

# Revue de presse américaine

**Ambassade de France aux États-Unis**  
Service de presse et de communication

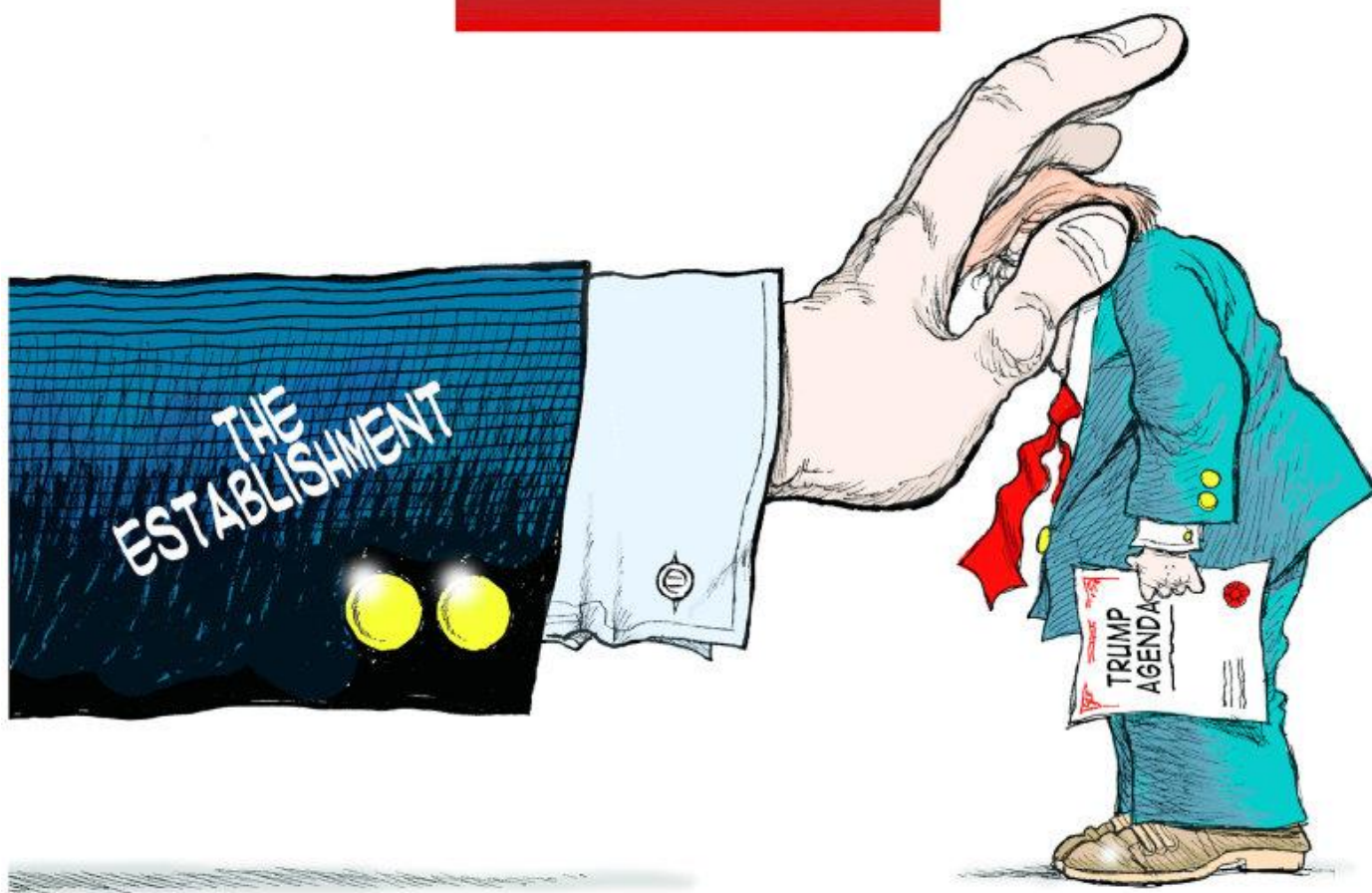


Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité  
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

**Mercredi 22 février, réalisation : Jérémie Gauthier**

©2017CREATORS.COM  
GORRELLAET.COM  
GORRELL

**PUSHBACK**



<b>FRANCE – EUROPE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Emmanuel Macron; can he pull off a boldly liberal French presidential campaign? .....	3
Socialist Minister Might Back Centrist in French Presidential Election .....	3

In London, Emmanuel Macron Gets a Warm Welcome from French Expats .....	4
Macron Tells French Londoners a Fight Looms as Polls Tighten .....	4
Emmanuel Macron pledges to lure British talent to France after Brexit.....	5
Le Pen Wins Over Women Voters Who Feel Left Behind in France .....	6

John Moody : Veiled surprise: Lebanon, meet Le Pen ...6	David Ignatius : The Trump bubble bursts in Moscow's markets .....25
French Presidential Candidate Marine Le Pen Refuses to Wear Headscarf on Lebanon Trip.....7	North Korean Embassy Official Sought in Kim Jong Nam Killing.....26
Here's Marine Le Pen's awkward headscarf stand off with the mufti of Lebanon.....7	South Korea's Impossible Bargain: China Trade or U.S. Protection .....26
French presidential candidate walks away from meeting with Lebanon cleric after refusing to wear headscarf .....8	Is China Pushing Trump to Talk to North Korea? .....27
Fortune : This Is How Much Marine Le Pen's Euro Exit Could Cost France .....8	Editorial : On Venezuela, a surprise stand from Trump28
Market Watch : Expect investors to bid adieu to French stocks on Le Pen's presidential prospects.....9	With NAFTA in Trump's crosshairs, Mexico's border factories brace for the unknown (UNE) .....28
CNBC, Daniel Lacalle : France quitting the euro would be the largest sovereign default in history with huge consequences .....9	
The Opening for Investors in Europe's Political Turmoil .....10	<b>ETATS-UNIS..... 30</b>
EU's Juncker Verbally Slaps U.K. Over Brexit.....10	Trump administration issues new immigration enforcement policies, says goal is not 'mass deportations' (UNE).....30
William Galston : How the President Can Reassure Europe.....11	Trump Administration Tightens Deportation, Detention Rules (UNE) .....32
Riots erupt in Sweden's capital just days after Trump comments .....11	Editorial : Mr. Trump's 'Deportation Force' Prepares an Assault on American Values .....33
Austrian court approves extradition of Ukrainian oligarch tied to Trump campaign adviser .....12	Editorial : The Trump administration's blueprint for mass removals, with a streak of cruelty .....33
Ukraine and the Shadowy Freelancers.....13	White House Contradicts Justice Department on Immigration Order .....34
Komal Sri-Kumar : Guns Can Get Europe Growing Again.....13	Adrienne LaFrance : A Border Wall by 2020? Doubt It34
	3 Generals Bound by Iraq Will Guide Trump on Security (UNE) .....35
<b>INTERNATIONAL..... 14</b>	Trump's new national security adviser: A soldier who can say 'No, sir' (UNE) .....36
Does Trump Herald the End of the West? .....14	Editorial : Now, Let General McMaster Do His Job.....37
Megan McArdle : Why the U.S. Shouldn't Quit NATO15	Jonathan Stevenson : Can McMaster Stabilize Trump's Foreign Policy Team? .....37
Qaddafi Son Faces Criminal Trial in The Hague — if He Can Be Found.....16	Max Boot : The Worst and the Dimmest .....38
Dozens of migrants found drowned on Libya's coast: Refugees' route to Europe continues to be deadly .....16	Ed Rogers : The 'deep state' is real. The 'alt right' is fake.....39
Bodies of 74 Migrants Wash Up on Libyan Coast .....17	Trump's America will be on vivid display at annual conservative gathering (UNE).....39
Danes Fighting for ISIS Were Paid Welfare Benefits, Government Says.....17	Lloyd Grove : Milo Yiannopoulos's Symphony of Victimhood.....40
Use of weaponized drones by ISIS spurs terrorism fears (UNE).....18	After delay and amid pressure, Trump denounces racism and anti-Semitism.....41
Terrorists are building drones. France is destroying them with eagles (online).....19	Ruth Ben-Ghiat : Trump rejects anti-Semitism? Prove it .....42
Bartle Bull : Iraq Is a Huge Opportunity for Trump .....19	Holman Jenkins, Jr : Missing the Meaning of Trump...43
Joseph Lieberman and Todd Stein : American values can defeat Islamist terror: Lieberman and Stein .....20	Jason Riley : The Media Do Battle With a Pragmatic New President .....44
Trying to Stanch Trinidad's Flow of Young Recruits to ISIS (UNE) .....21	Ben Shapiro : Identity Politics, Left & Right -- Ideas & Values Should Matter More .....44
Gaza Is Outwardly Rebuilding, but Inwardly Fearful (UNE).....22	Trump Uses His Tee Times for a Mix of Diplomacy and Recreation.....45
John Yemma : What decides a claim on land? .....23	Scott Pruitt Signals Dramatic Shift in EPA Priorities...46
Israeli Soldier Jailed for Shooting Death of Disarmed Palestinian Attacker .....24	Pruitt to EPA employees: 'We don't have to choose' between jobs and the environment .....46
At Tehran Gala, Cakes, Fruit and Anti-Israeli Slogans 24	Chuck Schumer: Jeff Sessions must recuse himself from the Flynn investigation .....47
Afghan troops surround vice president's compound in Kabul standoff.....25	Thomas Friedman : Meet the 5 Trump Administrations47

## FRANCE – EUROPE

**Newsweek**

### Emmanuel Macron; can he pull off a boldly liberal French presidential campaign?

By Josh Lowe On 2/21/17 at 1:15 PM week

He's an establishment figure but a relative political novice, with a staggering level of self-confidence and a campaign based around riotous rallies—France's independent centrist presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron would be just like Donald Trump, if it wasn't for the small matter of disagreeing with him on more or less every substantive aspect of policy and politics.

Still, in a briefing with English language journalists in London Tuesday, Macron has a go at letting out his inner populist, berating the press for its attitude toward his campaign. "that's very interesting to me to see your reaction, or French journalists' reaction," he says, in very good but heavily accented English, "those who two years ago, three years ago say" — here he punctuates his sentence with a loud hand clap and injects sarcasm as only the French can — "oh how David Cameron is a big star, it's super... they are making super-liberal reforms, they are much better than France."

"OK fine. Now you have a liberal guy trying to push reforms in France you say 'oh guys... no chance, how [does he] want to do so?'" he smiles, "But fine, because I'm proud of it."

Try Newsweek for only \$1.25 per

The episode illustrates how Macron, who served as economy minister under Socialist President Francois Hollande but is running this race under the banner of his new "En Marche!" movement, is conducting his campaign. His aim, he says, is not to half-heartedly promote the tenets of 21st century centrism — public sector reforms, pro-Europeanism, socially balanced but moderate economic policy, and the rest — but to make the case for them without shame or reservation. Emmanuel Macron, head of the political movement En Marche !, or Onwards !, and candidate for the 2017 presidential election, delivers a speech during a campaign rally in Lyon, France, February 4. Robert Pratta/REUTERS

For an example of the opposite, he says, look no further than Britain's last political upset; the Brexit referendum. David Cameron and his allies, Macron believes, "didn't defend the Remain, actually, they defended a 'yes but,' which is not the best way to win against 'no.' And at the end of the day they lost."

Where he is most passionate — and most directly against the prevailing political mood — is in his pro-Europeanism. He describes the idea that leaving the EU can boost national sovereignty as "bullshit," relishing the coarse English swear word. "Where you have to deal with

Chinese dumping of steel... if you play it on a national basis, you are killed," he says, "When you speak about immigration and security, you need Europe."

His visit to the U.K. does well to showcase the twin poles of his appeal; on the one hand, he is a political 'grown up' comfortable on the world stage, and on the other, he is a whirlwind speechmaker who relishes whipping up his supporters.

In a coup for the former, he's granted a meeting with British Prime Minister Theresa May at her Downing Street office before our briefing. They discuss security co-operation, and Britain's forthcoming departure from the European union, his tone on which is measured, but firm: "the best trade agreement for Britain... is called membership of the EU, and is very well known," he says.

He hopes to demonstrate the latter at a rally Tuesday evening. Walking to and from the briefing through the confines of a cavernous conference center in Westminster, Newsweek is surrounded by gaggles of excitable teenagers from Britain's French expat community, wearing Macron campaign t-shirts with Topshop-esque logos and jabbering at each other in hushed, excitable tones.

Right now, he's looking impressive, instilled with confidence and riding high in the polls (most put him at second place in the first round of

voting, after the far-right Marine Le Pen, and then have him beating her in the second round, two person, showdown).

But the real test is yet to come. Campaign sources say that we'll start to see the real meat of his policy ideas at the end of this week, when he'll put out a proposed budget for France. Sometime after that, he'll be releasing a detailed programme for government.

At the moment, his charismatic good looks, confident, muscular liberalism, and rare relish for political campaigning mean everyone broadly in France's political center ground (including the center-right) can project their hopes onto to him. That won't be possible once he explains exactly what he wants to do. The test is whether the coalition he is building sticks around past this point; he was, after all, part of the government of a President described as the least popular since World War Two.

Macron says he is aware he's facing a tough fight. But he's confident, in part because he has faith in France's unconventional nature. "Ten years ago when a lot of countries like yours were pushing very hard for a much more ultra liberal Europe... we went dead against. So we have a contrarian approach," he jokes. Macron's country will certainly be contrarian if it elects him. But in a time of political shocks, it's far from an impossibility.



### Socialist Minister Might Back Centrist in French Presidential Election

PARIS —

A senior Socialist minister said Tuesday that he might back centrist Emmanuel Macron in France's presidential election, which could help Macron as he battles to maintain his campaign's momentum.

The pronouncement by Agriculture Minister Stephane Le Foll came as opinion polls pictured a multicandidate race in which far-right leader Marine Le Pen was holding on to recent gains, keeping debt and foreign exchange markets on edge.

Two polls showed ex-banker Macron neck and neck with conservative rival Francois Fillon as favorite. A third, from Elabe, had Macron in retreat, and made Fillon of the Republicans, a former prime minister, the favorite for the first time since a scandal over allegedly fake

work rocked his campaign four weeks ago.

All recent polls show Le Pen ahead in the April 23 first round, but losing a May 7 runoff to the first-round winner, be it Macron or Fillon.

They also show, however, that her losing margin has shrunk to as little



as 6 percentage points from more than 10.

### Bad news for left

Le Foll's potential defection was the latest development in a slew of bad news for France's divided political left.

"I support the man who has been chosen [by the Socialists], but the moment comes for political responsibility with regard to what is at play, with regard to Marine Le Pen and with regard also to the program of Francois Fillon," he said on BFM TV.

Asked whether this meant he would back whoever was best placed to prevent a Le Pen-Fillon runoff, he said: "Exactly!" Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault has also said he might back Macron, rather than the ruling Socialists' chosen candidate, Benoit Hamon, who is a distant fourth in the polls.

Despite the prospect of heavyweight Socialist backing, the polls show Macron's campaign losing momentum.

Elabe pollsters reckon he has made a series of missteps that explain how they now see Fillon ahead.

Macron "has had 10 difficult days," they said.

FILE - Conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon applauds while his wife, Penelope, looks on as they attend a campaign meeting in Paris, Jan. 29, 2017.

### Anger on the right

Macron angered opponents on the right during a visit to Algeria last week by calling France's colonial past a crime against humanity. He has upset gay-marriage supporters by saying their opponents had been humiliated by the government when it pushed through the gay marriage bill in 2013.

On Tuesday, Macron took his centrist and pro-European campaign to London, home to a large expatriate French community who get to vote in the elections.

The anti-immigration, anti-European Union Le Pen, meanwhile, caused controversy on a trip to Lebanon, where her plans to meet a senior Muslim figure were canceled after her refusal to wear a headscarf.

Le Pen's surge has worried investors concerned that her policies will further destabilize fragile

European unity, blow apart the eurozone and hurt the value of French debt.

The cost of insuring French government debt against default has risen to its highest level in more than three years, and sterling rose almost 1 percent against the euro to its highest in two months.

Fillon, meanwhile, was tweaking the health care policies that caused a campaign wobble earlier this year, having apparently put behind him allegations that his wife, Penelope, was paid hundreds of thousands of euros for work she may not have done.

Fillon has said the work was genuine. An official inquiry is under way.

### Unity talks flag

Besides the three-way fight, discussions to unite candidates on the left looked to be going nowhere.

Hamon is pushing a hard-left program that divides his party and competes for votes with another leftist, Communist-backed Jean-Luc Melenchon.

Melenchon is in fifth place, but a combined Hamon-Melenchon vote could theoretically put them into first or second and therefore into the runoff, instead of Fillon or Macron, against Le Pen.

Talks between Melenchon, a veteran campaigner, and Hamon, an ex-education minister, were tentative from the start, and both have acknowledged wide policy differences.

Hamon gave the latest indication on Tuesday that they were unlikely to be joining forces.

"There is a desire on Melenchon's part to go on right to the end," Hamon said on Europe 1 radio. "I respect that. ... In any case, I will work on right to the end."

Political analysts are also eyeing an imminent decision from veteran centrist Francois Bayrou on whether to stand. If he stands, that could hurt Macron, but backing from Bayrou could be a further boost.



## In London, Emmanuel Macron Gets a Warm Welcome from French Expats

Zamira Rahim / London

Emmanuel Macron, the centrist candidate in the French presidential race, drew a crowd of expats to hear him speak during a charm offensive in London on Tuesday.

An estimated 300,000 French people live in the U.K., making the capital an attractive campaigning location for the former investment banker and economy and industry minister, whose centrist pro-business views are appealing to middle ground voters. The independent candidate currently lags behind far-right National Front candidate Marine Le Pen in first-round polling, but maintains a narrow lead against her in a two-way race.

Macron spoke at Methodist Central Hall, close to the British Parliament, having met with Prime Minister Theresa May beforehand. The crowd included younger voters eager for a new approach in French politics and also more cautious City professionals,

curious to see what the 39-year-old would be like in person.

"He's not like the other ones, the grumpy conservative ones," Sixtine Marion, 21, a journalism student at City university said. "He's young and enthusiastic. He will be good for our generation." Macron, who has never held elected office before, has attracted criticism for his apparent lack of concrete policies. "I like that he doesn't really have policies," says Marion, who is originally from Paris. "He is central you know, I really hate the divisions in France, the ongoing war between left and right."

Other audience members weren't so sure. "I am here to see what [Macron's] programme is, I am not clear about it," Marie Angwin, 82, said. "I think he possibly could win but I think Fillon's programme is very clear." Fillon, the conservative candidate, had been the favorite in the presidential race but has struggled to recover from a damaging investigation into political

jobs held by members of his immediate family.

"Fillon is my candidate," Clement Rohart, 43, a banker, said. "but he's having some difficulties. So if he doesn't make it to the second round then maybe, maybe Macron. We'll see." Rohart doesn't believe Macron's lacking policy platform will be an issue for voters. "He's fine. The guy on the right is very much in the right, the guy on the left is very much on the left, all he needs to do is to keep going and make no mistakes."

Macron isn't the only candidate seeking to attract voters beyond France's borders. Far right candidate Marine Le Pen courted controversy and possibly Franco-Lebanese votes too, during a two day trip to Lebanon this week, while Francois Fillon spent three days in Réunion, a French Island in the Indian Ocean.

The expats in the crowd had varying backgrounds and opinions but were largely united in their dismissal of

the French left. This appeared to apply to even self-identifying leftist voters. The Socialist candidate, Benoit Hamon, has consistently seen weak polls. "I'd consider myself left wing but France is in crisis economically and socially," Etienne Bataille, a 25 year old PR professional, who moved to the U.K. as a child, said. "Macron has a pro-business attitude which I think France needs at the moment."

In France's two-round elections, it's crucial for any serious contender to attract voters who initially preferred another candidate. French voters in London were in no doubt how they'd be voting if Macron didn't make it to the second round. "I'd vote for the left wing candidate," Bataille said. "I just don't want the Front National - I'll vote to block Le Pen."

Angwin agreed. "I will certainly not be voting for Marine Le Pen," she said. "Anyone but her. I vote French style - against a candidate, not for."



## Macron Tells French Londoners a Fight Looms as Polls Tighten

Mark Deen and Gregory Viscusi

21 février 2017 à 17:03 UTC-5  
21 février 2017 à 06:43 UTC-5

- Centrist Bayrou to answer speculation about bid Wednesday
- Le Pen would lose 56 percent to 44 percent in second round

French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron speaks during a campaign meeting at Central Hall Westminster in London on Feb. 21.

Photographer: Chris Ratcliffe/Bloomberg

France's Emmanuel Macron told compatriots in London that he is ready for a tough fight in coming weeks after polls continued to show a tight and tumultuous presidential race.

"The period that is coming will be very hard -- I'm ready," Macron told a crowd of 3,500 in central London.

Emmanuel Macron in London, Feb. 21.

Photographer: Chris Ratcliffe/Bloomberg

Macron may soon be facing another problem, with his centrist rival Francois Bayrou expected to declare whether he'll join the campaign at a news conference at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday.

With just over two months to go until the first round of voting, the 39-year-old independent Macron has seen support slide after one gaffe in which he qualified French colonial rule in North Africa as a "crime against humanity" and another regarding those straight people who may have felt "humiliated" by gay marriage. Macron has also come under fire for failing to provide a complete and coherent set of campaign promises -- something he promised to rectify by next week.

For a dashboard on European political risk, click here

Republican candidate Francois Fillon is back on track to qualify for the run-off in France's presidential race, according to Tuesday's Elabe poll, as a sweetened program of reforms and intensive campaigning on social media and across the country pay dividends. Fillon leapfrogged Macron, gaining three percentage points to 21 percent, while Macron shed five points to 18.5 percent, according to the survey for L'Express magazine.

"Francois Fillon has rediscovered his power and stopped his decline," Elabe said in a commentary attached to the poll.

All the same, OpinionWay's daily poll on Wednesday showed how tight the contest is, with Macron edging back in front. He gained one point to 22 percent in the first round, with Fillon steady at 21 percent, and both trailing National Front leader Marine Le Pen who was on 26 percent.

#### Le Pen's Polling

Le Pen would lose to Fillon by 56 percent to 44 percent in the second round on May 7, Elabe said. OpinionWay showed her losing to Macron 59 percent to 41 percent. While that's a gain of one point for Macron from Tuesday, OpinionWay had Macron winning 66 percent to 34 percent just two weeks ago.

Even if no surveys have projected Le Pen winning the presidency, the prospect of the anti-euro Le Pen further cutting the gap has pushed the spread between French 10-year bonds and similar-maturity German bunds to its widest in more than four

years. The risk premium rose 3 basis points to 82 basis points at 12:40 p.m. in Paris while the euro fell for a fourth day to \$1.0502.

For an analysis of the hurdles facing a Le Pen presidency, click here

The most important business stories of the day.

Get Bloomberg's daily newsletter.

Bayrou, mayor of the southern town of Pau, won 18.6 percent of the first-round vote in 2007 and 9.1 percent in 2012 and would compete with Macron for moderate votes. Elabe's poll showed Bayrou at 6 percent, and while he'd drain support from all his rivals, it projected that Macron would lose most. Bayrou hasn't indicated his intentions to the French press. He did meet with Macron last week, news magazine Le Point reported.

Macron's trip to London also included a meeting with Prime Minister Theresa May and a fund-raising dinner. He took the opportunity of addressing a crowd containing French voters working in London's financial industry to defend his own stint as a banker, saying he doesn't want a future in which people feel the need to come to London to be successful.

"Not a single day passes in which I'm not criticized on social media for that," he said. "I can assure you I earned my pay."

Contenders across the board are searching for traction in France's most open presidential election in living memory. The campaign has already seen former Prime Minister

Alain Juppe lose the Republican primary after a year as favorite while one ex-president, Nicolas Sarkozy, dropped out and the incumbent, Francois Hollande, opted not to run.

#### Divided Left

Fillon, a 62-year-old former prime minister, has made gestures to both conservative and moderate voters in the past days with intense campaigning to ram home his credentials on security while dialing back his plan to cut health care spending.

Fillon and Socialist candidate Benoit Hamon Wednesday night attend the annual dinner of France's largest Jewish organization. Le Pen, 48, is back in France after a three-day visit to Lebanon. She's visiting a prison and then appearing on TF1's television news in the evening. She'll unveil details of her foreign policy Thursday evening.

Meanwhile, Socialist candidate Benoit Hamon sought to unify France's splintered left. "My government will have all the currents of the left: socialists, communists, ecologists, radicals," he said in a town hall meeting in the central city of Blois.

OpinionWay credited Hamon with 14 percent and far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon with 11 percent. Talks between the two to forge a common ticket fell apart last week.

Before it's here, it's on the Bloomberg Terminal. LEARN MORE



## Emmanuel Macron pledges to lure British talent to France after Brexit

By Hilary Clarke

Updated 12:09

PM ET, Tue February 21, 2017

French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron outside 10 Downing Street, London, on February 21.

#### Story highlights

- Meeting with Prime Minister Theresa May in Downing Street
- French expatriates gather to hear the former economy minister

London (CNN)French Presidential hopeful Emmanuel Macron said he hoped to attract talented British bankers and academics to France in the wake of the UK's departure from the European Union.

Speaking after talks with Prime Minister Theresa May in London on Tuesday, Macron also said he hoped some of the 300,000 French citizens living in London would return home if he became president.

"I want banks, talents, researchers, academics and so on," he said, according to the Press Association. "I think that France and the European Union are a very attractive space now, so in my program I will do everything I can to make it attractive and successful."

Marine Le Pen refuses to wear headscarf, cancels meeting

Macron is running as an independent centrist, leading his own En Marche! movement.

Three opinion polls this week suggest that Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front party will finish ahead in the first round of voting on April 23, leaving Macron and the center-right Republican

Francois Fillon battling for second place.

If no candidate wins an outright majority in the first round, French presidential elections go to a second round between the top two finishers. The runoff is scheduled for May 7.

#### Meeting with May

At their meeting, May and Macron discussed the UK's plans to leave the European Union. Macron said he assured May of his willingness to seek a "fair execution of Brexit" that protects and defends French and European interests, the Press Association reported. He also said he wanted to ensure the rights of French citizens to stay in the UK after Brexit if they wished.

Francois Hollande (R) speaking with Emmanuel Macron.

A Downing Street spokesman told CNN that Macron, a former French economy minister, requested the meeting with May.

May will not host Le Pen. "It's a long-standing position that we don't engage with the Front National," the spokesman said.

Such a meeting is not unprecedented. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair met Nicolas Sarkozy before he won the French presidency in 2007. But it is unusual, particularly given that Macron is not standing for any of the major parties.

#### Former banker

Macron, 39, worked as an investment banker and a civil servant before becoming an aide to French President Francois Hollande in 2012.

Two years later he was appointed economy minister but resigned in 2016 after failing to push labor reforms through parliament. Macron then announced his intention to run for the presidency.

On his visit to London, Macron was also due to meet Chancellor of the Exchequer Phillip Hammond. He was then due to address an estimated 4,000 French expatriates

in Central Hall, Westminster.

It is estimated that there are more than 300,000 French passport holders living in London, with a

further 100,000 living elsewhere in the country.

**Bloomberg**

## Le Pen Wins Over Women Voters Who Feel Left Behind in France

@HeleneFouquet

More stories by Helene Fouquet

by

22 février 2017 à 00:00 UTC-5  
2 février 2017 à 07:00 UTC-5

- Anti-EU candidate attracted 2 million women voters since 2012
- Nationalist vows to defend France's freedom against Islamists

French women are starting to picture their next president as a divorced mother of three.

The anti-euro, anti-immigrant candidate Marine Le Pen has been playing up her gender as she seeks to convert a likely first-round victory into an overall majority in the run-off on May 7 -- and it's paying off. The 48-year-old National Front leader has already rallied some 2 million additional female voters to her cause since her last run for president in 2012 and she's betting more will follow.

"Women are the key," said Nonna Meyer, a researcher at the Sciences Po institute in Paris who has studied the National Front for 25 years. "These women often abstain and now they are backing Le Pen to protect their jobs and their security."

While women make up just over half of the electorate in France they are far less likely to turn out than men, offering a well of untapped support for the candidate who manages to tune into their concerns. Le Pen's pitch weaves together concerns about immigration, security, and the economic decline of many white French communities into a potent populist brew that borrows freely from U.S. President Donald Trump, blaming "the elite" for the problems of ordinary voters.

In 2012 Le Pen lagged behind with female voters, winning 17 percent compared with 20 percent of men's ballots. Now she's closed that gender gap, attracting 26 percent of voters of both sexes, according of pollster Ifop. That makes her the favored candidate among women for the first round.

"What she is proposing is really different, just like Trump offered something really new," said Cindy Blain, a 27-year-old pharmacist in the rural north east of France. "Maybe if we see Trump succeed, then voters will give her a chance."

### Glossy Brochure

The prospect of a populist president committed to taking France out of the single currency has pushed the spread between French 10-year bonds and similar-maturity German bunds to its widest in more than four years. The risk premium rose 3 basis points to 82 basis points at 12:58 p.m. Paris time on Wednesday.

Asked if she was concerned about the risks involved in Le Pen's plan to leave the euro, Blain brushed the question off with a flick of her hand, as if swatting away a fly.

For a dashboard on European political risk, click here

Le Pen's bid for women's votes is clear: on Feb. 4 she began distributing 4 million copies of a glossy, magazine-style brochure that set out her plan to "defend French women" as the country's first female president. The pamphlet was interspersed with pictures of her navigating "the world of men" as a sister, mother, lawyer, sailor and political leader and included a promise to be a shield against Islamic fundamentalists who, she said, want to stop women "wearing a skirt, going to work or to the bistro."

"This is not a feminist vote," Meyer said.

Le Pen sent another signal to the voters Tuesday on a visit to Beirut, when she refused to wear a head scarf to meet with a senior Muslim official, who insisted she don one. With neither side backing down, she left without seeing him.

### Working-Class Concerns

The National Front voted against a proposal to secure equal rights for women in the European parliament in March, but Le Pen again vowed to protect French women after the mass sexual assault by groups of men in Cologne, Germany, just over a year ago in an op-ed that tied together immigration and women rights.

"Le Pen isn't asking for equality, she's promising justice and security," said Nicolas Lebourg, a researcher on French far-right politics at the University of Montpellier. "And that often resonates more with women facing the challenges of everyday life."

As well as the surge of support from women, surveys show she's gained support among less-educated voters, rural communities and those in lower-paid jobs. She's doubled her poll scores among retirees, though she still lags Republican candidate Francois Fillon.

### 'Quite Scary'

Still, not all women are persuaded by Le Pen's claims to represent the sisterhood.

"It'd be good if we were to elect a woman but not this one," said Florence Charlet, a 44-year-old hairdresser from Le Pen's northern heartlands of the Pas-de-Calais region. "She's actually quite scary

for a woman. She's not soft-spoken, she's quite virile."

Le Pen's first round polling projections equate to about 10 million votes in the first round and it typically takes about 18 million to win the run-off.

Keep up with the best of Bloomberg Politics.

Get our newsletter daily.

That may be a stretch, according to Bruno Cavalier, chief economist at Oddo Securities in Paris, but she does have a chance if she faces the Republican Francois Fillon or Benoit Hamon of the Socialists in the run-off. In that scenario, turnout may be depressed and Le Pen could win with as few as 14 million votes, Cavalier said in a research note Monday, though he gave her just an 11 percent chance of victory.

Read more: the constitutional barriers to a French euro exit

Bookmakers rate her chances much higher at 34 percent and the pollster Elabe on Tuesday showed Le Pen exceeding 40 percent in the run-off against either Fillon or the independent Emmanuel Macron for the first time.

Still, Le Pen's polling numbers may be less reliable than those for the mainstream candidates, according to Meyer, because fewer voters have a track record of voting for her and newly recruited sympathizers may not actually turn out to vote on May 7.

"I don't know who I'll vote for," Blain, the pharmacist, said. "I'm still looking. I may decide at the last moment."

Before it's here, it's on the Bloomberg Terminal. LEARN MORE



## John Moody : Veiled surprise: Lebanon, meet Le Pen

John Moody

Sometimes, it's not what's in your

head, but on it -- or rather not on it -- that gets you remembered. France's populist candidate for President, Marine Le Pen, just had such a moment. She's feeling good about it.

Le Pen, who is running for her country's top job on the right-wing National Front ticket, was in

Lebanon this week to meet that country's president. She also had a session scheduled with the country's top Sunni Muslim cleric.

Her talk with President Michel Aoun, who is Christian, went well enough, according to most press reports. But when it came time to meet with Sheikh Abdel-Latif Derian, the French candidate was told that women were required to don

headscarves before entering the presence of the religious leader.

Le Pen refused, and after a few awkward moments between her staff and the sheikh's, abruptly called off the audience and left. "I consider the headscarf a symbol of a woman's submission," she said afterward. "I will not put on the veil."

Whether Le Pen was truly surprised by the dust-up, or playing to her

audience at home is an open question. She insists that her team informed the mufti's staff the night before that she would show up bare-headed. Derian's camp says she had agreed to don the veil.

Le Pen, who is leading in presidential polls before April's first round of national elections, has long called for limits on immigrants coming to France -- many of whom are Muslims from the Middle East



and North Africa. Her dramatic, attention-getting play in Beirut may not convince centrist French voters who are wary of her hardline positions, but it is certain to galvanize her core supporters.

Le Pen's timing could not have been better. On the same day that she snubbed the Muslim mufti, police arrested three suspects in southern France for plotting what they called "an imminent terror attack." That headline, juxtaposed with Le Pen's face-down of a Muslim grandee, will reinforce her warning that France already has too many immigrants.

The Lebanon incident was covered quite differently by various news organizations. The Associated Press included this quote from Le Pen, referring to herself in the third person: "I note that when Marine Le Pen refuses to

don the headscarf, it is criticized, but when Michelle Obama refused to do it in Saudi Arabia, it was considered admirable."

Al Jazeera, which is funded by the ruling family of Qatar, was less generous. "This was a trap and a set-up because she wanted to send a message to her own voters and supporters that she somehow refused to respect the local customs in a Muslim-majority country," its online report noted.

Note to Al Jazeera: you got it right, but for the wrong reason.

Le Pen has the same ability to sense the voters' mood in her country as a long-shot candidate in the United States named Trump demonstrated last year on his way to the White House. That she is being criticized for taking a strong

stand is only further evidence of the media's double-standard toward conservative politicians.

Indeed, America's former first lady, Michelle Obama, was credited with making "a bold political statement" when she declined the veil during her husband's visit to the kingdom in 2015. Another former first lady, Laura Bush, also appeared with then-King Abdullah without head covering in 2006.

The Catholic Church used to request that women shroud their heads when they met with the Pope, but that custom has nearly faded from Vatican protocol. Hillary Clinton, when she was first lady, met Saint Pope John Paul II, her hair free to blow in the wind.

Bellwether thinks Le Pen smelled an opportunity to demonstrate strength

and embrace Western values, and took it. She might not be popular in part of Lebanon, but her actions there shouted: "Vive La France!"

*John Moody is Executive Vice President, Executive Editor for Fox News. A former Vatican correspondent and Rome bureau chief for Time magazine, he is the author of four books, including "Pope John Paul II: Biography."*

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

# French Presidential Candidate Marine Le Pen Refuses to Wear Headscarf on Lebanon Trip

William Horobin and Stacy Meichtry

Updated Feb. 21, 2017 1:26 p.m. ET

PARIS—Marine Le Pen, the presidential candidate for France's far-right National Front, seized on a trip to Lebanon to showcase her hard line on Islamic custom, refusing Tuesday to wear a head scarf and upending her plans to meet with the country's senior Sunni Muslim cleric.

On the final day of a three-day visit, Ms. Le Pen refused to take a head scarf before meeting with Grand Mufti Sheik Abdel-Latif Derian at his office, saying Sunni officials hadn't demanded she cover herself in meetings with Sunni leaders in the past.

Ms. Le Pen was making the visit to Lebanon in a bid to raise her international profile in a country at the doorstep of Syria's war and its resulting refugee crisis.

"It doesn't matter. Pass on my considerations to the Grand Mufti but I will not veil myself," Ms. Le Pen told reporters before turning back to a waiting car.

The press office of Dar al-Fatwa, Lebanon's highest Sunni authority, said it had informed an aide to Ms. Le Pen on Monday that she would need to cover her head for the meeting.

"When she arrived, the [staff] were surprised by her refusal to abide" by the protocol, Dar al-Fatwa said in a statement carried by the National News Agency.

In France, full-face veils are outlawed and headscarves are banned from schools and public-sector workplaces.

Throughout the visit, Ms. Le Pen has highlighted her differences with France's political establishment on how to address the war in Syria. On Monday, she said the "realistic" way to end the conflict was to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who France and others have accused of committing war crimes against his own people.

The National Front, which is campaigning on a platform of opposition toward the European Union and immigration, has for

years called for tough application of rules on religious clothing and backed attempts last summer to ban head-to-foot burkini swimsuits on beaches.

In her 2017 election campaign Ms. Le Pen claimed the secular rules separating religion from the public sphere were being tested. She described scenes of women wearing full-face veils in public and claimed Muslims were praying in the street and businesses were setting up prayer rooms in the workplace.

At a recent rally in Lyon, Ms. Le Pen said women have been asked to not wear skirts showing their legs when working in cafes.

"No French person, no republican, no woman attached to her dignity and freedom can accept it," Ms. Le Pen said to rapturous applause.

Polls suggest Ms. Le Pen will garner the largest share of the vote in the first round of the presidential election on April 23, but lose in the second round May 7 to whichever one of the other candidates qualifies.

Still, recent polls show her closing in on her second-round opponents. Independent candidate Emmanuel Macron has seen his poll numbers dip after he traveled to Algeria and criticized France's colonial history in that country as a "crime against humanity."

On a trip to London aimed at rallying support among the hundreds of thousands of French nationals who live there, Mr. Macron told reporters his Algeria remarks had been taken out of context. But he defended what he said was France's need to confront its colonial history in North Africa—a legacy that continues to fuel tensions with French Muslims.

"As long as you refuse to look at your past, you get a big issue with the minorities in your country," he said.

—Noam Raydan in Beirut contributed to this article.

**Write to** William Horobin at [William.Horobin@wsj.com](mailto:William.Horobin@wsj.com) and Stacy Meichtry at [stacy.meichtry@wsj.com](mailto:stacy.meichtry@wsj.com)



## Here's Marine Le Pen's awkward headscarf stand off with the mufti of Lebanon

By Damien Sharkov On 2/21/17 at 11:37 AM

French nationalist presidential candidate Marine Le Pen walked away from a planned meeting with Lebanon's religious authority Tuesday, after being asked to cover

her head in accordance with Islamic custom.

Le Pen and her far-right National Front party are among the most radical voices against the visibility of Islamic religious symbols in France — a country which already has

legislation in place banning the full face veil.

Strong anti-immigrant and anti-EU rhetoric has won Le Pen increasing support over recent years following a spate of ISIS-inspired terror attacks, and should ensure her

place in the runoff for this spring's presidential election.

Try Newsweek for only \$1.25 per week

The trip to Lebanon, planned to boost Le Pen's foreign policy

credentials, included a visit to the grand mufti of Lebanon.

However, the meeting at Edict House in the capital Beirut ended abruptly when Le Pen rejected the offer of a headscarf and terminated the appointment in protest.

After a brief exchange at the door, Le Pen rejoined a crowd of journalists outside and continued to argue publicly with a befuddled mufti aide, who had already prepared a white headscarf for her.

French National Front leader Marine Le Pen begins a two-day rally in Lyon, France, to launch her presidential campaign Emmanuel Foudrot/Reuters

"I met the grand mufti of Al-Azhar," she declared, referring to the high Egyptian cleric whom she met during a visit to the country in 2015. "The highest Sunni authority didn't have this requirement, but it doesn't matter."

National Front members were quick to celebrate her stance in favor of the

popular French state ideal of secularism — laïcité. Her party's vice president, Florence Philippot hailed it as a "beautiful message of emancipation sent to the women of France and the world."

The grand mufti's office responded with a statement expressing surprise and disappointment, arguing that Le Pen's team were informed of the headscarf requirement in advance — described as a "well known rule" of their establishment by French newspaper *Le Figaro*.

"I personally greeted her at the door of the Edict House and wanted to hand her a white headscarf that was in my hand, she refused to take it," Khaldoun Awais, the mufti's press secretary told CNN.

"The Edict House regrets such inappropriate behavior at such meetings."

Los Angeles Times

## French presidential candidate walks away from meeting with Lebanon cleric after refusing to wear headscarf

Associated Press

France's far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen refused to don a headscarf for a meeting with Lebanon's top Sunni Muslim cleric on Tuesday and walked away from the scheduled appointment after a brief squabble at the entrance.

Le Pen, who is on a three-day visit to Lebanon this week and has met senior officials, was to meet with the country's grand mufti, Sheikh Abdel-Latif Darian.

Shortly after she arrived at his office, one of his aides handed her a white headscarf to put on. Following a discussion with his aides that lasted a few minutes, she refused and returned to her car.

Le Pen has tried to raise her international profile and press her pro-Christian stance with her visit to Lebanon, a former French protectorate.

On Monday, she met with President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Saad Hariri. She said Syrian

President Bashar Assad was "the most reassuring solution for France," adding that the best way to protect minority Christians is to "eradicate" the Islamic State group preying on them — not turn them into refugees.

Some Lebanese officials including, including Hariri, a Sunni, have taken umbrage at what is widely seen as her stigmatization of Muslims, who her followers claim are changing the Christian face of France. There also was apparent displeasure at her comments about Assad.

Christian right-wing leader Samir Geagea said after meeting with Le Pen on Tuesday that "terrorism has no religion." He described Assad as "the biggest terrorist in Syria and the region."

Walid Jumblatt, a leftist politician in Lebanon, tweeted on Tuesday that Le Pen's statements in Lebanon "were an insult toward the Lebanese people and Syrian people."

After walking away from the meeting with the grand mufti, Le Pen said she previously had told the cleric's office that she would not wear a headscarf.

"They didn't cancel the meeting, so I thought they would accept the fact that I wouldn't wear one," she said. "They tried to impose it upon me."

The office of Lebanon's mufti issued a statement saying that Le Pen was told in advance through one of her aides that she would have to put on a headscarf during the meeting with the mufti.

"This is the protocol" at the mufti's office, the statement said. It said that the mufti's aides tried to give her the headscarf and that Le Pen refused to take it.

"The mufti's office regrets this inappropriate behavior in such meetings," the statement said.

Le Pen said she had met in the past with Egypt's Grand Sheikh of Azhar, the head of the Sunni world's most prestigious learning institute, without

wearing a headscarf. Photos of Le Pen with Ahmed Tayeb in 2015 in Cairo show her with the cleric with her hair uncovered.

Le Pen's refusal on Tuesday to don a headscarf would be in line with her strong support for French secularism and a proposal in her presidential platform. French law bans headscarves in the public service and for high school pupils.

Le Pen's proposal aims to extend a 2004 law banning headscarves and other "ostentatious" religious symbols in classrooms to all public spaces. While the 2004 law covers all religions, it is aimed at Muslims.

Later Tuesday, a small group of Lebanese protested in Beirut against Le Pen's visit. One protester raised a drawing of Le Pen between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, with "Neo-fascists" emblazoned underneath.

## Fortune : This Is How Much Marine Le Pen's Euro Exit Could Cost France

Geoffrey Smith

Marine Le Pen's goal of taking France out of the Eurozone if she's elected President would probably cost the country over 180 billion euros (\$190 billion), according to a new study out Wednesday.

The pro-business think-tank Institut Montaigne reckoned that the hit to gross domestic product (the total value of a country's goods and services output) would be on average 9% over the long-term—and warned that that forecast is optimistic, since it doesn't factor in the broader dissolution of the Eurozone that would almost certainly follow if the currency union's second-largest member pulled out.

The study bears an eerie resemblance to the prophecies of doom issued in the U.K. by the vast majority of economists in the run up to the Brexit referendum last year: it predicts a 20% drop in the exchange rate of the newly-reintroduced French franc and higher interest rates to contain resurgent inflation, and warns that "the number of jobs destroyed by this measure could be tens of thousands in the first year and could easily top 500,000 in the long term."

Leaving the Eurozone is a central plank of Le Pen's presidential campaign, alongside a promise of much tighter policy on immigration and internal security. She has led constantly in the opinion polls ahead of the first round of the two-round election due in April and May. However, all the polls have

suggested that she would lose the second round run-off to either of her two likely opponents, the center-right Francois Fillon or the center-left Emmanuel Macron. Even if she does win, she would still need a majority in parliament after elections there in June to carry out her promises, and that seems even more unlikely than victory in the race for the presidency.

But the election is still widely seen as the most open in decades. A fresh terrorist outrage, in the style of the Nice or Paris attacks, could easily bolster her ratings. Moreover, both Fillon and Macron have vulnerabilities: Fillon is under investigation for misuse of public funds by employing his wife on a sinecure while he was a lawmaker, and Macron's background at an elite university and the investment bank

Rothschild leave him open to criticism that he is not the anti-establishment crusader he claims to be.

Financial markets are certainly taking no chances on the outcome. The risk premium on French government bonds, relative to the supposedly risk-free German equivalent, has skyrocketed on fears that those who hold euro-denominated bonds today could be repaid in francs tomorrow. And as the chart above shows, nothing gave that fear greater impetus than Donald Trump's election in November, which, like Brexit, showed how much Europe's establishment had underestimated the power of populist protest against the prevailing consensus.



# Market Watch : Expect investors to bid adieu to French stocks on Le Pen's presidential prospects

Carla Mozee

Getty Images

French far-right party National Front leader Marine Le Pen.

Expect investors to continue ditching French equities and selling the euro if the prospects for Marine Le Pen becoming the country's next president keep strengthening, analysts said.

The shared currency could drive toward its lowest level of the year against the U.S. dollar on more polling gains by the far-right French politician, they said.

In the fixed-income market, investors are demanding a higher premium to hold French debt ahead of the first round of voting in France's presidential election on April 23. *City Index*

Le Pen's gaining ground on front-runner Emmanuel Macron.

The moves come as National Front party leader Le Pen has been gaining support in her bid to become France's new president. Le Pen as president is seen by some as a risk to the eurozone's foundations as she's called for France to leave the euro and to hold a referendum on whether the country should leave the European Union. The U.K. last June voted to exit the bloc, in what was widely known as Brexit.

An OpinionWay poll released Monday showed Le Pen pulling ahead of her two main rivals, Emmanuel Macron, a centrist candidate and former economics minister, and François Fillon, the conservative former prime minister. A separate poll published late Tuesday showed she widened her lead over the two.

"We do think the market is starting to pay attention to how big this issue is," said Naeem Aslam, chief market analyst at ThinkMarkets UK.

Aslam said "people are flying out of the French equity market and getting into more stable markets, which in this case happens to be the German market," and that investors have been placing more short bets on French stocks.

The benchmark CAC 40 PX1, -0.06% has risen 0.6% this year, lagging behind a more than 4% rise in Germany's DAX 30 DAX, +0.12% and a nearly 2% gain for the U.K.'s FTSE 100 UKX, +0.13%. Among ETFs, the iShares France ETF EWQ, -0.16% is up 1% this year.

A second round of voting in the presidential election would be held on May 7 if no candidate wins a majority in the first round.

Le Pen's improved poll numbers comes as potential voters see her as strong on security issues, the director of OpinionWay told Bloomberg.

**See:** Le Pen's chances are much stronger than believed

**Euro drops, bond yield bounces up:** The euro EURUSD, -0.2183% on Wednesday briefly dipped below \$1.05. The currency on Tuesday fell below \$1.06 even after an unexpected jump in eurozone manufacturing and services data for February.

The euro is now "slicing through some pretty critical support levels that opens the way to a potential longer-term decline back towards 1.0341 – the low from 3rd January," wrote Kathleen Brooks, research director at City Index, in a Tuesday note. "The biggest problem for the euro is politics, and it's not going away any time soon."

*FactSet*

Spread between 10-year French and German bonds has climbed.

Aslam said in the longer term, "a lower euro could perhaps help to boost France's export numbers, but that's only if France stays as a part of the euro and the European Union."

**See:** Why the euro needs an orderly exit mechanism

Meanwhile, the spread between French and German 10-year bond yields this week reached its highest since March 2013 as French yields climb and prices drop.

"If you look at the spread, people are feeling a lot more comfortable in holding German debt as opposed to French debt even though the payout isn't that great. But it's a matter of where investors feel more comfortable parking their money," said Aslam.

10-year French bonds TMBMKFR-10Y, -3.28% were yielding 1.05% on Wednesday, while the yield on 10-year German bonds TMBMKDE-10Y, -16.76% was at 0.25%.

*ThinkMarkets*

Investors ramping up bearish positions on France's CAC 40

Tuesday's poll from communications firm Elabe showed Fillon overtaking Macron, who is believed to have a better chance of beating Le Pen in the second round of voting.

Fillon has grappled with a pay scandal involving his wife. But Le Pen is dealing with her own run-in with French police, who on Monday searched her offices on suspicion that she and other National Front members misused European Union funds.

Le Pen generated headlines Tuesday as she canceled a meeting with a top Muslim cleric in Lebanon after refusing to don a headscarf for the gathering.

## CNBC, Daniel Lacalle : France quitting the euro would be the largest sovereign default in history with huge consequences

Daniel Lacalle, CIO of Tressis Gestion

Alain Jocard | AFP | GettyImages

A few days ago, David Rachline of the far-right National Front party in France said that "the debt of France is about 2 trillion euros (\$2.1 trillion), about 1.7 (trillion euros) are issued under French law, which means that it can be re-denominated."

The economic program of the National Front specifically calls for the exit of the euro and the creation of a new currency, the French franc, which would be "closely" linked to the euro while allowing the government to undertake "competitive devaluations" making the transition in an "orderly way".

There is only one problem. It does not work. There is no "orderly exit" from the euro. It is an oxymoron.

This would be the largest credit event in history and would create a massive contagion effect throughout the euro zone. The euro, obviously, would suffer from the break-up risk, so the fallacy of the "closely linked" second currency is simply a joke. Both would collapse in tandem.

The risk is already evident. The French-German yield spread has reached the highest level since 2012 despite the European Central Bank's (ECB) massive quantitative easing. The ECB has bought more than 255 billion euros of French bonds.

This mirage of an "orderly exit" ignores that the French financial system, which carries assets more

than three times the size of France's GDP (gross domestic product), would be severely damaged from the impact of the credit event.

A financial system that already suffers from weak net income margins and more than 160 billion euros in non-performing loans, would collapse as these bad loans escalate and the losses in the banks' bond portfolios eat away their core capital. This would inevitably lead to Greek-style capital controls and bank runs as the entities would lose liquidity support from the ECB.

This French exit from the euro would also mean the collapse of France's pension and social security systems, which are mostly invested in sovereign bonds, the destruction of the savings of millions of citizens,

and the bankruptcy of thousands of French small companies.

Let us remember that more than 40 percent of France's government debt is held by the French savers, pensions and institutions, who would suffer the bulk of the losses from the default. No, there is not an "orderly exit".

Banks' outstanding home sovereign and sub-sovereign securities represented 6.4 percent of total assets in the EU, according to Standard & Poor's. A credit event of this magnitude, and the subsequent contagion risk throughout the euro zone, would lead French and European banks and SMEs (small- to medium-sized businesses) to collapse.

The thought that sinking the currency and defaulting is going to

improve the French economy is based on three myths:

- That a default will not affect new credit and access to future financing. To think that a default would help France borrow more and cheaper is simply ridiculous.
- That citizens would not be affected. Not only would savings and pensions be

destroyed, access to credit from SMEs and families disappears, even if they want to invent a thousand public banks printing paper.

- That the new economy would be stronger. Covering the large imbalances of the French economy with devaluations and a default harms the productive

economy, leaving a weaker and less dynamic economy that leaves a global reserve currency to become a regional one. Import costs soar, and its main trade partners would suffer from the domino effect.

It is terrifying to see that citizens are led to believe in these fake magic solutions. No amount of money printing from the ECB would mitigate

the impact of an effective default in France. Someone should tell Marine Le Pen that her plan has already been carried out. By Argentina, and its currency lost 13 zeros in 40 years.

— Daniel Lacalle is the chief investment officer at Tressis Gestión.

Follow CNBC International on Twitter and Facebook.



## The Opening for Investors in Europe's Political Turmoil

Komal Sri-Kumar

After a period of relative calm, volatility and investor fear have returned to Europe. Investors took in stride the Brexit vote last June, along with the decision by Italian voters in December to reject Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's referendum, which led to his resignation. But three national elections this year -- in the Netherlands next month, in France in April and May, and in Germany in September -- have fed uncertainty in currency, bond and equity markets. Italy may also move up the national elections set for early 2018, contributing to political risk on the continent.

Investor fear is centered on the possibility that an anti-Europe party could form the next government in one or more of these countries, leading to measures that could eventually take that country out of the euro zone. With the euro no longer the nation's currency, assets would be redenominated in the new currency. Market concerns are focused on France and Italy, where debt has surged since the global financial crisis to 97 percent and 132 percent of gross domestic product, respectively.

The risk of a debt default or redenomination has created wider bond spreads in France and Italy with respect to Germany. With the anti-Europe candidate Marine Le Pen rising in the polls before the first round of the French presidential elections on April 23, the spread of the French 10-year sovereign over the German 10-year bund rose to 79 basis points at the close of

European markets on Feb. 21, up from 48 basis points at the end of 2016.

Over the same period, the Italian spread increased from 155 basis points to 195 basis points over fears that the nationalistic Five Star Movement could form the next government. The spread surged this week after Renzi's resignation from the ruling party on Sunday. If mainstream candidates continue to lose support in coming weeks, expect the French and Italian spreads to rocket upward from current levels.

Source: Bloomberg

Source: Bloomberg

How can investors in Europe incorporate political risk? One pointer comes from the way bond markets performed after risk of Greece's exit from the single-currency area first surfaced in late-2009. Growing fears of "Grexit" caused the yield on 10-year Greek sovereign debt to go from 6 percent at beginning of March 2010 to 12.5 percent just two months later.

After a bailout arranged by the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Union, the yield dropped to 7.2 percent by mid-May. Investors who banked on Europe's penchant for last-minute solutions benefited handsomely by buying Greek paper at its worst moment, and exiting when the bailout was announced. Even though Greece is a relatively small country, the euro zone could not afford setting the precedent of

an exit in what is supposed to be a marriage without divorce.

Another example of bond investors dealing with euro zone financial crises is the surge in Italian sovereign yields in 2011 because of fear that the government might not comply with EU restrictions on its fiscal deficit under then-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. The yield on the 10-year sovereign paper topped out at more than 7 percent in November 2011, about 500 basis points over the German bund. However, after a pledge in July 2012 by Mario Draghi, the president of the ECB, to "do whatever it takes" to save the euro, the situation stabilized. Italian debt ended the year yielding less than 4.5 percent. Again, if you bet on European officials muddling through at the final minute, you won.

The past is not always a perfect guide to the future, of course. Investors are currently faced with not one, but four, countries with rising anti-Europe forces. And France and Germany are significantly larger countries than Italy or Greece. What if Le Pen wins the presidency in May, and sets the stage for the country to exit the euro zone after a referendum?

In that case, French assets could be redenominated in "New French Francs," which would promptly depreciate against the euro and the dollar. But remember that France runs a deficit in the current account of the balance of payments, and needs to encourage capital inflows to finance the shortfalls. The new government might have to

implement policies that are investor-friendly to have foreigners provide the necessary capital.

While redenominated French debt may never regain its par value in euro- or dollar-terms to make holders whole, investors with a medium-term horizon should find ample opportunities in "distress" investments. Real estate, new currency-denominated debt at high yields, and well-managed export-oriented French companies taking advantage of the depreciated currency, would all be candidates for attractive returns under a new currency regime.

The bottom line is that 2017 looks like a year of huge investment opportunities in Europe. Another one-off problem similar to those of Greece and Italy in the past may make the bond markets attractive. An "Italexit" or "Frexit" would require investors to wait longer, but they should find returns in a variety of asset classes.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

To contact the author of this story: Komal Sri-Kumar at ksrikumar1@bloomberg.net

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Max Berley at mberley@bloomberg.net



## EU's Juncker Verbally Slaps U.K. Over Brexit

Laurence Norman and Jenny Gross

Updated Feb. 21, 2017 2:33 p.m. ET

BRUSSELS—The European Union's top official said Tuesday the U.K. would face a steep bill on leaving the EU and warned it would take years to negotiate future EU-

U.K. economic ties, marking some of the toughest comments yet delivered by a senior European politician.

"The bill will be, to put it somewhat crudely, very steep," European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said in a speech to the Belgian Parliament, without giving

specifics. He also predicted the negotiations would be "difficult."

Roughly a month before U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May is expected to trigger a two-year window for negotiations, Mr. Juncker's comments suggest a hardening of positions ahead of the talks, even as both sides say they want an

amicable divorce. British officials and EU officials have signaled fundamental differences on key points and even over the process, paving the way for a contentious start.

A U.K. government spokesman on Tuesday declined to comment specifically on Mr. Juncker's

comments but said Britain was confident that it could get a good deal from the EU.

"We haven't begun negotiating our exit yet," the spokesman said. "We're approaching negotiations in a mature and open way in the spirit of goodwill."

While EU officials maintain that determining the terms of the future relationship between the U.K. and the bloc will be lengthy, British officials say they hope to end the two-year Brexit period with a deal not only on exit terms but also on their future trade and economic ties.

Mr. Juncker said Tuesday that in

addition to the two-year window to agree upon "the future architecture of the relationship between the U.K. and the European Union, we will need some years."

European officials have said in recent weeks that the EU will present Britain with a bill of €55 billion to €60 billion (\$58 billion to \$63 billion), which covers past British spending commitments that will come due in the future on various items, including economic assistance to Eastern European countries and sharing the pension bill for EU employees.

The European Commission, the EU executive, will conduct the day-to-day negotiations with the U.K.

U.K. officials, including Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, have argued that discussions on a future trade deal could take place in parallel with the exit terms and wrap up soon after.

David Davies, a Conservative lawmaker who backed leaving the EU, said Mr. Juncker can throw demands around, but the EU can't force the U.K. to act in a way it wants.

"What are they going to do if we don't pay?" Mr. Davies said. "National governments contain

politicians who have to win elections, and they're not going to be able to do that if they cut off their largest market from their manufacturing sectors."

#### Corrections & Amplifications

Jean-Claude Juncker is president of the European Commission. An earlier version of this article incorrectly spelled his last name as Junker in the headline. (Feb. 21)

**Write to** Laurence Norman at [laurence.norman@wsj.com](mailto:laurence.norman@wsj.com) and Jenny Gross at [jenny.gross@wsj.com](mailto:jenny.gross@wsj.com)

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Galston

Feb. 21, 2017 7:22 p.m. ET

Although I've often disagreed with Sen. John McCain on specific policies, I've always admired his courage and his candor, never more than now. In a speech at the recent Munich Security Conference, he offered a pointed rejoinder to the damaging doubts President Trump has injected into the trans-Atlantic alliance.

Sen. McCain began by invoking the experience of protectionism, hypernationalism, and violence that had led Ewald von Kleist and other visionary leaders to initiate the Munich meetings half a century ago. And he asked what von Kleist's generation would say if they saw the world today. Mr. McCain's answer merits quotation:

"They would be alarmed by an increasing turn away from universal values and toward old ties of blood, race, and sectarianism . . . by the hardening resentment we see toward immigrants, and refugees, and minority groups, especially Muslims . . . by the growing inability, and even unwillingness, to separate truth from lies. They would be alarmed that more and more of our fellow citizens seem to be flirting with authoritarianism and romanticizing it as our moral equivalent. But what would alarm them the most, I think, is a sense that many of our

## William Galston : How the President Can Reassure Europe

William A.

peoples, including in my own country, are giving up on the West, that they see it as a bad deal that we may be better off without, and that while Western nations still have the power to maintain our world order, it is unclear whether we have the will."

Mr. McCain cited the many American leaders who agree with his belief that the United States must not lay down the mantle of global leadership, including Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, Vice President Mike Pence and the members of the bipartisan congressional delegation who had joined them in Munich. I doubt that many in the audience overlooked a significant omission from this list.

Mr. McCain might also have pointed to the sentiments of the American people. A recent Gallup survey found that 80% of Americans support the continuation of the NATO alliance, up from 64% in 1995. Support for NATO includes 97% of Democrats, 74% of independents and 69% of Republicans.

None of this means that the alliance is in entirely good order. NATO doctrine is still evolving to meet the security threats of the 21st century that Secretary Mattis enumerated in his Munich speech—terrorism, cyber-attacks, and the alliance's unsettled southern flank, from the Mediterranean to Turkey's southern and eastern border.

Mr. Mattis, a retired Marine general, articulated the case for NATO in practical, soldierly terms. "When it comes to security," he said, "no one goes their way in this world alone. Security is always best when provided by a team." He declared that "the trans-Atlantic bond remains our strongest bulwark against instability and violence" and that the NATO treaty's Article 5, under which an attack against one or more ally is considered an attack against all, "is a bedrock commitment."

Nonetheless, his remarks made it clear that burden-sharing remains a longstanding irritant in the trans-Atlantic relationship. Not all who benefit from the alliance bear what Mr. Mattis termed "their proportionate share of the necessary costs." He stressed that his fellow defense ministers and NATO's secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, accepted this proposition.

There are many different ways of calculating the contribution our allies make to NATO. Still, few meet the agreed standard of devoting 2% of gross domestic product to defense.

There are encouraging signs. Germany's defense minister, Ursula von der Leyen, vigorously supports increasing her country's defense spending. Germany's new defense-policy document endorses an expanded German role in the protection of Western security. Last October, Chancellor Angela Merkel publicly acknowledged that

Germany would finally have to honor its 2% commitment, which would mean spending an additional \$30 billion annually out of a GDP nearing \$4 trillion. A four-year plan to reach the 2% threshold would require annual increments of only \$8 billion, and Germany starts with a budget that has been balanced four years in a row. The issue is not fiscal constraint; it is political will. If Germany leads, others will follow.

Despite reassuring words from senior Trump administration representatives as well as elected officials, Europeans continue to regard the new administration as a source of uncertainty and instability. Only President Trump can allay these fears. If he wants to do this, there is a simple three-point plan he can follow.

First, the president should publicly congratulate the officials who represented him in Munich, underscoring that they speak for him and enjoy his full support. Second, at the NATO summit in May that he has pledged to attend, Mr. Trump should deliver a statesmanlike speech reiterating his administration's unconditional commitment to Article 5, while presenting his ideas for updating the alliance. And finally, after the summit, he should say nothing further on the subject without prior consultation with the relevant members of his cabinet.

## The Washington Post

rak

On Feb. 20, riots broke out in a predominantly immigrant neighborhood in the northern suburbs of Stockholm. The riot comes two days after President

## Riots erupt in Sweden's capital just days after Trump comments

<https://www.facebook.com/max.bea>

Trump implied that immigrants had perpetrated a recent spate of violence in Sweden. (Jason Aldag, Max Bearak/The Washington Post)

On Feb. 20, riots broke out in a predominantly immigrant neighborhood in the northern suburbs of Stockholm. The riot

comes two days after President Trump implied that immigrants had perpetrated a recent spate of violence in Sweden. A riot breaks out in Sweden days after Trump cites violence (Jason Aldag, Max Bearak/The Washington Post)

Just two days after President Trump provoked widespread consternation by seeming to imply, incorrectly, that immigrants had perpetrated a recent spate of violence in Sweden, riots broke out in a predominantly immigrant neighborhood in the northern suburbs of the country's capital, Stockholm.



The neighborhood, Rinkeby, was the scene of riots in 2010 and 2013, too. And in most ways, what happened Monday night was reminiscent of those earlier bouts of anger. Swedish police apparently made an arrest on drug charges at about 8 p.m. near the Rinkeby station. For reasons not yet disclosed by the police, word of the arrest prompted youths to gather.

Over four hours, the crowd burned about half a dozen cars, vandalized several shopfronts and threw rocks at police. Police spokesman Lars Bystrom confirmed to Sweden's Dagens Nyheter newspaper that an officer fired shots at a rioter but missed. A photographer for the newspaper was attacked and beaten by more than a dozen men and his camera was stolen.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

Please provide a valid email address.

Bystrom later said that a police officer was slightly injured and that one person was arrested for throwing rocks, news agencies reported. Some civilians were also assaulted while trying to stop looters, he said.

*[Trump asked people to 'look at what's happening ... in Sweden.'*

*Here's what's happening there.]*

Bystrom said, "This kind of situation doesn't happen that often, but it is always regrettable when they happen."

At a Florida rally on Feb. 18, President Trump listed several countries with large numbers of refugees that were recently struck by terror attacks. "You look at what's happening last night in Sweden," Trump said. Swedish authorities are not aware of any such incident that night. At a Florida rally on Feb. 18, President Trump listed several countries with large numbers of refugees that were recently struck by terror attacks. "You look at what's happening last night in Sweden," Trump said. Swedish authorities are not aware of any such incident that night. (Reuters)

At a Florida rally on Feb. 18, President Trump listed several countries with large numbers of refugees that were recently struck by terror attacks. "You look at what's happening last night in Sweden," Trump said. Swedish authorities are not aware of any such incident that night. (Reuters)

In 2015, when the influx of refugees and migrants to Europe from Africa, the Middle East and Asia was at its peak, Sweden took in the greatest number per capita. By and large, integration has been a success story there, save for incidents such as Monday night's, which have taken

place in highly segregated neighborhoods.

Dagens Nyheter analyzed crime statistics between October 2015 and January 2016 and concluded that refugees were responsible for only 1 percent of all criminal incidents. That has done little to assuage perceptions, even among Swedes, that foreigners carry out the vast majority of crimes. A Pew Research Center study conducted in early 2016 indicated that 46 percent of Swedes believed that "refugees in our country are more to blame for crime than other groups."

Trump clarified on Twitter that he drew his claim about immigrant violence in Sweden — made at a campaign-style speech in Melbourne, Fla. — from a Fox News segment in which two Swedish police officers were interviewed. The segment was part of "Tucker Carlson Tonight" and featured filmmaker Ami Horowitz, who was introduced as someone who had documented an "incredible surge of refugee violence" in Sweden.

The two Swedish officers whose interview provided the basis for the report spoke out Monday and claimed that their testimony had been taken out of context. One of them, Anders Göransson, said that the interview was about areas with high crime rates and that "there wasn't any focus on migration or immigration."

"We don't stand behind it. It shocked us. He has edited the answers," Göransson said. "We were answering completely different questions in the interview. This is bad journalism."

Horowitz defended his work to the Guardian newspaper, saying he was "pretty sure" that he told the officers what the segment was going to be about and implying that the officers' disavowal was made under pressure from their superiors.

*[Never forget: Colbert mocks Trump's Sweden flub, honors 'all the people who did not suffer']*

Multiple criminologists in Sweden contacted by The Washington Post over the weekend said the notion that immigrants were responsible for a large proportion of crime in the country was highly exaggerated. None were comfortable referring to neighborhoods such as Rinkeby as "no-go zones."

Nevertheless, the integration of immigrants into Swedish society is a problem that the government has been struggling to address. "Sweden, definitely, like other countries, [faces] challenges when it comes to integration of immigrants into Swedish society, with lower levels of employment, tendencies of exclusion and also crime-related problems," said Henrik Selin, director of intercultural dialogue at the Swedish Institute.



## Austrian court approves extradition of Ukrainian oligarch tied to Trump campaign adviser

<https://www.facebook.com/roth.andrew?fref=ts>

An Austrian appeals court on Tuesday approved the extradition to the United States of a Ukrainian oligarch with ties to a former senior Trump adviser on corruption charges.

Dmytro Firtash, a billionaire who made a fortune as a middleman in Ukraine's rough-and-tumble gas industry, has been indicted by U.S. prosecutors for allegedly bribing Indian officials to secure a titanium deal. An extradition request in 2015 had been denied by a Viennese court, which called the U.S. allegations "politically motivated." A final decision on whether to hand over Firtash to the United States will be made by Austria's justice minister.

Firtash wielded significant political power in Ukraine under former president Viktor Yanukovich, who was overthrown amid street protests in 2014. Firtash was arrested in Vienna on an FBI warrant just weeks after Yanukovich fled to

Russia and was succeeded by a vocally pro-Western government. Firtash's lawyers say that he is being targeted by the United States as part of a political inquisition against Yanukovich's former political allies.

Evening Edition newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Please provide a valid email address.

"It wasn't for us to judge whether Mr. Firtash was guilty, but only whether the extradition is allowed," Judge Leo Levaic-Iwanski said in the ruling on the U.S. request Tuesday, Bloomberg News reported. "This decision only means that another country will make a decision whether he is guilty."

Lawyers for Firtash had sought to paint the allegations against Firtash as a strategy to limit Russian influence in Ukraine. The criminal investigation was initiated during the Obama administration.

In a statement, Firtash's U.S. legal team said it was "disappointed" by the appeals court decision and said he was innocent.

"If and when Mr. Firtash is required to come to the United States, the team will fight to obtain dismissal of this unjust case by the Department of Justice or, if necessary, in U.S. courts, to clear Mr. Firtash's name," the statement read.

Firtash had previously weighed teaming up with American investors and political strategist Paul Manafort, who for a time managed Donald Trump's presidential campaign, to buy high-end real estate in the United States, including the famous Drake Hotel in New York.

According to correspondence revealed in a 2011 lawsuit brought against Firtash by former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, Manafort met with Firtash in May, June and August of 2008 to seal the Manhattan real estate deal, according to a memo by Rick Gates, another Trump

strategist. Firtash had agreed to put \$112 million into buying the Drake Hotel, tearing it down and building a new luxury skyscraper, to be called the Bulgari Tower.

Tymoshenko claimed that Firtash was trying to invest ill-gotten proceeds from gas deals in Ukraine. The lawsuit was thrown out of a U.S. court for lack of evidence. No deals were completed, and Firtash has denied that he invested in the project.

Firtash owned half of a company that negotiated natural gas sales from Russia and Central Asian countries to Ukraine, a lucrative business that Reuters in 2014 reported made him billions of dollars.

In another twist, Firtash was detained shortly after Tuesday's decision by Austrian police serving a Spanish warrant separate from the extradition ruling. Spain in November sought Firtash's arrest for charges of money laundering and reported ties to organized crime. It was not immediately clear why the

arrest came shortly after the extradition ruling or whether the Spanish extradition request would take precedence.

## The New York Times Ukraine and the Shadowy Freelancers

The Editorial Board

The Russia-related questions on which President Trump urgently needs to shed some light seem to multiply by the day. The latest involve the president's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, and his work with an obscure Ukrainian opposition legislator and a Russian-born New Yorker who has done business deals with Mr. Trump. The three men produced a peace plan for Ukraine, which Mr. Cohen then delivered to the office of Michael Flynn, the national security adviser who was fired days later.

There may be nothing illegal in this, and there is no evidence that the plan reached Mr. Trump or his foreign affairs team. But given all the troubling questions swirling about ties between Russia and Mr. Trump and his associates, the back-

channel plan raised a host of new questions about who else might be behind it and why. It is simply not enough to pretend, as the three men have, that they were motivated only by a desire to end a nasty war.

Andrii Artemenko, a Ukrainian legislator. Valentyn Ogirenko/Reuters

The plan basically called for a Ukrainian referendum on leasing Crimea to Russia for 50 or 100 years and the withdrawal of Russian support for separatists in eastern Ukraine, along with amnesty for most of them. In theory, the plan could be a basis for exploring a solution to the Ukraine stalemate; before Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, it had a long-term lease on naval facilities in Sevastopol.

The question, however, is why all this was done behind the backs of Kiev, the State Department and

most everyone else. The plan seems to have originated with Andrii Artemenko, the Ukrainian legislator and a wheeler-dealer who sees himself as a Ukrainian Trump. He also claimed to have evidence of corruption that could bring down Ukraine's president, Petro Poroshenko.

The Kremlin denied it had known anything about the plan. The Ukrainian government was livid, and prosecutors in Kiev are investigating whether Mr. Artemenko committed treason. Mr. Cohen dismissed reports about the plan as "fake news" and denied delivering anything to anyone, though he acknowledged meeting the other two men. Felix Sater, the third man — a New York real estate developer who once served prison time for a stock-fraud scheme and again for a bar fight and then cooperated with federal authorities investigating

fraud cases — indignantly insisted he had had no contact with anyone in the Russian government on behalf of Mr. Trump or the plan.

President Vladimir Putin's aggressive policies are among the major challenges facing the United States and Europe, and Ukraine is central to that challenge. Western steadfastness and unity are critical, yet the unanswered questions about Mr. Trump's relations with Russia have caused considerable consternation among allies, which his lieutenants have been trying hard to assuage.

Mr. Cohen is Mr. Trump's lawyer; he cannot pretend to be acting as a concerned citizen when he meets with opposition Ukrainian politicians bearing suspect proposals. This is no time for freelancing.



## Komal Sri-Kumar : Guns Can Get Europe Growing Again

Mario Calvo-Platero

budget deficits below 3 percent of GDP.

Visiting Europe in recent days, top U.S. officials have sought to walk back some of President Donald Trump's more controversial statements. Vice President Mike Pence, and before him Defense Secretary James Mattis, both strongly reaffirmed America's commitment to the transatlantic alliance. But they also had a reminder for their NATO counterparts: U.S. support depends on European nations fulfilling their own pledges, in particular their promise to spend at least 2 percent of GDP on defense, much faster. "If your nations do not want to see America moderate its commitment to this alliance, each of your capitals needs to show support for our common defense," Mattis warned.

### QuickTake Cool War

European leaders have reason to bristle at the threat. Trump's dismissive comments about NATO, not to mention the European Union itself, undercut the credibility of the alliance. German Chancellor Angela Merkel points out that spending on other matters, including development aid, crisis prevention and refugees, is equally critical to any balanced security approach; she prefers to reach the 2 percent target gradually, by the original 2024 target date. Countries looking to accelerate the schedule risk breaching another ironclad European commitment, to keep their

There's another way for Europeans to view the U.S. demand, however. Meeting it could not only appease the Trump administration. It might finally provide the fiscal stimulus Europe so desperately needs.

As a matter of principle, the U.S. isn't wrong to demand more from its NATO partners. The U.S. currently spends more on defense than all other 27 alliance members combined -- some \$650 billion, or 3.6 percent of GDP. Only four countries besides America have met the 2 percent target: the U.K., Poland, Estonia and (unexpectedly) Greece. Spain and Italy spend less than 1 percent each; France comes closer to the target at 1.8 percent. Germany, by far the richest country in Europe, spends only 1.2 percent, or \$40 billion.

### Falling Short

How NATO allies stack up against one another

Source: NATO

Speaking at the Munich Security Summit over the weekend, European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker argued that such a focus on the bottom line ignores Europe's other contributions to peace and security. "Modern politics cannot just be about raising defense spending," he said. "If you look at what Europe is doing in defense, plus development aid, plus

humanitarian aid, the comparison with the United States looks rather different."

That's true enough. At the same time, modern defense spending involves much more than tanks, missiles and soldiers. According to one NATO study, private-sector companies provide half of military satellite communications and 90 percent of military transport needs. Roughly 75 percent of member nations' support of NATO operations is sourced from local commercial infrastructure and services. Military spending thus has a large knock-on effect, beyond traditional defense contractors.

NATO also has a mandate to focus on civil preparedness, which in the current security environment has broad ramifications. Alliance members are meant to work with the private sector and international organizations, "in particular the European Union," to reinforce the efficiency and effectiveness of everything from power grids to telecoms and cyber networks, from health systems to food supplies. Most of this spending could justifiably be accounted as investments in infrastructure. The projects will benefit the general population, not to mention the private companies hired to complete them.

This offers NATO members a way around their deficit commitments and traditional German resistance to fiscally expansionary policies.

Guidelines clearly allow European countries to ask for exemptions under several circumstances. One is to deal with extraordinary events: Italy, for instance, was allowed to keep out of the current budget the expenses it sustained coping with the recent tragic earthquakes. Another involves investment that has a measurable impact on the economy; increased defense spending should easily qualify. In theory, NATO members could approach the European Commission en masse to ask for such an exemption, which might reinforce their case. If approved, it will be up to the European Commission to give the final green light.

Imagine the impact on the European economy of a fiscal stimulus of about 1 percent of GDP on average. It would create thousands of jobs and help many struggling countries to grow at a faster pace. And it would go some way towards addressing widespread resentment of Brussels and of excessively rigid EU policies, including the deficit limits.

All that's required is political will. Merkel is likely to resist any such proposal, especially in a difficult electoral year. Bureaucrats in Brussels will raise any number of objections. But NATO countries should press ahead anyway. Accelerating defense spending would not only strengthen NATO's credibility. It's an opportunity for Europe to open the door, long

closed, to firm and sustained growth.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial

board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

To contact the author of this story: Mario Calvo-Platero at mplatero@ilsol24ore.us

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Nisid Hajari at nhajari@bloomberg.net

## INTERNATIONAL

POLITICO

### Does Trump Herald the End of the West?

By James P. Rubin

LONDON—Since the fall of communism in 1989, a year has not gone by without some high-level meeting or international conference wrestling with the question of whether the Western alliance, NATO, has passed its sell-by date. "Whither NATO?" is now a well-worn inside joke for the conference attending global elites so despised by Donald Trump and his followers.

However, with each passing week of chaos, confusion and amateurish public statements emanating from the modern day Tower of Babel, formerly known as the White House, the prospect of permanent damage to this revered institution is no longer an exaggerated fear. This time, many in Europe agree, the danger is real. Worse yet, we are rapidly approaching a point of no return—a decision point when European governments conclude that, despite its demonstrable success, the era of a U.S.-led NATO military alliance is ending and they must act accordingly.

Story Continued Below

We are not there yet. But for those who have worked over the last 70 years to establish and enhance American leadership of a stable, prosperous, democratic order, as well as for those who support and benefit from the policies and practices such a world order entails, it's time to recognize the risk.

In doing so, it is especially important to consider the context in which Trump's damage is being done. The critique of Western allies, like Germany, for insufficient defense spending did not begin with Trump. NATO alliance stalwarts like former Senators Mike Mansfield and Sam Nunn as well as the ever-present Bob Gates, secretary of defense for George W. Bush and Barack Obama, have all made much the same point.

And while Trump has taken his complaint to an extreme by casting doubt on America's pledge of collective defense, something no other president has ever even contemplated, it was Obama after all who loudly complained about "free riders," countries who benefit from U.S. military spending and action and have sufficient resources but still don't contribute their fair share. Most assumed Saudi Arabia and Germany were prime examples.

Beyond the question of NATO spending is the larger context of America's willingness to act internationally and the extent to which it acts in concert with allies and partners. This part of the problem is too often ignored. The tragic truth is that it has been a long, long time since Washington has been both willing to lead internationally and willing to do so together with our Western allies.

Much has been written about the damage done to the Western alliance by the Bush administration's arrogance in the lead up to both Afghanistan and Iraq. From the treatment of prisoners, to the abrogation of treaties, to the pre-Iraq war diplomatic blunders, to the disastrous prosecution of the war and its aftermath, as well as the absence of weapons of mass destruction, no doubt the two terms of Bush terms profoundly scarred America's international reputation here in Europe.

If the Bush administration was marked by overreach, then the eight years of Obama could be described as underreach. The widespread perception among Europeans is that Obama never established the close working partnerships with leaders of Britain, France and Germany previously seen as a necessary component of American diplomacy. Nor, in the minds of most European governments, was the United States willing to act when crises erupted in

Ukraine and Syria. And as much as anything, the refugees that flooded Europe as the Syria conflict went unaddressed for six long years were the final straw for British voters who chose to exit the European Union. As painful as it is to acknowledge, the Obama years were widely regarded as a typically American overreaction to Bush's excesses.

Which brings us to President Trump. No doubt Trump's attacks on NATO as obsolete, his inexplicable refusal to criticize Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, and his boorish treatment of Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany are deeply damaging when taken in isolation. But coming as they do after 16 long years of European longing for a return to respected American leadership of the West, they are far more destructive.

After four straight administrations marked by seesaw leadership and erratic diplomacy, each of which weakened, albeit in different ways, perceptions of U.S. reliability and leadership, it was always going to be hard for a new President to restore trust and confidence. But now, as a consequence of four weeks of President Trump's heresies and insult-driven diplomacy, it seems fair to say European confidence in America has reached a new low—a loss of confidence so profound that it may soon be extremely difficult to reverse.

To see how low we have sunk, it's worth remembering France's response during the Cuban Missile Crisis. President John Kennedy was determined to secure the full support of his French counterpart, General Charles de Gaulle. So, he sent Dean Acheson, the respected former secretary of state who was "present at the creation" of the key Western Institutions, to meet the prickly French president in Paris along with a CIA representative who was carrying the photographic evidence of the Soviet missiles in

Cuba. Remarkably, DeGaulle declined the CIA briefing Acheson offered, telling him that he had full confidence in Kennedy and took him at his word on a matter so grave. After the Iraqi WMD fiasco, that kind of trust is hard to imagine.

The solidarity of NATO has also been crucial to its success in deterring Soviet aggression and contributing to the emergence of a Europe whole, free and prosperous. Whether it was the invasion of Ukraine, the 9/11 attacks, the aggression of Slobodan Milosevic or Saddam Hussein's attack on Kuwait, that solidarity was proven in crisis after crisis. If the Trump effect has indeed provoked a point of no return, we may not know it until a new crisis arises requiring NATO to take a stand.

In the meantime, European governments may well be willing to provide greater resources for defense. In the case of Germany, defense spending has been growing, even before Trump raised the subject. If the pace were accelerated, that is all to the good.

The dangers come when European governments develop an expectation that they can no longer rely on the United States. Will they make future decisions about sanctions on Russia based on a weakening NATO? What about the united European stance against Russia's insistence on acceptance of its "sphere of influence" in former Soviet territories? Will a loss of confidence in American leadership change how France or Germany answer that crucial question?

Or take the Balkans, where NATO and European institutions were so successful in stopping Serbian aggression in Kosovo and promoting democratic government in all the former Yugoslav republics. Reports indicate that Moscow is stirring up Serbian nationalism again. Without an expectation of American leadership, Europeans



may not be willing to protect those hard-won victories for the rule of law and democratic values.

At last week's Munich security conference, Trump officials worked hard to reassure European leaders that U.S. support for NATO had not fundamentally changed. Vice President Mike Pence, in particular, sought to dispel doubts about

America's readiness to defend Europe and face down the growing Russian menace. While his statements, and similar comments by Defense Secretary James Mattis, hit all the proper notes, confidence has been so shaken that words alone are simply not enough. Europeans, too, will be watching the next crisis carefully. The right words

are necessary but only actions will be sufficient.

At the same event, foreign ministers from Russia, China and Iran were putting forward a more troubling premise. Each in their own way asserted that this year marked the end of the "West" and the onset of a new era for Europe and the wider world. Their analysis was surely

premature and self-serving, inasmuch as those countries have been making similar points for many years now. Tragically though, unless something changes, this time they may be right.



## Megan McArdle : Why the U.S. Shouldn't Quit NATO

Megan McArdle

"It has been a nervous year," Tom Lehrer once remarked, "and people have begun to feel like ... a Christian Scientist with appendicitis." That was 1965, and he was speaking of the escalation in Vietnam and the Dominican Civil War. With President Donald Trump steering foreign policy, Americans surely know how he felt.

The latest news is that Defense Secretary James Mattis has told NATO allies that if they don't start carrying their weight, the U.S. is going to "moderate its commitment" to the region. Now, as an abstract matter of principle, I'm firmly behind this. Only five NATO countries actually hit their targets, and three of them are a lot poorer than the sponging grifters that have cut their militaries back ... while enjoying the safety of the U.S. security umbrella.

The freeloading countries don't even send a fruit basket to Washington to say thanks. In fact, as a rightish American who's spent a bit of time abroad, I can personally attest that many of those NATO members' citizens feel free to disparage our massive military budget, as if their smaller budgets were some sort of moral sacrifice rather than an unearned benefit paid for by U.S. taxpayers.

There, I got that off my chest. I hope we all feel better.

Nonetheless, even for me, Mattis's statement is a sort of "gulp" moment. The Europeans aren't the only people who benefit from the American security umbrella. The fact that the world's biggest rich economy is willing to spend so much of its GDP on the military doesn't just mean that other countries don't have to; it also means that other countries don't bother, because they can't possibly catch up.

There are downsides to this. Countries with a big hammer will inevitably end up using it in ways that turn out to be stupid. (See: Iraq.) It also, inevitably means that the security umbrella of the world will be used in ways that the country that owns it likes. (See complaints by every country except the U.S.,

many of them justified.) But for all that, you can certainly imagine a country with an America-sized military advantage doing much worse things with it. Many worse things. In fact, when you think about alternative histories, we're pretty far into the "happy" zone of the spectrum. Not all the way to utopia, mind you. But a lot better than you'd imagine, if you'd never heard of the United States of America and you were plotting out your science fiction novel with a dominant, heavily armed nation.

A more evenly multi-polar world would look like -- well, perhaps you're acquainted with a little tiff known to historians as World War I. You may even have read about the exciting sequel they made when the first production turned out to be so great. That was terrifying enough when the nastiest stuff in the world's arsenal was toxic gas. It gets even more terrifying when you have bombs that can flatten a city or worse.

Unfortunately military spending is the ur-example of what economists call a "public good." These provide a benefit to everyone, and once the benefit has been created, it cannot be taken away from anyone.

Imagine a public health campaign that eliminates HIV, wiping it off the face of the planet. That's an enormous benefit to the world. But if I pay to get rid of HIV, I have no way to charge you for the benefit I provided. Once I've gotten rid of HIV, you benefit from my investment, whether you pay me back or not.

Public health, defense, crime control -- these are classic public goods because for some people to get the benefit, everyone has to. Unfortunately, the optimal self-interested strategy is therefore to let other people pay for the stuff, while you free ride. If everyone practices the optimal strategy, no one gets the benefit. Enter government, which has to secure these things, if we're going to have them, and force everyone to pay the bill.

That's fine for crime, because its effects are local and the cost of management relatively moderate. If the Topeka City Council figures out

a way to wipe out crime, there's probably very little spillover effect in San Luis Obispo, and zero cost to San Luis Obispoans. But in the case of plagues and national defense, we can run into a problem, which is that the effects are very large, and the investment required can be huge. Imagine that we didn't treat national defense as a federal responsibility, and handed it to the states. Maine and Texas would have gigantic militaries; places like Connecticut and Oregon might have sizeable Coast Guards. But the rational military budget for a place like Nebraska would be pretty close to zero. Because border states are of limited size and financial capacity, the militaries of those places would probably be smaller than everyone would like, even as the proud people of Montana labored under gruesome taxes to protect Coloradans from the fearsome Canadian horde.

In fact, you see this problem with NATO. Of the five countries that are actually pulling their weight, only two can be said to be doing so for reasons that aren't strictly rational self-interest (the U.S. and Britain). The other three -- Greece, Poland and Estonia -- border non-NATO countries and are pretty worried about future conflict with a military power that meets or exceeds their own. The problem is that neither Poland nor Estonia could ever even remotely hope to repel a Russian invasion. If the U.S. gets fed up with its NATO partners and withdraws, Germany would be depending on the Poles to fend off any Russian aggression -- or hoping that Russia got sick of all the winning after they took Poland and stopped there. (See: World War II.)

Military capacity takes time to build up; even the famous mobilizations of the 20th century were built around a core of officers who had spent their lives thinking about little things like the best tactics to repel invasions, and how to transport large numbers of troops and supporting items to the front while keeping them in condition to fight, and how to get people to overcome their self-interest to pick up a gun and run into harm's way.

Only the U.S. has consistently invested so much in this buildup. Because the U.S. has decided to provide this public good of military protection to much of the world, other countries have let those skills atrophy. If the U.S. actually decided to become isolationist, other countries might quickly become willing to assume its military roles, but would not immediately be able to. Pouring money into the defense budget now will not create the majors and lieutenant colonels and generals you need; those arise only if you invested in lieutenants years back.

All of humanity now benefits from this public good: a world in which major wars are pointless. No government except the U.S. can possibly provide that. (Even if you think you'd fancy a world policed by China better, its economy does not yet throw off enough surplus to play "lone superpower," and neither does Russia's.) Multilateral institutions can step into the breach somewhat, but multilateral institutions don't have the same taxing power that a territorial state does, and it shows. All NATO can really do is complain that members aren't meeting their targets. The U.S., as the member picking up the tab, can threaten to pull out if other states don't contribute more. But following through on that threat would hurt us as well as them.

Given those two choices, I'll grit my teeth and pay the taxes and practice my frozen smile for my next trip to Europe. But if Trump makes the other choice, then I, like everyone else in the world, will have to live with the result.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

To contact the author of this story:  
Megan McArdle at  
mmcardle3@bloomberg.net

To contact the editor responsible for this story:  
Philip Gray at  
philipgray@bloomberg.net

## Qaddafi Son Faces Criminal Trial in The Hague — if He Can Be Found

Nick Cumming-  
Bruce

Seif al-Islam el-Qaddafi on trial in Zintan, Libya, in 2014. Reuters

GENEVA — Seif al-Islam el-Qaddafi, the son of Libya's ousted dictator, should be turned over to the International Criminal Court to be tried on war crimes charges, the United Nations said on Tuesday, adding that he did not get a fair trial in Libya.

But the question is, who will hand him over?

A court in Tripoli, the Libyan capital, convicted Mr. Qaddafi in July 2015 and condemned him to death, but he was not in the court's custody. Mr. Qaddafi had been detained by a militia in the northwestern city of Zintan, and took part in the proceedings only by video link; the militia refused to hand him over to the Tripoli authorities, citing security issues.

A year after the verdict, the commander of the militia announced that Mr. Qaddafi had been released under an amnesty decree issued by the Libyan government. Mr. Qaddafi has not

been seen in public since, the United Nations said, and his status is unclear; he may still be held by the militia.

In the Tripoli trial, Mr. Qaddafi and 36 other defendants were charged with indiscriminate attacks on civilians and other crimes committed during the 2011 revolution that toppled Mr. Qaddafi's father, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi. Nine of the defendants were sentenced to death, including Mr. Qaddafi and Abdullah al-Senussi, his father's intelligence chief.

Though the trial was the first significant effort to bring members of the former government to justice, United Nations human rights officials said in their report on Tuesday, the proceedings fell far short of international standards.

Defendants were held incommunicado for long periods, the report said, and there was no proper investigation of allegations that they were tortured. Defense lawyers complained frequently of obstacles to meeting with their clients, and were given little opportunity to challenge the prosecution, which presented no

witnesses at the trial, the report said.

The convictions in Tripoli and sentences are being reviewed by an appeals court in Libya, a process that United Nations officials said could take years. Those proceedings put Libya in conflict with the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Mr. Senussi's lawyer, Rodney Dixon, said on Tuesday that "many qualified people have criticized these trials" conducted by the Libyan courts, including advocacy groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. "Hopefully, this U.N. report may now make a difference," Mr. Dixon said, "and at the very least, the death sentences should be suspended."

The purpose of the court is to try cases of war crimes and crimes against humanity when national courts are unwilling or unable to do so. Libya, a member of the court, has insisted on trying the cases itself, before the international court gets involved. But the United Nations Security Council referred the matter to the court in 2011, and

the court issued warrants for Mr. Qaddafi later that year.

Mr. Senussi was also indicted by the international court, but the court's judges decided that he could be tried in Libya, while maintaining that Mr. Qaddafi should be tried in The Hague.

The United Nations said on Tuesday that Libya needed to hand Mr. Qaddafi over to comply with its international obligations.

United Nations officials last saw Mr. Qaddafi in person in June 2014 in Zintan, where he was held in a cage for a hearing in a makeshift courtroom, Claudio Cordone of the United Nations human rights office told reporters in Geneva on Tuesday.

The international court's prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, told the Security Council in November that the Libyan authorities disputed the reports of Mr. Qaddafi's release, saying he was still being held by the Zintan militia.

Ms. Bensouda said that Libya and the events surrounding the 2011 revolution would be a priority for her office in 2017.



## Dozens of migrants found drowned on Libya's coast: Refugees' route to Europe continues to be deadly

The Christian Science Monitor

February 21, 2017 —The bodies of at least 74 African migrants have been found washed up on the shores of western Libya after their inflatable boat's engine was stolen, according to the Libyan Red Crescent and local officials from the Libyan coast guard.

The bodies were recovered Monday afternoon and evening near the city of Zawiya. The refugees appeared to have been dead for about two days prior to their recovery. Another 12 migrants from the boat remain missing and are "presumed drowned," according to the UN migration agency. The sole survivor of the tragedy was transferred to a local hospital in a coma.

It is unfortunately common for smugglers to pack large rubber boats with up to 180 migrants to send towards Italy and other parts of Europe, which make them easy to capsize. Poor conditions and accidents on these overcrowded vessels led to a record number of deaths over the past year.

But according to Joel Millman, a spokesman for the International

Organization for Migration (IOM), this incident may have been a little different. A local IOM staff member had reported that "traffickers came and removed the engine from the boat and left the craft adrift," leaving the people on board completely helpless in open ocean.

"This is not a only horrible number of deaths in one incident but it strikes us as something that we haven't really seen much of, which is either deliberate punishment or murder of migrants," he said.

These kinds of cynical and often outright cruel measures taken by smugglers against refugees attempting to flee into Europe have been well documented over the course of the refugee crisis. As Peter Ford reported for The Christian Science Monitor in August 2016:

No longer do people-smugglers carry refugees to the Italian coast and then return home to Libya for another consignment.

Instead they pack boats with passengers, load just enough fuel for them to reach international waters, give basic instructions on how the engine works and which

direction to head in, and then cast the migrants loose.

"It is not the intention that these boats make it to Europe," a recent EU report found. "They are designed to reach ... the high seas, to then trigger a search and rescue operation."

Sometimes the smugglers leave a satellite telephone with their clients, along with a number for the Italian maritime rescue center in Rome, so that the refugees can call to tell somebody that they exist.

But while a number of rescue ships do patrol international waters between Libya and Europe in search of these migrants, they often arrive too late to help. And the longer the refugee crisis drags on, the more perilous the journey becomes for those who choose to make it, as smugglers grow ever cheaper.

"We are seeing the new boats, which are not equipped with anything, but they carry more people," said Libyan coast guard spokesman Ayoub Gassim. "This is going to be even more disastrous for the migrants."

The escape route between Libya and Italy is a popular but dangerous one for migrants fleeing poverty and conflict elsewhere in Africa. Libya, which has been in a state of civil war itself since 2011, is largely governed by local militias that often turn a profit from the trafficking, with its two main opposing governments busy competing for power in separate parts of the country.

The European Union hopes to stem the tide of migrants by sending money to the UN-brokered government in Tripoli (which is weak and not recognized by the rival government) and by training the Libyan coast guard. But many human rights groups have decried the EU's plan, which they say would strand migrants in the country and leave them open to further human rights abuses at the hands of the local militias.

Arjan Hehenkamp, head of Doctors Without Borders, criticized the plan, calling the EU "delusional about just how dangerous the situation in Libya really is."

Last year, 181,000 migrants attempted the crossing between Libya and Italy, 4,500 of which are

known to have died on the way. The IOM said this latest discovery of bodies has brought the 2017 death

toll up to more than 365.

*This article contains material from the Associated Press and Reuters.*

**The  
New York  
Times**

## **Bodies of 74 Migrants Wash Up on Libyan Coast**

Declan Walsh

Red Crescent

workers collected the bodies of migrants on Monday from a beach near Zawiya, Libya. Libyan Red Crescent

CAIRO — The bodies of 74 migrants were recovered from a beach near the town of Zawiya in western Libya, rescuers said on Tuesday, an ominous sign before the high season for Mediterranean crossings.

The bodies were believed to have come from a shipwrecked inflatable raft that was found on the same stretch of shore, said Mohammed Almosrti, a spokesman for the Libyan Red Crescent. Some of the bodies were found inside the stricken raft.

The rubber boat left Libya for Italy on Saturday and appears to have been left drifting without an engine for several days, said Flavio Di Giacomo, a spokesman for the International Organization for Migration in Rome.

"It's really strange that smugglers would take off

the engine," he said. "They are becoming increasingly cruel."

Red Crescent workers spent seven hours collecting the bodies on Monday afternoon, and the organization posted photographs of dozens of black-and-white body bags lined up on a beach. Three of the dead were said to be women. Given the capacity of the boat, which could hold up to 120 people, the death toll is expected to rise, Mr. Almosrti said.

The tragedy was a stark reminder about what may lie ahead during the main migration season in Libya, the principal springboard for most African migrants seeking to get to Europe.

Although the illegal trade usually slows for the winter, at least 228 people died in January while trying to reach Italy, mostly in smaller boats and inflatable vessels, according to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency.

The bodies that washed up near Zawiya, a smuggling hub 30 miles west of Tripoli, the capital, appeared to be a further sign that greater numbers were starting to set off.

"Usually they wait until April or May, and it continues until October," Mr. Almosrti said. "If they are starting strong like this, it means we could see a lot of deaths this year."

The route between Libya and Italy was the site of a record number of deaths last year, when at least 4,579 people died, Fabrice Leggeri, head of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, said last week. The toll for 2015 was about 3,000.

Libya was the departure point for many of the estimated 180,000 migrants who reached Italy last year. The migrants, most of whom are fleeing war or poverty in Africa, often arrive in Libya after arduous journeys through the desert.

They entrust their lives to smuggling gangs that have set up along a 230-mile stretch of coast in western Libya, which is largely controlled by an array of rival militant groups.

Italy recently trained 89 members of the Libyan Coast Guard, hoping they will take distressed boats back to Libya instead of allowing them to continue to Italy. The Italian initiative is part of a broader

European effort to stem the flow of migrants that includes financing for, and training to set up, holding centers for migrants in Libya.

But the plan depends largely on assistance from the United Nations-backed unity government, one of several rival governments in Libya. The unity government has limited control in Tripoli and in a few towns along the coast.

News of the Italian training program, however, may be accelerating the migrant crossings. Mr. Di Giacomo, of the International Organization for Migration, said some smugglers were urging migrants to leave now before the Libyan Coast Guard could thwart their departure.

"The smugglers are using this information to convince the migrants that this is the moment to go," Mr. Di Giacomo said. "For them, it's a way of doing more business."

**The  
New York  
Times**

## **Danes Fighting for ISIS Were Paid Welfare Benefits, Government Says**

Dan Bilefsky

People walking in Norrebro, a multicultural neighborhood in Copenhagen. Denmark has been struggling to maintain Danish identity while integrating immigrants' cultures. Ilvy Njokiktjen for The New York Times

The Danish government has been inadvertently paying benefits to citizens fighting for the Islamic State in Syria, Danish officials said Tuesday, as outrage grows that militants are manipulating the country's generous welfare system.

About 145 Danes have traveled to Syria or Iraq to fight for militant groups since 2012, according to the Danish security and intelligence services.

Officials said this week that they had identified a number of Danish citizens who, while receiving government disability pensions, had traveled to Syria to join the Islamic State, also known as ISIS.

"It is a huge scandal that we are paying out money from the welfare funds in Denmark to people who are going to Syria and elsewhere in the world to undermine democracy that

we have been fighting for for hundreds of years," the country's minister of labor, Troels Lund Poulsen, said.

Last year, the news media reported that more than two dozen Danish citizens receiving unemployment benefits had traveled to Syria to fight for ISIS, even though the law requires recipients to live in Denmark.

Senior labor ministry officials said Tuesday that the center-right government of Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen was planning to pass legislation to plug loopholes and prevent what they called an egregious misuse of public funds.

Officials said that since last year, municipal and state authorities had been trying to collect about \$95,000 in welfare benefits that had been wrongly paid to 29 citizens who had gone to Syria to fight for ISIS.

Until now, national regulations have made it difficult for the authorities to stop benefit payments to a suspected militant, even if the person had been identified by the intelligence services as an ISIS fighter. Officials said investigating

the circumstances of individuals in Syria or Iraq was logistically challenging.

Under the proposed legislation, any citizen deemed a national security risk after traveling abroad to join the Islamic State would have his or her benefits immediately halted, said Bent Nielsen, an official who oversees how welfare benefits are distributed.

"If someone is deemed to be a risk for state security by intelligence services while staying abroad, they wouldn't get a dime," Mr. Nielsen said. He added that, under the proposed legislation, once a Danish court determines that a citizen has violated the law and joined the Islamic State, then Danish authorities could also demand the reimbursement of benefits already paid.

Dozens of militants have returned to Denmark after fighting for ISIS in the Middle East, and the country has been experimenting with ways to reintegrate the former fighters, including psychological counseling, education and job advice.

More than a decade ago, Denmark became a flash point for Islamic extremism after a Danish newspaper published caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, spurring outrage and protests across the Muslim world. In February 2015, Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein, a 22-year-old Danish-born gunman of Palestinian descent, killed two people while targeting a Copenhagen synagogue and an event promoting free speech. He was later shot dead by police.

The efforts to tame Islamic radicalism in Denmark are occurring against the backdrop of a simmering culture war over Danish identity and the challenge of integrating immigrants, which has helped drive support for the far-right anti-immigrant Danish People's Party.

This month, the Parliament approved a statement by the Danish People's Party expressing concern that there were more immigrants than native-born Danes in some areas of Copenhagen.

"Parliament notes with concern that today there are areas in Denmark where the share of immigrants and



descendants from non-Western countries surpasses 50 percent," the statement said. "It is the opinion of the Parliament that Danes should not be a minority in neighborhoods in Denmark." The statement, which was largely symbolic but generated a loud debate, also called for the government to limit the granting of asylum.

Opponents of the statement, which was supported by the government and its coalition partners and passed by a vote of 55-54, said it stigmatized Danish immigrants and citizens who were born of immigrant parents.

The Danish People's Party also caused an outcry after its immigration spokesman, Martin Henriksen, suggested that Muslim

refugees and immigrants should celebrate Christian festivals, including Christmas and Easter, if they wanted to be accepted as Danish.

Also this month, another far-right, anti-immigrant group, the Party of the Danes, came under criticism after stuffing immigrants' mailboxes in a suburb west of Copenhagen with fliers that looked like one-way

airline tickets. The party is not in the Danish Parliament.

The fake airline tickets showed a flight from Copenhagen to "Langbortistan," which roughly translates to "Faraway-istan." The tickets also included a message in Arabic: "Have a good trip home."

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Use of weaponized drones by ISIS spurs terrorism fears (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/joby.warrick>

Late last month, a pair of Islamic State fighters in desert camouflage climbed to the top of a river bluff in northern Iraq to demonstrate an important new weapon: a small drone, about six feet wide with swept wings and a small bomb tucked in its fuselage.

The two men launched the slender machine and took videos from a second, smaller drone that shadowed its movements. The aircraft glided over the besieged city of Mosul, swooped close to an Iraqi army outpost and dropped its bomb, scattering Iraqi troops with a small blast that left one figure sprawled on the ground, apparently dead or wounded.

The incident was among dozens in recent weeks in a rapidly accelerating campaign of armed drone strikes by the Islamic State in northern Iraq. The terrorist group last month formally announced the establishment of a new "Unmanned Aircraft of the Mujahideen" unit, a fleet of modified drones equipped with bombs, and claimed that its drones had killed or wounded 39 Iraqi soldiers in a single week.

Checkpoint newsletter

Military, defense and security at home and abroad.

Please provide a valid email address.

"A new source of horror for the apostates!" the group's official al-Naba newsletter declared.

While the casualty claim is almost certainly exaggerated, U.S. officials confirm that the terrorist group appears to have crossed a threshold with its use of unmanned aircraft. Two years after the Islamic State first used commercially purchased drones to conduct surveillance, the militants are showing a growing ambition to use the technology to kill enemies, U.S. officials and terrorism experts say.

The Islamic State's use of drones is increasingly sophisticated, a worrying battlefield development

with implications for other insurgencies. The Islamic State's use of drones on the battlefield is getting more sophisticated (Joby Warrick, Jason Aldag/The Washington Post)

(Joby Warrick, Jason Aldag/The Washington Post)

The threat to troops is serious enough to prompt U.S. and Iraqi commanders to issue warnings to soldiers near the front lines. But a far bigger worry, U.S. officials say, is the potential for future attacks against civilians. Islamist militants have long discussed the possibility of using drones as remote-controlled missiles that can deliver explosives or even unconventional weapons such as deadly nerve agents. In recent weeks, the notion of terrorist drones has moved a step closer to reality, terrorism experts say.

"They're now showing that these devices can be effective on the battlefield," said Steven Stalinsky, executive director of the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), a Washington nonprofit group that analyzed dozens of incidents for a new report on Islamist militant groups' use of drones. "With the way these groups use social media, my worry is that they're also putting the idea into people's heads that this is something you can now do."

*[Islamist militants gleeful over Trump's travel ban]*

To be sure, the lightweight, relatively inexpensive drones in the militants' fleet are nowhere close to matching the sophistication and lethal power of the Predators and Reapers used by the U.S. military. The drones displayed by the Islamic State are too small to carry heavy bombs and rockets, and they lack the guidance systems used by U.S. pilots to steer missiles toward their targets. Still, even a small bomb, such as the three-pound mortar shells typically used against Iraqi government troops, can have an effective blast radius of 30 to 45 feet, enough to kill or injure dozens of people if dropped in a crowded area.

Pentagon officials say the drones have scant military significance and will not affect the Iraqi government's timetable for recapturing Mosul, the northern city that fell to the Islamic State in 2014.

"Although dangerous, and effective as a propaganda tactic, it has limited operational effect on the battlefield and will not change the outcome," Air Force Col. John L. Dorrian, spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition opposing the Islamic State, said at a news briefing last week.

But a second Pentagon official acknowledged that coalition troops had been forced to take countermeasures against drones — steps that include early-detection systems and electronic jamming — while also stepping up the search for factories and staging areas where the aircraft are being readied for use on the battlefield.

"The coalition takes this threat seriously," said the official, who insisted on anonymity in discussing the military's response to the new threat.

Small start, big ambitions

As recently as a decade ago, drones were the province of a few advanced industrialized countries, with the United States as the pioneer and lead practitioner in the use of unmanned aerial vehicles to target and kill suspected terrorists overseas. Today, dozens of countries, including Israel, China and Iran, manufacture and operate military-grade UAVs.

At the same time, a rapidly growing commercial drone industry has made the technology available to private consumers almost anywhere in the world. Online shoppers can pick from hundreds of models, from sparrow-size "nano" drones that can be controlled from a smartphone to larger aircraft that cost thousands of dollars and can carry small payloads.

The sudden availability of cheap, remote-controlled flying machines did not escape the notice of terrorists groups. The Islamic State is only the latest in a long line of militant organizations that have

acquired drones and attempted to modify them for their own purposes. The Iranian-backed group Hezbollah has repeatedly used drones to probe Israel's air defenses, and the group released video last summer that appeared to show a drone dropping Chinese-made bomblets on Syrian rebels.

Al-Qaeda operatives in Pakistan commissioned an avionics engineer to build small attack drones and conducted at least one successful test flight before the program was discovered by police in 2013.

There have also been plots — involving drones by lone-wolf actors in the United States. In 2011, a physics graduate and model hobbyist from Massachusetts was accused of planning to launch small drones with bombs against the Pentagon and the Capitol, according to an FBI affidavit.

The Islamic State's efforts have been comparatively crude. In August 2014, the terrorist group began using drones to gather battlefield intelligence and to document the effects of suicide bombings, often broadcasting the videos online to bolster morale, according to the report by MEMRI. Occasionally the group would strap an explosive onto a small drone and try to land it near a military outpost, as happened in October when a booby-trapped toy aircraft exploded as Kurdish fighters were examining it near the northern Iraqi city of Irbil.

*[Islamic State seeks to turn children into weapons]*

Terrorist leaders last year put out appeals for scientists and engineers to travel to Iraq and Syria to work on weapons programs, including drones. In March, a group of pro-Islamic State technicians used the social-media platform Telegram to discuss how common engine parts might be adapted for use in missiles or in military-style attack drones, according to a transcript of the discussion provided by MEMRI.

"What does success look like?" asked one of the participants, using a nickname but describing himself as an American with a microelectronics background. "Are

we talking about an actual guided missile or a drone which can drop payload?"

'A lot more surprises'

At least a few technical experts appear to have responded to the call. When government troops recaptured the Iraqi provincial capital of Ramadi last year, they discovered a small workshop where workers were attempting to manufacture drone parts from scratch. Photographs from inside the facility show homemade wings and fuselage parts as well as electronics, camera controllers and gyro sensors used to control flight, according to an analysis by Conflict Armament Research, a London-based nonprofit group that investigates weapons trafficking.

Similar factories built to modify commercial UAVs have been found in liberated parts of Mosul in the past few weeks, all pointing to an "increasing use by ISIS of weaponized drones," said James Bevan, executive director of Conflict Armament Research, using an acronym for the Islamic State.

Bevan's analysts found that the group initially favored small -

helicopter-like drones with four rotors and sufficient heft to carry a small bomb — usually a mortar shell or similar device with stabilizing fins and a point-detonating fuse built to explode on impact. But some of the more recent attacks have involved fixed-wing drones of uncertain origin, U.S. officials said.

When Iraqi troops captured drone facilities in Mosul earlier this year, they discovered scores of documents detailing an elaborate procurement system for purchasing the aircraft and parts, as well as extensive procedures for altering and testing the equipment. The records "speak to the group's efforts to secure, modify and enhance the range and performance of its drones," said a report by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, N.Y., which published some of the documents.

*[Files show some Islamic State recruits are refusing to fight]*

When the siege of Mosul began in the fall, Islamic State fighters stepped up their use of small surveillance drones to gather intelligence and showcase their efforts to defend the city, producing

mini-documentaries with aerial footage of successful suicide attacks on Iraqi troops.

The shift to weaponized drone attacks began late last year and was ramping up dramatically at the time of the group's formal announcement of the program on Jan. 24.

"The army of the Islamic State has revealed its use of the unmanned aircraft weapon for the first time," the group's al-Naba newsletter said. It described an "aerial bombardment" of Iraqi forces around Mosul and said that "most of the hits were precise, and inflicted losses in the ranks of the apostates."

Since then, the group's social-media pages have carried dozens of videos showing strikes using small bombs and rockets. Not all the bombs find their targets, but the drone attacks have become a daily threat for residents in some parts of liberated eastern Mosul, Iraqi news accounts show.

Iraqi troops also have been forced to scan the skies for tiny aircraft and to take cover when they appear. Videos released by the Islamic

State show multiple instances in which bombs were dropped close enough to Iraqi troop positions to cause injuries. Some of the footage appears to show wounded figures on the ground after the attacks, although there has been no official confirmation from Iraq of the terrorists' claim of dozens killed and wounded.

Regardless of the actual numbers, the campaign appears to have raised the spirits of some of the group's supporters. The Jan. 24 announcement triggered euphoric discussions on social-media platforms used by Islamist militant groups, as well as predictions that armed drones would soon be deployed elsewhere. One Feb. 3 post on the Telegram messaging site called the early attacks "a drop in the sea."

"The coming days will reveal a lot more, Allah permitting," the post said, according to a translation provided by the SITE Intelligence Group, a private company that monitors militant websites. "After the planes, there are still a lot more surprises."



## Terrorists are building drones. France is destroying them with eagles

By Avi Selk

The French Air Force is training eagles from a young age to snatch drones from out of the sky. (Reuters)

The French Air Force is training eagles from a young age to snatch drones from out of the sky. The French Air Force is training eagles from a young age to snatch drones from out of the sky. Rough Cut (no reporter narration) (Reuters)

Under French military supervision, four golden eagle chicks hatched last year atop drones — born into a world of terror and machines they would be bred to destroy.

The eagles — named d'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis — grew up with their nemeses.

They chased drones through green grass that summer, pecking futilely at composite shells as seen in Sky News footage. They were rewarded with meat, which they ate off the backs of the drones.

When the eagles were ready — this month — d'Artagnan launched screeching from a military control

tower across a field, Agence France-Presse reported.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

Please provide a valid email address.

The bird covered 200 meters in 20 seconds, slamming into a drone, then diving with the wreckage into the tall grass.

"The eagles are making good progress," said the French air force's commander of a program that adapts the ancient art of falconry to the threats of unmanned flight.

*[Elephants, rats and dolphins: Eight ways the U.S. military has used animals]*

Weeks earlier, on the other side of the world, Iraqi soldiers fired their guns wildly into the sky after a small drone dropped a bomb on them. Terrorists have been modifying devices that can be bought in toy stores into weapons and radio-controlled spies, the Associated Press reported.

The French have been concerned since early 2015, when drones flew over the presidential palace and a restricted military site, according to Agence France-Presse.

No one was harmed. But terrorist attacks later that year, including the November massacre in Paris, inspired military officials to creative prevention.

They wanted a way to take down drones without shooting at them — a potential disaster if one went rogue in a crowded area.

*[How the Islamic State has 'weaponized' drones to spur terrorism fears]*

A solution presented itself in an experiment by Dutch police, who last year used a trained eagle to pluck a DJI Phantom drone out of the air, Peter Holley reported for The Washington Post.

With unmatched speed and sight and bone-crushing talons, birds of prey have been trained to hunt for hundreds of years — for other animals, of course. But a wild eagle demonstrated natural hostility to a drone in Australia — as

the doomed machine's final footage revealed on CNN.

Thus, in France, four eggs "were placed before birth on top of drones while still inside the eggshell and, after hatching, kept them there during their early feeding period," Reuters reported in November.

The eagles were named after characters in "The Three Musketeers," and by February proved capable of intercepting drones in lightning-fast horizontal chases.

"Soon they will be casting off from peaks in the nearby Pyrenees Mountains," Agence France-Presse reported.

The military has already ordered a second brood of eagles, according to the outlet.

Meanwhile, d'Artagnan and his siblings will be outfitted with high technology to carry on their war against machines.

"The military is designing mittens of leather and Kevlar, an anti-blast material, to protect their talons," Agence France-Presse reported.



## Bartle Bull : Iraq Is a Huge Opportunity for Trump

Bartle Bull

Updated Feb. 21, 2017 7:37 p.m. ET

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis's visit to Iraq on Monday made headlines largely because he reassured the Iraqi people that the U.S. is "not in Iraq to seize anybody's oil." Meanwhile, as the battle for Mosul continues, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq acknowledged that, while U.S. forces remain in an advise-and-assist role, "we are operating closer and deeper into the Iraqi formation."

Perhaps because of Iraq's inclusion in President Trump's ill-fated immigration order, many Iraqis tend to see him positively, as a strong leader committed to defeating Islamic State. While the Jan. 29 Yemen raid, in which a Navy SEAL was killed, was costly, it showed Mr. Trump is willing to take risks to defeat ISIS in the region. At the same time, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is stepping forward as a figure of real stature: a popular politician, reformer and successful war leader.

Mr. Trump and his advisers must not underestimate Iraq's importance. The Sunni-Shiite problem, on whose fault-line Iraq sits, is among the most critical U.S. geopolitical challenges since the Cold War. When President Obama took office in 2009, Iraq was one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. It was a dedicated U.S. ally at peace with its neighbors, a land of 32 million people under a popular federalist constitution passed by a legitimate parliament. Election after election, Iraqis defied risks to vote in turnouts of 70% or more. Across religious divides more moderate parties consistently dominated.

Mr. Obama's abandonment of Iraq in 2011 was both

military and diplomatic. The first imperative for the Trump administration is to understand what really happened. Staffing at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad—once the largest in the world—was halved. U.S. offices around the country were closed. No senior U.S. person with a profile above the technocratic level has been tasked with Iraq since the estimable Ambassador Ryan Crocker left in 2009. Iraqis value being taken seriously, and downgrading them has been far from diplomatic.

My own business in Iraq has provided a worm's-eye view. We spent almost two years working closely with the Overseas Private Investment Corp.—Uncle Sam's international lending operation, established to further U.S. foreign-policy goals—to set up a heavy-equipment rental firm in Iraq's southern oil fields. The Obama administration killed the project due to the diplomatic deprioritization of Iraq.

A far more important cost of America's diplomatic retreat was the survival for far too long of the premiership of Nouri al-Maliki. His Shiite chauvinism paved the way for the defeated Baathist-Wahhabi insurgency to reinvent itself as Islamic State. Mr. Maliki's corruption and despotic tendencies badly weakened the ability of Iraq's army, state and economy to resist the insurgent threat.

Today the U.S. armed presence in Iraq approaches 10,000. Had we left this many troops in country after 2011, they would still be in their air-conditioned bases, quietly guaranteeing the peace as their colleagues do in Korea and Germany, and nobody would have heard of Islamic State.

Instead ISIS rose to cause terrible harm in Iraq and doom Syria's secular revolution. Now American soldiers are back in Iraq and are fighting in Syria too. Priceless elements of mankind's cultural heritage have been erased, millions have been killed and displaced, thousands of children and young women remain in sexual slavery, and Russia has a naval base in the Mediterranean.

Yet now Iraq bounces back again, giving Mr. Trump's team much to work with. The Baghdad stock market is among the best-performing on earth over the past six months, up 48% in U.S. dollar terms. Business in the southern oil fields is surging toward pre-ISIS levels.

Under the worst imaginable provocations—Saddam Hussein, U.S.-led invasion, Sunni insurgency, Iranian death squads, Mr. Maliki's sectarian misrule, the rise of Islamic State—Iraqi society never descended into widespread violence. Belatedly cajoling the Iraqi political class to dump Mr. Maliki was a rare success for the Obama administration. Mr. Abadi's leadership is an expression of Iraq's fundamental pragmatism and tolerance.

Rolling back Islamic State, firing corrupt officials left over from the Maliki era, keeping at bay predatory neighbors like Iran and Turkey, surviving a halving of oil prices at the worst possible time—the soft-spoken Mr. Abadi is developing into an impressive figure.

So how can the Trump administration help Mr. Abadi succeed? The U.S. is already removing the absurd Obama-era restraints upon our forces fighting Islamic State. This should continue, but we need to do a better job

supplying the Iraqi military. An arbitrary cap on "boots on the ground" means there are not enough U.S. forces to back up Iraqis in air transport, logistics, emergency medicine and intelligence—all areas where the Iraqis need help.

Iraqis have long relied on the U.S. for their marquee military systems, including the M1A1 Abrams tank, the F-16 fighter and the C-130 transport. But in 2012, when the Obama administration rejected an Iraqi plan to adopt the Apache helicopter, the Iraqis turned to Russia and eventually sealed a \$4.2 billion deal. We want Iraq to buy, train and maintain American.

Washington must also make the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad a priority again and work with Iraqis to keep Iran and Mr. Maliki on the sidelines. Federalism, heavily enshrined in the 2005 constitution, is the only way such a country can work; the Sunni areas need more autonomy. Mr. Abadi's work to bring sectarian militias (including at least 30,000 Sunnis) under the ministerial chain of command deserve support; some of these are blatant Iranian proxies, but Mr. Abadi is not. Kowtowing to the Persians is not a vote-winner in an Arab country.

Any Trump administration détente with Russia should not lead to tolerance for increased Iranian interference in Baghdad. Mr. Abadi's Iraq is emerging as a player on the global stage. As Russia increases its presence in the Mideast and sells itself as an alternative to the U.S., Iraq is one ally the Trump administration can't afford to lose.

*Mr. Bull is a founder of Northern Gulf Partners, an Iraq-focused investment firm.*



## Joseph Lieberman and Todd Stein : American values can defeat Islamist terror: Lieberman and Stein

Joseph Lieberman and Todd Stein  
12:15 p.m. ET Feb. 21, 2017

A Kurdish fighter in northeastern Syria. (Photo: Fabio Bucciarelli, AFP/Getty Images)

In his inaugural address, President Trump promised to eradicate "radical Islamic terrorism," thereby laying an important new cornerstone for American policy in this war against terrorism.

Any plan to eradicate radical Islamic terrorism and destroy the Islamic State and other such groups requires not just a military strategy, but a plan to destroy the ideology — Islamism — that is the foundation of ISIL and other Islamist terrorist

groups. We will never be able to do that unless we clearly name and define that ideology, as the president has done. The war against Islamist terrorism is as much a war of clashing ideologies and values as were last century's wars against fascism and communism.

In this war, as in those, we need to go on the ideological offensive with American values like freedom, justice, and equality of opportunity.

Why has the U.S. not previously pursued a policy of confronting and destroying the ideology of Islamism?

One of the primary reasons was the fear of appearing to target a religion, which is antithetical to American values and political sensitivities.

Another argument for not using words like "radical Islamist terrorism" was that an essential element of the recruiting narrative of terrorist groups is that the West — led by the U.S. — is at war with Islam. By associating the religion of Islam with our enemy, the argument goes, the U.S. would confirm that false narrative, which in turn would lead to more terrorists and more terrorism.

Concerns about de-linking terrorism and Islam led the Obama and Bush

administrations to use anodyne terms like "violent extremism" and "the global war on terror" to describe who we are fighting and what we are fighting. But those words were clearly not accurate and they clearly did not weaken our enemy. In fact, they have undercut our counterterrorism efforts, instead of making us friends in the Muslim world.

The most honest and therefore best way to make clear that the religion of Islam is not our enemy is to describe our enemy as what it is, a political movement called radical Islamist terrorism.

To win this war, we must confront and target the ideology driving that



movement head-on among Muslims in a campaign that should be led by Muslims. The Trump administration took the first critical step to such a policy when the president used those words: "radical Islamic terrorism."

Now he should bring one more word — "freedom" — into the war against the enemy.

President Trump can argue that this is not a war between Islam and the West, as ISIL and other al-Qaeda progeny want it to be, but a war between America's values — specifically the free exercise of religion — and Islamist extremism, which rejects such freedom. Where there is religious freedom, where a community values and protects the rights of individuals to practice the religion of their choosing without fear of persecution or harm, Islamism cannot thrive and will not survive.

Taking this approach can achieve two goals in this war.

First, it will create a more effective front line in the battle for the hearts and minds of those in the Muslim world who might otherwise be susceptible to the radical Islamist terrorist narrative. Religious freedom means that Muslims have as much right as any other faith community to try to convince others to join their faith, but at its core, freedom of religion also means that no one may impose their religion on anyone else.

#### **POLICING THE USA: A look at race, justice, media**

Second, defining the ideological war as one between religious freedom and Islamist tyranny will make it easier to enlist the help of Muslim-Americans. Instead of feeling alienated and isolated, they can become integral and empowered to employ both their patriotism and

their religion for the protection of our country.

In his famous Long Telegram from Moscow during the late 1940s, George Kennan laid out a strategy for defeating the Soviet Union. He wrote that Communism "can handle only individuals who have been brought into complete dependence on a higher power." The U.S. won the Cold War by championing and spreading the American value of individual freedom that was incompatible with that "higher" Communist power.

The same approach can be critical now in the war we are in with radical Islamist terrorism. In this case, of course, the higher power is not the Central Committee. It is Islamism and its radical terrorist leaders. A clear description of our enemy and the deployment of the force of freedom will be a great help to those who are taking the fight to the enemy every day — our military, our intelligence community, our

diplomats and, most importantly, our friends and allies in the Muslim world. And if we do, we will achieve the same victory over Islamism that we won over Communism in the Cold War, and with the same values.

*Joseph Lieberman, a former senator from Connecticut, is senior counsel at the law firm Kasowitz, Benson, Torres and Friedman. Todd Stein is a senior fellow at the Homeland Security Policy Institute at the George Washington University.*

*You can read diverse opinions from our Board of Contributors and other writers on the Opinion front page, on Twitter @USATOpinion and in our daily Opinion newsletter. To submit a letter, comment or column, check our submission guidelines.*

Read or Share this story: <http://usat.ly/2m4B9ie>

## **The New York Times**

### **Trying to Stanch Trinidad's Flow of Young Recruits to ISIS (UNE)**

Frances Robles

ENTERPRISE, Trinidad and Tobago — By the time he was 17, Fahim Sabur had memorized the Quran.

At 23, he was shunning calypso parties and giving private Arabic lessons in his neighborhood here in Enterprise, about 20 miles south of Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad and Tobago.

A year later, he was on the battlefield in Syria, where he died fighting for the Islamic State.

"He never spoke to me about it," said his father, Abdus Sabur, 56, who sells meat patties on the street. "National Security called me one day and told me, 'Your son is dead.'"

Law enforcement officials in Trinidad and Tobago, a small Caribbean island nation off the coast of Venezuela, are scrambling to close a pipeline that has sent a steady stream of young Muslims to Syria, where they have taken up arms for the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL.

American officials worry about having a breeding ground for extremists so close to the United States, fearing that Trinidadian fighters could return from the Middle East and attack American diplomatic and oil installations in Trinidad, or even take a three-and-a-half-hour flight to Miami.

President Trump spoke by telephone over the weekend with Prime Minister Keith Rowley of

Trinidad and Tobago about terrorism and other security challenges, including foreign fighters, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, a White House spokeswoman, said.

Trinidad has a history of Islamist extremism — a radical Muslim group was responsible for a failed coup in 1990 that lasted six days, and in 2012 a Trinidadian man was sentenced to life in prison for his role in a plot to blow up Kennedy International Airport. Muslims make up only about 6 percent of the population, and the combatants often come from the margins of society, some of them on the run from criminal charges.

They saw few opportunities in an oil-rich nation whose economy has declined with the price of petroleum, experts say. Some were gang members who either converted or were radicalized in prison, while others have been swayed by local imams who studied in the Middle East, according to Muslim leaders and American officials.

The young men found solace in radical Islamist websites and social media.

And in the call to jihad.

In contrast to the laws of many countries, it is not illegal in Trinidad to join the so-called caliphate, though the government wants to change that. One hundred to 130 people have made the trip to Syria from Trinidad, which has a population of 1.3 million, according to a former United States ambassador, John L. Estrada, and

Trinidad's minister of national security, Edmund Dillon.

By comparison, about 250 citizens of the United States, a country with 240 times the population, had joined the extremists or attempted to travel to Syria by late 2015, according to a House Homeland Security Committee report.

Per capita, Trinidad has the greatest number of foreign fighters from the Western Hemisphere who have joined the Islamic State, said Mr. Estrada, who stepped down after the inauguration of President Trump last month.

"Trinidadians do very well with ISIL," Mr. Estrada said. "They are high up in the ranks, they are very respected and they are English-speaking. ISIL have used them for propaganda to spread their message through the Caribbean."

Much of the information about the identities of those who went abroad comes from American intelligence sources, although local imams and Islamic leaders all said they knew several people, including women, who had left.

"I know whole families that went," said Imtiaz Mohammed, president of the Islamic Missionaries Guild, which does charity work in Trinidad and the Middle East.

Umar Abdullah, an Islamic activist in Trinidad and Tobago, at home with his daughter. Federico Rios Escobar for The New York Times

Juan S. Gonzalez, a former deputy assistant secretary of state for

Western Hemisphere affairs, said the bulk of Islamic State fighters from Latin America originated in Trinidad and Tobago. The numbers underscore a risk of lone-wolf attacks in the region, he added.

"As the United States continues to corner ISIS and defeat them, a lot of these guys aren't going to feel they have safe quarters," Mr. Gonzalez said. "Is the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, prepared for these guys to return back to their countries? This is a real vulnerability."

He noted that people in the Caribbean enjoyed visa-free travel throughout the islands, which makes it fairly easy to travel to the Bahamas, and from there make a "short jump" to South Florida.

The United States, which encouraged Trinidad to tighten its laws, has hosted meetings with Muslim leaders at the embassy in Port of Spain, and paid for several to attend anti-extremism workshops in the United States.

Mr. Sabur, the young radical from Enterprise, is one of a handful of Trinidadians known to have died in Syria. Others include Shawn Parson, who appeared in an Islamic State recruiting video. He was targeted by an F.B.I. program that, with the cooperation of the military, sought to eliminate the group's social media figures, often with drone strikes.

Last summer, Shane Crawford, also known as Abu Sa'd at-Trinidad, perhaps Trinidad's best-known

Islamic State recruit, was prominently featured in an article in the group's magazine, Dabiq, in which he called for attacks on Western embassies.

Mr. Crawford said he had been influenced by Islamic lectures and a Trinidadian Muslim leader, Ashmead Choate. Mr. Choate "attained martyrdom" in Ramadi, Iraq, the article said.

The genesis of today's rising militancy, Mr. Crawford added in the article, can be traced to the failed 1990 coup, when a group of radical Muslims took legislators hostage in a siege of Parliament. When it was over, two dozen people were dead.

Yasin Abu Bakr, 76, who led that uprising and has since been released from prison, said the government had created a climate where young Muslims did not feel safe or welcome in the military or civil service. "This is total discrimination and isolation against young Muslims in Trinidad," he said in an interview.

Trinidad's attorney general, Faris Al-Rawi, said that after the coup, wearing Muslim garb "took on a certain appeal."

"A lot of people who were not genuinely Muslim or otherwise took on the persona to carry on their thuggery," he added.

Mr. Al-Rawi said Mr. Crawford was believed to have died in Syria. His mother, Joan Crawford, said she had heard rumors that he had been badly wounded.

Ms. Crawford, 62, said that her son had been falsely accused of plotting to kill the Trinidadian prime minister, and that this had diminished his professional prospects, even though he ran a fish business and had experience in plumbing.

"Once you are branded a terrorist in your own country, what could you do?" said Ms. Crawford, a former Spiritual Baptist who converted to Islam after her son did. "I did cry, because I knew I would never see him again. I did not get to say goodbye."

Harun Ben Usuf, left, an imam in Trinidad. At least one Muslim who has joined the Islamic State has been through his mosque. He said he hadn't known of that Muslim's plan to join the jihadist group. Federico Rios Escobar for The New York Times

Efforts to combat the flow of young Muslims to overseas battlefields have been complicated by the ambivalence toward, and sometimes support for, the jihadi cause among some imams and the recruits' parents. In an interview that began and ended with a prayer, Mr. Sabur said he had welcomed his son's death as a martyr: "I felt elated. Speaking about it now, I am overelated."

The Trinidadian government last week introduced a series of amendments that would criminalize membership in the Islamic State and other extremist organizations. People who traveled to certain regions would be presumed to be doing so for terrorism, and the

burden to prove otherwise would be on them, Mr. Al-Rawi said.

Mr. Mohammed, of the Islamic Missionaries Guild, criticized the proposed legislation, saying groups like his that make trips to the Middle East are often engaged in charity work and could be unfairly singled out.

"You can't just go to a court and have a judge tell you that you are guilty with no evidence, just an assumption," he said.

Mr. Mohammed has publicly denounced the Islamic State, but noted that his own United States visa and commercial pilot's license had been revoked after a terrorism suspect passed through his Islamic center.

A senior intelligence official in Trinidad who was not authorized to speak publicly said he worried that the proposed legislation would make people who would have left for Syria plan attacks at home instead.

He said about 15 or 20 of the Islamic State recruits spent two weeks before their trips at a mosque in Rio Claro, about 50 miles southeast of Port of Spain. There, they attended an orientation, the official said.

Umar Abdullah, an Islamic activist, said he had been among those who encouraged the would-be fighters.

Despite having made thinly veiled threats to Americans in the past, which led a cruise ship on its way to Trinidad to turn back, Mr. Abdullah

has since denounced extremism, and now says Muslims must work with the United States to "change the narrative." It would be "stupid" to try to attack the United States Embassy, he said.

"At one point in time I was a strong believer in that, and I still believe it to some extent," Mr. Abdullah said. "But to do something like that would put the Muslim community in harm's way. We would not be able to stand the fallout of that type of action."

The imam in Rio Claro, Nazim Mohammed, denied running an Islamic State training program, and insisted that he operated an elementary school and a weekly food program for the poor. But he acknowledged that two of his children and five of his grandchildren were in Syria, and that the adults were believed to be involved with the Islamic State.

"Killing and murdering is not Islamic," Nazim Mohammed, 75, said in an interview. "Our program is to help people. You know how many people have come here for help?"

He insisted that his children did not notify him of their plans, and he shrugged off the group's influence.

"Who is ISIS?" he said. "ISIS is just a few people."

## The New York Times Gaza Is Outwardly Rebuilding, but Inwardly Fearful (UNE)

Ian Fisher

BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip — In her new home, finally finished after she lived two years in a trailer across a dirt road, Samaher al-Masri, 40, showed a video on her cellphone of a cute preschooler: her son Majdi. He was singing:

*"I am a son of Palestine, I have a right and a cause ...*

*Even if they shoot me and I die as a martyr, I will not forget the cause."*

Majdi, who was 6, lived through two Gazan wars, though his old family house was toppled by bulldozers in the 2014 fighting with Israel. But the day after he ended kindergarten last year, he caught his hula hoop in a metal door in the trailer. The door was heavy, the frame shoddy. It fell on him and crushed his skull, killing him.

"Something is missing," his mother said eight months later, in the living room of her house, built on the rubble-cleared plot of the old one.

"You asked me if this is better. Yes, it's better. But I'm missing him. His bedroom was waiting for him."

So it is in Gaza, outwardly rebuilding and moving on from war, inwardly far from recovered. Gaza seems at a loss for what might be next. After so many years of isolation, residents of Gaza find themselves ever further from Palestinians in the West Bank, their future clouded by rising doubts that they could ever unite and work toward a lasting peace.

Two million tons of rubble have been cleared — about a ton for each person who lives in this cramped coastal strip. Two-thirds of the 160,000 damaged homes have been rebuilt, as have half of the 11,000 that were destroyed. Roads are better, travel faster. People gawk at their first real mall, with a food court and 12 escalators, both rarities in Gaza.

But they are not buying much. Unemployment is high, especially

among the many young people graduating from college. In all, 50,000 people remain displaced. Electricity and water supplies are still near crisis levels. Hamas, which governs Gaza, elected a new hard-line leader. Tunnel building goes on (and, presumably, so does the construction and smuggling of weapons). On the Israeli side, the political right talks of a new war in the spring over Hamas's rearming and expresses a desire to inflict a decisive blow.

The Capital Mall has a food court and 12 escalators, both rarities in Gaza. Wissam Nassar for The New York Times

As has been the case for a decade, the strip remains encircled. Israel tightly controls most going in and out: food, building supplies, people. Two children died recently for lack of drugs or medical access, one of cancer, the other of a heart problem.

"The blockade of Gaza is something I can compare to the Middle Ages and the besieged castle that can fall at any moment," said Dr. Fadel Ashour, a psychiatrist in Gaza since 1994. "People in Gaza are not satisfied with who governs this castle. They lack the tools to change it. They live with armed militias, and the institutions are not clear as they are in the West Bank. They know they are paying a price for something they don't want. Or deserve. This increases their depression and hopelessness."

It is unclear how the flickers of change elsewhere in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict will ripple to Gaza, which is surrounded by Israel on two sides, by Egypt to the southwest and by the Mediterranean. With President Trump in office in the United States, Israel's right seems to feel empowered and is likely to push more settlements in the West Bank, even to toy with annexation, despite Mr. Trump's call to slow the pace.

The Palestinian Authority, which has wide backing in the West, seems to be looking abroad for ways to push its immediate future, including persuading the world to recognize a state of Palestine, threatening action in the United Nations and encouraging Israeli boycotts.

Leaders of Hamas, considered a terrorist group by the United States and by many other countries, do not have the same backing from the West. Interviews with political and business leaders, academics and ordinary people can divine only a basic strategy: improve the lives of frustrated residents as its leaders put off as long as possible what they see as the next inevitable war, then fight when it happens. (Life could be better, Hamas's critics contend, if the group spent less on war preparations.)

Mahmoud Zahar, a senior Hamas official, said that with years of failed talks, settlements expanding across the West Bank and Mr. Trump's apparent ambivalence about a Palestinian state, "You have two options: either to cooperate with the occupation or the resistance. There is no option," he said. "Where is the two-state solution?"

Ms. Masri, 40, plays with her son Othman in the family's new house in Beit Hanoun. Another son, Majdi, died in an accident. Wissam Nassar for The New York Times

Interviews make it clear that there is a growing distance between Gaza and the West Bank — a central reason cited by Israelis for the impossibility of negotiations. Hamas won Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006 and took control of Gaza in 2007.

"Now, Gaza is something and the West Bank is something else," said Ibrahim al-Madhoun, a columnist for the Hamas-affiliated news outlet Al Risala. "It's a fact. You can't connect the two realities. You will get lost. Things have changed."

Mr. Madhoun and several others raised a possibility, a very long shot, one that could conceivably be acceptable to Israel's far right: Someday Gaza — with defined borders, no Israeli occupation and no settlers — could become the basis for a Palestinian state as settlements gnaw away at the West Bank.

"If there is going to be a Palestinian state, it's going to be Gaza," said Mkhaimar Abusada, associate professor of political science at Al-Azhar University in Gaza. "Politically speaking, it's not right. But this is what's coming."

Otherwise, he said, "I don't think there is a grand strategy where Gaza is in 10 years or 20 years. I know Hamas will never want to give up Gaza as long as it is capable of keeping control."

Residents say they are focusing on getting by. Industrious and, for the most part, educated, they have cleared and rebuilt to the point that in places it is hard to tell there have been three wars in six years. One giveaway is that the concrete on the houses is fresh dark gray, rather than sun-bleached and weathered. Qatar and Saudi Arabia have underwritten minicities, as caravans and tents slowly empty. The Islamic University has patched the two buildings bombed in two wars and, with great effort, installed an impressive array of 450 solar panels on the science building, even though there is a fear the panels and the building might make a big target in the next war.

Hamam al-Sammara is Gaza's only remaining bathhouse. It is heated with olive wood and, its owners say, predates Islam's arrival over a millennium ago. Wissam Nassar for The New York Times

Capital Mall opened in January, with four floors of upscale shops. One woman lifted her niqab briefly for a photo in front of a Valentine's Day flower display. Another posed for her husband, who is in an Israeli jail.

"I feel happy here," Sana Shanghan, 50, said, visiting with some of her 13 children. "Here, I feel I'm outside Gaza. I forget about Gaza's problems."

The feeling was similar inside the steamy domes of Hamam al-Sammara, Gaza's only remaining bathhouse, heated with olive wood and, its owners say, predating Islam's arrival over a millennium ago.

"People are tired, kids and old people," said Salim Abdullah al-Wazir, 66, who runs the house for his family. "More and more come here for psychological support."

He added: "There is no progress. It's just survival."

Mona Ghalayini is betting on more than just survival. One of Gaza's few businesswomen, Ms. Ghalayini, 46, has built a small empire that began with a fast-food shop in 2003. For most people in Gaza, the sea is simply a place where fishermen work waters constricted by Israeli patrol boats. But she sees potential in the current stability, recently buying two seaside hotels.

"We have brains," she said, inhaling from a shisha on the patio of one of her hotels. "We have smart people. We can survive, even with the blockade. But we need connection. We don't want isolation."

Tourism is the future, she said. Then she reconsidered.

"Who visits Gaza?" she asked. "No one."



## John Yemma : What decides a claim on land?

The Christian Science Monitor

February 21, 2017 —Simple solutions sound great. Then along come nuance and detail. One place where nuance and detail cannot be ignored is the Middle East. What at first looks like a simple explanation for the way things are — or ought to be — becomes more elusive the more you learn. The history of one community overlays that of another. Mosques sit atop churches, which sit atop temples. Some inhabitants have roots centuries deep. Some go back a millennium or more. Some just arrived.

The long-running issue of Israeli settlements, which Christa Case Bryant examines in a Monitor cover story ([click here](#)), seems simple at first glance. Under the Geneva Conventions, which Israel has signed, an occupying power cannot transfer its population onto occupied territory. Most members of the

United Nations have repeatedly condemned Israel for allowing what are now hundreds of thousands of Israelis to live in territory it captured in 1967. That seems like an open-and-shut case.

Israel, however, argues that the clock didn't start in 1967, that the occupied territory was never a part of a sovereign state before it was annexed by Jordan after 1948, and that Israelis have a historical right to live in the territory both because of biblical ties to Judea and Samaria and because Jewish communities lived in the region for hundreds of years.

Palestinians have ancient ties to the Holy Land as well. The biblical Philistines, among other peoples, were contemporaneous with the biblical Israelites. While it is not certain that today's Palestinians are their direct descendants, it is not certain either that most of today's Israelis are direct descendants of

Israelites. Most modern Israelis migrated from Europe, Russia, and North Africa. Most modern Palestinians are a mixture of ethnicities that have ebbed and flowed through the Middle East for thousands of years. In any case, Palestinian families were well established throughout the Holy Land when the Zionist settlement movement began in the late 19th century.

So what decides a claim to the land — international law, possession, antiquity? Palestinians and Israelis can cancel each other out on all of those points. There is one decisive factor, however: Israel is currently in control. Its military is dominant. It can impose its will. And because pro-settlement Israelis, who have become a potent political force in Israel, see an ally in the Trump administration, an Israeli push to grow the settlements and even to annex the West Bank seems increasingly likely. That would

fundamentally change Israel, either weakening its Jewishness by enfranchising millions of Palestinians or weakening its democracy by denying them full citizenship rights. Annexation would also isolate Israel internationally and perhaps plunge it into new conflict.

Most settlers live in concrete-and-steel cities connected by superhighways. A visitor from Arizona or southern California would feel right at home. Most settlers live normal lives. They go to work, send their children to school, shop, ride bikes, swim. But as solid and grounded as the settlements seem, Israelis have never been the only inhabitants of the West Bank.



# Israeli Soldier Jailed for Shooting Death of Disarmed Palestinian Attacker

Rory Jones

Updated Feb. 21, 2017 10:31 a.m. ET

TEL AVIV—An Israeli soldier was sentenced by a military court on Tuesday to 18 months in prison for the shooting death of a disarmed Palestinian attacker, capping a trial that laid bare deep divisions in Israel about the role and responsibilities of soldiers serving in the occupied territories.

The court also demoted the soldier, Sgt. Elor Azaria, to private, following his conviction last month on charges of manslaughter in the death of Abdul Fattah Sharif in the West Bank city of Hebron.

After Mr. Azaria's sentence was read, members of his family present in the courtroom sang Israel's national anthem, the Hatikva.

A manslaughter conviction in Israel carries a maximum jail sentence of 20 years, but many had predicted Mr. Azaria would receive a shorter jail term. His lawyers are expected to appeal the sentence, amid demands by right-wing politicians that Israeli President Reuven Rivlin grant the soldier a pardon.

The March 24, 2016, shooting of Mr. Sharif encapsulated the dilemmas, confusion and uncertainty that often face Israeli soldiers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where they are deployed to

stem violence, maintain control and protect about 400,000 Jewish Israeli settlers living among some 2.9 million Palestinians.

Amid a monthslong wave of Palestinian attacks against soldiers and Jewish Israelis in the West Bank, Mr. Sharif and another Palestinian stabbed and wounded an Israeli soldier on the streets of Hebron, and were then shot by Israeli troops.

While his fellow attacker soon died, the 21-year-old Mr. Sharif lay wounded and incapacitated on the road, and Mr. Azaria, then 19 years old, fired into his head.

The circumstances of the shooting—whether Mr. Azaria was justified in pulling the trigger—were the focus of a trial that riveted the country.

Liberal politicians and senior officials of the Israeli military argued that Mr. Azaria's actions in Hebron ran counter to the ethics and values of what historically has been the country's most revered institution.

Pitted against them were many in the Israeli public and parliament who said soldiers operating under the difficult conditions of the territories can't and shouldn't be held to so high a standard of restraint.

Inside the courtroom, Mr. Azaria's lawyers argued that he believed Mr.

Sharif might have an explosive device and was still dangerous. The prosecutor said he shot Mr. Sharif out of a desire for revenge.

The court agreed with the prosecution, ruling that Mr. Sharif posed no threat before he was killed. Judge Col. Maya Heller called Mr. Azaria's testimony "evolving and evasive," said his motive for shooting "was that he felt the terrorist deserved to die."

Reactions to Mr. Azaria's sentence on Tuesday showed that the issues disputed in his trial were far from resolved.

Right-wing politicians and settlers condemned the punishment, saying that in shooting Mr. Sharif, Mr. Azaria acted properly given the conditions facing him.

"The process is inherently polluted. Elor must not sit in jail, or we will all pay the price," tweeted Naftali Bennett, leader of the right-wing Jewish Home party who called for a pardon for Mr. Azaria.

Yariv Oppenheimer, a board member of the nongovernmental organization Peace Now, tweeted that the sentence was "an embarrassing and lenient punishment."

"And even more embarrassing is the conduct of politicians that are still demanding a pardon for a person that shot a terrorist in the

head because he felt like it," he added.

The office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declined to comment on Mr. Azaria's sentence. Diverging from top members of Israel's security establishment, he has refrained from vehemently condemning Mr. Azaria's actions. He also phoned Mr. Azaria's family to offer his support.

In a possible indication of the political pressure over the case from members of his fragile ruling coalition, Oren Hazan, a member of parliament from the premier's Likud party, tweeted that, "Every day that Elor sits in prison is a stain on the [military] and the judicial system."

Under Israeli law, Mr. Azaria, his lawyer or a relative can request a pardon from the Israel president after all avenues of appeal are exhausted. The president would then consult with judicial authorities and the Israeli military before deciding whether to issue a pardon.

The office of Israel's current president, Mr. Rivlin, has said that any pardon request would be considered according to standard procedures.

Write to Rory Jones at [rory.jones@wsj.com](mailto:rory.jones@wsj.com)

The  
New York  
Times

## At Tehran Gala, Cakes, Fruit and Anti-Israeli Slogans

Thomas Erdbrink

A session at the International Conference in Support of Palestinian Intifada in Tehran on Tuesday, where Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, urged renewal of the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, against Israel. Ebrahim Noroozi/Associated Press

TEHRAN — Everything was in place on Tuesday for a gala celebration at Iran's annual conference in support of Palestinians. Awaiting the hundreds of guests was a table piled high with cakes and fruit, with plenty of tea to wash it all down and a placard saying, "Netanyahu: Go to Hell."

The theme for this year's gathering was "All Together for Palestine." Prominent seatings were reserved for the heads of Parliament for Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Syria, as well as the leaders of Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Lebanese group Hezbollah.

All three of those groups are considered terrorist organizations by the United States. Iran's support for them is one of the main reasons the White House has, for years, and particularly now, in the Trump era, labeled Iran perhaps the biggest state sponsor of terrorism in the world.

In Tehran, however, the groups are revered as freedom fighters battling a Western-backed colonizer. All three have offices in the Iranian capital and all have received money, intelligence and even weapons from Iran — at least in the past.

On Monday, the evening before the conference, Iranian state television broadcast an hourlong interview with the leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, who warned that his organization was capable of striking Israel's nuclear facilities.

"The U.S. for the past 70 years has supported aggression, blockades, settlements and occupation," said

Jan Fermon, the secretary general of the International Organization of Democratic Lawyers, which is based in Brussels. "Even under international law, Palestinians, being occupied, have the right to fight back. You can't simply say, 'Oh, if they do they are terrorists.'"

That morning, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, delivered a long speech pledging support to all groups that fight against Israel, calling it "dangerous" and "a cancerous tumor." He also insisted that any compromise with Israel, even a peace deal based on a two-state solution, would be "a grave and unforgivable mistake."

Speaking in Iran's cavernous Islamic conference hall, Ayatollah Khamenei ticked off a series of viewpoints that have been standard fare since the Islamic revolution of 1979. In essence, they consisted of exporting their ideals, uplifting the poor worldwide and giving full state support to the Palestinians.

"The issue of Palestine can, and should be, the pivot of unity for all Islamic countries," the supreme leader told his audience, which also included guests from Germany, Wales and Suriname.

Unfortunately, Ayatollah Khamenei said, some crises in other countries in the region have "caused support for the issue of Palestine to be undermined." Presumably he was referring to the civil wars raging in Syria and Yemen.

Iran's ossified ideological stances have put it at odds with other states in the region, particularly Saudi Arabia, which over the last decade has lost some interest in the Palestinian cause.

Last week, the Trump administration hinted at a coalition among Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries that he said would counterbalance Iranian influence in the region. That, analysts say, has raised concern levels in Tehran.

"Naturally, people are getting worried," Ali Hashem, a Lebanese reporter, said. "There is a lot of tension in the region right now. We might see an uptake in regional proxy wars."

But in the conference room, everything was about the Palestinian cause. The speaker of the Zimbabwean National

Assembly, Jacob Francis Mudenda, lauded the Iranians for their support of the Palestinians. He highlighted his own country as an example.

"We have lived for a hundred years under colonialism, and we freed ourselves; Palestine can, too," Mr. Mudenda said, as other delegates in the room applauded.

Prime time was reserved for Ramezan Abdullah, the secretary general of the Islamic Jihad, a Palestinian group fully supported by Iran, the semiofficial Tasnim news agency reported. He brought news welcomed by those in the conference hall.

"The Palestinian people should prepare themselves for the downfall

of Israel," he said. Perhaps the United States is interested in a two-state solution, Mr. Abdullah said, but not his group. "Palestine belongs to the Palestinians, not the Jews."

## The Washington Post

# Afghan troops surround vice president's compound in Kabul standoff

By Sayed Salahuddin

KABUL — Government troops surrounded the fortified luxury home of First Vice President Abdurrahshid Dostum in the Afghan capital Tuesday in an all-day standoff, raising fears of a violent confrontation with his armed guards. The former warlord, accused of brutalizing a political rival, has refused to cooperate with a government investigation for several months.

The action came after Dostum repeatedly ignored requests for cooperation from the attorney general's office in investigating the case, including summonses for nine of Dostum's guards and other employees wanted for questioning.

But on Tuesday evening, after hours of tension and confusion gripped the capital, Dostum spoke publicly with supporters inside his house, saying he had ordered his guards to avoid any armed clash. At the same time, he warned that any move to unseat him would weaken the government of President Ashraf Ghani.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

Please provide a valid email address.

In his first public comments on the case since December, when a fellow ethnic Uzbek leader named Ahmad Ishchi accused Dostum of holding him prisoner, subjecting him to brutal assaults and ordering

guards to sodomize him, the vice president dismissed the accusations as "a conspiracy of the enemies." His appearance was broadcast live on a private TV station.

The allegations against Dostum triggered outrage among Western governments and rights groups, which termed the case a major test of Ghani's ability to establish the rule of law. Under Ghani's direction, the Afghan attorney general began an investigation of the charges, but Dostum refused to answer several official summonses and warrants issued for nine guards in his employ.

Meanwhile, Dostum has remained largely out of sight, first at his compound in northern Jowzjan Province and later inside his elaborate, bunker-like residence in the affluent Sherpur neighborhood of Kabul. He stopped going to his government office and attending most official functions, although he did appear at the funeral of a veteran political leader last month.

In November, government troops blocked roads near his house in Kabul for a week, raising expectations that Dostum might be arrested, but they did not approach the compound.

The latest standoff began early Tuesday, one day after Dostum suddenly reappeared in his vice presidential office for the first time since November. Armed government forces in several armored vehicles blocked roads leading to a cluster of buildings he owns in Sherpur.

It was not immediately clear whether the troops were sent there to arrest either Dostum or the nine guards accused in the case. The burly former communist general has often switched sides during Afghanistan's nearly four decades of conflict and has earned a reputation for brutal behavior. He said Tuesday that if he were removed from office, it would be a significant blow to the Ghani government, which has been fighting an aggressive Taliban insurgency for more than 15 years and a newer challenge from Islamic State militants.

"Removal of General Dostum from government certainly will not strengthen the government, it will weaken it. People will not stand behind it. ... People will be alienated," Dostum said, speaking in the third person. He looked tired in the TV broadcast, but also made jokes with the supporters surrounding him.

A huge billboard of the 2014 election campaign, showing Dostum next to Ghani, hung behind him as he made his televised comments. He repeatedly referred to the Islamic State as a major emerging threat to Afghan stability, and he called on the government to overcome internal differences with him and stand together to confront the militants.

Dostum, in an apparent effort to emphasize his potential influence on national security, claimed tens of thousands of armed outlaws are in Kabul, waiting for chaos in order to loot banks and private property should security decline further.

A number of government officials, including those from Ghani's office, refused to comment on the day's events. A palace spokesman, asked about Dostum's sudden resumption of his vice presidential duties, said the president had no objection to it.

Some critics had called on the government to suspend Dostum while the investigation was underway. But several political observers said Tuesday that his return to duty was part of a deal he had made with Ghani.

Dostum's chief of staff, Enayatullah Farahmand, said his boss would now return to his normal duties. He attributed Dostum's lengthy absence to his involvement in fighting against the Taliban in the north, followed by trips to Uzbekistan and Turkey.

"The allegations cannot block him from his duties. ... He will 100 percent continue to do his duty. We want the issue to not be handled politically," Farahmand said in an interview.

But several political and academic figures said that Dostum's return to his post with the charges still pending against him was a sign of weakness on the government's part.

Hamidullah Tokhi, a legislator from southern Zabul province, said that "failure to implement the rule of law on the president and his deputies is a serious threat for the progress of the country."

## The Washington Post

# David Ignatius : The Trump bubble bursts in Moscow's markets

<https://www.facebook.com/davidignatiusbooks>

Financial markets have been sending an interesting message about President Trump and Russia. After Trump's election, investors seemed to be betting that sanctions against Moscow would soon be eased. But this confidence collapsed in late January, and Russian stocks plummeted.

The numbers tell the story: From Nov. 7, the day before the election, to Jan. 27, the MICEX index of leading Russian stocks rose 26 percent. The index for Russian financial stocks increased 19 percent over that same period. But this upward momentum suddenly reversed: As of Tuesday, the MICEX index had fallen 10.4 percent from its January peak, and the financial measure had dropped 6.5 percent.

What happened on Jan. 27? After weeks of negative stories about possible links between members of Trump's campaign and Russia, the new president told a news conference it was "very early to be talking about" removing sanctions. Regarding a call scheduled the next day with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Trump said blandly that he would "see what happens." And according to both sides, the call produced only vague pledges to cooperate against terrorism.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

Please provide a valid email address.

Economists debate whether markets distill expectations about policy or whether they're closer to a "random walk." But in this case, the turnaround looks very rational indeed. Investors believed

something would happen and then decided it might not.

A good summary of market expectations was a Bloomberg News story published Dec. 20, headlined "Trump Seen Paying Off for Putin with Sanctions Relief Coming." The story cited a Bloomberg survey of economists that month in which 55 percent of respondents predicted that the penalties imposed after Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea would be lifted over the next 12 months. Only two months before, when the polls were predicting that Trump would lose, just 10 percent of those surveyed had expected any quick easing of sanctions.

The website of Russia Today, described by U.S. intelligence as a Kremlin propaganda outlet, published a jubilant Dec. 21 story noting the Bloomberg poll and predicting, "Donald Trump's election is expected to bring fundamental changes in U.S. foreign policy."

Among the biggest cheerleaders for a Trump move to

end sanctions were the chief executives of Sberbank and VTB Group, two big Moscow banks partly owned by the Russian government. Both have been targets of U.S. sanctions, squeezing their ability to borrow or move money in the West.

"I think Mr. Trump should remove sanctions against the four leading Russian banks," said Andrey Kostin, VTB's chief, in a Jan. 19 story published by RT. "It would be very helpful. [The sanctions] didn't kill us ... but of course that very much made our future not as bright as we expected," he explained. VTB surfaced in the so-called Panama Papers as an alleged money-laundering tool for Putin, a charge the bank denies.

"Trump is a president of changes," said Herman Gref, the chief executive of Sberbank, in a Dec. 28 interview with the newspaper Vedomosti. "I have met Trump and my impression from the interaction is very positive. I know several people from his team," said Gref,

who has been a close Putin adviser, in a translation of the interview published by Newsweek.

Gref had indeed met Trump, in November 2013, when the mogul was in Moscow for the Miss Universe pageant. Gref invited Trump to a two-hour dinner at the Moscow branch of Nobu restaurant. "There was a good feeling from the meeting. He's a sensible person ... [with] a good attitude toward Russia," Gref told Bloomberg News in a Dec. 21 story.

Trump apparently felt the same way. Bloomberg quotes his comment about the Moscow dinner to Real Estate Weekly after he returned to New York that month. "The Russian market is attracted to me. Almost all of the oligarchs were in the room."

For the Russian banks, it has undoubtedly been disappointing to see Trump back away from any quick easing of sanctions. Sberbank shares sold in Britain, which rose 35 percent from Nov. 4 to Jan. 27, have since fallen 3.4 percent. VTB's

British shares, which jumped 20 percent on pro-Trump enthusiasm, have slipped 4.5 percent since their January high.

These financial machinations illustrate one little-examined reason why it matters whether former national security adviser Michael Flynn talked to Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak about sanctions before the inauguration, or whether anyone from the Trump campaign had contact with Russian officials.

These issues don't just interest journalists or Trump's critics in Congress. They move markets. The Trump trade was looking like a winner for Moscow, but now, not so much.

*Read more from David Ignatius's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.*

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Raghuvanshi

Updated Feb. 22, 2017 4:15 a.m. ET

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—Malaysian police identified a North Korean embassy official and a state-owned airline employee among seven suspects still at large in the killing of dictator Kim Jong Un's half brother here, adding to authorities' suspicions that Pyongyang was behind the assassination.

Police also said someone tried to break into the morgue where Kim Jong Nam's body is being kept, leading them to tighten security there. Mr. Kim was attacked by two women—who are in police custody—at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Feb. 13.

One suspect in the killing, 44-year-old Hyon Kwang Song, is a second secretary in the North Korean embassy in Kuala Lumpur; another, Kim Uk Il, works for Air Koryo, Malaysia's Inspector General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar said at a news conference on Wednesday.

Police strongly believe that four other suspects fled Malaysia on the day of the attack and are now in Pyongyang. On Sunday, police identified them as Hong Song Hac, 34; Ri Jae Nam,

## North Korean Embassy Official Sought in Kim Jong Nam Killing

Yantoultra Ngui and Gaurav

57; Rhi Ji Hyon, 33; and O Jong Gil, 55. Police disclosed their passport numbers.

"We believe these four are heavily involved in the attack," Mr. Khalid said Wednesday, adding that the North Korean embassy wasn't being helpful with the investigation.

Police have requested that the North Korean embassy hand over Mr. Hyon and Kim Uk Il to help with the investigation. "We submitted the request today," Mr. Khalid said. "If they refuse to cooperate, then we will issue warrants of arrest on both of them."

Mr. Khalid didn't say what evidence police had to back up the claim about the break-in at the morgue. Armed guards from the special forces were seen at the Hospital Kuala Lumpur morgue earlier this week, prompting some people to believe that Mr. Kim's son had arrived to identify and claim the body.

Results from lab tests on samples taken from Mr. Kim's body after a Feb. 15 postmortem examination are still outstanding, and no family member has turned up to claim the body or provide samples for a DNA test, the police chief said.

The police chief said the body will be handed only to a family member after establishing a DNA match. "Any of his family members [can

claim the body], not necessary only his half brother," Mr. Khalid said. "Any of his family members, his brothers and sisters and children."

Malaysia previously declined a request from the North Korean side to release the body to their embassy. It also said no to a North Korean offer to conduct a joint investigation into the killing.

The two women who attacked Mr. Kim last week as he waited for a flight to Macau were trained to carry out the killing, Mr. Khalid said, contradicting their claim that they thought they were playing a prank for a hidden-camera TV show.

The suspects were aware that they were applying a poisonous substance to Mr. Kim's body and rehearsed the operation at two upscale malls, including one at the Kuala Lumpur City Center, the site of the iconic Petronas Twin Towers, Mr. Khalid said.

Police were seeking Wednesday to extend the custody of the two women, who they previously identified as Doan Thi Huong, 28, who carried a Vietnamese passport, and Siti Aisyah, 25, who carried an Indonesian passport. Police are also seeking to extend custody of a North Korean suspect arrested last week. However, a suspect from Malaysia will be released, the police chief said.

It wasn't immediately known if all the arrested suspects had legal representation, though Indonesia said it appointed lawyers for Ms. Aisyah. Last week, officials from the North Korean embassy visited the police station in Sepang, near the Kuala Lumpur airport, where the suspects are being held. It wasn't clear if any of the suspects were allowed consular access.

The investigators have yet to identify the substance used to kill Mr. Kim, but Mr. Khalid said both female suspects smeared it on his face and didn't wear gloves while attacking him. He said they washed their hands afterward.

In a statement Wednesday, the North Korean embassy said again that Malaysian police haven't found evidence from the arrested suspects. It also questioned how the two women could be alive after applying the poison to Mr. Kim with their bare hands.

The embassy statement called for the release of "the innocent females from Vietnam and Indonesia," in addition to the detained North Korean, Ri Jong Chol.

**Write to** Yantoultra Ngui at yantoultra.ngui@wsj.com and Gaurav Raghuvanshi at gaurav.raghuvanshi@wsj.com

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

## South Korea's Impossible Bargain: China Trade or U.S. Protection



Andrew Browne

Updated Feb. 21, 2017 8:28 p.m.  
ET

SEONGJU, South Korea—It is no small irony that U.S.-China rivalry at the outset of the Trump era is playing out on—of all places—a golf course hidden in pine-covered mountains around here.

Or that just weeks into his term, Donald Trump has already handed a crucial advantage to Beijing.

South Korea picked the golf retreat to host a U.S. antimissile system known as Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or Thaad, under an agreement with Washington to counter a nuclear threat from North Korea. However, China fears the system's radar will snoop on its own nuclear force, and is piling pressure on South Korea to abandon the shield.

Without announcing any formal sanctions or labeling their moves as reprisals, Chinese authorities have blocked shipments of South Korean cosmetics, squeezed tourist flows, turned away K-pop singers, and harassed the China operations of the golf course owner, Lotte group.

Though relatively mild, the measures remind South Korea of China's power to disrupt its export-led economy. Thus Seoul is caught between its all-important defense alliance with the U.S. and burgeoning trade relations with China.

"It's the South Korean nightmare," says John Delury, a Chinese

Studies professor at Seoul's Yonsei University.

The implications for other U.S. partners in the region are just as alarming.

All rely on the U.S. for security but increasingly depend on exports to China for growth.

None wish to be forced into the choice that South Korea now faces: the U.S. or China, protection or prosperity.

South Korea ships one-quarter of its exports to China, Australia one-third. Taiwan's economy would stall without the mainland's vast markets for high-tech electronics. That makes the region highly susceptible to Chinese political pressure.

Moreover, China's economy, while slowing, is still expanding four times as fast as America's.

If China can bend South Korea to its will through economic coercion, it would send a chilling message to a region beset by new unpredictability.

North Korea is close to acquiring nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles able to strike its neighbors and reach as far as the U.S. West Coast.

Mr. Trump's arrival in the White House at this volatile moment intensified a debate in capitals around the Asia-Pacific about how to balance between the U.S. and China. To worried Asian allies, his strident "America First" rhetoric suggested a retreat from Washington's global commitments, even as his hawkish aides seemed to be spoiling for a fight with Beijing.

Although Mr. Trump's friendly call with Chinese President Xi Jinping, followed by "golf diplomacy" with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Florida, soothed some nerves, doubts remain.

U.S. friends and allies are dismayed by his decision to pull the U.S. out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a giant free-trade deal, ceding even more economic influence in the region to China, which is now promoting its own trade arrangements. Singapore leader Lee Hsien Loong told U.S. Sen. John McCain last year that if the U.S. abandoned the trade deal "You're finished in Asia."

In South Korea, meanwhile, public opposition to Thaad has exposed some of the fault lines in America's relations with a key ally.

A steeply winding road to the Lotte golf course is festooned with protest banners: "Go Away Thaad!" "Send Thaad to the U.S.!"

A movement to block the deployment has united a hodgepodge of leftists, Won Buddhists (one of their most sacred shrines sits just off the fairways) and environmentalists concerned about the health effects of Thaad's electromagnetic waves.

In a way that may surprise outsiders, the protesters worry much less about North Korea unleashing Armageddon than being stuck in the middle of a dust-up between the U.S. and China. "There will be a conflict. It's inevitable—and all the damage will come to South Korea," says activist leader Kim Jong-kyung.

How does he assess Mr. Trump? Unpredictable—"like a rugby ball," Mr. Kim says. "You don't know which way he's going to bounce."

Such sentiments resonate among the broader population, and have a hold on opposition politicians in Seoul. A recent survey by the Asan Institute, a Seoul-based think-tank, shows public opinion for and against Thaad evenly split. President Park Geun-hye, whose government agreed to the Thaad deal, is under impeachment and a likely successor, Moon Jae-in, wants to defer a decision on the deployment.

The wider question for the region is whether Mr. Trump's America will remain a reliable, steady partner. Nobody wants to return to an ancient "tribute system" that Beijing seems anxious to restore in its backyard, with South Korea and Vietnam acting as Chinese vassals and more distant neighbors taking their place in a Sinocentric order.

Nor does the region desire confrontation between the world's two largest economies. Mr. Moon told reporters recently that "the best scenario for us is when the U.S. and China get along well."

Mr. Trump didn't create the dilemma that South Korea and other partners now face, torn as they are between two great powers, but he's made their choices starker.

—Min Sun Lee contributed to this article.

Write to Andrew Browne at [andrew.browne@wsj.com](mailto:andrew.browne@wsj.com)

## The New York Times Is China Pushing Trump to Talk to North Korea?

Jane Perlez

BEIJING — For years, the United States and others have pressed China's leaders to suspend imports of coal from North Korea to push the reclusive state to abandon its nuclear weapons program. For years, the Chinese leadership resisted — until Saturday, when it suddenly announced in a terse statement that it would do just that.

But if Beijing was sending a message to North Korea, it was also directing one at President Trump, who has complained that China was not putting enough pressure on North Korea.

Now President Xi Jinping of China has essentially said: We have done our part in enforcing sanctions. Over to you, Mr. Trump.

The challenge comes at a tantalizing moment. For weeks now,

plans have been afoot for a North Korean government delegation to meet in New York in early March with a group of former United States officials who have long been involved in North Korea policy.

Will the Trump administration issue visas to the North Koreans, a move that would suggest the new president is interested at least in hearing from Pyongyang through informal channels?

There have been indications that Mr. Trump was willing to take a quite different tack from President Barack Obama.

During his campaign, Mr. Trump said he was interested in sharing a hamburger with the 33-year-old leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-un. He seemed to suggest he had a smidgen of respect for, or at least curiosity about, the maverick leader, the most recent incarnation of a longstanding dynasty.

Mr. Trump's response to the recent North Korean missile test was restrained, perhaps the result of Mr. Obama's warning after the November election that North Korea would be the incoming president's most dangerous foreign policy challenge.

"If the visas are issued, it will be a clear message that the Trump administration is prepared to go the extra mile and engage North Korea," said Evans J. R. Revere, a former principal deputy assistant secretary of state.

There should be little expectation, he warned, of any policy shift by the North, which has shown every indication of wanting to continue building its nuclear program.

The planned meeting, sponsored by the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, headed by Donald S. Zagoria, falls far short of talks between the two governments

and has been designed as an initial sounding board.

"I have been organizing such meetings with the North Koreans since 2003, and our goal is to increase mutual understanding as well as to encourage the kind of frank dialogue that may not be possible in official talks," Mr. Zagoria said.

The gathering would be the first of its type in New York in five years because the Obama administration opposed holding even informal talks on American soil given North Korea's expansion of its nuclear weapons program. That North Korea is holding two Americans hostage was another impediment.

Meetings with North Korean officials arranged by Mr. Zagoria and other groups were held in world capitals during the Obama era, including Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Berlin last year.

The decision whether to allow the meeting to proceed in New York is now freighted with more than the usual complications.

Over the last 10 days, North Korea has shown its full colors. First, the regime flaunted its expanding nuclear capabilities with the test of an intermediate-range ballistic missile that uses a solid-fuel technology that will make it easier for the country to hide its arsenal.

Then, last week, Kim Jong-nam, the half brother of the North Korean leader, was assassinated in Malaysia in a crowded passenger terminal at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. The South Korean government has publicly accused North Korea of the killing, and six North Koreans have been linked to the plot.

Without these two incidents, the Trump administration could have won praise for breaking the logjam with North Korea by allowing the New York meeting to go ahead, said a former participant in such meetings who declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the topic.

But the assassination of Kim Jong-nam would allow opponents of North Korean engagement to

charge that granting visas only rewarded bad behavior, the person said.

Soon after the killing, Republican and Democratic members of Congress called for the United States to return North Korea to its blacklist of states that sponsor terrorism, from which it was removed nine years ago.

The Trump administration faces another, perhaps more profound, decision on how to handle North Korea. Annual joint military exercises, set for March between South Korea and the United States, are expected to involve an American aircraft carrier, advanced stealth fighters, B-52 and B-1B bombers and a nuclear submarine, according to South Korean news reports.

This annual show of force, not far from the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea and off the Korean coast, has traditionally been viewed by North Korea as an American preparation for an attack against its forces.

With the heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula, and Chinese-North Korean relations at a low point, the risk of a strong response by the North to the exercises —

through the launch of missiles or a nuclear test — is higher than usual, said Peter Hayes, the executive director of the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainability in Berkeley, Calif.

Last year, for example, the North conducted its fifth nuclear test during joint American-South Korean military exercises.

"We are likely entering a new and extremely dangerous phase of the Korean conflict," Mr. Hayes said. He suggested ramping down the exercises to "avoid inadvertent clashes and escalation to nuclear war, and to probe North Korean intentions."

China would like the Trump administration to deal directly with North Korea. Beijing's suspension of coal imports from North Korea was a signal that China was being tougher than usual, offering Mr. Trump a concession to bring Washington to the table with the North.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has stepped up his contacts with Chinese officials in recent days. On Tuesday he spoke by telephone with Yang Jiechi, China's top diplomat, and among the topics they

discussed was how to handle North Korea.

But how much impact a suspension of coal imports would have on the rudimentary and seemingly resilient North Korean economy was far from clear.

The Foreign Ministry insisted Tuesday that the suspension of coal imports was a bureaucratic procedure. In the first six weeks of 2017 China had already imported almost all its annual quota of coal allowed under the United Nations sanctions, the ministry said.

Zhang Liangui, an expert on North Korea at the Central Party School of the Communist Party, said he was not optimistic that any talks with North Korea, formal or informal, would result in a diminishing of the North's nuclear capabilities.

"North Korea has said more than 50 times that it will not participate in any talks that have denuclearization on the agenda," he said. "I don't think President Trump could pull this off and talk the Koreans out of it."

## Editorial : On Venezuela, a surprise stand from Trump

<https://www.facebook.com/washingtonpostopinions>

By Editorial Board

The Post's View

Opinion

**Opinion** A column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages).

February 21 at 7:32 PM

PRESIDENT TRUMP so far has exhibited a deep disinterest in — and even some contempt for — U.S. human rights advocacy. His secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, pointedly declined to acknowledge major offenses by U.S. allies such as the Philippines and Saudi Arabia during his confirmation hearing, or even the well-documented war crimes committed by Russia and Syria in Aleppo. So it was encouraging that the president and the State Department acted last week in support of political prisoners and democracy in a country where both badly need

outside support: Venezuela.

Mr. Trump met at the White House with Lilian Tintori, the wife of imprisoned opposition leader Leopoldo López, and sent out a tweet saying he should be "out of prison immediately." State, meanwhile, finally cleared the way for the sanctioning of two senior Venezuelan officials accused of drug trafficking, including recently appointed Vice President Tareck El Aissami. On Saturday, the third anniversary of Mr. López's arrest, a State Department statement expressed "dismay and concern" about more than 100 political prisoners, including Mr. López and Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma, and called for "respect for the rule of law, the freedom of the press ... and the restoration of a democratic process that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people."

Punishing corrupt Venezuelan leaders and standing up for moderate, nonviolent opponents such as Mr. López ought to be a no-brainer for the United States, given Venezuela's catastrophic decline,

anti-American agenda and increasing isolation in the region. But the Obama administration shied from taking action, citing ongoing negotiations between the regime of Nicolás Maduro and the opposition. In fact, it has been obvious for months that the talks were going nowhere. The administration's caution may have had more to do with avoiding offense to the regime's last supporter — the Castro regime in Cuba — with which President Barack Obama was pursuing what he saw as a legacy-making detente.

Evening Edition newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Please provide a valid email address.

Mr. Trump, who has promised a tougher line toward Havana, suffers from no such constraint; nor does Mr. Tillerson, who led ExxonMobil when it severed its once-extensive relationship with the oil-rich country. Last week's long-overdue sanctions were easy to justify: Mr. El Aissami has been implicated in the

trafficking of cocaine from Venezuelan military air bases, and his installation as vice president positions him to take over the country if Mr. Maduro is ousted. It's no wonder a bipartisan group of 34 members of Congress urged Mr. Trump this month to act against Mr. El Aissami and other senior officials, who are vulnerable to U.S. action because of their holdings of U.S. real estate and bank accounts.

The administration ought to follow up with more sanctions, including against generals involved in profiteering from Venezuela's desperate shortages of food and imprisoning opposition leaders. It should lobby at the Organization of American States for action against the Maduro regime under the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Most important, it should show resolve about human rights in nations that are not so easy to oppose. The Philippines and Saudi Arabia would be good places to start.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## With NAFTA in Trump's crosshairs, Mexico's border factories brace for the unknown (UNE)

By Tracy Jan

EL PASO — If you sleep on a memory foam mattress, chances are good that its fabric cover was made here in a small factory in this desert border town on the westernmost edge of Texas.

Well, here and over there, across the Rio Grande in Ciudad Juarez, a Mexican city where pieces of fabric cut in El Paso are stitched together and shipped back across the border. The supply of cheap labor in Mexico has fueled the rise of manufacturing plants dotting the border known as maquiladoras.

The journey of this mattress cover, from El Paso to Ciudad Juarez and back, illustrates the far-reaching tentacles of free trade and its impact on the border economy and across the United States. It's a journey now fraught with tension as President Trump moves to renegotiate — or even unilaterally withdraw the country from — the 23-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which has allowed maquiladoras to flourish but which Trump and some Rust Belt communities blame for the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Perhaps no one knows the complex implications of trade agreements better than a family whose prosperity and company profits were built on their promises. MFI International is a U.S. textiles manufacturing firm that has operated on the border for three decades. Now, in a moment of uncertainty and flux, the tweaking of any trade deal will change the foundation on which the company runs as well as the economic fates of two cities that are inextricably linked.

"We are in the desert where things don't look that green, but what makes our area very fertile is our people on both sides of the border who work in the manufacturing industry," said Cecilia Levine, who, along with her husband and son, owns MFI International. "Every job in Mexico produces jobs in the United States."

Altering NAFTA could raise another complexity — the higher prices likely to follow would make U.S. companies less competitive against manufacturers overseas.

"Stopping NAFTA doesn't stop the flow of goods coming in from China," Levine said.

NAFTA, which Trump has called "the worst trade deal in history," set the foundation for the current economic ecosystem in border towns by allowing companies in the United States to send raw materials to their plants in Mexico for assembly and import the finished

product back to the United States — generally without paying duties.

The result for consumers: finished goods at a lower price.

On a recent morning in an industrial park on the eastern outskirts of town, rolls of bound cloth waited to be inspected and processed by the 100 or so workers in MFI's El Paso plant. A worker used a knife to manually cut patterns from a three-inch stack of polyester material as cumbia music echoed through the factory.

Once the pieces for the mattress cover are cut, they are loaded onto semi-trucks bound for Ciudad Juarez, where workers earning less than half the salary of their U.S. counterparts sew the pieces together.

'Economies are intertwined'

Cecilia Levine used to cross the U.S.-Mexico border four to six times each day.

She started manufacturing plus-size fashion in Ciudad Juarez with a six-person plant in 1986, seeking to take advantage of a previous customs rule that allowed U.S. materials to enter Mexico duty free as long as the manufactured products were exported back to the United States. Within a couple years, her factory had grown to 260 workers.

Then a single mom, she recalled her daily routine of piling her three young children in the car and driving from their El Paso home over the bridge to Ciudad Juarez to open the factory by 6:30 each morning before schlepping them back to El Paso in time for school. Her American children grew up in the factories, doing their homework, learning to sew and driving forklifts.

Shortly thereafter, she met Lance Levine, who had just moved his vacuum cleaner filter factories from New York and Illinois to El Paso and Ciudad Juarez to better compete with the Asian market. He was expanding manufacturing to include other goods such as jock straps and baby carriers. She snagged a contract away from him to make slippers, and they fell in love. She sold her company and joined his, as the chief of operations.

Business boomed after NAFTA came into force in 1994. In addition to lowering tariffs among the United States, Canada and Mexico, the trade agreement created a common set of rules, regulations and practices among the countries. That made companies feel more comfortable about the long-term stability of the U.S.-Mexico relationship, prompting them to

invest in manufacturing operations along the border, Lance Levine said.

Maquiladora employment in Mexico grew 86 percent in the first five years after the onset of NAFTA, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. MFI expanded the number of workers in both its El Paso and Ciudad Juarez plants.

Then China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, opening up the world economy for Chinese exports. Nearly all textiles manufacturing migrated to China, where production costs were much smaller in comparison.

"We got killed. Virtually the entire textile industry in the U.S. was destroyed. We just couldn't compete with Chinese prices," said Lance Levine, accusing China of currency manipulation and government subsidies that he said prevented fair competition. "Our trade policies just allowed that to happen."

At the time, Lance Levine sat on an International Trade Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commerce Department. Cecilia Levine served on President George W. Bush's Export Council. Together they raised concerns to the U.S. government about American businesses losing their competitive edge to China. Cecilia even traveled to China with then-Commerce Secretary Donald Evans to meet with the Chinese government about leveling the playing field — to no avail.

"It was like a nightmare. All our baby products went away. Clothing went away. Home furnishings went away," Cecilia Levine said. "Other companies that only made pants and shirts disappeared. But we were flexible. If I'd only known how to make jeans and those jeans went away, I could have sat there and cried. I learned to make something else."

MFI switched to manufacturing larger products, such as mattress and couch covers, that would cost more to transport from China to the United States.

The Levines' concerns over unfair foreign competition is reflected in Trump's trade rhetoric. Trump has already withdrawn the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a 12-nation trade agreement designed during the Obama administration to help the countries compete against China's growing economic clout. But Trump argued that the deal would have put U.S. workers at a disadvantage to cheaper labor in countries that were also part of the deal, such as Vietnam. Instead, Trump has

threatened to impose high tariffs on Chinese, as well as Mexican, goods.

Economists say that NAFTA has benefited the United States overall and that raising tariffs would risk sparking a trade war and wreak havoc on the manufacturing supply chain. Slapping a 35 percent import tariff, as Trump has threatened with Mexico, would be "bad for growth, bad for business, bad for jobs," said Caroline Freund, senior fellow with the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

Freund chalks up Trump's talk of high tariffs and withdrawal from NAFTA as negotiating ploys. A more likely scenario floated by the administration, she said, would be to push for rules mandating that a higher percentage of parts and materials originate in North America in order for traded products to be exempt from tariffs. That would limit imported materials from Asia, where MFI gets much of its fabric.

But even that change could have negative consequences, Freund said, "making production less efficient and making our companies less competitive globally," she said.

Others are more supportive of the Trump administration's attempt to renegotiate NAFTA. Raising the requirement for parts originating in North America would encourage foreign companies to locate production plants in North America and prevent "free-riding imports" from China and elsewhere, said Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing.

MFI currently imports about 20 percent of its cloth from Asia because it's cheaper than domestic cloth. Certain types of material are no longer available in the United States because the textiles mills have either closed or moved to Asia over the past two decades, said Lance Levine. Even most of the U.S. fabric used by MFI is woven or knit from Asian yarn.

Still, Lance Levine said, finished goods are arriving in the United States from China at a lower cost than the materials themselves. Unless the United States increases tariffs on those finished products, U.S. manufacturers would still lose, Levine said, because renegotiating NAFTA to raise the percentage of materials sourced from North America would result in higher priced mattresses made in the United States and Mexico.

Already, MFI produces some "Made in the USA" mattress covers completely assembled in El Paso for mattress companies who request them — at a higher cost.



"If my products were to become more expensive, I guarantee you my clients are going to buy where they can get equal products at lower cost," Levine said. "They have to be competitive worldwide. This is not as easy as it first seemed on the campaign trail. There are a lot of sensitive negotiations here."

Cross-border trade existed in this region long before NAFTA and will continue no matter what Trump does, Cecilia Levine figures. One of her great-grandfathers traded cattle with Mexico. Another operated gold mines in Mexico as well as luxury department stores in both the United States and Mexico. Her father ran cotton gins in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua and sold Pima cotton to the United States.

International trade, she said, is in her blood — and the country's.

"Mexico makes the perfect partner with the U.S.," she said. "Our economies are intertwined."

'The stakes are very high'

In an industrial park in Ciudad Juarez, about a 20-minute drive from MFI's El Paso factory, workers sit in clusters surrounded by plastic crates overflowing with pieces of cloth. Some sew covers for a major memory foam mattress brand, assembling zippers, adding labels, topstitching fabric panels. Others do the same for a start-up "bed-in-a-box" company. Altogether, MFI produces mattress covers for seven U.S. memory foam bedding companies.

A child Jesus doll, Santo Niño de Atocha, watches over them from his perch on a little wooden chair nailed to the white cinder block wall. So does Saint Jude, a saint of miracles — as well as a screen displaying their productivity in real time.

The factory's 650 workers come in two shifts — the first from 6 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., the second until half past midnight, five days a week. They are paid by seniority and skill set, with a seamstress earning, on average, \$147 a week including benefits.

Many of the employees have been with MFI for more than 20 years, met their spouses here and witnessed Cecilia's children grow up in the factory. Now her son, Lawrence Wollschlager, is taking over the family business as MFI International's president and chief operating officer. When he walks onto the factory floor, cutting a striking figure in his well-tailored suit and brown and blue leather oxford shoes, the women pretend to swoon over their sewing machines.

But workers have been harder to find these days. Maquiladoras in Ciudad Juarez were short about 30,000 workers in 2016, according to local business associations. That deficit has dropped dramatically in 2017, to between 3,000 and 6,000, according to the Industria de Exportación, a nonprofit representing Mexican export companies, because companies are not growing as quickly given the uncertain political and economic climate.

While many workers moved to Ciudad Juarez from elsewhere in Mexico for these factory jobs, thousands more moved out in recent years when the city was racked by violence. The crime has subsided, and "vacantes" signs advertising job openings have sprung up on fences around the industrial parks. An increase in auto manufacturing plants contributed to the worker shortage, Wollschlager said, as well as an aging workforce. Young people in Mexico simply don't find factory work to be all that attractive these days, he said.

To lure workers from the south, maquiladoras in Ciudad Juarez began offering benefits such as two square meals a day and transportation from their homes to the factories. The commute to MFI's plant on refurbished school buses painted white could stretch to more than two hours amid afternoon traffic. The factory also offers workers a chance to complete their elementary and secondary educations, with lessons squeezed in before or after their shifts.

The worker shortage in the north recently prompted MFI to open a second Mexico plant farther south, in Jimenez, Chihuahua, where the company employs close to 100 operators.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates that 6 million U.S. jobs depend on trade with Mexico. Many are on the border; a 10 percent increase in manufacturing on the Mexican side increases employment in El Paso by 2.8 percent, according to research by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. In addition to factory work making parts for the supply chain of cars, medical devices and electronics, thousands of U.S. warehousing and logistics jobs are driven by cross-border operations.

In Ciudad Juarez, the number of maquiladoras has risen by more than 40 percent since NAFTA to 327 plants today, according to research by the University of Texas at El Paso Border Region Modeling Project.

But the business community here is on edge. More than two dozen business leaders and mayors recently penned a letter to Congress warning that retreating from NAFTA would cripple trade and cause recessions in border communities and elsewhere in the United States.

Uncertainty over NAFTA has frozen investments in the region, with hiring and land purchases slowing, said Jon Barela, chief executive of the Borderplex Alliance, a nonprofit focused on promoting economic opportunity in El Paso, Ciudad Juarez and southern New Mexico. In one week alone, he said, at least a dozen companies have frozen capital investments on both sides of the border, delayed hiring and canceled factory orders from U.S. suppliers as well as transportation contracts with trucking companies.

"The stakes are very high," Barela said. "For decades the two nations have worked to develop a relationship that Trump has blown apart in a matter of a week."

'Difficult to stay open'

Delighted whoops and hollers erupt from a sewing cluster in another corner of MFI's Ciudad Juarez plant. Geronimo Renteria, a 62-year-old nicknamed "El Gallo" (The Rooster), entertains his colleagues with his realistic clucking and crowing. Renteria stood out in his white fedora, which he's allowed to wear only on Fridays because he and his colleagues go dancing after work.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

Please provide a valid email address.

Renteria said he came to MFI three years ago because he likes to sew. Previously he was making wiring harnesses for airplanes at another maquiladora. That factory did not allow him to wear his fedora.

"A lot of other companies don't take the elders. If you're 50, forget it. But here, we embrace the elders," said Cecilia Levine.

It would be a mistake to think that all these jobs in Ciudad Juarez would return to El Paso if the United States pulled out of NAFTA, she said. What would more likely happen, she said, is that the mattress companies, too, would decamp for China, taking the jobs in Ciudad Juarez and El Paso along with them.

"It would be very difficult to stay open," she said. "You are talking about a U.S. company that would suffer."

Once the mattress covers are complete, workers load crates of finished covers into the back of a semi-truck, ready to return to El Paso. From there, the covers will be shipped to various mattress companies around the United States to be stuffed with memory foam and sold in stores.

## ETATS-UNIS

The  
Washington  
Post

**Trump administration issues new immigration enforcement policies, says goal is not 'mass deportations' (UNE)**

<https://www.facebook.com/nakamuraadavid>

The Trump administration on Tuesday sought to allay growing

fears among immigrant communities over wide-ranging new directives to ramp up enforcement against illegal immigrants, insisting

the measures are not intended to produce "mass deportations."

Federal officials cautioned that many of the changes detailed in a

pair of memos from Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly will take time to implement because of costs and logistical challenges and that border patrol agents and

immigration officers will use their expanded powers with care and discretion.

Yet the official public rollout of Kelly's directives, first disclosed in media reports over the weekend, was met with outrage from immigrant rights advocates over concerns the new policies will result in widespread abuses as authorities attempt to fulfill President Trump's goals of tightening border control.

Trump took a hard line against illegal immigration during his campaign, at times suggesting he would seek to create a nationwide "deportation force" to expel as many of the nation's estimated 11 million unauthorized immigrants as possible.

In a conference call with reporters, a senior Department of Homeland Security official moved to avert what he called a "sense of panic" among immigrant communities.

(Alice Li/The Washington Post)

Jeanette Vizguerra, an undocumented immigrant who has lived in the U.S. for 20 years, is under a deportation order and was supposed to check in with authorities on February 15. Instead, the mother of four and immigration activist is seeking sanctuary 15 miles away in the basement of First Unitarian Society of Denver. She plans to remain there indefinitely. How far would you go to avoid being deported? For one mother, she's willing to risk it all by seeking sanctuary in a church. (Alice Li/The Washington Post)

"We do not have the personnel, time or resources to go into communities and round up people and do all kinds of mass throwing folks on buses. That's entirely a figment of folks' imagination," said the official, who was joined on the call by two others, all of whom spoke on condition of anonymity to answer questions. "This is not intended to produce mass roundups, mass deportations."

The new guidelines, intended as a road map toward implementing a pair of executive actions Trump signed last month, call for the hiring of thousands of additional enforcement agents, expanding the pool of immigrants who are prioritized for removal, speeding up deportation hearings and enlisting local law enforcement to help make arrests.

The policies represent a sharp break from the final years of the Obama administration and could reverse a sizable reduction in the number of deportations that

occurred toward the end of President Barack Obama's time in office.

After deportations reached a record high of 434,000 in 2013, intense pressure from immigration advocates prompted the Obama administration to implement new guidelines that focused enforcement on hardened criminals. Obama announced in Nov. 2014 that his administration would deport "felons, not families." Many undocumented immigrants have lived in the country for more than a decade and have family members and children who are U.S. citizens.

The number of people deported in 2015 was just over 333,000, the lowest number since 2007, according to federal data. Statistics for 2016 are not publicly available.

Kelly's new DHS policies considerably broaden the pool of undocumented immigrants prioritized for removal, including those who have been charged with crimes but not convicted, those who commit acts that constitute a "chargeable criminal offense," and those who an immigration officer concludes pose "a risk to public safety or national security."

The Trump administration "is using the specter of crime to create fear ... in the American community about immigrants in order to create an opening to advance the indiscriminate persecution of immigrants," said Clarissa Martínez-de-Castro, deputy vice president at the National Council of La Raza. "This administration is saying, 'Now, everybody is going to be a priority,' and the devil may care."

DHS officials emphasized that the guidelines in Kelly's memos hew closely to the language of Trump's executive orders and that the secretary has written the memos to conform to federal immigration laws established by Congress.

"We are not creating anything out of whole cloth," the DHS official said.

Democrats and human rights groups blasted the administration. Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) called the policies "xenophobic" and suggested they could lead to racial profiling of minorities.

"It is irresponsible to treat a hardened criminal the same as an immigrant mother with children for purposes of deportation," Menendez said in a statement.

*[Trump's hard-line immigration rhetoric runs into obstacles — including Trump]*

White House press secretary Sean Spicer also denied that the goal of Trump's executive orders is mass deportations. Rather, he said, the Obama administration had allowed "so many carve outs" on which immigrants were to be the focus of enforcement actions that federal agents "had their hands cuffed behind them."

"The president wanted to take the shackles off individuals in these agencies and say, 'You have a mission, there are laws that need to be followed, you should do your mission and follow the law,'" Spicer said.

Yet Spicer on several occasions during his daily press briefing misrepresented the number of undocumented immigrants living in the country, citing "13, 14, 15" million, or "potentially more." In fact, the number has held steady in recent years at just over 11 million, after peaking in 2007 at about 12.2 million, according to a report last fall from Pew Research Center.

That is in part because of stricter border control measures have flattened the net flow of illegal immigrants to roughly zero, according to the report.

During his campaign, Trump said he thought there could be as many as "30" million illegal immigrants. "Nobody knows what the number is," he said.

Trump's early attempts to crackdown on immigration, including his executive order banning travel of citizens from seven Muslim-majority nations, have drawn criticism both in the United States and abroad. Kelly and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson plan to visit Mexico later this week where tensions over the president's plan to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border are sure to be on display. Around the same time, House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) will be leading a delegation of lawmakers to the border as Congress wrestles with how to actually implement Trump's signature campaign promise.

Kelly's implementation memos do not overturn one important directive from the Obama administration: a program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals that has provided work permits to more than 750,000 immigrants who came to the country illegally as children.

Trump had promised during his campaign to "immediately terminate" the program, calling it an unconstitutional "executive amnesty," but he has wavered since then. Last week, he said he would

"show great heart" in determining the fate of that program.

But the new directives released on Tuesday seek to expand partnerships with local law enforcement agencies to apprehend undocumented immigrants, hire 10,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and 5,000 new Border Patrol agents, and broaden expedited deportations, currently limited to those in the country two weeks or less, to those who have been in the country for up to two years.

The provisions mandate that the government detain immigrants until they are granted a hearing before an immigration judge, ending the Obama administration's policy of releasing some to live with relatives until their hearings. Backlogs at immigration courts have delayed hearings for more than a year.

#### Local Politics Alerts

Breaking news about local government in D.C., Md., Va.

Please provide a valid email address.

The provisions also allow federal authorities to prosecute the parents of unaccompanied minors who enter the country illegally if they are found to have paid smugglers.

DHS officials said the Trump administration is seeking to maximize federal immigration policies that have been on the books for years but were not used by the Obama administration.

Some of the changes, they said, will take time to implement because of the costs and because some of the policies must be announced through the federal register. Officials declined to estimate the costs for the additional personnel, including more immigration judges to speed up hearings, as well as significant new detention housing for unauthorized immigrants awaiting their court proceedings.

"This will not happen tomorrow," the DHS official said.

"The big picture here is that we're executing what the president directed, which is consistent with what Congress put into law," the official added. "We will do so professionally. We will treat everyone humanely and with dignity, but we're going to execute the laws of the United States."

# Trump Administration Tightens Deportation, Detention Rules (UNE)

Laura Meckler

Updated Feb. 21,

2017 6:42 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—The Trump administration on Tuesday implemented sweeping changes to the way immigration policy is enforced, making clear that millions of people living illegally in the U.S. are now subject to deportation and pushing authorities to fast-track the removal of many of them.

Memos issued by the Department of Homeland Security flesh out a pair of executive orders signed last month by President Donald Trump, who campaigned on a promise to crack down on illegal immigration. Together, the memos amount to major changes, both at the border with Mexico and in the interior of the U.S.

The policy calls for enlisting local authorities to enforce immigration law, jailing more people while they wait for their hearings and trying to send border crossers back to Mexico to await proceedings, even if they aren't Mexican.

Much of the Trump approach would require new spending. The memos call for 5,000 more Border Patrol agents, 10,000 more immigration enforcement officers, considerably more detention space and a border wall with Mexico estimated by the administration to cost more than \$21 billion. Homeland Security officials said they didn't know the total cost of the plan, and most of this would require funding from Congress.

But the policy on deportations has begun taking effect. Raids this month targeted criminals but also snagged undocumented immigrants who would have likely been given a reprieve under rules set by the Obama administration.

"If in the performance of our duty, looking for a criminal alien, we find someone there in the house who is here illegally, we just can't ignore that," Thomas Homan, acting director of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, said in an interview Tuesday. "We have to look at the case [on] a case-by-case basis, and find out do we put that person in [deportation] proceedings."

Under Obama-era rules, undocumented immigrants who didn't fall into one of the administration's priority groups were generally safe from deportation. Mr. Obama's priority groups included people convicted of serious crimes and recent border crossers. Under

the new policies, officials said Tuesday, almost anybody in the U.S. illegally is subject to deportation at any time.

"The Department no longer will exempt classes or categories of removable aliens from potential enforcement," the enforcement memo says. "Department personnel have full authority to arrest or apprehend an alien whom an immigration officer has probable cause to believe is in violation of the immigration laws."

The memos still outline priority groups among the estimated 11 million people in the U.S. illegally, starting with serious criminals. But the priorities are much broader and include people charged with crimes who haven't been convicted, people guilty only of immigration-related crimes such as using false documents and anybody who an immigration officer believes is a risk to public safety.

DHS officials said they wouldn't target otherwise law-abiding undocumented immigrants and said their limited resources would still require a focus on those people who pose a public-safety risk. They also said rules regarding not picking up people at "sensitive locations" such as churches, remain in effect. "You will not see folks rounded up," one official said.

But officials also said people aren't exempt from deportation just because they may not fall into a priority group.

The new guidance is likely to face legal challenges, advocates said, and immigration-rights advocates called the policy a license for "mass deportation."

"These memos amount to an instruction manual for the coast-to-coast, fast-track deportation of everyone in the United States without papers, no matter how long they've been here, how strong their family ties and how much they contribute," said Lynn Tramoto, deputy director of America's Voice Education Fund, an advocacy group.

The policy is also likely to further alienate many Hispanic voters from Mr. Trump's Republican Party, although in the 2016 election, the president overcame a poor showing with these voters with strong backing elsewhere.

Supporters of stricter enforcement said the new rules were bringing policy into compliance with the law.

"There's nothing really out of the ordinary about what they're doing

here," said Ira Mehlman of the Federation for American Immigration Reform. "It's just out of the ordinary compared to what the policy was under the Obama administration."

A separate Trump administration executive order suspending the U.S. refugee program and banning entry to the U.S. by people from certain countries has been put on hold by the courts. The White House is expected to release a new version of that order as early as this week.

The two new memos were dated Tuesday and signed by DHS Secretary John Kelly. One dealt with issues related to border security, and a second focused on immigration enforcement in the nation's interior. They include only minor changes to draft memos dated Friday and reported Saturday by The Wall Street Journal.

The final version includes a new policy seeking to deport or possibly prosecute parents who facilitate the travel of their children to the U.S. illegally. It also suggests the children who are reunited with their parents may no longer qualify for special treatment under U.S. law for unaccompanied minors.

At the same time, the orders make clear that the Trump administration, at least for now, is retaining the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, created under Mr. Obama's administration. That program provides safe harbor from deportation and work permits to about 750,000 young people brought to the U.S. as children, known as "Dreamers." As a candidate, Mr. Trump promised to kill the program, but since then he has expressed sympathy for this group.

"We're going to try and take care of the Dreamers very, very much," Mr. Trump said Tuesday in an interview with MSNBC.

The memo on border security orders the DHS to begin the planning and construction of a wall at the Mexico border, though its language suggests security measures other than a wall may be used. The order specifies that the wall should be planned for "the most appropriate locations" and that officials should use "appropriate materials and technology to most effectively achieve operational control of the border."

While the proposal for the wall has generated more public attention, the changes that Mr. Trump's administration is ordering to

deportation policy are likely to have a much more profound impact.

For many years, officials have expedited removals of people within 14 days of their having crossed into the country illegally, while other longer-term residents who were found to have been in the country illegally could have their cases heard in an immigration court. Because such courts are severely backlogged, the effect has been that many people get to stay in the U.S. for an extended period.

The new policy under Mr. Trump, which will be published in the Federal Register, will apply expedited removal to people who came to the U.S. within the previous two years. A DHS official said the new approach was consistent with the law as written.

The agency also seeks to speed up the process for determining eligibility for asylum, which many Central Americans apply for upon arrival.

In addition, the memos lay out a process for trying to prevent people who arrive at the border from ever getting into the interior of the U.S. Under current policy, Mexicans are turned back to Mexico almost immediately, but people from other countries have their cases heard inside the U.S.

New administration rules plan to return some non-Mexicans to Mexico to await proceedings. The agency suggests this could be accomplished by teleconference, though other details of the proposal weren't available, and the program would need to be agreed to by Mexico.

The new orders may come up this week, when Mr. Kelly and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson travel to Mexico to meet with top officials.

The memos also lay out plans to resume coordination with local law-enforcement officials through a program called Secure Communities, in which local officials are asked to detain suspected undocumented immigrants until federal officials can pick them up.

Homeland Security will now seek to enlist local law enforcement for help on immigration law at the Mexican border, in addition to the cooperation some provide in the rest of the country.

**Write to** Laura Meckler at [laura.meckler@wsj.com](mailto:laura.meckler@wsj.com)

## Editorial : Mr. Trump's 'Deportation Force' Prepares an Assault on American Values

The Editorial Board

Golden Cosmos

The homeland security secretary, John Kelly, issued a remarkable pair of memos on Tuesday. They are the battle plan for the "deportation force" President Trump promised in the campaign.

They are remarkable for how completely they turn sensible immigration policies upside down and backward. For how they seek to make the deportation machinery more extreme and frightening (and expensive), to the detriment of deeply held American values.

A quick flashback: The Obama administration recognized that millions of unauthorized immigrants, especially those with citizen children and strong ties to their communities and this country, deserved a chance to stay and get right with the law. It tried to focus on deporting dangerous criminals, national-security threats and recent border crossers.

Mr. Kelly has swept away those notions. He makes practically every deportable person a deportation priority. He wants *everybody*, starting with those who have been

convicted of any crime, no matter how petty or old. Proportionality, discretion, the idea that some convictions are unjust, the principles behind criminal-justice reform — these concepts do not apply.

The targets now don't even have to be criminals. They could simply have been accused of a crime (that is, still presumed "innocent") or have done something that makes an immigration agent believe that they might possibly face charges.

Mr. Kelly included a catchall provision allowing Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers or Border Patrol agents — or local police officers or sheriff's deputies — to take in anyone they think could be "a risk to public safety or national security." That is a recipe for policing abuses and racial profiling, a possibility that Mr. Kelly will vastly expand if Congress gives him the huge sums required to hire 10,000 ICE officers and 5,000 Border Patrol agents.

He wants to "surge," his verb, the hiring of immigration judges and asylum officers. He wants to add processing and detention centers, which surely has the private-prison

industry salivating at the profits to come.

He wants to ramp up programs deputizing state and local law enforcement officers as immigration enforcers. He calls them "a highly successful force multiplier," which is true if you want a dragnet. It's not true if you want to fight crime effectively and keep communities safe. When every local law enforcement encounter can be a prelude to deportation, unauthorized immigrants will fear and avoid the police. And when state and local officers untrained in immigration law suddenly get to decide who stays and who goes, the risk of injustice is profound.

So is the danger to due process. Current procedure allows for swiftly deporting, without a hearing, immigrants who are caught near the border and who entered very recently. But Mr. Kelly notes that the law allows him to fast-track the removal of immigrants caught anywhere in the country who cannot prove they have been here "continuously" for at least two years. He's keeping his options open about whether to short-circuit due process with a coast-to-coast show-me-your-papers policy.

He plans to publish data on crimes committed by unauthorized immigrants, and to identify state and local jurisdictions that release immigrants from custody. Why? To promote the false idea, as Mr. Trump has shamefully done, that immigrants pose particular safety risks and to punish so-called sanctuary cities that, for reasons of public order and decency, are trying to disconnect themselves from ICE.

This is how Mr. Trump's rantings about "bad hombres" and alien rapist terrorists have now been weaponized, in cold bureaucratic language.

Mr. Kelly promised before his confirmation to be a reasonable enforcer of defensible policies. But immigrants have reason to be frightened by his sudden alignment with Mr. Trump's nativism. So does every American who believes that the country is, or should be, committed to the sensible, proportionate application of laws, welcoming to immigrants, and respectful of the facts.

## Editorial : The Trump administration's blueprint for mass removals, with a streak of cruelty

<https://www.facebook.com/washingtonpostopinions>

By Editorial Board

The Post's View

Opinion

**Opinion** A column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages).

February 21 at 7:34 PM

IN THE fiscal year that ended last fall, the number of undocumented immigrants apprehended on the southwestern border was just a quarter the number in 2000 and less than half the annual count during most of George W. Bush's administration. Although last year's apprehensions in the Southwest rose from the previous year — largely because of unaccompanied minors and families from Central America seeking refugee status — the overall number was among the lowest since the turn of the century.

Nonetheless, Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly has somehow conjured what he called a

"surge of illegal immigration at the southern border [that] has overwhelmed federal agencies and resources and created a significant national security vulnerability to the United States." Mr. Kelly's unfounded rhetoric is contained in a memorandum, released Tuesday, that provides an inventive rationale to justify the Trump administration's overbroad expansion of deportation efforts. The effect of the new DHS guidelines is to sharply expand the pool of immigrants designated as priorities for deportation.

They do so by various means, including widening the targets of expedited deportation proceedings, until now limited to undocumented immigrants in the country for no more than two weeks and living within 100 miles of the border, to people who entered in the past two years and live anywhere in the nation — a cohort estimated at 800,000 to 1.1 million people. They also target not only people convicted of serious crimes but also those convicted of minor infractions, such as using a false Social Security number to get a job.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

Please provide a valid email address.

The guidelines' subsidiary effects are just as concerning. They compromise law enforcement efforts in counties and cities nationwide by expanding efforts to deputize local police to act as federal deportation agents. That could chill cooperation between local law enforcement agencies and immigrant neighborhoods. The document sends a message of fear through many of America's immigrant communities — not just the estimated 11.1 million unauthorized immigrants, but also their spouses, children and other relatives living legally in the United States.

Administration officials sought to ease such concerns by offering assurances that some enforcement measures will be implemented gradually, including an effort to return Central American refugees to

Mexico as they await hearings on asylum claims. That will rely on coordination with Mexican authorities, whose cooperation may be dimmed by Mr. Trump's hostility and his insistence that Mexico will pay for a wall it vehemently opposes.

Sean Spicer, the White House spokesman, likes to echo Mr. Trump's comment that he has "a big heart," the supposed evidence being that the DHS guidelines do not, for now, aim deportation efforts at "dreamers" — the 750,000 young people given work permits and temporarily shielded from removal by the Obama administration. While that is welcome, in other respects a streak of cruelty runs through the new policy. For instance, it seeks to deter the entry of unaccompanied minors by threatening to prosecute parents if they paid smugglers to help their children cross the border. Deterrence is a fair goal if achieved by humane means. In this case, the administration's policies will break up families and harm people leading peaceable lives.



## White House Contradicts Justice Department on Immigration Order

Ted Mann and  
Brent Kendall

Feb. 21, 2017 9:44 p.m. ET

White House press secretary Sean Spicer on Tuesday contradicted a Justice Department court filing on President Donald Trump's plans to rescind his executive order on visas and refugees, saying the original ban wouldn't be revoked as another one is issued.

At a White House press briefing, Mr. Spicer said the president would soon issue a new executive order with an updated iteration of the ban but he wouldn't rescind the current order, which has been suspended by the courts. The order temporarily blocked entry to the U.S. from seven majority-Muslim countries. It also temporarily halted the U.S. refugee program and indefinitely blocked entry by refugees from Syria.

The administration says the ban is aimed at halting immigration from countries identified as having poor ability to vet migrants for connections to terrorism. Critics say the order is an unconstitutional attempt to screen immigrants on the basis of religion and fails to provide due-process rights to those affected.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, based in San Francisco, ruled the order should be suspended for now, while several legal challenges to its underlying legality work their way through the courts.

That ruling was made by a three-judge panel of the court, and an unnamed judge recently requested that a larger group of judges from the court reconsider the decision. But the Justice Department told the court last week that it didn't need to reconsider the ruling.

"Rather than continuing this litigation, the president intends in

the near future to rescind the order and replace it with a new, substantially revised executive order to eliminate what the panel erroneously thought were constitutional concerns," the department wrote.

But Mr. Spicer, questioned on the matter on Tuesday, suggested that while the administration does plan to issue a new executive order on immigration, it would leave the original order in place, confident it would prevail in the courts.

A Justice spokeswoman declined to comment on Mr. Spicer's remarks or the White House's plans for the next executive order. However, this could leave the department in an awkward position, since it told a federal court in writing that the administration planned to pursue one path, and now the government may take a different path, the sort of misstep that has angered judges in the past.

It also could lead to some confusion in the numerous cases challenging the executive order, since courts would have to consider the legality of one order while another has already been issued that could supersede parts of the earlier version.

President Trump has previously suggested that rescinding and replacing the order would be the best way to address the courts' concerns and implement changes to the immigration system quickly.

It isn't clear when a new order would be issued. Mr. Trump signaled earlier this month that a new order could come down last week, but no order emerged. Mr. Spicer said Tuesday that work on the order was continuing within the administration but didn't give a timeline for its release.

**Write to** Ted Mann at [ted.mann@wsj.com](mailto:ted.mann@wsj.com) and Brent Kendall at [brent.kendall@wsj.com](mailto:brent.kendall@wsj.com)

## Adrienne LaFrance : A Border Wall by 2020? Doubt It

Adrienne

LaFrance

The construction of a massive wall along the border of the United States and Mexico is one of President Donald Trump's central campaign promises. And it's a promise he intends to keep.

Within days of taking the oath of office in January, Trump began laying the groundwork for the construction of a series of walls and fences that would span some 1,250 miles along the border. On Monday, the Department of Homeland Security issued a memo outlining its commitment to "begin planning, design, construction and maintenance of a wall" to deter and prevent illegal entry into the United States. The memo follows an executive order in which Trump called for the wall's "immediate construction."

But how immediately can Trump's wall be built?

One of the latest estimates, from an internal Department of Homeland Security report obtained by *Reuters*, is that the wall will take three-and-a-half years to build. The agency is aiming to seal the border in three phases of construction of fences and walls, completing its work by the end of 2020, *Reuters* reported.

But that estimate is almost certainly too ambitious, and for a few reasons. First and foremost, there's the fact that Congress still has to approve the bulk of the money for a

project that is likely to cost tens of billions of dollars, according to several estimates.

Even if lawmakers approved that kind of cash this week, the wall almost certainly wouldn't be complete by the end of Trump's first term—or even a potential second term. The "iron law" of infrastructural megaprojects, according to a paper by Bent Flyvbjerg published in the *Project Management Journal* in 2014, is that they will go "over budget, over time, over and over again."

This is obviously the case in projects where everything that can go wrong seemingly does (think: Boston's infamous Big Dig highway project). But even for well-managed megaprojects, building major infrastructure always seems to take longer than estimates suggest. Sometimes that's because a time estimate only pertains to the actual construction—not the time leading up to it, says Andrew Natsios, the director of the Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs at Texas A&M University.

Natsios is a public-finance expert who was hired to salvage the Big Dig project after catastrophic cost overruns. He also has a reputation for stinginess. (Evidence for his frugality, *The New York Times* reported in 2000, was displayed on a conference room in his office at the time: "a red sign with the simple word 'No.'") Natsios told me that he hasn't studied the wall, specifically,

but that it is likely to face the same sorts of challenges that any megaproject bumps up against.

"Some of the wall will have to be built on private property and the owners may challenge the federal government's taking of the land," he wrote in an email. "Politics extended the construction of the Big Dig in Boston for years because of innumerable disputes. That will likely be the case in the construction of the wall on the U.S. border with Mexico."

That said, there are some aspects of the project that make it easier to stick to a timetable. The fact that the wall is to be built on "open land," rather than in an urban area, is hugely helpful, Natsios told me. "Building on land where there are existing buildings, in urban areas, that takes much longer," he said.

That's not to say it will be easy. "The border presents huge topographical challenges to construction," analysts at the research firm AllianceBernstein wrote in a report last year. "It runs through remote desert in Arizona, over rugged mountains in New Mexico and, for two thirds of its length, along rivers... These difficulties were illustrated during the construction of the existing fence which was beset by delays, surging costs and disputes with private land owners."

Overrun models demonstrate that delays to major infrastructure

projects often beget more delays. This is an easy concept to understand, but a difficult one to quantify. "The potential to lose productivity as work slips from its initial plan is generally understood but rarely considered explicitly in planning and estimating," wrote Stephen Grey, an expert in uncertainty models, in a 2010 paper on risk management. "It raises the hypothesis that some projects lose control over their schedule because insufficient effort was devoted to understanding the effect of small deviations from the plan—and to preparing to prevent it from snowballing into a progressive decline."

The bigger the project, the worse this snowball effect can be. And all over the world, infrastructure projects are ballooning in size. "Not only are megaprojects large," wrote Flyvbjerg, who is the founding chair of Major Program Management at Oxford University's Saïd Business School, in his 2014 paper, "they are constantly growing ever larger in a long historical trend with no end in sight."

All the while, project managers are generally terrible at developing accurate scheduling estimates—whether because they're deceptive or just irrationally optimistic. "People have a tendency to think what they want to think is true," Erik Angner, a philosopher who studies rationality told *The Wall Street Journal* in 2010. "It's conceivable that bidders are lying. But it's also conceivable

they managed to convince themselves they can do it as cheaply as they say they can."

What this means for Trump's border wall is uncertain. But it does underscore the likelihood that one

of the president's central campaign promises won't be fulfilled by the end of his presidency.

**The  
New York  
Times**

### 3 Generals Bound by Iraq Will Guide Trump on Security (UNE)

Peter Baker and  
Eric Schmitt

Ramadi, Iraq, in September 2008.  
Wathiq Khuzaie/Getty Images

WASHINGTON — At one point or another, they each strode the sands of Iraq, fighting on the unforgiving battlefield of America's costliest war since Vietnam. Now all three will sit around the table in the White House Situation Room, steering a new president through the treacherous crosscurrents of a stormy world.

President Trump's appointment of H. R. McMaster, an Army lieutenant general, as his new national security adviser creates a powerful troika of senior officers who served in Iraq, teaming him up with Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and John F. Kelly, the secretary of homeland security, both retired four-star Marine generals. This administration is the first to have all three security jobs filled by senior military veterans at the same time.

The ascension of the three generals to political jobs at the National Security Council reflects the rise of a generation of military leaders that came of age during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that began after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. Each officer saw up close what a losing war looked like and took away lessons about how to avoid repeating fatal mistakes. Each got to where he is today in part by bucking the military hierarchy.

"This generation of generals lived through some of the struggles, especially in the '04, '05, '06 time frame in Iraq when we weren't doing things right," said Senator Tom Cotton, Republican of Arkansas, an Army veteran who served in Iraq. "They understand that security and military force are the pre-eminent requirement, but it's not sufficient. This generation of generals who grew up in the Iraq war probably understands that more than any previous generation."

Mr. Cotton was the one who persuaded the White House to consider Mr. McMaster, who became known over the years for questioning orthodox views of the Vietnam and Iraq wars. "Donald Trump is an unconventional president, and I think it fits him well to have someone who for many years colored outside the lines and so many times was proven right," Mr. Cotton said.

General John F. Kelly during a handover ceremony with Maamoun Sami Rashid Al-Alwani, right, the governor of Anbar Province, in

While some critics worry about the prevalence of military officers in political posts, others have welcomed the three generals, hoping that they will serve as a brake on bad ideas. "All three of them showed an independent streak and a talent that is in my view extraordinary, and I've known a hell of a lot of them over the years," Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, said in an interview.

How much any of the three will be able to shape Mr. Trump's policies remains an open question. When the president considered reinstituting torture for the interrogation of terrorism suspects, Mr. Mattis objected and Mr. Trump backed down, saying he would defer to his defense secretary. But when the White House enacted a temporary ban on refugees and on any visitors from seven predominantly Muslim countries, Mr. Kelly was not fully briefed until late in the process.

Mr. McMaster, 54, will have an office across the West Wing from Mr. Trump, and will see him more than any of the three. He has the least Washington experience of the group, meaning he will have to learn on the job how to balance the various constituencies, including the Pentagon, the State Department, the C.I.A. and Congress. He will also have to get to know a president who, Mr. Cotton said, had never heard of Mr. McMaster just a week ago.

Mr. McMaster will also have to figure out how to handle Stephen K. Bannon, the president's chief strategist, who was given a seat on the cabinet-level national security principals committee and has played a strong role in foreign policy so far. Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, said on Tuesday that Mr. McMaster would have authority to organize the national security team as he sees fit.

But the three generals are not known only for their experiences during war. Mr. McMaster and Mr. Mattis are both thought of as scholar-soldiers. The author of a dissertation examining the failures of the military leadership during Vietnam, Mr. McMaster has lately been running a command charged with rethinking the Army of the

future. Mr. Mattis, 66, a student of history, is "just as likely to quote Cicero to you as Clausewitz," as former Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates put it.

As the head of Southern Command, Mr. Kelly, 66, spent a lot of time thinking about how to protect the southern border and fight drug trafficking beyond traditional combat operations. He also represented the Marines on Capitol Hill, learning the byways of Congress.

"The wars clearly played a role in shaping all three men, and also certainly in shaping their reputations," said Mr. Gates, who served Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. But, he added, "These are much broader, deeper people than just their experience in Iraq, and I find that all reassuring."

The three generals did not all overlap at the same time and place in Iraq. Mr. Mattis and Mr. Kelly grew up together in the Marine Corps, rising to four-star generals in a service that has only a handful of officers at that rank. Mr. Kelly served as assistant commander of the First Marine Division under Mr. Mattis during the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003. Mr. Kelly returned there in 2004 and a third time in 2008, when he was named the top American commander in western Iraq.

While the Marines focused on Anbar Province, Mr. McMaster and the Army's Third Armored Cavalry Regiment concentrated on Tal Afar to the north, where in 2005 he introduced a new counterinsurgency strategy that bucked the military leadership's thinking and helped recapture the city. His success was later cited as a model in a counterinsurgency manual that Mr. Mattis had a role in drafting with Gen. David H. Petraeus and that inspired the larger strategy shift that turned the war around in 2007 and 2008.

Mr. McMaster's approach was not always appreciated by the military brass, however, and he was twice passed over for promotion to brigadier general. Mr. Gates personally intervened by summoning General Petraeus to take over the promotion board and ensure that Mr. McMaster would receive his first star.

General Jim Mattis, center, speaking with his commanders in Iraq in March 2003. Ozier Muhammad/The New York Times

Mr. Mattis was not always in concert with superiors, either. He led the first Marines into Afghanistan after Sept. 11, but when he sought to pursue Al Qaeda into the Tora Bora region, he was not given permission, and Osama bin Laden ultimately escaped. In Iraq, where Mr. Mattis's radio call sign was Chaos, reflecting the havoc he sought to rain down on enemies, Mr. Mattis objected when told to abort an offensive to retake Falluja early in 2004 for what he considered political reasons.

Mr. Kelly is also known for speaking his mind. While leading Southern Command, he talked about the need to rebuild aging facilities at the Guantánamo Bay prison, despite the Obama administration's official policy that the detention center was about to close. He also called for more Navy ships to conduct counternarcotics patrols despite being repeatedly told to back down.

"He does what he thinks is right, and is anything but politically correct," said James G. Stavridis, a retired admiral who served as NATO's top military commander and has known the general since 1979.

If all three share common experiences from the wars of the last 16 years, they were most personally felt by Mr. Kelly. In 2010, his son, Lt. Robert Michael Kelly, was killed when he stepped on a land mine in Afghanistan, making the father the highest-ranking officer to lose a son or daughter in either war.

"They'll bring a very sober, realistic, practical experience base to the discussions in the Situation Room because they've lived it," said Douglas E. Lute, a retired three-star Army general who was a senior national security aide to Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama.

David W. Barno, another retired lieutenant general and a former commander of American forces in Afghanistan, said the three would take a more thoughtful approach to the use of force. "They'll bring in some hard-nosed realism of what war looks like," Mr. Barno said. "It doesn't mean they shy away from using the military, but they will have a perspective no one else in the White House will have."

## Trump's new national security adviser: A soldier who can say 'No, sir' (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/josh.partlow1>

President Trump named Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster his new national security adviser on Feb. 20. H.R. McMaster, former tank commander, named national security adviser (Peter Stevenson/The Washington Post)

(Peter Stevenson/The Washington Post)

More than any other officer of his generation, Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster's military career has been defined by a willingness to dissent — often forcefully.

In "Dereliction of Duty," the book he wrote in the 1990s, McMaster blasted the nation's top generals for their unwillingness to tell a domineering president that his war strategy in Vietnam could not work.

More than a decade later, as the commander of a 5,000-soldier regiment in Iraq, McMaster essentially ignored the U.S. military's prevailing plan for stabilizing the country, which he concluded was failing badly.

Checkpoint newsletter

Military, defense and security at home and abroad.

Please provide a valid email address.

On Monday, President Trump chose McMaster as his national security adviser, replacing the ousted Michael Flynn. McMaster's surprising rise has his supporters and critics asking the same question: How will a soldier known for his sharp mind and even sharper opinions get along with a president who does not like being told that he is wrong?

"I have tremendous respect for H.R. as a military professional," said Stephen Biddle, a political scientist who has worked closely with the U.S. military in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Whether he can be as effective and candid as we all hope is the big question."

*[The tank battle that came to define the early career of Trump's new national security adviser]*

In his many successes and his most notable failure — leading an anti-corruption task force in Afghanistan — McMaster has displayed the same traits: a fierce intellect, dogged determination and a penchant for conflict that has

produced loyal supporters and, in some cases, determined foes.

McMaster comes to the job leading the White House's National Security Council with some significant disadvantages relative to his predecessors. The most effective national security advisers have close personal relationships with the president. It's not clear whether McMaster had even met Trump before interviewing for the job.

McMaster, a three-star general, will be coordinating and helping to oversee a Cabinet that includes retired Marine Gens. Jim Mattis and John F. Kelly, both of whom outranked him when they were in uniform and could view him as a subordinate or someone they can bypass.

Finally, McMaster's decision to stay on active duty as he serves in the Trump White House could make it harder for him to disagree forcefully with the president or other senior administration officials. "It is a lot easier to say 'Screw this job' or 'I am not doing that' as a civilian," said a friend of McMaster's, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to speak frankly. "It is the ethos of the military to do what you are told, whether or not you like the mission or the chain of command."

The ethos of uncritically following orders is one that has never come easily to McMaster. He wrote about the Vietnam War at a moment when most of the Army was more interested in forgetting about it. "The emotions connected with sacrifices made in a lost war ran too deep to permit veterans of that conflict to dwell on their experiences," he wrote in the book's introduction.

When the book was published in 1997, the Army's top brass still blamed the loss on what they saw as a micromanaging president and a disloyal, left-leaning press that undermined support for the war at home. McMaster instead shifted the blame to some of the Army's most storied generals, whom he faulted for their passivity and willingness to support a policy of gradual escalation that they knew was doomed to failure.

In 2005, McMaster's armored cavalry regiment deployed to Iraq at a moment when U.S. fatalities were climbing and Iraq was slipping into an all-out civil war. In Baghdad, senior commanders were telling their field commanders to consolidate U.S. forces on large,

secure bases, where they would be less vulnerable to enemy attack, and focus on training beleaguered Iraqi troops to take over the fight.

McMaster, then a colonel, was among a small group of officers who ignored that guidance. He moved his troops off a large, secure air base outside the northern city of Tal Afar and established 29 combat outposts throughout the city. Instead of training Iraqis, his troops focused on stopping the ethnic and sectarian killing in the city.

McMaster's approach caught the attention of Philip Zelikow, a senior aide to then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Both Zelikow and Rice then fought for it back in Washington. "I talked to other generals who had mixed things to say about H.R. as a commander ... and personally," Zelikow said. "My view was that this is a guy who is really trying to do something, and he's breaking some [bureaucratic] crockery in the process."

Journalists, academics and officials from Washington think tanks flocked to Tal Afar, often at McMaster's invitation, to study his approach. A 2006 New Yorker article, which received widespread attention in Washington, described McMaster and his men as "rebels against an incoherent strategy."

Despite public praise from President George W. Bush, McMaster was twice passed over for promotion to one-star general upon returning from Iraq. To Zelikow, the Army's failure to elevate one of its smartest officers was a sign of anti-intellectualism in the ranks and "very serious institutional rot."

"Iraq was not the Army's finest hour," he said.

Others in the Army said the decision reflected McMaster's impatience with underperforming subordinates, his temper and his tendency to clash with superiors.

Sometimes, McMaster's passion and intellect worked against him on the battlefield — especially in Afghanistan, where he was chosen in 2010 to lead an anti-corruption task force.

McMaster landed at an inauspicious moment in the counter-corruption effort. Hundreds of millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars were being siphoned from ministries by Afghan officials and flown out of the country to buy beachfront real estate in Dubai.

McMaster's unit was an eclectic mix of soldiers and civilians from various NATO countries and included former fighter pilots, Rhodes scholars, counterintelligence officers, Treasury Department officials and FBI agents.

His brash style alienated many of his American civilian colleagues at the U.S. Embassy and angered his partners in the Afghan government. But even those who hated his management style tended to recognize his brilliance.

"He's not a bull in a china shop," Paul Rexton Kan, a professor who spent a month in Kabul on McMaster's team to help write the anti-corruption strategy, said in an interview for a book on Afghanistan. "He's a bull who picks up the china shop and just smashes it."

With an uncooperative Afghan government, and an Obama administration unwilling to cut off aid money, McMaster's team had little to show for its work after months of effort. His own team called itself the "Fix the Impossible Task Force" and the "Anti-Gravity Task Force." Several team members described the work environment as "toxic."

In one episode, McMaster demanded that U.S. Justice Department advisers hand over the corruption files kept by the Afghan attorney general and then berated the officials and knocked over a chair when they refused.

That outburst caused a stir back in Washington. People in the meeting were asked to give affidavits about what happened, according to those familiar with the situation. Eric H. Holder Jr., then the U.S. attorney general, demanded an apology from McMaster.

Trump has demonstrated something of a split personality when selecting his senior staff and Cabinet. In Mattis, Kelly and McMaster, Trump has chosen brash leaders who speak plainly and frankly. He has also proved quick to fire aides who question his judgment, and he has blackballed senior Republican foreign policy officials who criticized him during his presidential campaign.

In "Dereliction of Duty," McMaster wrote critically of generals who chose not to air their differences with President Lyndon B. Johnson. "Their silence helped to impel the very strategic concept they opposed," McMaster wrote. Soon

he will be sitting at the same Situation Room table, deciding what to say.

**The  
New York  
Times**

## Editorial : Now, Let General McMaster Do His Job

The Editorial Board

Justin Renteria

President Trump's first pick for national security adviser, the hotheaded Michael Flynn, got pushed out last week before he could do much damage. His second choice, retired Vice Adm. Robert Harward, turned down the job, wary of the chaos of the Trump White House.

His third, Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, who accepted the job on Monday, is an enlightened choice. If Mr. Trump empowers him and defers to his judgment, General McMaster could be an important moderating force in an administration packed with radicals and amateurs.

There are reasons to be hopeful. Unlike Mr. Trump, General McMaster is a student of history. He earned a reputation as one of the military's most gifted scholars and

strategists. While earning a doctorate in military history at the University of North Carolina in the 1990s, he wrote a meticulously researched thesis taking military leaders to task for failing to challenge the doomed Vietnam War strategy under Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and President Lyndon Johnson. This work, published as "Dereliction of Duty," lays out the consequences of abetting misguided presidents with ill-conceived policies.

In the messy history of the Iraq war, General McMaster emerged as one of the best American commanders. The key to his success was simple, yet revolutionary at the time: He insisted that his soldiers treat Iraqis with dignity and deference. He made keeping civilians safe and working to resolve local conflicts priorities over killing and detaining as many suspected insurgents as possible. "Every time you treat an Iraqi disrespectfully, you are

working for the enemy," he warned his troops.

More recently, General McMaster has spoken of the threat of terrorism with nuance and restraint, careful not to brand all Muslims as a menace. That outlook is a welcome counterpoint to the hysteria that led the Trump administration to halt refugee resettlement and ban travelers from seven predominantly Muslim nations.

The White House said Mr. Trump has given General McMaster "full authority" to assemble his own team. It's not clear, however, if General McMaster will be effective in a role that, in the best of cases, demands sharp political instincts, a president willing to absorb unpleasant news and the ability to build consensus among national security leaders. Having spent little time in Washington, General McMaster will have a steep learning curve on the basics.

To spare him from interference, Mr. Trump should remove Steve Bannon, his chief strategist, from the National Security Council, which General McMaster will lead. Mr. Bannon was appointed to the Principals Committee of the council last month, while the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the director of national intelligence were taken off as regular members. Undoing this move would be a first step to forming a coherent national security team.

While national security advisers generally do not need Senate confirmation, because General McMaster is a three-star general on active duty, the president must seek Senate approval to reassign him. This presents a valuable opportunity for lawmakers to question General McMaster about his worldview and his plans as he takes on the biggest challenge of his professional career.

**The  
New York  
Times**

## Jonathan Stevenson : Can McMaster Stabilize Trump's Foreign Policy Team?

Monday's appointment of Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster as national security adviser, after President Trump fired his predecessor, Michael T. Flynn, should augur at least a fleeting period of stability at the dysfunctional National Security Council. General McMaster is a compelling choice: a scholar-warrior in the mold of Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, with the bonus of looking every inch the part — allegedly a critical asset in the image-conscious Trump administration.

Yet those very qualities could spell more trouble ahead. General McMaster's deep understanding of civil-military relations, and his reputation for not suffering fools, could quickly make him an irrepressible critic — and political enemy — of Mr. Trump and his senior adviser, Stephen K. Bannon.

General McMaster, who is and will remain on active duty, is both a proven cavalry officer and a formidable defense intellectual, with a doctorate in history. His performance in combat at Tal Afar, Iraq, as commander of the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, is already studied as an exemplary application of counterinsurgency doctrine. In the 1991 gulf war, he led a legendary tank assault that completely destroyed a much larger Iraqi force and earned him a Silver Star.

At the same time, General McMaster has a cooler head than Mr. Flynn, or for that matter John Bolton, whom he beat out for the job. Although General McMaster may place undue faith in robust military force and counterinsurgency, like General Mattis he values stability. He most likely wouldn't advocate anything pointlessly disruptive, like reversing (again) the One China policy, tearing up the Iran deal or barring Muslims. It's a quality one would want in a national security crisis; unfortunately, it's also one that may put him on a collision course with the hot heads who occupy Mr. Trump's inner circle.

President Trump appointed Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster as his new national security adviser on Monday. Al Drago/The New York Times

Perhaps the best indication of General McMaster's thinking, and the likelihood of conflict with Mr. Bannon and others, is his 1997 book, "Dereliction of Duty," a merciless, meticulous study of the early days of the Vietnam War, and how senior civilian officials and the Joint Chiefs of Staff led the country into a quagmire.

His central thesis is that the Joint Chiefs became inordinately politicized, caving to senior civilian officials in the Johnson administration like McGeorge

Bundy, the national security adviser, who knew little about Vietnam, or military doctrine. Those officials were more concerned about appearing just strong enough not to lose hawkish domestic support without compromising the Great Society agenda than they were about actually winning the war. This yielded the tentative "graduated pressure" approach, rather than a decisive early concentration of military resources — especially combat ground troops.

"The war in Vietnam was not lost in the field nor was it lost on the front page of The New York Times or the college campuses," he wrote. "It was lost in Washington," even before "the first American units were deployed."

In his book, and in the 20 years since its publication, General McMaster has shown he is not afraid to find fault with presidents and other powerful officials. Lyndon B. Johnson and his senior advisers, he wrote, "rendered the administration incapable of dealing adequately with the complexities of the situation in Vietnam," which prompted "arrogance, weakness, and lying."

For General McMaster, the military must be able to forcefully assert its operational and strategic expertise in informing policy. The same holds

for the intelligence and law enforcement communities.

Yet Mr. Trump's inclusion of Mr. Bannon on the Security Council's Principals Committee last month, and the sidelining of the Joint Chiefs, gives the administration's most senior voice on domestic policy a central role in national security decision making — setting up the same scenario for disaster that General McMaster examined in "Dereliction of Duty."

We've already had a taste of the kinds of mistakes this arrangement will produce: the fumbled writing and rollout of Mr. Trump's executive order on immigration, and possibly the ill-fated raid in Yemen. An imbalance between political and operational considerations is precisely what General McMaster abhorred about the Vietnam-era process. He derisively referred to the Vietnam-era Joint Chiefs as "the five silent men."

Men like Mr. Bannon, of course, are not likely to be either silent or deferential. Instead, they will try to bureaucratically outflank dissenters. General McMaster, for his part, vehemently objected to the way President Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara largely circumvented the Security Council's interagency process in formulating and implementing Vietnam policy; it's unlikely he'll abide a similar



move by Mr. Bannon and his circle. He'll probably be joined by General Mattis, who has emerged as an important counterweight on the council to Mr. Bannon.

Expect fireworks. General McMaster's unblinking, incisive criticism of national security officials reflects a conviction that they are

duty bound to do all they can to avoid making or repeating historical mistakes — even at the risk of insubordination. At the same time, Mr. Trump does not take criticism well and lacks a sophisticated appreciation for operational nicety, policy deliberation or sound civil-military relations. He and Mr. Bannon are hostile to technocrats

whose rigor and exactitude might impede their ideological agenda. And Mr. Trump, given his rhetoric, appears willing to indulge the use of military force with little regard to strategic consequences.

General McMaster may well establish himself, with General Mattis, as an effective stabilizing

force within the administration. Or he could find himself sidelined, or even ousted, if he brings too many inconvenient truths to the table. The drama would make for an entertaining piece of political theater — if it didn't involve the risk of a strategic disaster.



## Max Boot : The Worst and the Dimmest

David Francis | 2 hours ago

Back in 2001, during the “end of history” interregnum between the Cold War and 9/11, Henry Kissinger published a book called *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* It was obviously a rhetorical question coming from a master of diplomacy. But now it is a very real issue, because the United States under President Donald Trump does not actually seem to have a foreign policy. Or, to be exact, it has several foreign policies — and it is not obvious whether anyone, including the president himself, speaks for the entire administration.

On Feb. 15, for example, Trump was asked, during a joint news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whether he still supported a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. His insouciant reply? “So I'm looking at two-state and one-state, and I like the one that both parties like. I'm very happy with the one that both parties like. I can live with either one.” This immediately prompted news coverage that, as a *New York Times* article had it, “President Trump jettisoned two decades of diplomatic orthodoxy on Wednesday by declaring that the United States would no longer insist on the creation of a Palestinian state as part of a peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians.”

But had Trump meant to do that? His remarks sounded as if they were being improvised off the top of his head. Did they actually denote a change of policy? Sure enough, 24 hours later, Trump's ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, told reporters that “the two-state solution is what we support. Anybody that wants to say the United States does not support the two-state solution — that would be an error,” thus suggesting that the president was mistaken about his own administration's policies. It soon emerged, thanks to *Politico's* reporting, that the secretary of state, Rex Tillerson, had not been consulted or even informed beforehand about what was, in theory at least, a momentous policy shift: “At the White House, there was little thought about notifying the

nation's top diplomat because, as one senior staffer put it, “everyone knows Jared [Kushner] is running point on the Israel stuff.”

This was not, of course, an isolated incident. Trump's recently fired national security advisor, Michael Flynn, apparently did consult with the Department of Defense prior to announcing, ominously, on Feb. 1 that Iran was being put “on notice,” whatever that means. But, according to a *New Yorker* profile of Flynn, the Pentagon's attempts to soften some of his language and to take out criticism of the Barack Obama administration were simply ignored. And there clearly was no preparation at either the Defense Department or Central Command to back up this ultimatum that could result in war with Iran. “Planning is trying to keep up with the rhetoric,” a “senior defense official” told Nicholas Schmidle of the *New Yorker*.

So much for the hopes that Trump's seasoned cabinet appointees — especially retired Gen. John Kelly at Homeland Security, retired Gen. James Mattis at Defense, and former ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson at State — could direct administration policy on a more mainstream course. Perhaps they will exert a bigger influence down the road, especially now that they will have a valuable ally in the new national security advisor, Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, but so far their impact has been decidedly limited. They have had to fight for influence with Steve Bannon, the white nationalist ideologue who has been inexplicably granted a place on the National Security Council's top-level Principals Committee, and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law who has been granted nebulous authority over areas such as Mexico and Israel. Bannon has even created his own shadow NSC, called the Strategic Initiatives Group, staffed by people such as the anti-Muslim extremist Sebastian Gorka.

Bannon showed just how much power he wields when he vetoed Tillerson's choice for deputy secretary of state — Elliott Abrams. One suspects that, from Bannon's standpoint, Abrams had multiple strikes against him: Not only is he

Jewish and a “neocon,” hence hostile to isolationism and nativism, but he has vast policymaking experience stretching back to the Ronald Reagan administration. Bannon, who has never served in government outside his time as a junior naval officer decades ago, must have known Abrams would be a formidable bureaucratic adversary — one who could make up for Tillerson's own lack of policymaking background. So

Bannon apparently sabotaged Abrams's nomination by putting before Trump a single article that Abrams had written last year critical of him.

Bannon apparently sabotaged Abrams's nomination by putting before Trump a single article that Abrams had written last year critical of him. That this is not just about loyalty to the president is obvious from the fact that Rick Perry, who once called Trump a “cancer on conservatism,” was appointed as energy secretary. But then nobody in the White House cares who runs the Energy Department or considers Perry any kind of threat. Abrams was different — and thus he could not be allowed to join the administration.

President Bannon's insistence on maintaining control also appears to be behind the problems the administration is having in finding a new national security advisor to replace Flynn. The first choice — retired Vice Adm. Bob Harward — turned down the post after Trump made it clear that he would not be allowed to pick his own deputy (for some reason Harward did not think that K.T. McFarland was qualified despite her years of pithy Fox News commentary) or to get any guarantees of a clear chain of command that would exclude interference from Bannon and Kushner. This was, among other things, a message that Mattis, who is close to Harward and recommended him, does not exercise any more sway than Tillerson over key administration appointments.

Retired Gen. David Petraeus, another highly qualified pick, was said to have withdrawn from consideration next after he made

similar demands. An anonymous official revealed the insular and arrogant White House mindset when he told the *Wall Street Journal*: “It is dumb to demand Flynn's people go. Why are you creating embarrassment? If you make that a precondition, you are not a loyal soldier and you don't deserve the job.” This is reminiscent of the misplaced self-confidence of the “best and brightest” of the John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson administrations — only Trump and his circle are far from bright or the best at anything other than bamboozling those who credulously place faith in them.

Trump finally selected as his national security advisor H.R. McMaster, a serving officer who would have had difficulty in turning down the commander in chief, or conditioning his acceptance on certain conditions as Harward did. McMaster is one of the outstanding officers of his generation, a rare combination of soldier and scholar who has literally written the book — *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* — on the need for the military to speak truth to its political masters. It is hard to imagine a better choice for the post, yet even McMaster will have difficulty bringing any order to American foreign policy as long as Bannon and Kushner continue to pursue their own policies and as long as the president continues to make incendiary and ill-considered statements that needlessly aggravate friendly states — most recently Sweden — while calling into question basic American foreign-policy commitments. Trump may think the White House is a “fine-tuned machine,” but it is in fact a jalopy whose wheels are falling off while it's going 60 mph, and it's far from clear that even McMaster can perform the needed repairs en route.

Foreign officials watching this amazing and dispiriting spectacle are left in the uncomfortable position of not knowing who if anyone actually speaks for the United States.

Foreign officials watching this amazing and dispiriting spectacle

are left in the uncomfortable position of not knowing who if anyone actually speaks for the United States. This became obvious over the weekend when Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of Defense Mattis, among others, traveled to the Munich Security Conference to offer reassurance that the United States would remain committed to NATO and opposed to Russia. But of course European officials are well aware that Trump has repeatedly expressed his own skepticism of NATO and admiration of Vladimir Putin and has

spoken longingly of doing a "deal" with Russia. Indeed, *Time* magazine reported that Bannon's Strategic Initiatives Group is generating "its own assessment of Russia-policy options," including concessions such as "reducing or removing the U.S. anti-ballistic-missile footprint in Central and Eastern Europe, easing sanctions imposed for election meddling or the invasion of Ukraine, or softening language on the Crimean annexation" — all options far removed from the tough talk in Munich.

Thus Germany's defense minister, Ursula von der Leyen, pointedly replied to Mattis's pro-NATO speech by expressing appreciation for the "secretary of defense's strong commitment to NATO." Not America's strong commitment or the Trump administration's strong commitment. Because who the hell knows anymore who actually speaks for America?

This dangerous dysfunction at the top — bad enough now at a time of relative peace and stability — will cause America and the world considerable grief when the

administration has to deal with its first serious foreign-policy challenge. Imagine a Cuban missile crisis in which McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara, Dean Rusk, and Robert F. Kennedy all pursued their own policies without any coordination, and you get an idea of the danger ahead.

Photo credit: MANDEL NGAN/AFP/Getty Images

## The Washington Post

PostPartisan

Opinion

**Opinion** A column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages).

February 21 at 4:32 PM

Here's a fact for the media to chew on: The "deep state" is here. As outlined in *Foreign Policy*, the concept of the deep state is nothing new. But the Trump presidency may serve as the galvanizing force that links some of the formal established Democratic opposition forces, including MoveOn.org, government unions and Black Lives Matter with the informal deep-state cadre of disgruntled liberal bureaucrats, the hostile mainstream media and the usual suspects on the left. It's a troubling phenomenon, with anti-Trump organizations and Democratic-aligned civil servants conspiring to actively work against

## Ed Rogers : The 'deep state' is real. The 'alt right' is fake.

By Ed Rogers

By Ed Rogers

the incumbent government.

There might not be any central command guiding the deep-state actions, but it's not hard for card-carrying Democratic party members, the mainstream media, liberal think tanks, government unions and other anti-Republican liberals of various stripes to naturally form into a collective grain that runs contrary to whatever elected Republicans in Congress and now in the White House want to accomplish. It's just like when a school of fish move in unison, choreographed not because of some planned effort, but because it is in their nature. The bias against President Trump has become frantic, and the Democrats and their allies in the media overreach almost daily in attacking the president and Republicans in general.

"Deep state" is a sexy new label being used in Washington to describe embedded anonymous bureaucratic bias against President Trump and Republican rule.

Specifically, the deep state is leaking documents, making confidential conversations public, pushing rogue social media accounts and otherwise acting in an underhanded manner to discredit the president, his Cabinet and the policy objectives of the Republicans. The use of encrypted chat programs to communicate and the continued leaks to various media outlets are just the start. Their tactics are beginning to spread to other Democratic sympathizers and form a continuous partisan assault both from within the government and from outside groups.

At some level, this shouldn't be surprising. The 2016 election was so vitriolic, and the Democrats' belief that Hillary Clinton would be the next president was so strong, that their defeat carried extra weight. Members of the Democratic coalition are already firmly entrenched within the federal government and among the surrounding intelligentsia. They

have the ability to feed their supporters information, giving the activists more reason to protest, which in turn conflates the liberal hype around the actions of the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress. It's a vicious cycle.

At the same time all this is going on, the left has taken to painting Republicans with a broad brush as the "alt-right." Well, as best I can tell, the alt-right is just a new way for the left to call Republicans racists and Nazis without actually having to say those terms out loud. To me, the deep state is real. The alt-right is not. The deep state may not be fully developed quite yet, but as the Democrats regain their footing and begin to coordinate and try to further and further damage the president's credibility, it will have a detrimental impact on how our democracy functions and will further erode the public's trust in government.

## The Washington Post

<https://www.facebook.com/costareports>

The conservative movement in America now belongs to President Trump.

Thousands of activists will arrive in Washington this week for an annual gathering that will vividly display how Trump has pushed the Republican Party and the conservative movement toward an "America first" nationalism that has long existed on the fringes.

"Every movement that gets dusty or sclerotic relies on an infusion of energy from the bottom up," said White House counselor Kellyanne Conway. "It also takes a transformative individual to bring about change."

## Trump's America will be on vivid display at annual conservative gathering (UNE)

Panels scheduled for the four-day conference include how the left does "not support law enforcement"; why the United States can't have the same security standards as heaven ("a gate, a wall and extreme vetting"); and a discussion of "fair trade" that will put Breitbart editor Joel Pollak and progressive anchor Ed Schultz, who hosts a show on Russian-owned RT, on the same side.

That may sound like a celebration of a young presidency and the ideas that helped him win in November. But the event will also showcase the tension created as these new voices reshape conservative thinking.

(Peter Stevenson/The Washington Post)

Self-described troll and conservative writer Milo Yiannopoulos resigned from Breitbart News on Feb. 21, but his far-right speeches and provocative comments aren't going anywhere. What does Milo Yiannopoulos really want? (Peter Stevenson/The Washington Post)

The new nationalist energy has already embroiled this year's CPAC gathering in controversy. Organizers invited the inflammatory commentator Milo Yiannopoulos to speak after protesters at the University of California at Berkeley rioted to stop one of his appearances. They disinvited him as controversy swirled over 2016 interviews in which he had criticized the age of sexual consent and joked about statutory rape.

By Tuesday afternoon, Yiannopoulos had resigned from Breitbart News, but the thinking behind his invitation remained. Matt Schlapp, the president of the American Conservative Union, which organizes CPAC, said the gathering this year will be an acknowledgment of the "realignment going on politically in the country" and of the rising import of "American sovereignty" to conservatives nationally.

*[Breitbart's Milo Yiannopoulos resigns following outrage over his past comments about pedophilia]*

This year's CPAC schedule represents a marked shift toward Trump's politics and penchant for showmanship. Nigel Farage, the pro-Brexit politician from Britain who

spoke to an emptying room in 2015, will speak the same morning as Trump. Reality TV star Dog the Bounty Hunter will appear with a super PAC trying to draft Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke, a regular Trump supporter on the cable news circuit, into Wisconsin's 2018 Senate race.

"There used to be Pat Buchanan's people, the populist revolt-types and the establishment of the anti-establishment, who'd get a third of the vote in the primaries and we'd beat them back," said Mike Murphy, a veteran Republican consultant who led a super PAC that supported former Florida governor Jeb Bush's presidential campaign. "Now they've hijacked the Republican Party."

White House chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon, who led Breitbart before joining Trump's team and has been a standard-bearer for conservative populism, will speak Thursday alongside his colleague, White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus. Bannon hopes to explain Trump's actions in his first month in office, in particular, policies on immigration and the creation of manufacturing jobs, according to an official familiar with White House discussions.

By sitting with Priebus, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee, Bannon aims to showcase how the party guard and formerly obscure players on the right are in power and working together to enact a new kind of conservative agenda, the official said, one that is directed at reaching working-class voters who are disillusioned with the global economy and elites.

Self-described troll and conservative writer Milo Yiannopoulos resigned from Breitbart News on Feb. 21, but his far-right speeches and provocative comments aren't going anywhere. What does Milo Yiannopoulos really want? (Peter Stevenson/The Washington Post)

(Peter Stevenson/The Washington Post)

And Breitbart, which has been a sponsor of CPAC for years, has more visibility than ever. As Bannon has pointed out to associates, a site that once organized panels titled "The Uninvited" for guests too controversial for CPAC is now shaping the movement's agenda. The annual Breitbart party, usually held at the outlet's Washington office, has been upgraded to an exclusive cruise along the Potomac River.

Antiabortion activists will have a presence at CPAC. Hedge fund manager Sean Fieler, a major donor to related groups, will appear, as will filmmakers Ann McElhinney and Phelim McAleer, who have produced a documentary on Kermit Gosnell, the Philadelphia doctor who was convicted of first-degree murder five years ago for killing three infants who were born alive during attempted abortions. He was also found guilty for the wrongful death of a patient.

Meanwhile, the libertarian flavor of the conference during the Obama years has faded. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who won the conference's presidential straw poll three years running, is not coming to CPAC. The immigration debate that once roiled Republicans has largely been settled, in Trump's favor.

"During my tenure we emphasized expanding the conservative base by reaching out to women and minority conservative upcoming leaders as guest speakers and panelists," said Al Cardenas, who ran the American Conservative Union from 2011 to 2014. "Yes, to the chagrin of some, we insisted on panels to discuss the various points of view within the conservative movement on the issue of immigration."

Richard Spencer, the white "identitarian" president of the National Policy Institute, suggested that the movement has gained ground with Trump's victory. The decision to book Yiannopoulos, said Spencer, "represented a creeping recognition on the part of CPAC" that the alt-right is a force. The alt-

right is known for espousing racist, anti-Semitic and sexist views.

"CPAC recognizes that it's not 1979 or 1984 anymore and that it has to change its ideology and adjust to new circumstances," Spencer said.

Schlapp has denounced the "alt-right" movement, telling MSNBC this week that "we won't endorse it and we won't rationalize it." On Thursday morning, ACU board member Dan Schneider will give a CPAC speech denouncing it.

Schlapp said he invited Yiannopoulos because of the way he represented the need for free speech on college campuses, including at the University of California at Berkeley, where his event prompted riots.

Former Republican National Committee chairman Michael Steele said Schlapp and others on the ACU board have to face the reality that connecting the Trump wing and more traditional conservatives will not be easy.

"When Milo admitted on Bill Maher's HBO show the other night that he wasn't a traditional conservative, he sounded like a lot of the young people that come to CPAC. They're libertarian, mostly, and deconstructionist in how they see politics. They're open to working with the LGBT side. So on a political level, you see why he'd be invited," Steele said. "But can everyone coexist?"

Former House speaker Newt Gingrich, a Trump ally who has given a series of speeches recently on "Trumpism," said he is "impressed that CPAC has very intelligently anticipated the direction that Trump is going to take the country and understood that he'll be the dominant voice on the right for the foreseeable future."

"Everyone in the media and some in my party are overreacting to his personality and not paying attention to the depth of the change that Trump is leading," which Gingrich compared to the way Franklin D. Roosevelt reshaped the Democratic

Party in the 1930s. "His critics instinctively understand what's happening and want to stop him."

As even his supporters acknowledge, Trump first arrived at CPAC as an interloper. The gay Republican group GOProud, which was sometimes denied a table at the conference, capped off its 2011 CPAC agenda by inviting Trump to give a speech about "making America respected again."

The Daily 202 newsletter

A must-read morning briefing for decision-makers.

Please provide a valid email address.

In 2016, when Trump canceled on CPAC at the last minute, his presidential primary rival Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) said he had learned "there were conservatives that were going to be here." Trump trailed Cruz and Rubio in the event's presidential straw poll.

Yet Sam Nunberg, a former Trump adviser who worked on the businessman's CPAC arrangements in the years before the 2016 campaign, said the conferences were "pivotal" for Trump because they gave him a tangible sense of how his celebrity could be translated to a career in conservative Republican politics.

"He starts going in 2011 and he's followed around by Republicans like the paparazzi," Nunberg said. "He realized that with that kind of star power, he could really take the air out of everyone else there."

"It's definitely a show," said Jimmy LaSalvia, a co-founder of GOProud who left the Republican Party in 2015. "It's a show that is now designed to perpetuate a fight. Donald Trump lives for the fight. He feeds off the fighting. So does, frankly, the Breitbart organization. It's all about us versus them. It's not about ideas."



## Lloyd Grove : Milo Yiannopoulos's Symphony of Victimhood

Lloyd Grove  
02.21.17  
9:45 PM ET

"Please be respectful," Milo Yiannopoulos admonished—an irony that was lost on no one but him.

Ignoring a question about his own disrespectful behavior that he apparently didn't feel like answering, the embattled Donald Trump groupie and alt-right provocateur—who usually baits African Americans, Jews, women, transgender people, and his fellow gay men at his various speaking

engagements in a merry tone of preening contempt—presided over a bizarre New York press conference Tuesday afternoon in a low, controlled voice, with a posh English accent that doesn't quite cover his multitude of sins.

Apparently to enhance the earnest gravity of the occasion—as opposed to his campy, pearl-necklace and bauble-bedecked insolence on HBO's *Real Time With Bill Maher* last Friday—he showed

up in a drab navy suit, burgundy tie, and polished black loafers.

After entering the crowded room behind a beefy, earpiece-wearing security man, Yiannopoulos, a tall and boyish 33-year-old, removed his wire-rimmed sunglasses and gave his instruction to be respectful in the middle of a somber performance in which he apologized, sort of, for his year-old comments on a podcast that

Lucas Jackson / Reuters

### Bizarre Display

Delivering a halfhearted apology for the remarks that led to his exit from CPAC and Breitbart, the alt-right provocateur asked the press to be 'respectful' Tuesday—before cursing them.

seemed to encourage the idea of adults sexually molesting children.

"I'm a gay man and a child-abuse victim," he began his presentation, reading from a lengthy statement that attempted to invite sympathy. Yiannopoulos recounted that when he was a boy, "two men touched me in ways they should not have."

He subsequently misspent his youth, "well into my 20s," in a haze of "alcohol and nihilistic partying" at night, he testified, never knowing in whose bed he was going to wake up the following afternoon, but also developing a love for "black comedy and gallows humor, and a love of shock value [that] never really went away."

He wished "to do something good with my life" and discovered the path to that laudable goal in "my usual blend of sassy gay British sarcasm and provocations."

In what he described as his first, and last, public apology—which he clearly didn't mean to apply to his unrelenting misogyny and racially charged insults, such as his witless campaign against *Ghostbusters* star and *Saturday Night Live* cast member Leslie Jones that got him permanently banned from Twitter—Yiannopoulos insisted that his self-damaging comments "do not reflect my views."

"We are talking about 13-25, 13-28, these things do happen perfectly consensually," he had said on an

episode of the *Drunken Peasants* podcast, referring to the appropriate ages of sexual partners. He joked about his own sexual relationship as a 13-year-old with a Catholic priest and added: "I wouldn't give nearly such good head if it wasn't for him."

At Tuesday's event, 40-odd reporters were present to hear his complaints and regrets in a rented event space on the 11th floor of a dreary building in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood, and more than dozen television cameras were trained on him (while a local station actually parked a satellite truck on the street below). Yiannopoulos said he is "horrified by that impression" left by those comments that he was advocating pedophilia, and insisted that he is "disgusted and horrified by pedophilia."

Yet he seemed to backtrack on that sentiment when he pointed out that such abuse "is simply not the worst thing that has ever happened. To go bankrupt is worse," he declared—assuredly not a reference to the troubled business history of President Trump.

Holding forth for nearly half an hour under a surprisingly muted interrogation by the Fourth Estate, Yiannopoulos blamed everyone but himself for the consequences of his recently excavated pedophilia endorsement: the loss of a \$250,000 book deal with Simon & Schuster; the loss of a high-profile speaking gig at CPAC, the nation's premier conservative conclave; and

the loss of his job as technology editor of Trump-friendly Breitbart News.

He described the revelation of his podcast remarks as the result of "a politically motivated witch hunt."

Yiannopoulos claimed his resignation from Breitbart was voluntary, though several outraged staffers reportedly threatened to resign if he was kept on, and he heaped praise on Breitbart editor in chief Alexander Marlow, who issued a statement—calling Yiannopoulos "a bold voice[that] has sparked a much-needed debate on important cultural topics"—but didn't respond to a request for comment.

Asked if he might still show up in Washington for CPAC this week as an attendee, Yiannopoulos said—again, without any sense of irony or, for that matter, self-awareness—that such a visit would be "indecorous."

Thank You!

You are now subscribed to the Daily Digest and Cheat Sheet. We will not share your email with anyone for any reason

Alas, after four foiled attempts by The Daily Beast to ask Yiannopoulos if he stood by his claim, during an appearance in December at Minnesota State University, that BuzzFeed media writer Joe Bernstein is "a typical example of a sort of thick-as-pig shit

media Jew," it was clear that he was having none of it.

Given the Trump groupie's implacable resistance—he can't stop calling his new president "Daddy"—it seemed pointless to press Yiannopoulos on whether he also still believes, as he once opined on Reddit, that "black men are notorious for lusting after a well-rounded caucasian butt cheek. I speak from experience"; he later elaborated: "Racist? Me? I've had more black dick in me than the entire Kardashian family."

On Tuesday, as the muffled anti-Milo chants of protesters could be heard wafting up from the street (where members of New York's Finest were on hand to prevent more aggressive forms of unpleasantness), Yiannopoulos claimed: "People who actually come to my shows and read my columns tend to end up liking me."

But "people who just read the headlines," he continued, referring to his noisy detractors, are being misled by unfair and inaccurate journalism that, he argued, irresponsibly misrepresents his beliefs and prompts general loathing.

"And you guys are responsible for that. Fuck you for that," he complained, respectfully. "You did a bad thing."



## After delay and amid pressure, Trump denounces racism and anti-Semitism

<https://www.facebook.com/abbydphillip>

President Trump on Tuesday denounced racism and anti-Semitic violence after weeks of struggling to offer clear statements of solidarity and support for racial and religious minorities.

During a visit to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Trump read carefully from prepared remarks decrying bigotry and specifically condemning a wave of recent threats against Jewish centers across the country.

"This tour was a meaningful reminder of why we have to fight bigotry, intolerance and hatred in all of its very ugly forms," Trump said. "The anti-Semitic threats targeting our Jewish community and community centers are horrible and are painful and a very sad reminder of the work that still must be done to root out hate and prejudice and evil."

Scanning the piece of paper with his finger as he read, Trump praised the museum on the Mall for its popularity and said the exhibitions had left their mark on his wife, Melania, who had visited the museum a week earlier.

For a president who prides himself on a freewheeling approach to leadership, Trump's demeanor on Monday was notably somber and disciplined. The appearance stood in stark contrast to the flashes of irritation he showed at a news conference last week at the White House, when he dismissed questions from reporters about his outreach to African American political leaders in Washington and his lack of response to a sharp increase in anti-Semitic incidents across the country.

(AP)

Missouri authorities are investigating after dozens of headstones were damaged at a Jewish cemetery near St. Louis. Missouri authorities are

investigating after dozens of headstones were damaged at a Jewish cemetery near St. Louis. (AP)

The differing responses come as calls have been growing for Trump to respond to a wave of bomb threats directed against Jewish community centers in multiple states on Monday, the fourth in a series of such threats this year, according to the Anti-Defamation League. More than 170 Jewish gravestones were found toppled at a cemetery in suburban St. Louis, over the weekend.

[Trump decries anti-Semitic acts as 'horrible' after threats and vandalism]

Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, called Trump's statement "as welcome as it is overdue."

"President Trump has been inexcusably silent as this trend of anti-Semitism has continued and arguably accelerated," Pesner said.

"The president of the United States must always be a voice against hate and for the values of religious freedom and inclusion that are the nation's highest ideals."

On Tuesday, White House press secretary Sean Spicer dismissed the idea that Trump has been slow to address anti-Semitism and racism.

"I think it's ironic that no matter how many times he talks about this, that it's never good enough," Spicer said.

While presidents are often asked to set the tone for the country on sensitive issues of race and religion, Trump has rarely seized the moment. In the past week, Trump seemed to bat aside opportunities to address anti-Semitism. And when asked by a reporter whether he would meet with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Trump asked the reporter, who is African American, whether she would arrange the meeting with the



lawmakers, implying that they were her "friends."

(The Washington Post)

President Trump urged Americans to "fight bigotry, intolerance and hatred in all of its very ugly forms," including antisemitic threats targeted at Jewish community centers, speaking on Feb. 21 at the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Trump: 'We have to fight bigotry, intolerance and hatred' (The Washington Post)

After a campaign in which Trump was criticized for appealing primarily to white Christians while strongly criticizing Mexican immigrants, Muslims and urban African American communities, the president has said little to assuage concerns that he would govern in a similar fashion, his critics say.

"I think it was a good symbolic gesture, but we need something of substance," civil rights leader Jesse Jackson said of Trump's museum visit, naming issues such as voting rights, unemployment and urban renewal. "There's been no communication on things that matter to us."

*[Trump administration seeks to prevent 'panic' as it outlines broader deportation policies]*

Trump has pursued policies broadening the scope of enforcement actions against people illegally in the country and sought to bar entry to the United States by citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries who the administration said pose a significant danger to U.S. national security. Both actions have raised tensions with the country's Hispanic and Muslim communities.

Some of Trump efforts Tuesday seemed aimed at smoothing over

past rifts with minority communities. Spicer pointed out that during his visit to the African American history museum, Trump had viewed an exhibition featuring the speeches of civil rights leader and U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), with whom Trump feuded last month over Lewis's refusal to attend his inauguration.

Still, the moves are seen as insufficient to critics who want Trump to directly address what they consider to be his missteps.

"I get that Trump never expected to be president, but now that he is president, he has to act like he's president for all of us," said Benjamin Jealous, a former president of the NAACP. "If he wants to be seen as a healer, he's going to have to atone for his own sins, starting with his race-baiting on President Obama."

Trump has been particularly sensitive to any suggestion that his administration is anti-Jewish. During the presidential campaign, chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon was accused of having used the conservative news site Breitbart, when he ran it, as a platform for the "alternative right." The alt-right, as it is commonly called, is a far-right movement that seeks a whites-only state and whose adherents are known for espousing racist, anti-Semitic and sexist points of view.

Asked during a news conference last Wednesday to respond to a wave of anti-Semitic incidents across the country, Trump first launched into a defense of his electoral college victory instead of addressing the issue. The next day, Trump was given a second opportunity to address the problem at another news conference but seemed to take the question as a personal affront, declaring that the journalist who posed the question

— who worked for a Jewish publication — was not being "fair" to him.

"This is frustrating to Trump. He thinks he's being treated unfairly," said Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, who called Trump "the most pro-Israel president ever."

Trump has already been caught up in a number of controversies involving the Jewish community since taking office a month ago. The White House released a statement on Holocaust Remembrance Day that did not mention the Jewish people or anti-Semitism. Instead of acknowledging any error, the White House defended the wording, prompting criticism from several Republican-leaning Jewish groups and the ADL.

*[Facing criticism, Trump administration has no regrets about leaving out Jews in Holocaust statement]*

Klein was among the Jewish leaders who criticized the administration's omission, but he said it was a minor slip for an overwhelmingly pro-Jewish president.

"I look for the policies much more than the words," Klein said. "Small mistakes here and there — they're just not consequential."

Yet Trump's critics point to a larger pattern, including his hesitation at denouncing former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, who has repeatedly pledged his support to Trump since Trump began his campaign in June 2015. Trump's comments Tuesday on anti-Semitism also came only after his daughter, Ivanka Trump, tweeted a broad condemnation of the recent attacks and threats Monday evening.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

Please provide a valid email address.

Former Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, whom Trump defeated in November, tweeted early Tuesday in reference to the anti-Semitic incidents: "Everyone must speak out, starting with @POTUS."

Steven Goldstein, executive director of the Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect, said that "when President Trump responds to anti-Semitism proactively and in real time, and without pleas and pressure, that's when we'll be able to say this president has turned a corner. This is not that moment."

Trump's supporters say that as a political outsider, the president's response to racial and religious divisions may not be typical for politicians because he is focused more on actions and less on talk.

"Tone matters, but tone is just empty talk if there's no movement in the right direction of those indicators of quality of life," said Ken Blackwell, a former secretary of state of Ohio and a former domestic policy adviser for the Trump presidential transition. Blackwell, who is African American, said he expects the administration to roll out new policies aimed at addressing the specific concerns of the black community in the coming weeks.

"Just as you've had stops and starts on the immigration executive order, he will get his footing to address this as well," Blackwell said. "He's going to speak to these issues. But he is also uniquely Donald Trump, and he speaks in his own voice and in his own way."



## Ruth Ben-Ghiat : Trump rejects anti-Semitism? Prove it

Ruth Ben-Ghiat

### Story highlights

- Ruth Ben-Ghiat: Trump's denunciation of anti-Semitism in interview is welcome, but late for a man who stoked bigotry throughout campaign
- She says he should rid White House of alt-right influences, reject considering a plan that would limit terror probes to Muslim-linked acts

Ruth Ben-Ghiat is a frequent contributor to CNN Opinion, and professor of history and Italian

studies at New York University. Her latest book is "Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema." The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

(CNN)"Anti-Semitism is horrible. And it's gonna stop and it has to stop," President Donald Trump announced Tuesday during a visit to the National Museum of African-American History and Culture. "You don't know where it's coming from but I hope they catch the people."

Many may feel relieved at this statement, which was occasioned by the latest evidence of a sharp uptick in anti-Semitism in our country. Just over the last few days, we've seen a slew of bomb threats

to Jewish community centers around the country and the desecration of over 100 headstones at St. Louis' Jewish cemetery.

President Trump showed some leadership with this communication, but we can ask: Why did it take him so long to decide to acknowledge reality? Just last week, he disheartened many by telling a reporter from a Jewish newspaper that merely asking about anti-Semitism was

"not a fair question."

And while it's true that as of now the perpetrators of these crimes have not been found, Trump's assertion that "you don't know where it's

coming from" is disingenuous, since he has contributed to the rise of that anti-Semitism in multiple ways from the very start of his campaign for president.

Trump long used powerful racist images to build his political brand and constituency during the race for the presidential nomination, setting himself up as the lone protector of white Christian America. In July 2015, his campaign released an ad that featured

men dressed as Nazi SS soldiers with a message proclaiming that "We need leadership!"

Four months later, he tried to discredit his opponent Jeb Bushby

retweeting a racist montage of images that included a swastika, Bush in a sombrero and a cartoon of a monkey trying to cross the border from Mexico. Such retweets from white supremacist social media accounts also brought concepts like "JewAmerica" and "white genocide" to mainstream attention. And have we conveniently forgotten Trump's use of anti-Semitic images to try and paint Hillary Clinton as a corrupt and untrustworthy candidate? It wasn't subtle - Clinton was depicted next to a star and against a background of \$100 bills -- but what should we have expected from its alt-right message-board source? By July 2016, having absorbed a year of such communications, his target audience knew what he stood for: the reassertion of white Christian power in America through any means necessary.

For the rest of us, there were lame excuses from the Trump campaign and surrogates. "The intern did it"

for the SS men; Trump's own overlooking of the

**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL**

Updated Feb. 21,  
2017 7:47 p.m. ET

Donald Trump comes to the presidency, it's safe to say, with a steeper learning curve than just about anyone who has ever held the position. He's working hard at a job he likely didn't believe he'd have until late in the campaign. Give him credit. At least he appears upbeat and game for the challenge, abating one realistic fear. Calling him a failure at this point is ridiculously premature.

Even more ridiculous is to compare his troubles to Nixon's Watergate, for there is no president he resembles less. Nixon was a deeply rooted, connected part of the ruling establishment. He had been a congressman, senator and vice president. His Watergate sins were committed on his way to a landslide re-election. If Mr. Trump screws up his presidency, it will not be the way Nixon did—by presuming too much on his ability to control institutions and bend them to his will. More likely the opposite.

Mr. Trump is an unusual president in that, unlike any we can think of, he speaks only for himself. There is no army of Trump interest groups and loyalists and activists to respond to his command or suggestion. He does not have deep knowledge of policy, government or politics. He does not have longtime organizational ties.

presence of the swastika in the Bush-targeted retweet; the liberal media's supposed misinterpretation and paranoia in the case of the Clinton image, which featured not a Star of David but a "sheriff's badge."

The truth is that racism has been a main element of continuity in Trump's political career, with anti-Semitic images used as potent currency. So no one should be surprised that the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate crimes, saw a sharp spike in hate-related incidents

(against Jews, blacks, immigrants, Muslims, and women)

in the month following the election. 37% of the recorded incidents were "Trump-related," meaning they "directly referenced either President-Elect Donald Trump, his campaign slogans, or his infamous remarks about sexual assault."

All of this should make Americans very concerned about the Trump administration's statement that it is considering narrowing its

Results do not flow: Nordstrom's stock is up since being bashed by Mr. Trump. If he tweeted tomorrow that the IRS ought to investigate Amazon—a threat he made during the campaign—nobody at the IRS would likely change a thing they were doing. Barack Obama would not have had to tweet a word.

What of the innuendo of Russian influence? Mr. Trump ran an unorthodox, idiosyncratic campaign. He also ran, unavoidably, an uneducated one—uneducated about whom not to take a call from, whom not to meet with, whom not to retweet. In this context, talk of "contacts" between his campaign and Russian intelligence probably means very little. Your columnist, he's pretty sure, also had contacts with Russian intelligence during the campaign, judging by the tone and curious diction of certain pro-Trump emails in his inbox.

The idea of Mr. Trump as Russian agent is one more failure of imagination by the media—a striving to believe that some hidden, sinister logic explains his rise (and also excuses Robby Mook).

Whether his presidency is a success or failure, the Donald Trump show is likely to remain, to an amazing degree, separate from the Trump administration show. Perhaps the latter will become the Jared Kushner show. It might become the Bob Corker show if Mr.

investigations of terrorism to Muslim-linked acts

. What is the aim of this apparent intent to ignore white racist violence, potentially paving the way for its decriminalization?

We might put the question to Trump's inner circle, to men such as Stephen Bannon, whose former job as executive chairman of the alt-right Breitbart News made him the darling of white nationalists everywhere; or to Stephen Miller, who has campaigned against "Islamofascism," on the belief that the US and Western civilization are at war with Islamic jihadists.

It's certainly high time to pose it to Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, both observant Jews.

What they perhaps don't want to realize -- but Bannon knows all too well -- is that racism is a famously mobile form of hatred. Blacks and Jews, and Arabs and Jews, have often been collapsed together by white nationalists and their authoritarian leaders as different

facets of the same "problem" to restrict or eliminate. And that once racist violence is unleashed, especially when encouraged by the state, it's difficult to contain.

Optimists believe that people can change. If Trump is really serious about going against his history and combating racism in all forms, anti-Semitism included, he could start with two actions: discard the idea of exempting white terrorists from prosecution. And get rid of Stephen Bannon, Stephen Miller and all the other extremists who Trump has allowed into America's halls of power and influence, only to propagate racially-grounded fantasies of American greatness.

If history's any judge, they will lead us to ruin. We deserve far better than that.

## Holman Jenkins, Jr : Missing the Meaning of Trump

Trump wisely reaches out (as another Republican president, Reagan, did) to a Tennessee senator to put a disordered White House on the straight and narrow.

A Trump administration need not devolve into chaos—its real challenge is how to make use of a unique asset, Mr. Trump himself, to power the coalitions that get things done in Washington. This possibility still exists.

The saddest part, though, is how quickly Democrats, following their loudest, ninniest voters, have decided to turn Mr. Trump into the Antichrist. One example: In 17 years of Howard Stern interviews, Mr. Trump appears never to have uttered a sentiment unfriendly to gays. He is a lifelong New Yorker. He was a regular at Studio 54. His mentor was a powerful gay attorney. In his convention speech, Mr. Trump offered himself as the defender of "LGBTQ citizens." Yet many gay activists now join a parade of those pronouncing themselves oppressed by a Trump presidency. Why? Pure cognitive dissonance: Democrats have been busy twisting his admittedly rococo image beyond reason to fit their partisan needs.

Mr. Trump's fundamental independence from party might have been, and still might be, an opportunity for the country. It perhaps merits eye rolling more

than paranoia, but another obstacle is the deranged meddling of the bureaucracy. Recall that it began with FBI chief James Comey's fatuous intervention in the election, clearing Hillary Clinton in the email controversy, unclearing her, and then clearing her again.

And now the so-called intelligence community shows itself unhealthily eager to traffic in claims about Kremlin influence in the election, to leak intercepts of Mike Flynn's phone chats, to fill the press with vague insinuations of ties between the Trump campaign and Russian intelligence.

All this smacks too much of the little Walter Mittys of our overfunded, underdelivering intelligence bureaucracy trying to punish Americans for how they voted.

They are fools to do so. The election represents serious data from the world. Sixty-three million Americans were trying to get Washington's attention. We still hope for real achievements. At worst, Trumpian gridlock is probably better than Obama gridlock (look at the stock market). In the meantime, the body politic will listen to itself. In four years, thanks to Mr. Trump, it will have been drilled into both parties' heads just how badly things have gone wrong in our country by the lights of millions of our fellow citizens.

## Jason Riley : The Media Do Battle With a Pragmatic New President

Updated Feb. 21,  
2017 9:03 p.m.

During labor disputes at major newspapers, it's not uncommon for reporters to withhold their bylines from stories to demonstrate frustration with management and win sympathy from readers. This can sometimes get management's attention, but it's unclear how many readers notice or care.

In recent weeks the Washington press corps's coverage of its continuing personal feud with Donald Trump, which pits a supposedly tyrannical president against a supposedly noble Fourth Estate, has dominated the news. Does the public care about this standoff as much as the media believe?

"They have their own agenda," Mr. Trump said of the national press at a rally in Florida Feb. 18, where he pitted the elite media against his supporters. "And their agenda is not your agenda." The president is on firmer ground than his media foes.

Republican presidents have been accustomed to harsh criticism from the mostly left-wing Beltway journalists who cover them, but no one in memory has received as much sustained abuse as Mr. Trump. Most major news outlets showed nothing but contempt for him and his

supporters throughout the campaign, and the disdain has only escalated since the election.

"They could not defeat us in the primaries and they could not defeat us in the general election," Mr. Trump told supporters, referring not to his political opponents but to the press. "We are not going to let the fake news tell us what to do, how to live, or what to believe. We are free and independent people, and we will make our own choices."

It's also becoming clearer that the media are more interested than Mr. Trump in maintaining this antagonistic relationship. Mr. Trump won the White House as an outsider who preached the sort of pragmatism on display in Florida, where he spoke at length about his administration's intention to focus on jobs, crime, border security and economic growth.

"I know that you want safe neighborhoods where the streets belong to families and communities, not gang members and drug dealers," he said. The president talked about reducing violent crime nationwide and assembling a task force that will focus on urban areas. He said "safety is a civil right." The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday that murder rates in Chicago, Baltimore, Milwaukee and Memphis have returned to record levels reached in the 1990s. For

millions of Americans, that task force can't come soon enough.

Mr. Trump's approach to job creation is no less commonsensical. He wants to cut red tape and use our natural resources as safely and strategically as possible. "You want low-cost American energy also, which means lifting the restrictions on oil, on shale, on natural gas, on clean—very clean—coal," he said at the Florida rally. "We're going to put the miners back to work." Mr. Trump pledged to reverse course at the Environmental Protection Agency, where regulatory activity increased dramatically during a previous administration that placed the concerns of environmentalists above those of blue-collar workers in Ohio and Michigan.

In the president's view, these regulations have been "clogging up the veins of our country," which "meant no jobs. It meant companies leaving our country and going to foreign countries to do things that they'd rather do here." An Americans for Tax Reform report last year said EPA compliance costs had grown by more than \$50 billion annually under President Obama and "ripple throughout the economy, impacting GDP, killing thousands of jobs, and increasing the cost of consumer goods."

Whether or not you support this agenda, it deserves at least as much serious media coverage as

Mr. Trump's CNN put-downs. Yet the press seems more interested in berating the president than in covering him. Mr. Trump's thin skin and lack of self-discipline don't help his cause. Nor does his rocky relationship with the truth. But Mr. Trump isn't the first president to prevaricate; he's just less polished than we're accustomed to.

Voters elected a nonpolitician to the Oval Office, a rookie who has made any number of rookie mistakes. The administration's poorly vetted nominee for labor secretary and hastily drafted travel ban were self-inflicted wounds. Yet those same misfires also provide evidence that the media's doomsday predictions are overblown.

Mr. Trump's executive order on refugees was rejected by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and the president said he is rewriting it to pass muster the next time around, which is how the system is supposed to work. The president's nominee for labor secretary lacked sufficient support from his own party in a GOP-controlled Senate, which suggests that Republicans have no intention of being a rubber stamp for this White House. Reports of the death of our constitutional system of checks and balances has been greatly exaggerated—by a national media that can't get over itself.

### NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE

## Ben Shapiro : Identity Politics, Left & Right -- Ideas & Values Should Matter More

In November, students at a historically black university in New Orleans led a massive protest against a speaker heavily supportive of Donald Trump. Socially Engaged Dillard University Students, the group organizing against the speaker, wrote an open letter: "His presence on our campus is not welcome, and overtly subjects the entire student body to safety risks and social ridicule. This is simply outrageous."

The speaker's safety was guaranteed by the university, and he proceeded to explain, "I will be Donald Trump's most loyal advocate."

The protesters were of the political Left; they chanted, "No KKK! No fascist USA!" Protesters were hit with pepper spray, and two were arrested.

So, here's the question: Did this make inviting the speaker worthwhile?

The answer should be obvious: From this account of events, you don't have enough information to say. The speaker could have been Sheriff David Clarke or Rudy Giuliani or Newt Gingrich.

But it wasn't. It was David Duke, who also said, at the same event, "There is a problem in America with a very strong, powerful, tribal group that dominates our media and dominates our international banking. I'm not opposed to all Jews."

If you did not answer that the story provided too little information for you to judge, it's time to check your biases. Did you decide that the speaker was on the right because the protesters were on the left? Did you decide that the speaker had something valuable to say if he ticked off the Left enough, if he melted enough snowflakes?

**RELATED: Trump and the 'Enemy of the People'**

Unfortunately, many conservatives have embraced this sort of binary thinking: If it angers the Left, it must be virtuous. Undoubtedly, that's a crude shorthand for political thinking. It means you never have to check the ideas of the speaker, you merely have to check how people respond to him.

That's dangerous. It leads to supporting bad policies and bad men. The enemy of your enemy isn't always your friend. Sometimes he's your enemy. Sometimes he's just a dude sitting there minding his own business.

*You don't have enough information to know.*

The logic of "if he melts snowflakes, he's one of us" actually hands power to the Left, by allowing leftists to define conservatives' friends. It gets to choose whom we support. This isn't speculative. It happened during the 2016 primaries, when the media attacked Trump incessantly, driving Republicans into his

outstretched arms. The media's obvious hatred for Trump was one of the chief arguments for Trump from his advocates: If, as his detractors claimed, he wasn't conservative, then why would the leftist media hate him so much?

The logic of 'if he melts snowflakes, he's one of us' actually hands power to the Left, by allowing leftists to define conservatives' friends.

To be fair, after Mitt Romney's bludgeoning at the hands of the media, there was at least a shred of justification for this logic. Romney wasn't a hard-core conservative, wasn't a personal shambles, and got savaged by the media anyway, simply for the sin of having an R after his name. The same happened to John McCain, a "maverick" Republican the leftist media had openly pushed for years. If the media opposed Trump with all their heart and all their soul, that must



have been some sort of reaction to Trump himself.

It wasn't, though. It was a combination of factors, including the fact that Trump was amazing press and the press thought Trump an unusually weak candidate. More-honest leftist commentators openly preferred Trump to more-conservative candidates such as Ted Cruz or Marco Rubio.

But Trump's war with the media carried him to the nomination, and from there to the presidency.

In fact, Trump continues to live off of this backward logic. His press conference last week was no ballet of informational expertise and policy knowledge, nor was it a brilliant recasting of his policy successes. It was a blunderbuss attack on the

media, entertaining in the extreme, occasionally daft, occasionally ridiculous. Yet many on the right immediately concluded that it was the most successful press conference in world history, not because it was successful with Americans per se — there was no evidence of that — but because it was a successful assault on the media, who had it coming.

Never mind if Trump lied to the media. They were angry. That showed it worked. Watching Chuck Todd fulminate and Chris Wallace rage and Don Lemon bemusedly tut-tut scratched conservatives where they itch — and it made Trump a hero.

**RELATED: Journalism's Fake Renaissance**

## The New York Times

### Trump Uses His Tee Times for a Mix of Diplomacy and Recreation

Mark Landler

WASHINGTON

— Of the 31 days he has been in office, President Trump has spent six of them on a golf course. That amounts to one-fifth of his tenure, including three of his five weekends, as commander in chief.

His golf partners have included the Japanese prime minister and champion players from South Africa and Northern Ireland. One Saturday in Florida, he managed to play in the morning at Trump National Golf Club in Jupiter, and in the afternoon at Trump International in West Palm Beach.

Few of these details came from the White House, which has thrown a veil of secrecy over the president's golf game, as well as many of his other pursuits while he is at his Palm Beach, Fla., estate, Mar-a-Lago.

The Trump administration does not disclose his golf partners, except for the day he played with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and the South African pro, Ernie Els, about which Mr. Trump tweeted himself. It declines even to confirm Mr. Trump is actually swinging at a tee when his motorcade disappears behind the towering palm trees and crested gates of his clubs.

Golf is not the only activity that the administration keeps under wraps in Florida, where Mr. Trump is still making a fitful transition from the proprietor of a private club to president. Last weekend, the White House did not disclose that he attended a charity benefit for cancer research at Mar-a-Lago, during which a tuneless former Canadian prime minister, Brian Mulroney, sang "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" to Mr. Trump and his guests.

It also did not publicize that the president led a tour of Air Force One for friends and family members of the staff at Mar-a-Lago, while the plane was parked at Palm Beach International Airport.

White House officials say these were all private events. The press office did publicize the president's work schedule in Florida, which included a staff meeting on repealing the Affordable Care Act, interviews with four candidates for national security adviser, and phone calls with the president of Panama and the prime minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

But the White House is clearly sensitive about Mr. Trump's Eisenhower-like golf habit — so much so that it has gotten the press office into the rough. On Sunday, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House deputy press secretary, told reporters in Florida that the president played a "couple of holes" on Saturday and Sunday.

Then Rory McIlroy, the world's No. 3-ranked player, told a golf website, No Laying Up, that he had played a full 18 holes with Mr. Trump. "He probably shot around 80," Mr. McIlroy said. "He's a decent player for a guy in his 70s!" A photograph of Mr. McIlroy, posing with Mr. Trump and Paul O'Neill, the former Yankees right-fielder, appeared on social media.

On Monday, Ms. Sanders clarified that the president "intended to play a few holes and decided to play longer."

President Barack Obama played golf with Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia in Hawaii in 2014. Nicholas Kamm/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

None of this is to argue that Trump is a leftist or that conservatives are wrong to support many of his policy prescriptions. But if your standard of right and wrong is whether the Left hates it, you're making a category error.

It's not good enough to just be opposed by the Left — you must *actually oppose the Left*. We must ask *what* someone is fighting against, not merely *whom*. We must ask what tools they're using — and we must insist they use the truth. Ideas and values matter more than identity.

But not anymore. The Left's identity politics is focused on racial, ethnic, and sexual identity — aspects of identity that place you somewhere in the hierarchy of intersectionality.

The Right's identity politics comes with a label: enemy of the Left. So long as you're wearing that button, you're presumptively on our side and you're nearly bulletproof.

Until it turns out that you're not. Until we jump the wrong way because we substituted political laziness for a philosophy. Until we embrace somebody nasty because the other side hated him or her and stop caring about truth so long as the other side is triggered.

Then we become the bad guys. And that's a problem.

— Ben Shapiro is the editor in chief of the Daily Wire.

The White House goes to considerable lengths to keep Mr. Trump's golf game away from scrutiny. When he plays in West Palm Beach, the press corps that follows him is diverted to a parking lot at a public library across the street. When he played in Jupiter, reporters were sequestered in a clubhouse meeting room that would have offered a picturesque view of the green, except that the windows and doors were taped with black plastic.

The rub, of course, is that Mr. Trump repeatedly criticized his predecessor, Barack Obama, for playing too much golf.

On Oct. 13, 2014, he wrote on Twitter, "Can you believe that, with all the problems and difficulties facing the U.S., President Obama spent the day playing golf. Worse than Carter." Ten days later, Mr. Trump posted, "President Obama has a major meeting on the N.Y.C. Ebola outbreak, with people flying in from all over the country, but decided to play golf!"

In July, Mr. Trump, then the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, offered his philosophy on presidents playing golf to David Feherty of the Golf Channel. "Obama plays a lot of golf — a lot," he said.

"I don't think you should play very much," he continued. "But if you're going to play, you should use it to your advantage, and the country's advantage." As president, Mr. Trump said, he would play with members of Congress, to push through his legislative agenda, or with foreign leaders, to advance the nation's diplomatic and trade priorities.

By that rationale, Mr. Trump's game with Mr. Abe was fully justified. Though it is hard to see where Mr. Els and Mr. McIlroy fit in, aside from the fact they are not American. According to No Laying Up, Mr. Trump's quartet with Mr. McIlroy included Nick Mullen, an executive with International Sports Management, and Richard Levine, a longtime friend and golf partner of Mr. Trump's who has donated to his foundation.

Mr. Obama played 333 rounds of golf as president, according to Mark Knoller, a White House correspondent for CBS News. Though he famously played with the Republican speaker of the House, John A. Boehner, in an ill-fated effort to cultivate him for budget negotiations, the large majority of Mr. Obama's rounds were with the same trio of White House aides.

The White House's refusal to disclose Mr. Trump's games has not deterred Mr. Knoller from his bookkeeping.

"I look for club members tweeting photos or other confirmation of his swinging a club," Mr. Knoller said. But he added, "I've changed my designation from 'rounds of golf' to 'golf outings' since it's clear on some occasions he has played only a few holes, not a full round."

Mr. Trump is not the first president to disguise his golf passion because of a complicated history with his predecessor. John F. Kennedy kept the news media away from his golf outings during the 1960 campaign for fear of being compared to Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"Kennedy was extremely sensitive about some voters' distaste for Dwight Eisenhower's widely known golf addiction," said Don Van Natta



Jr. in his book about presidents and golf, "First Off the Tee: Presidential Hackers, Duffers,

and Cheaters From Taft to Bush." "As Kennedy quietly asked his friends: 'Would it be appropriate for

someone aspiring to be the champion of the people to indulge in a rich man's game?"

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Scott Pruitt Signals Dramatic Shift in EPA Priorities

Amy Harder

Feb. 21, 2017 3:13 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—In his first speech as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt stressed a dramatic change of priorities at the agency, stating the importance of the agency's communication and relationship with businesses but giving few details about policy changes.

Mr. Pruitt didn't touch on the hard-fought issues that arose during his confirmation process, including his work as Oklahoma attorney general suing the EPA and comments President Donald Trump has made about nearly eliminating the agency.

The new administrator focused instead on his general aspirations for the agency, such as giving businesses certainty regarding environmental rules and striking an appropriate balance with states when it comes to regulations.

"Regulations ought to make things regular," said Mr. Pruitt, repeating a line he used at his confirmation

hearing in January. "Those that we regulate ought to know what they can expect from us."

That is a clear difference in message and focus from the EPA under President Barack Obama, which emphasized first what the agency was trying to protect with its regulations on clean air and water.

Mr. Pruitt's speech at agency headquarters, which went a little over 10 minutes, was aimed at striking a balance between the administrator's mandate from Mr. Trump to roll back Mr. Obama's environmental regulations and persistent concerns from inside and outside the agency about that very mandate. It didn't include questions from either media or the assembled EPA staffers in Washington. EPA employs about 15,000 people across the U.S.; thousands were able to watch the speech online.

"You can't lead unless you listen. I seek to listen and learn and lead with you to address these issues we face as a nation," Mr. Pruitt said.

Mr. Trump's plans for EPA have attracted particular attention, given his stated goal of making wholesale changes at the agency. Current and former officials of the agency had publicly urged the defeat of Mr. Pruitt, saying they were concerned about his close relations with the oil and gas industry in Oklahoma. The Senate narrowly confirmed him on Friday mostly along party lines.

Mr. Pruitt's comments Tuesday didn't ease some critics' concerns.

"Pruitt told EPA staff they may not know him except for what they have read, but perception is reality," said Liz Purchia, a former EPA communications director under Mr. Obama. "Trump's team spent the entire campaign and the last few months railing against EPA's existence, its staff and its purpose."

Mr. Pruitt didn't mention the Trump administration's imminent plans to start undoing two of the biggest rules the agency has issued over the past eight years: one cutting carbon emissions from power plants and another bringing more waters under federal jurisdiction.

Mr. Trump is expected to soon sign at least two executive orders to begin the process of scrapping both of those regulations, along with other Obama-era climate regulations, according to several people familiar with the plans. Both efforts would take months and are likely to face legal challenges.

The executive order focusing on power-plant emissions is expected to be framed as an attempt to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy while promoting domestic energy production, two of Mr. Trump's campaign promises. Supporters of the regulation say it is important for fighting climate change.

Other policies likely to be targeted in the executive orders is an Interior Department temporary ban on coal leasing and a measure cutting emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas, from oil and natural gas wells on federal lands. Congress is already in the process of repealing that regulation.

## The Washington Post

### Pruitt to EPA employees: 'We don't have to choose' between jobs and the environment

<https://www.facebook.com/chriscmooney>

Director of Environmental Protection Agency Scott Pruitt was sworn in by Justice Samuel Alito on Feb. 17 after the U.S. Senate confirmed him over the objections of Democrats and environmentalists worried he will gut the agency. (Reuters)

Director of Environmental Protection Agency Scott Pruitt was sworn in by Justice Samuel Alito on Feb. 17 after the U.S. Senate confirmed him over the objections of Democrats and environmentalists worried he will gut the agency. Scott Pruitt was sworn in by Justice Samuel Alito on Feb. 17 after the U.S. Senate confirmed him over the objections of Democrats and environmentalists. (Reuters)

In his first full work day as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt made clear Tuesday that he intends to step back from what he sees as the agency's regulatory overreach during the Obama administration.

Pruitt, who spent years criticizing and suing the EPA before becoming its newest leader, reiterated an

argument he often had made as Oklahoma attorney general.

"The only authority that any agency has in the executive branch is the authority given to it by Congress," he said during a noon address to employees at the agency headquarters. "We need to respect that. We need to follow that. Because when we do that, guess what happens? We avoid litigation. We avoid the uncertainty of litigation and we reach better ends and outcomes at the end of the day."

Pruitt himself was the source of some of that legal conflict in recent years, suing the agency more than a dozen times over the course of President Barack Obama's two terms. And those lawsuits, plus his vocal criticism of the EPA's work generally and skepticism about climate change, have triggered palpable concerns among many longtime agency employees.

In many ways, though, the new administrator's remarks before his staff were conciliatory. Pruitt said he had come to listen to them and outlined principles for how he planned to guide the agency,

including emphasizing civility and respect for the role of states.

"In this environment we live in this country today ... it's a very toxic environment," Pruitt said. "We have jerseys that we put on both politically and otherwise. And that's something, I think, is damaging to finding results and answers."

*[Trump to roll back Obama's climate, water rules through executive action]*

Pruitt was confirmed Friday afternoon, mostly along partisan lines in the Senate, after a process that featured much criticism of his statements about climate change, his relationships with the fossil-fuel industry and his history of litigation against the agency he's now leading. Two Democrats in the Senate, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Joe Manchin of West Virginia, voted for him. One Republican, Susan Collins of Maine, voted against him.

While Republican lawmakers and industry executives welcomed his nomination, it was met with unprecedented opposition from environmental groups and from

hundreds of former and current EPA employees, who argued that his track record shows little regard for environmental protection.

Pruitt's remarks were delivered in the Rachel Carson Green Room at the EPA, a large and dramatic wood-paneled room named after the famed environmentalist whose 1962 book, "Silent Spring," helped galvanize a movement that eventually led to the EPA's founding. About 75 EPA employees were on hand — attendance at the event was optional, and staff could also listen or watch online — along with members of the Trump administration and dozens of reporters.

News reports have suggested that President Trump is on the verge of signing a number of executive orders to roll back Obama priorities on the environment, including the Clean Power Plan, which restricts greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, and the Waters of the U.S. regulation. But Pruitt made no explicit mention of planned policy changes in his remarks, instead focusing on what he said were a set

of principles by which he would guide the agency.

Pruitt was introduced at the event by Catherine McCabe, who had served as acting administrator until his confirmation. Her remarks about his background did not mention the many occasions when he, as Oklahoma attorney general, had filed lawsuits against the agency.

*[On eve of confirmation vote, judge orders EPA nominee to release thousands of emails]*

"Civility is something I believe in very much," Pruitt told the employees gathered. "We ought to be able to get together and wrestle through some difficult issues and do so in a civil manner." He also noted that the "process" and "rule of law" matter greatly at the EPA. By contrast, he did not talk much about the agency's actual goals, such as preserving clean air and clean water.

"Federalism matters," Pruitt

continued, pledging to forge close relationships with the states as he carries out his role. But states are likely to be highly divided over any attempt to undo Obama environmental regulations, with states such as Massachusetts, New York and California likely to oppose such efforts through state-level lawsuits much like the ones that Pruitt himself participated in against Obama's EPA.

At one point, Pruitt actually quoted John Muir, the founder of the Sierra Club — which provoked a quick response from the environmental group's executive director, Michael Brune, that "John Muir is rolling over in his grave at the notion of someone as toxic to the environment as Scott Pruitt taking over the EPA."

Pruitt also said that there shouldn't be a contradiction between environmental protection and energy production or job creation, a line also often emphasized by

President George W. Bush's administration.

"We as an agency and we as a nation can be both pro-energy and jobs and pro-environment," Pruitt said. "That we don't have to choose between the two. I think our nation has done better than any nation in the world at making sure we do the job of protecting our natural resources and protecting our environment while also respecting the economic growth and jobs our nation seeks to have."

Overall, the comments were very much in line both with what Pruitt said during his confirmation hearing and the arguments he has made for years during his opposition to EPA regulations under the Obama administration. He has been a leading proponent of the notion that the EPA too often overstepped its legal authority, going beyond the language of the statutes passed by Congress to take aggressive regulatory action. In addition, Pruitt has argued that the agency often

infringed on the rights of states to regulate within their own borders.

Pruitt's remarks came shortly before the possible release by the Oklahoma attorney general's office of thousands of his emails from his tenure there, as ordered by a judge on Thursday. The office has not said whether it will comply or appeal.

After introducing him, McCabe gave Pruitt an EPA lapel pin and an EPA hat. The new leader, a former partner of a Triple-A baseball team, said he would wear the latter when going to Washington Nationals games.

Energy and Environment newsletter

The science and policy of environmental issues.

Please provide a valid email address.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Chuck Schumer: Jeff Sessions must recuse himself from the Flynn investigation

By Chuck Schumer

By Chuck Schumer February 21 at 7:55 AM

*Chuck Schumer, a Democrat from New York, is U.S. Senate minority leader.*

The gravity of the issues raised by the events that led to national security adviser Michael Flynn's resignation cannot be overstated or ignored. Revelations about Flynn's contact with the Russians and reports indicating that he may have lied to the FBI about that contact may be only the tip of the iceberg. There's an overwhelming view in our intelligence community that Russia tried to influence our election.

The American people, and indeed American democracy, require a thorough and independent investigation into what transpired and whether any criminal laws or constitutional precepts were violated. Such an investigation and any resulting prosecution would normally be carried out under the purview of the attorney general, as the nation's chief law enforcement officer with oversight of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. But in this case, given his deep and long-standing ties to President Trump and many of Trump's top advisers, Attorney General

Jeff Sessions cannot lead such an investigation.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions was sworn in by Vice President Mike Pence on Feb. 9 at the White House. Sessions sworn in as attorney general (Photo: Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

Sessions's recusal is required by the Justice Department's own rules and regulations. The department clearly states that "no employee shall participate in a criminal investigation or prosecution if he has a personal or political relationship with any person or organization substantially involved in the conduct that is the subject of the investigation or prosecution or any person or ... has a specific and substantial interest that would be directly affected by the outcome of the investigation or prosecution." It is beyond dispute that Trump has a number of specific and substantial interests that would be directly affected by the outcome of the investigation. The regulations define a political relationship as "a close identification with an elected official [or] candidate ... arising from service as a principal adviser thereto or a principal official thereof."

During the campaign, Sessions was identified by the Trump campaign and by Trump himself as a key

adviser. Sessions was the first senator to endorse Trump, frequently appeared with him on the campaign trail and even served on the same campaign council as Flynn. Would he be able to impartially lead an inquiry into potential wrongdoing by the team that appointed him to his current post and with whom he has been closely allied? Certainly, the appearance of bias is unavoidable.

Most important, Sessions's recusal from this matter is important not only to comply with the law but also to ensure that the public can have faith that the investigation is being conducted in a thorough and impartial way. Last week, the attorney general met with the president in the Oval Office, as his job requires. Until he recuses himself from this investigation, many Americans will remain suspicious about what they discussed. Did they talk about the ongoing investigation? Did the president try, in any way, to steer him away from the truth? A cloud will hang over every meeting and conversation between the president and attorney general until Sessions recuses himself.

*[I didn't think I'd ever leave the CIA. But because of Trump, I quit.]*

Because administration officials did not reveal Flynn's prevaricating

about his contacts with Russia for weeks, acknowledging them only after they were exposed by the media, they have made it extremely difficult for the American people to believe that they will endeavor to get to the bottom of the issues at hand. Removing a political ally from running the investigation is absolutely necessary to "assure the public the matter will be handled without partisanship." Anything short of a full recusal by Sessions will jaundice the investigation and violate Justice Department rules.

As then-Sen. Sessions wrote, with others, in calling for the recusal of then-Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch in the matter of former secretary of state Hillary Clinton's emails: "When a high public official is accused of serious wrongdoing and there is a sufficient factual predicate to investigate it is imperative the investigation be thorough, with dispatch and without partisanship. ... The appropriate response when the subject matter is public and it arises in a highly-charged political atmosphere is for the Attorney General to appoint a Special Counsel of great public stature and indisputable independence to assure the public the matter will be handled without partisanship." Attorney General Jeff Sessions should take the words of Sen. Jeff Sessions to heart.

**The  
New York  
Times**

## Thomas Friedman : Meet the 5 Trump Administrations

Thomas L. Friedman

It should be clear by now that there are five different Trump administrations swirling before our eyes — Trump Entertainment, Trump Cleanup, Trump Crazy, Trump G.O.P. and the Essential Trump — and no one can predict which will define this presidency, let alone make a success of it.

Trump Entertainment shows up every day now in the form of an outrageous “alternative fact,” a pugnacious press conference, a tweet denouncing the news media as “the enemy of the American people” — or as a pep rally in Florida, unconnected to any particular legislative agenda and organized entirely for the purpose of giving the president an ego sugar high.

The country, though, is getting addicted to Trump Entertainment. It is hard to avert your gaze from a president who will say anything about anything. It's so unusual, like a flying elephant or a horse that can talk, that you can't help but stare. But it's such a waste of energy. I wonder if the Chinese are spending their days this way. I suspect they've added another high-speed rail line just since Trump's election.

Trump Cleanup comprises the adults on his team who follow in the wake of Trump Entertainment and “clarify” what the president meant. It's Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis assuring the South Koreans that — despite what Trump said — we'll honor our security commitments to them, or assuring the Iraqis that we're actually

not going to steal their oil. It's the U.N. ambassador, Nikki Haley, clarifying that — despite what Trump said — we're still committed to two states for Israelis and Palestinians.

President Trump speaking to reporters on Air Force One on Saturday. Al Drago/The New York Times

The undisputed boss of Trump Crazy is chief strategist Steve Bannon, who rushed the president's initial mess of an executive order on immigration. Bannon is dedicated to shrinking the global clout of China, the European Union and Iran, and to making America a country less open to immigration and trade, a country that is whiter and more nationalistic and a country that is as free of Muslim influence and immigrants as possible. He surely encouraged Trump's attacks on the intelligence community and the media as a way to undermine all independent sources of truth, so that Trump can inject his own reality, through Twitter, directly into the U.S. body politic.

Trump G.O.P. is led by Reince Priebus and represents the old Republican agenda. It knows that Trump is an invasive species who took over the G.O.P. garden, and Trump G.O.P. is just trying to get the best out of him — to kill Obamacare, cut taxes, deregulate Wall Street, promote fossil fuels and appoint conservative judges — while curbing his worst ideas, like his vow to restrict free trade.

So much of the daily reporting about Trump has had to focus on his serial fabrications that it's distracted us from the Essential Trump, which can be summed up by the most truthful thing he's said since he started his campaign: “I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose voters.”

That's the Essential Trump — a man who values loyalty above all else and who thinks his followers are so stupidly loyal that they wouldn't convict him for a murder they saw him commit; a man who thinks only he can get the little people more jobs by single-handedly putting the arm on big companies; and a man who has shown no interest in earning the trust of Americans who did not vote for him. He appointed no Democrats to his cabinet and, as his Florida rally underscored, he is only interested in being president of the Trump fan club.

When I add up all these Trumps I do not get a good team feeling; I get the feeling of a pickup basketball team. It doesn't start with a shared vision of what world we're living in and what are the biggest forces shaping this world. It starts with the conclusions on which Trump bases his facts.

But the fact is we're living in a world being shaped by vast accelerations in technology, globalization, climate change and population growth, and government's job is to enable more citizens to thrive in such a world and cushion its worst impacts. These

are the facts on which I base my conclusions.

In this age, leaders have to challenge citizens to understand that *more is required of them* if they want to remain in the middle class — that they have to be lifelong learners.

It's an age when the governments that thrive the most will be those that are as open to the world as possible — to get the change signals first and attract the most high-I.Q. risk-takers — and at the same time encourage radical entrepreneurship, provide stronger safety nets like health care, and foster life-learning opportunities for every citizen. They have to go left and right at the same time. They are the governments that are focused not on erecting walls but on preparing citizens to live without them.

It's an age where the best leaders build trust at the top, and between themselves and their people, because trust is what enables teams to move fast and experiment more. It's an age when to make America great requires doing big hard things, and big hard things can only be done together. And it's an age when, because of the speed of change, small errors in navigation by a leader can send us hurtling far off track.

But maybe Trump's many administrations will surprise us. Maybe elephants can fly. And maybe not.



## ObamaCare fix hinges on Medicaid clash in Senate

By  
Alexan  
der

Bolton - 02/22/17 06:00 AM EST

The most divisive issue for Senate Republicans when it comes to repealing and replacing - ObamaCare is what to do with Medicaid.

The Affordable Care Act gave states the option of accepting federal funds to expand Medicaid, the healthcare program for the poor and disabled. Millions of people gained health insurance after 31 states — including many with Republican governors — decided to accept the deal.

Repealing ObamaCare would end the Medicaid expansion, cutting federal funds to all of those states.

Some Republicans want to save the expansion at least through a transition period during which states would continue to get additional federal funds.

Others, including lawmakers from states that didn't take the expansion, say all of ObamaCare has to go, with no long, costly transition period for Medicaid.

The fact that some states took the expansion and others didn't provides a dividing line that will pit Republicans against one another.

Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) calls it the single thorniest issue of the entire debate.

“You don't want to punish or penalize states that didn't expand [Medicaid], but the states that did expand are going to say, ‘We don't want to get punished for expanding, either.’ To me, that's probably the thorniest and most difficult issue to resolve,” said Thune, the chairman of the Senate Republican Conference.

Twenty Republican senators represent states that expanded Medicaid under ObamaCare, which the federal government subsidized

entirely for the first three years of the expansion. Many want to keep the federal subsidies providing for the expansion.

Thirty-two Senate Republicans represent states that opted out of the Medicaid expansion. Many of them don't think it's fair for states that opted in to keep getting federal help.

It's a bigger fight in the Senate than in the House, where the GOP last week unveiled a proposal to roll back federal subsidies for Medicaid. The House plan does not specify when this would happen.

If states want to keep the Medicaid expansion, House policymakers say they will have to find the money themselves. If they cut back, they say, low-income individuals and families would be eligible for a new, yet-to-be-specified refundable tax credit to buy private insurance.

Ohio Gov. John Kasich, a Republican, said the House

proposal “means phasing out coverage.”

“That is a very, very bad idea, because we cannot turn our back on the most vulnerable,” he told CNN's “State of the Union.”

Nearly 620,000 people in Ohio were made eligible for Medicaid under - ObamaCare.

Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) says he wants to make sure that constituents who received new health coverage through Medicaid don't lose it.

He and Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) have met with Republicans from other states that agreed to the Medicaid expansion.

Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, which covers low-income minors, cover 29 percent of West Virginians. That's the highest percentage of any state, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

"Sen. Capito is committed to ensuring that there is a stable transition when ObamaCare is repealed to avoid any gaps in coverage and ensure those currently covered by the Medicaid expansion are protected and retain access to healthcare," said Amy Graham, a spokeswoman for Capito.

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) took fire from constituents angry about possible cuts to ObamaCare during a town hall meeting in Iowa Falls on Tuesday.

Grassley insisted that the 11 million new people who signed up for Medicaid under the 2010 law will still "be able to get the subsidy," according to video of the meeting provided by American Bridge, a pro-Democrat advocacy group.

He said either states would subsidize the expanded enrollment or "there will be a refundable tax credit for low-income people."

But just how the refundable tax credit would work has yet to be fully understood by many GOP lawmakers, and it's unclear whether it would be enough to buy insurance covering the same services as Medicaid.

Controversy over repealing the Medicaid expansion erupted among Senate Republicans two years ago when they passed legislation under special budgetary rules at the end of 2015.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) brokered a deal at the time to ease the concerns of colleagues such as Portman and

Capito by proposing a two-year transition period to end the Medicaid expansion.

The stakes were lower then, because everyone knew President Obama would veto the bill.

President Trump is expected to sign the ObamaCare repeal measure into law, meaning whatever the Republican Congress does now is likely to become reality.

Sen. Steve Daines (R), whose home state of Montana also agreed to the Medicaid expansion, is floating a four-year transition period to a new safety net for low-income families.

"As [Vice President] Mike Pence said, we need to have a soft landing and not too long a runway. I'm actually tossing out a four-year kind

of transition right now, but to really give the states the power there of how they want to spend money," Daines told The Hill.

That kind of talk rankles conservatives such as Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul (R). Though his state adopted the Medicaid expansion, he's adamantly opposed to "partial" repeal plans.

"One thing we were unified on about a year ago when we voted was complete repeal," he said. "That's all some of us are going to vote for."

"There's still division. There are some people who want to keep part of ObamaCare," he said.

*Peter Sullivan contributed.*



## Bill de Blasio: Why I'm supporting Keith Ellison for DNC chair

By Bill de Blasio

By Bill de Blasio

February 21 at 3:51 PM

*Bill de Blasio is mayor of New York.*

Like many Democrats, I've spent a lot of time since Nov. 8 wondering what went wrong. Though Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by nearly 3 million votes, it's clear to me that too many voters stayed home because they felt the election was more about personalities than the issues that affect their lives.

But what we've seen in the days after the inauguration is nothing short of incredible. All over the country, millions of people are getting organized and demonstrating against the president and the broken policies of the Republican Party. People are starting to feel their power to stop the administration.

The new mission of the Democratic Party must be to harness and build on this energy. We need determined leadership that will bring us together as one united party. We need an inspiring vision of equality that resonates in the hearts, minds and souls of all Americans. We need to renew our commitment to strengthening our grass-roots infrastructure to take on President Trump and the Republicans.

You'd be hard-pressed to write a better description of Keith Ellison's approach to public service. That's why I'm supporting him in the race to be the next chairman of the Democratic Party.

*[Keith Ellison: 'The Democratic Party doesn't exist for Democrats']*

As leader of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, Keith, a Democrat from Minnesota, has been fighting to put working families at the center of our economic vision. He has built coalitions to raise wages for federal contract workers and stop cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. If there's a strike happening, you can almost guarantee Keith will be there right next to the workers.

And beyond being right on the issues, Keith knows what Democrats need to do to win.

During his successful run for Congress in 2006, his campaign knocked on doors and talked to voters who were neglected for years. That shaped Keith's approach to winning elections. He built a turnout machine in Minnesota by contacting as many voters as possible. It helped elect statewide Democrats in critical election years, including Sen. Al Franken's win by 312 votes in 2008. Surrounded by red states, Minnesota continues to shine blue in part thanks to voter participation levels that often lead the nation.

Nationwide, 58 percent of eligible voters went to the polls in 2016. A larger focus on turnout in key states might have changed the outcome. That's why Keith's experience and his plan to build a 3,143-county turnout strategy is so important. He wants local and state leaders to boost their turnout by 3 to 7 percent.

He is committed to make that happen by shifting the resources of the Democratic Party toward a grass-roots focus on getting voters to the polls. Higher turnout everywhere means victories not only at the federal level but at the state and local levels as well.

Keith also knows Democrats go further when we go as one. While the people in our party don't agree on everything, Keith knows it is our shared values that animate us to do good, fight for progressive values and lift up our fellow Americans. At the Democratic National Convention, I watched Keith, who had endorsed Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), barnstorm state delegations urging party unity for Democrats to rally behind Hillary Clinton. Later, he went to Nevada to facilitate a meeting between Sanders supporters and the Nevada Democratic Party leadership, helping to deliver a public unity statement after a contentious state convention in May.

No matter what the president says about "draining the swamp," Republicans will continue to be the party of millionaires and billionaires. I expect the GOP to break its promises to the people who supported it in the fall because they felt left behind economically. When that happens, the Democratic Party will have a big opportunity to win over some of the voters we lost.

But what we learned from the 2016 election is that being right on the issues isn't enough to win those voters back.

*[Obamacare's enduring victory]*

The campaign last year became too much about the wrong thing. It focused on what was bad about Donald Trump — his character and his personality. But we should've been focused more on what we could do to put more money in the pockets of working Americans.

Ironically, that was exactly the focus of our party's primary process. Clinton and Sanders spent months debating who could do more to lift up working families. The debate was substantive and high-minded. It brought new people into the process, introduced ideas that didn't seem possible just a few years ago and, most important, energized our party.

We now need to do the hard work of harnessing that energy. We need to organize year-round to constantly remind people that we stand for them. We have to live our values and focus on small-dollar donations. We need to show the voters left behind by Trump's tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations that our party represents them and that we're beholden only to them. We've got to give them a reason to go to the polls.

Trump likes to say he built a movement. The demonstrations around the country prove there's a people-powered movement ready to fight against him and the Republican Party. I believe Keith is the leader we need to build a party capable of channeling that power to win up and down the ballot.