

And the idea was that that would be dealt with separately.

But now that's hostage to this whole mess as well.

Well, let's talk about that a little bit more.

What is the likelihood that the Ukraine funding will continue under these conditions?

Well, first of all, they have to elect a new speaker.

This freezes the business of the house until a new speaker is in place.

Everything becomes more difficult, including Ukraine funding.

It'll be a pressing task for the next speaker.

There's a majority in the House and the Senate for supporting Ukraine.

However, getting that majority's will through a very divided Republican caucus in the House is not going to be easy at all.

And it's now all tied up with the negotiations over the role of speaker.

And none of this can be resolved before there is a new speaker.

Do we know what the hunt for one will look like?

It seems that the Republicans are going to gather on October the 10th to discuss who might be the next speaker.

There'll be lots of lobbying and jockeying up until that point, of course, and the vote will follow probably soon after that.

And there are a few candidates that are being mentioned, but it's still very unclear who would prevail, because whoever it is has to manage to straddle these divides within the Republicans that have been so much on display in recent days.

One person who's being talked about is Steve Scalise, the second ranked House Republican, the majority leader.

But he's recently been diagnosed with cancer, so that's a complication for him.

Jim Jordan, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee

and who's leading the investigations into Joe Biden,

has a credibility with the right as a former Freedom Caucus chairman,

but he's also managed to work constructively with McCarthy allies.

And there are some other candidates, but it's still going to be very hard as it was last time round, and it's probably become even harder to get the Republicans to agree around it.

And I ask you on Monday in a sort of general sense about keeping the trains running in American government, whether or not Kevin McCarthy's departure would be good or bad.

I mean, what do you reckon to that question now?

Well, I think Kevin McCarthy clearly didn't have enough friends when it came down to it,

and he'd managed to antagonise people on both sides in a way that ultimately did for him.

But he also did manage, rather unexpectedly at times, to keep the show on the road.

He managed to do a deal to raise the debt ceiling.

He managed to do a temporary deal to keep the government going.

And in the end, he said in departing that he put governance over grievance.

And I think there's some degree of credit goes to him for critical moments managing to keep business going in Washington.

It's not an easy job to do,

so whoever comes after him is going to face the same dynamics, the same divisions within his own party.

And presumably face that same one member, one vote potential ousting at any stage.

Are we not going to see this same dynamic play out again and again with a speaker up speaker down?

I think there's a strong possibility that this is set a dangerous precedent,

if you like, for stability of American government.  
So I think one of the critical questions will be  
whether whoever replaces Kevin McCarthy  
has greater credibility across the party  
and faces, therefore, less risk of being vulnerable to such a challenge.  
It doesn't look good for Republicans,  
and I think Democrats are sitting back  
and letting the Republican divisions beyond display for all to see.  
It was a very bizarre spectacle, I think, in the House  
when you saw the Republicans fighting each other  
and the Democrats just looking on.  
And as we move into an election year,  
that's something that Democrats won't be too unhappy about.  
Daniel, thanks very much once again for your time.  
Thank you, Jason.  
The right choice can take an outfit from good to great,  
like Albers' all-new courier,  
everyday style, timeless comfort, and supreme versatility.  
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and use code SOCKSTYLE for free socks with your purchase.  
There's a new film out in India's cinemas called Javan,  
which in this context translates as Soljo.  
Leo Morani is an India correspondent for The Economist  
and is based in Mumbai, which he still insists on calling Bombay.  
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and is based in Mumbai, which he still insists on calling Bombay.  
It's a rollicking action movie starring Shahrukh Khan,  
who's the biggest film star in India,  
and he plays a double role.  
He plays a father and a son,  
but is the son we meet first,  
who is a jailer in a women's prison by day,  
but also by day, he is a vigilante,  
bringing justice to India's oppressed masses.  
And it is enormous fun,  
and what's remarkable is that it's causing mayhem  
in all parts of India.  
It's uniting this country,  
which actually has several film industries, several languages,  
and rarely do films become massive hits  
all the way from north to south,  
but that's what this film has done.  
So why is it then that big films aren't big

throughout the country in general?

The most obvious reason, Jason,  
is that, as you know, India's a very diverse country  
and has multiple, multiple languages.  
So Hindi, which is the most widely spoken language in India,  
is still actually spoken in India,  
is still actually spoken natively by less than 50% of Indians.  
And the south, which today comprises five states,  
has a number of languages,  
and they come from an entirely different family of languages,  
known as the Dravidian languages,  
rather than the Indo-European ones of North India.

So that's one reason that this is rare,  
but also North India and South India are divided in many ways.  
They're divided politically.

The south tends not to vote for the Bharatiya Janta Party,  
which runs India from Delhi,  
and which is dominant in the north.

The south is much richer.

But the people that have a higher standard of living,  
the sensibilities there are different as well.

So what is it about this film  
that's helping it to bridge all those divides you mentioned?

So this film, it pretends to be a Bollywood movie.  
Bollywood is the term for the Hindi film industry,  
which is based in Bombay, which is in west India,  
and these films generally appeal  
to sort of starting from the top of the Indian Peninsula  
all the way to north India.

The south of the country has its own film industries  
in the languages of Kannada, Tamil, Telugu.

Now, this film is normally a Bollywood movie,  
but actually it's a Tamil movie in disguise.

The director of the movie, a guy called Atli,  
is from Chennai.

He's made a bunch of big hits in Tamil.

A lot of the cast is from the Tamil industry as well,  
and the sensibilities, the style, the action, the politics of it,  
a lot of this stuff is actually south India.

Meanwhile, you have Shahrukh Khan,  
as I mentioned, India's biggest star,  
who represents a whole bunch of different bits of India.  
He's from the north regionally. He grew up in Delhi.  
He lives in Bombay. He's a Bombayite, a Mumbai car.

He owns a cricket team in Kolkata,  
which is in the east of the country,  
and he's described himself as Part Patan,  
which is today in the northwest frontier province  
in what is now Pakistan, Part Hyderabad,  
which is in south India, and Part Kashmiri,  
which is at the very top of the country.  
You take all these different factors together,  
and it becomes a truly pan-Indian product.  
So for a sense of how this film has been received in India's cinemas,  
I can try and describe it to you as very hard,  
but if you've never watched a movie in a single screen in India,  
it's very hard to explain the joyous, carnival-esque atmosphere  
of these outings.  
But basically, there's hooting, there's dancing, there's clapping.  
There's literally, it's a phrase, it's a cliché,  
but there is literally dancing in the aisles.  
There's parts of it where you can't even hear what's going on.  
You can't hear the dialogue because people are just making such a racket.  
It's kind of like going to a concert,  
like a big concert at Wembley, except you're just at a movie.  
So the wild success of this film,  
bridging the north-south divides and what have you,  
do you think that is reflective of a wider intermingling in India,  
or indeed driving such an intermingling?  
Well, yes and no.  
So on the one hand, the government in Delhi  
is very keen to bring a certain uniformity to India,  
and a lot of its policies revolve around the phrase,  
one nation, one film, the blank.  
And that doesn't always go down so well.  
Earlier, the south is quite different from the north.  
On the other hand, the north and south are becoming,  
if not more alike.  
You're finding more of each in the other.  
In India, wedding ceremonies tend to vary  
depending on the part of the country that you're in.  
But increasingly, throughout India, including in the south,  
you find these ceremonies that have Punjabi roots  
becoming part of their traditions,  
and a lot of that has to do with Bollywood movies, actually.  
Another way in which you see this is northern dress  
is becoming more common in the south.  
Interstate migration means

it's becoming more common to hear Hindi spoken in the south.  
Just a decade ago, it was very, very rare  
to hear Hindi spoken in the south.  
And it happens the other way around, too.  
There's a greater variety of South Indian cuisine  
in the north now, and perhaps most remarkably,  
in the past few years,  
some of the biggest hits in cinemas  
have been films that have come out of Bangalore,  
out of Hyderabad, out of Chennai,  
in languages such as Kannada, Tamil and Telugu.  
They've been dubbed for a wider audience.  
But films from the south have been finding takers  
across the country which did not used to happen before.  
So there's all these different ways  
in which north and south are coming closer together.  
And I suppose in some ways,  
Javan is a logical extension of that.  
It's the dominant film industry  
looking at what works elsewhere  
and saying, how do we co-op this?  
How do we make this part of our offering, as well?  
And I suppose it's worth asking,  
is this example of that a good film?  
Did you enjoy it?  
Oh, yeah, I had a fantastic time.  
I was buzzing for quite a while after I came out.  
What I found really surprising about it, though,  
is that it's not just an extremely entertaining  
bang-bang action movie with great stunts  
and good-looking people, although all of that  
would have been enough on its own.  
But it's also nakedly political.  
It references all of these recent events,  
all sorts of news.  
A lot of the urgent issues that the country is facing,  
everything from environmental degradation,  
to a distressed farming sector,  
to toxic air that we breathe in our cities.  
That's pretty heavy for a movie like this.  
Hollywood has started churning out  
some quite jingoistic, almost propagandist movies.  
And a lot of the bigger stars  
who are not necessarily part of these movies

have been very quiet on the politics of the country.  
They tend not to say very much,  
and therefore the film industry has acquired  
a bit of a reputation as cowardly.  
So it was all the most surprising  
when, towards the end of the movie,  
Shah Rukh Khan's character, or really Shah Rukh Khan,  
looks straight into the camera  
and he talks about how Indians  
will ask all sorts of probing questions  
when they're purchasing a product,  
whether it is rice or wheat or a motorcycle.  
And yet, don't ask that many questions  
of their own government.  
And so he looks at the camera and he says to viewers,  
use the power of your vote  
and ask the government that you're voting for  
for better public services.  
Vote for education, vote for health,  
vote for jobs.  
Do not vote on the basis of religion  
or caste or fear.  
And that's by the very low standards  
set by the film industry.  
That's really, really something.  
It's seen as quite brave.  
So the fact that this film has been a hit  
up and down the country in all sorts of places  
with all sorts of political and religious  
and economic leanings suggests that  
there are more people in India  
who feel that they are not being well-served  
by their government than you would think  
watching the news or reading the newspapers  
or just listening to the public discourse.  
Leo, thanks very much for your time.  
Thank you for having me, Jason.  
With it, including a long kickback weekend episode  
of The Intelligence.  
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Okinawa is a small Japanese island  
far southwest of the mainland.  
It's known for the bustling Naha city,  
but it's also famed for the longevity of its residents.  
Life expectancy for 65-year-old women in Okinawa  
is almost a year higher than the country-wide average  
and almost four years higher than Britain or America.  
So for a while, this is really fascinated researchers.  
Is it that the people in Okinawa are living a long time  
because of their vegetable-rich diet?  
Is it because they stay very active?  
Or some people have even said it's  
because they have a strong sense of purpose.  
In the data team, we were reading around some literature  
on longevity to have a data story  
that could accompany the technology quarterly.  
And we found this fun study, which is yet to be peer-reviewed,  
which suggests that one reason for these places  
with really remarkable longevity records  
could be simply data errors.  
A government audit in Japan in 2010  
discovered that there were around 230,000  
supposedly living centenarians  
that were either dead or missing.  
That is a lot of dead or missing people.  
And why is it that the data is so sketchy  
around old people, as you say?  
Age estimates of the elderly are often very inaccurate.  
Few very, very old people have birth certificates  
and a lot don't know their true age.  
Sometimes this is just genuine mistakes,  
but other times it's deliberate efforts  
by individuals or family members to commit pension fraud.  
So is the suggestion here that in Okinawa  
or in the other places in the world  
that are famed for having some super-old people  
is the same thing going on here?  
Yeah, that's sort of the idea.

So in the paper by Saul Newman of the University of Oxford, he gathered data on centenarians, semi-super-centenarians, which is people over 105, and super-centenarians, which is people over 110, living in areas of America, Britain, Italy, France, and Japan.

He found that in places where there's really high reported longevity, they also happen to be places where you might think there could be more lax record keeping or where residents might be more incentivised to commit pension fraud.

So for example, in Britain, Italy, France, and Japan, he found that poorer areas with more crime were more likely to have people who reached extraordinary ages.

Okinawa, for example, has a poverty rate more than twice the Japanese average.

OK, so this puts a little bit of a wrinkle in my retirement plans to move to Italy to eat the Mediterranean diet and to grow very, very old.

Yeah, well, Italy has some particularly strange data.

In Italian provinces where more people allegedly reached the age of 105, they also seem to have more people who die before the age of 55.

So the Italian island of Sardinia, for example, which is renowned for its abundance of very old people, residents have among the lowest chances of reaching midlife of any Italians.

But maybe the most concrete evidence that data errors that play in these extraordinary records comes from America.

In America between 1841 and 1919, states gradually introduced birth certificates.

And at that point, after everyone had a birth certificate, age estimates became much more accurate and fraud much more difficult.

Dr. Newman aligned data on the numbers of old people in each state with the date when they introduced birth registration.

And what he found was that about 110 years after birth registration was introduced, the number of super centenarians, so people over 110, dropped by 69%.

Okay, so if we can't point to these places and their diets and lifestyles and senses of purpose and so on, what is the secret to the long life that I desire?

Well, I think it's wrong to throw away all advice

about diet and lifestyle.

Of course, some countries live much longer than others and a big part of that is probably how healthy people are and also the healthcare systems that they have.

One option, perhaps if you want to live an extraordinary long life, just throw away your birth certificate.

Thanks very much for joining us, Ainsley.

Thank you, Jason.

That's all for this episode of The Intelligence.

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