

Revue de presse américaine

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



Mardi 21 février 2017, réalisation : Samuel Tribollet



FRANCE - EUROPE	3
French Police Search Marine Le Pen's Office in EU Funds Probe	3
Europe's Periphery Debt Market Welcomes New Member: France	3
Europe Combats a New Foe of Political Stability: Fake News (UNE)	4
In trip to Brussels, Pence tries soothing anxious leaders with pro-E.U. message	5
Editorial : Europe Needs a Higher Price on Carbon	5
British parliament debates Trump visit	6
'I Am Ashamed' vs. 'Get Over It': U.K. Parliament Debates Trump Visit	6
U.K. Lawmakers Debate Condemnation of Trump's State Visit	7
Maltby : The real meaning of UK's hot debate over Trump visit	7
Editorial : Save Greece by Saving Its Economy First	8
Don't Look Now, But There's Another Greek Debt Crisis Brewing	8
Eurozone Agrees to Greece Talks in Exchange for Bailout Payments	9
Editorial : Romania's lesson in public integrity	9
More Migrants Storm Fence to Enter Ceuta, Spanish Enclave in Africa	10
Trump tries to shift the conversation on Sweden	10

From an Anchor's Lips to Trump's Ears to Sweden's Disbelief (UNE)	10
Stephens : Do We Still Want the West?	11

INTERNATIONAL	12
U.S. troops in Iraq move closer to the front lines in fight for Mosul	12
Syria Bombing Kills 4 Russians	13
Tension Flares on Afghan-Pakistan Border Following Terror Attacks	13
Turkey Tries 47 Ex-Soldiers in Erdogan Assassination Plot	13
Trump Talk of Terror Listing for Muslim Brotherhood Alarms Some Arab Allies	14
Famine Declared in South Sudan	15
Netanyahu's Planned Visit to Australia Is Met With Opposition	15
Leonhardt : Trump's Russia Motives	15
O'Brien : Trump Can't Seem to Shake Those Russia Problems	16
Kim Jong-nam Killing Was 'Terrorist Act' by North Korea, South Says	17
Samsung Heir, Seeking to Modernize Opaque Culture, Instead Faces Scandal (UNE)	17

ETATS-UNIS	19
Sciubba : What the U.S. really needs is a wall to keep immigrants in	19
Trump Chooses H.R. McMaster as National Security Adviser (UNE)	19
McMaster Named as Trump's National Security Adviser (UNE)	20
Editorial : A Military Strategist for Trump's NSC	22
From 'Dereliction of Duty' to Trump's White House	22
Trump taps Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster as his new national security adviser (UNE)	23
Bergen : Trump's brilliant choice of McMaster	24
Stanley : Why Trump's supporters still love him	25
For a Trump adviser, an odyssey from the fringes of Washington to the center of power (UNE)	26
Trump to roll back Obama's climate, water rules through executive action	28

Editorial : Anyone home in Trumpville.....29
Gerson : The terrible consequences of abandoning
American exceptionalism.....29

Robinson : Obamacare’s enduring victory.....30
Phillips : Move Left, Democrats31

FRANCE - EUROPE

THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL

Norman

Feb. 20, 2017 3:29 p.m. ET

PARIS—French police Monday searched the offices of National Front leader Marine Le Pen on suspicion the presidential candidate and other members of her far-right party misused European Union funds, the party said.

Investigators are looking into whether Ms. Le Pen and other National Front leaders used funds—earmarked for assistants working inside the Strasbourg-based European Parliament—to pay party staffers in other parts of France. EU rules require European Parliament assistants to work

French Police Search Marine Le Pen's Office in EU Funds Probe

Noemie Bisserbe and Laurence

at one of the body's offices in Brussels, Strasbourg or Luxembourg and to reside near that workplace.

"This is evidently a media operation whose only goal is to disturb the smooth running of the presidential election campaign and harm Marine Le Pen at a time when she is making great inroads" with the polls, the National Front said in a statement.

Ms. Le Pen was in Lebanon on Monday, meeting with President Michel Aoun. After the meeting, she criticized the French government's help to rebel forces in Syria, saying Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was the only "realistic" ally.

The French probe stems from investigations EU authorities conducted in 2014 and 2015 into whether Ms. Le Pen, her father Jean-Marie Le Pen and other National Front representatives to the European Parliament improperly paid their political aides.

EU authorities have forwarded the findings of the probes to French judicial authorities. The European Parliament has said it was docking the pay of Ms. Le Pen and the others after they ignored the parliament's order to repay hundreds of thousands of euros.

Police are deepening their investigation of Ms. Le Pen as one of her main rivals, conservative François Fillon, is facing a criminal

probe into whether his wife collected a state salary without performing any work.

Scrutiny of Mr. Fillon, once the race's front-runner, has helped Ms. Le Pen pull away in the polls. Surveys have predicted Ms. Le Pen would win the first round of the elections on April 23, but lose the second-round runoff in May.

A poll published by Opinionway on Monday, however, showed Ms. Le Pen closing the second-round gap. Ms. Le Pen would lose 44%-to-56% if she faces Mr. Fillon in the runoff. She would garner 42% of the vote if she faces independent Emmanuel Macron.

THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL

Europe's Periphery Debt Market Welcomes New Member: France

Mike Bird and Jon Sindreu

Updated Feb. 21, 2017 8:19 a.m. ET

Investors are once again selling the bonds of Europe's peripheral economies amid political concerns. This time around, France has joined the club.

Some investors are selling French government debt, worried that the country will elect Marine Le Pen as its president, a candidate that has promised to take the country out of the eurozone. That has left French bonds behaving increasingly like their peers in the parts of Europe hit hardest by the 2011-12 sovereign-debt crisis.

It is quite a flip for Europe's second-largest economy. After that crisis, French bonds traded with Germany's. On Monday, a poll showing Ms. Le Pen comfortably in the lead for April's first round of the presidential election drove yields on French 10-year bonds to jump to 1.064%. Yields rise as bond prices fall.

The spread with German bond yields hit 0.84 percentage points during the day on Monday, the highest in more than four years, before settling at 0.75 percentage points as European markets closed. Six months ago, this gap was only 0.22.

Also rising are Italian and Portuguese 10-year yields which are up by around 0.7 percentage points against Germany's in the last six months. Greek yields have jumped.

The premium that investors demand for holding the debt of these nations over richer northern European economies like Germany and the Netherlands will continue to rise as a range of risks grow and the European Central Bank's massive bond buying program buys less debt, investors say.

It could be French yields leading the charge higher this time. Analysts at Japanese bank Mizuho Financial Group, Inc. told their clients Monday that they should stop treating French government bonds on par with German or Dutch debt.

"France is in the driving seat" in eurozone bond markets, Francesco Garzarelli, co-head of European macro research at Goldman Sachs said in a recent research note.

To be sure, Southern European spreads were widening before concerns spiked over France. In Italy and Portugal, economic growth remains weak as bad debts burden banks. In Greece, concerns have resurfaced that officials will fail to secure new loans from European creditors.

But, in the eurozone, there is a history of selling in one country's bonds that ripples out across

weaker members of the currency bloc. France appears to now be acting in that role.

"If France was to leave, the viability of the remaining euro would be very difficult to justify," said Neville Hill, co-head of global economic research at Credit Suisse.

The French presidential election takes place over two rounds this spring. Most experts and polling suggest Ms. Le Pen will fail in the election's second round, as voters choose an "anyone but Le Pen" candidate. But international investors, in particular, are fretting about the possibility that the National Front's candidate will pull off a Brexit-style surprise and shock markets.

A poll released Monday suggests Ms. Le Pen will win the first round of the vote, but lose in the second round, garnering 42% or 44% respectively against Emmanuel Macron and François Fillon, the two next most popular candidates. But Ms. Le Pen's second-round polling support has been rising in recent months, causing volatility in European bond markets.

Within the 19-nation eurozone, investors always dump the bloc's weaker economies and rush into stronger members like Germany whenever risks of a breakup of the currency emerge.

In 2012, the European Central Bank stemmed the fall in peripheral bonds by buying up billions of euros in this debt.

But ECB bond-buying has passed its peak.

Starting in April, officials will cut the amount of bond-buying they do every month from €80 billion (\$84.89 billion) to €60 billion, as part of a broader trend of developed world central banks reducing their involvement in markets.

The program's strict rules also mean that the ECB has to buy a smaller share of the debt of some of the neediest nations, chiefly Portugal. While ECB officials suggested last week that they may be increasingly favoring flexibility in these rules, investors remain worried that they hamper the bank's ability to prop up peripheral debt.

"Without ECB support it's hard to see how their spreads don't widen up further," according to Said Haidar, chief executive of the New York-based hedge fund Haidar Capital Management. Mr. Haidar is now betting against Southern European and French bonds.

Still, the ECB is unlikely to allow eurozone yields to reach 2012 levels again, investors say.

And not all of the periphery is looking shaky. Investors see the bonds of two peripheral

nations, Spain and Ireland, as increasingly being on safer footing, just as they view French debt on shakier ground.

Spain's 10-year bond yields are now around 0.5 of a percentage point below Italy's, their most negative spread against Rome in five years. Ireland's 10-year yields are now practically equal to France's, yielding 1.047% and 1.035% respectively on Monday.

The New York Times

Europe Combats a New Foe of Political Stability: Fake News (UNE)

Mark Scott and
Melissa Eddy

In a year when the French, Germans and Dutch will elect leaders, the European authorities are scrambling to counter a rising tide of fake news and anti-European Union propaganda aimed at destabilizing people's trust in institutions.

As officials play catch-up in the fight against sophisticated hacking and fake news operations, they fear Europe and its elections remain vulnerable at a critical moment: The region's decades-old project of unity hangs in the balance, challenged by populist forces within the bloc and pressures from Russia and beyond.

"If you look at how European media, and even big American media, are covering the issue now, I would say that it is those few people on that team who have been able to raise awareness," said Jakub Janda, a deputy director with European Values, a think tank based in Prague, who has worked with East Stratcom.

Many false claims target politicians who present the biggest obstacles to Moscow's goal of undermining the European Union. Others seek to portray refugees from the Middle East as terrorists or rapists, fomenting populist anger.

In France, the head of the En Marche! party said last week that Russian news channels had targeted the presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron, who belongs to the party and is running on a pro-European Union platform. Richard Ferrand, the party's secretary-general, said the campaign's databases and websites had been hit by "hundreds, if not thousands," of attacks from inside Russia.

The East Stratcom team is the first to admit that it is outgunned: The task is overwhelming, the volume of reports immense, the support to combat them scant.

The team tries to debunk bogus items in real time on Facebook and Twitter and publishes daily reports and a weekly newsletter on fake

Investors are also finding bargains in the midst of Europe's latest round of political turmoil, even in France. Since January, Adam Whiteley, portfolio manager at London-based Insight Investment, has bought French government debt while selling French corporate bonds, because he believes that the gap between the two has narrowed too much.

stories to its more than 12,000 followers on social media.

But its list of 2,500 fake reports is small compared with the daily churn across social media. Catching every fake news story would be nearly impossible, and the fake reports the team does combat routinely get a lot more viewers than its myth-busting efforts.

East Stratcom is purely a communications exercise. Still, team members, most of whom speak Russian, have received death threats, and a Czech member of the team has twice been accused on Russian television of espionage.

The team in Brussels is not the only force in Europe fighting the problem. Similar groups are being created from Finland to the Czech Republic to disprove online hoaxes, state agencies are improving online security to counter potential hacking attacks and European news media outlets are expanding fact-checking teams to counter false reports.

One of the biggest problems policy makers across Europe say they face is a lack of tech specialists. Germany recently passed a cybersecurity law that called for a rapid response team to combat hacking attacks. Officials quietly acknowledged, though, that they would need three teams, if they could only find people to staff them.

"There are concerns shared by many governments that fake news could become weaponized," said Damian Collins, a British politician in charge of a new parliamentary investigation examining the phenomenon. "The spread of this type of material could eventually undermine our democratic institutions."

Despite the nationwide push to counter false reports, experts question whether such fact-checking efforts by governments and publishers will have a meaningful effect. Fake reports can easily be shared through social media with few, if any, checks for accuracy.

"Most people just don't care about where their news comes from," said

Also, most investors—particularly French ones—still believe it is unlikely that euroskeptic candidates like Ms. Le Pen will win power, and overcome Europe's complicated electoral systems.

"I see the risk as limited," said Frédéric Lamotte, chief investor at Indosuez Wealth Management. "From a portfolio point of view, generally, I don't care."

Mark Deuze, a professor at the University of Amsterdam. He added that "nep news," Dutch for "fake news," has been growing ahead of the country's national elections next month. "People are exposed to a ridiculous amount of information online."

Officials are also anxious about hackers' attempts to infiltrate the email accounts of candidates and politicians to steal compromising information.

Much like their American counterparts, security experts warn, European politicians remain highly vulnerable, though national intelligence agencies are now strengthening lawmakers' security protocols.

In Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel is facing tough competition ahead of elections in September, the country's domestic intelligence service already has reported a sharp rise in so-called phishing attacks in recent months aimed at political parties and members of the country's Parliament.

They attribute these efforts to the hacking group known as Fancy Bear, or APT 28, which American intelligence agencies linked to the hacking of the Democratic National Committee before the presidential election. Both American and German intelligence officials believe the group is operated by the G.R.U., the Russian military intelligence service.

The German government is weighing potential hefty fines for tech giants like Google and Facebook, whose platforms allow false stories to be quickly circulated. The companies insist that they cannot be held responsible because they do not generate the stories.

Hans-Georg Maassen, the head of Germany's domestic intelligence service, said that although there was no "smoking gun," Russia was likely to be involved in the increase in online misinformation aimed at destabilizing German politics.

Corrections & Amplifications
Spain's 10-year bond yields are now around 0.5 of a percentage point below Italy's, their most negative spread against Rome in five years. An earlier version of this article incorrectly stated the yields' performance. (Feb. 20, 2017)

"What makes cyberattacks so sexy for foreign powers is that it is nearly impossible to find a smoking gun," Mr. Maassen said in an interview with Phoenix TV Feb. 12. "It is always possible to cover your tracks and operate undercover."

American tech giants also have stepped in after they were accused of not doing enough to counter false reports on their platforms, accusations that Facebook, Google and other companies deny. They are now funding initiatives in the United States, France and elsewhere to flag fake news online and remove posts if they are found to violate companies' terms of use or local laws.

"This isn't just about debunking falsehoods," said Jenni Sargent, the managing director of First Draft News, a nonprofit that is partly funded by Google and expanding rapidly in France ahead of the country's elections, as well as across Europe and beyond. "What we're trying to do is to deal with the content as opposed to the source."

Such efforts across Europe have gained momentum since the United States' presidential election.

Soon after Donald J. Trump's victory in November, David Alandete gathered his team in the El País newsroom in downtown Madrid with one goal in mind: to respond to fake news.

Like many journalists, Mr. Alandete, the Spanish newspaper's managing editor and a former United States correspondent, had seen waves of false reports during the presidential campaign, many directed at Mexico — a country that accounts for roughly half of El País' online readership.

"Trump winning was a major turning point for us," Mr. Alandete said. "Many of our readers were asking whether they could even travel to the States."

Populist parties and distrust of traditional news media outlets have been growing in Spain, like other cash-strapped European countries. Such movements have spurred an

explosion of fake or misleading news, aimed at either promoting certain political views or undermining others' credibility.

To counter such reports — and, in part, to cater to its Mexican readers — El País began expanding its fact-checking efforts late last year. That

includes assigning five more reporters to debunk false reports online and starting a blog, called "Hechos," or "facts" in Spanish, to dispel the worst offenders.

Not all of El País's myth-busting targets, though, have been about politics.

In its first blog post, published last month, the newspaper's reporters reviewed false claims that the Portuguese soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo had abandoned his sports car after hurting one of his hands while driving. The post, according to Mr. Alandete, was viewed more than 200,000 times — making it one of El

País's most-read online articles that week.

"Many people don't trust institutions anymore," Mr. Alandete said. "We see fake news coming from everywhere."

The
Washington
Post

In trip to Brussels, Pence tries soothing anxious leaders with pro-E.U. message

<https://www.facebook.com/michael.birnbaum1>

Vice President Mike Pence said he was "disappointed" that former White House national security adviser Michael Flynn misled him on his contacts with Russia, during a visit on Feb. 20 to NATO headquarters in Brussels. Pence 'disappointed' Flynn misled him (Reuters)

(Reuters)

BRUSSELS — Vice President Pence assured nervous European leaders on Monday that the Trump administration is committed to "cooperation and partnership" with the European Union, as he sought to quiet fears that the White House wants to break up the 28-nation bloc.

Pence's reassurance was a striking departure from some of President Trump's comments over the past year in which he painted the European Union in dark terms. Trump described Brussels as "a hellhole" early last year, and he praised Britain's decision in June to leave the E.U.

In his meetings with top E.U. officials, Pence offered a far more conventional vision of relations with the bloc.

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Please provide a valid email address.

"It is my privilege on behalf of President Trump to express the strong commitment of the United States to continued cooperation and partnership with the European

Union," Pence said after meeting European Council President Donald Tusk, who represents the leaders of the 28 E.U. nations. "The United States' commitment to the European Union is steadfast and enduring."

[Trump asked people to 'look at what's happening ... in Sweden.' Here's what's happening there.]

Vice President Mike Pence said he and President Trump "support a free and independent press," but will continue to voice disagreement about certain stories, on Feb. 20 at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Pence says he and Trump 'strongly support a free and independent press' (Reuters)

(Reuters)

Pence said he looked forward to greater coordination in dealing with economic matters and fighting terrorism. He urged peace efforts in Ukraine, promising to push Russia hard.

"We are separated by an ocean, but we are joined by a common heritage and a common commitment to freedom, to democracy and to the rule of law," Pence said.

Tusk said he was satisfied with the meeting.

"Too much has happened over the past month in your country and in the E.U. Too many new and sometimes surprising opinions have been voiced over this time about our relations, and our common security, for us to pretend that everything is as it used to be," said Tusk, a former prime minister of Poland. "The world would be a decidedly worse place if Europe were not united. It is in the interest of us all to prevent the disintegration of the West."

Concerns about Trump's attitude toward the European Union spiked when he said shortly before his inauguration that he was indifferent to the fate of the bloc, that it was primarily a vehicle for German economic interests and that he expected that more countries would split from the E.U. in the coming years.

[Has the White House press office's silence become a weapon in its war on the media?]

Worries spiked even higher after a former U.S. diplomat, Ted Malloch, said he was in the running to become Trump's U.S. envoy to the E.U. Malloch, a business professor based in England, believes in breaking up the union.

President Trump expects "real progress" by the end of the year among NATO allies to step up their defense spending, Vice President Mike Pence said on Feb. 20 at NATO headquarters in Brussels. Trump wants NATO to step up defense spending: Pence (Reuters)

(Reuters)

E.U. officials took the highly unusual step of ordering a review to outline how they might reject an ambassador. There's been no confirmation from the U.S. State Department or the White House that Malloch is a candidate.

Trump also termed NATO "obsolete" last month, sending shivers through Eastern Europe, which relies on U.S. security guarantees to keep it safe from Russia.

Pence and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis were deployed to Europe last week to try to calm fears about a shift in U.S. foreign policy attitudes that have otherwise remained

constant since 1945. By and large, they outlined a policy toward Europe and NATO that bore only fleeting resemblance to Trump's public comments about the institutions.

That left European leaders uncertain about how much faith to place in Mattis and Pence's message over the weekend, which came at the same time that Trump called the news media an "enemy of the American people" and appeared to invent a terrorist attack in Sweden.

Both leaders pushed hard for an increase in European defense spending in meetings at the Munich Security Conference. Mattis delivered a stern message to NATO defense ministers in Brussels on Wednesday and Thursday, warning that the United States might "moderate its commitment" to NATO if other members fail to meet defense spending guidelines of 2 percent of their annual economic output.

Pressed Monday for clarity on what that might mean — the "or else" in the threat — Pence declined to offer specifics. "I don't know what the answer is to 'or else,'" he said, "but I know that the patience of the American people will not endure forever.

"The commitment that we have made to one another, that the American people are keeping with the people of Europe and NATO, is a commitment that the president of the United States and the American people expect our allies in Europe to keep as well," Pence said. "But failing that, questions about the future we'll just leave in the future as hypotheticals."

Bloomberg

Editorial : Europe Needs a Higher Price on Carbon

The Editors

Europe's promise to lower greenhouse-gas emissions looked bright a dozen years ago, when its leaders created the first big market for trading carbon permits. Sadly, though, its system has failed to encourage investment in clean

technology and appreciably lower carbon dioxide emissions. Until the European Union trims the number of permits traded enough to drastically raise the cost of emitting carbon dioxide, its market will remain dysfunctional.

The idea behind the Emissions Trading System was simple: Cap the total amount of greenhouse gases each industry can emit, let companies receive or buy allowances according to their needs, and lower the cap over time. The price of carbon would gradually rise,

nudging companies to invest in cleaner energy.

It didn't work out that way, however. The cap was set, and has remained, far too high. Free allowances were handed out generously. And when the financial crisis hit, industrial production fell, turning a surplus of

emissions allowances into a glut. While the ETS has brought about a modest decrease in emissions, its low carbon price discouraged the kind of widespread shift to clean technology the system was meant to drive.

Experts say that, to make a difference, the price of carbon dioxide should be about \$30 a ton today, rising by roughly 5 percent a year. Today in Europe, the price is down to about five euros (\$5.29).

**The
Washington
Post**

British parliament debates Trump visit

LONDON — The last time British lawmakers found themselves debating Donald Trump in the hallowed halls of Parliament, the American business mogul was a presidential candidate.

On Monday, they were debating President Trump, the most powerful man in the world.

That didn't hold them back.

The Daily 202 newsletter

A must-read morning briefing for decision-makers.

Please provide a valid email address.

For three hours, lawmakers debated whether Britain should rescind its offer of a state visit to the U.S. president.

The lawmakers don't have the power to force the government to cancel the visit, and there was no binding vote. But the event still drew plenty of public attention. During the proceedings, thousands of anti-Trump protesters rallied outside of Parliament. At times, their chants could be heard within the debating chamber.

The debate, held in Parliament's Westminster Hall, was opened by Paul Flynn, a lawmaker for the opposition Labour Party. Like many in attendance, Flynn argued that the offer of a full state visit to Trump — whom he called a "petulant child" — should be watered down to a mere official visit.

A state visit, he said, "would be terribly wrong because it would appear that British Parliament, the British nation, the British sovereign, is approving of

Tinkering with the system hasn't worked. In 2015, auctions of new permits were postponed to reduce the overflow, but this didn't help much.

Last week the European Parliament passed a set of reforms to take effect after 2020, one of which would double the number of permits to be taken off the market. This could push the carbon price up to 25 euros a ton by 2020, according to Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

the acts of Donald Trump."

[Call to block Trump from addressing British Parliament stirs controversy]

It's highly unusual for British politicians to weigh in on U.S. politics in this way, although it has happened before. Last year, lawmakers debated whether Britain should ban Trump after he made controversial comments about Muslims on the campaign trail.

Monday's debate was triggered by a petition — signed by more than 1.8 million people — that called on the British government to cancel the state visit because it would prove embarrassing for the queen. A rival petition backing the state visit, with 310,000 signatures, also was debated. Any petition on Parliament's website that receives more than 100,000 signatures is considered for debate.

Although the action held no legal power, it is nonetheless a headache for British Prime Minister Theresa May, who has worked hard to nurture ties with Trump. She announced at her first joint news conference with the president last month that she was extending an offer of a full state visit later this year.

For some, the offer was extended far too quickly. President Barack Obama waited more than 700 days before he received an invite. President Trump waited seven days.

"After seven days, really, why? Because this great country is so desperate for a trade deal?" asked Labour's David Lammy.

The Liberal Democrat lawmaker Alistair Carmichael agreed that May

But first the reforms will need to survive the EU's legislative process.

The EU has set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent by 2030. If it can't make the emissions-trading system work, then member states will have to find alternatives. The U.K.'s floor on the price of carbon emissions -- 18 pounds (\$22.35) per ton -- will put all its coal-fired power plants out of business. France announced a price

got it "catastrophically wrong" by offering the state visit so early. He asked what Britain might offer Trump the next time the United Kingdom wants a favorable response from the United States.

"The crown jewels?" he mused.

[As White House chaos grows, Trump is a 'boon for business' in Britain's betting houses]

Queen Elizabeth II usually hosts one or two state visits a year, made on the recommendation of the British government. During the visits, the head of state often stays at Buckingham Palace, and a lavish state banquet is held in the leader's honor.

During her long reign, the queen has hosted more than 100 such state visits, several of which have drawn controversy. When President George W. Bush visited in 2003, thousands took to the streets in protest.

At Monday's debate, several members of the ruling Conservative Party argued in favor of the state visit.

"It's a no-brainer," said legislator Simon Burns, who argued that a close relationship with the United States was even more important now after Britain's vote to leave the European Union. "We can't afford to be isolated and stand there alone."

Crispin Blunt, head of parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, said that "dangling" a state visit over Trump, whose mother was Scottish and an admirer of the queen, "was a very successful use of the kind of soft power that the U.K. has." But he also said it would be more appropriate to hold the visit in 2020

floor last year, and other countries may need to follow suit.

There's no reason market forces can't work to lower emissions. But without a high enough price on carbon, a permit-trading system has no force to bear.

To contact the senior editor responsible for Bloomberg View's editorials: David Shipley at davidshipley@bloomberg.net.

to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower to America.

The debate touched on various subjects, including Trump's immigration policies and his lewd comments about women that he dismissed as "locker room talk."

Naz Shah, a Labour Party politician, said that Trump's stance on Muslims was divisive and dangerous and that by "bringing out the crockery, the china, the red carpet, what we are doing is endorsing all those views."

"As a Muslim in this house, I am not an enemy to Western democracy. I am part of Western democracy," she said.

"Can you really lay out the red carpet for someone who has talked about grabbing women by the p----?" asked Labour lawmaker Tulip Siddiq.

Responding on behalf of the government, Alan Duncan, the deputy foreign secretary, said that the state visit "should happen and will happen."

"The United States is the world's greatest power," he said. "We believe it's entirely right to use all the tools at our disposal to build common ground with President Trump."

He also said that when Trump does visit, he expects Britain to extend a "polite and generous welcome."

**The
New York
Times**

'I Am Ashamed' vs. 'Get Over It': U.K. Parliament Debates Trump Visit

Mr. Trump would hardly be the first contentious leader to be honored with a state visit. The queen, acting as always on the recommendation of the government, has in the past

received President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and President Mobutu Sese Seko, the former leader of Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. After a recent visit with President Xi Jinping of

China, she was caught on camera speaking of how "very rude" the Chinese leader had been.

"A queen who has been asked over the decades to host tyrants such as Presidents Mobutu of Zaire and

Ceausescu of Romania is going to take a brash billionaire from New York effortlessly in her stride," William Hague, a former foreign secretary, wrote in The Daily Telegraph.

Still, the prospect of Mr. Trump's visit has stirred great passion in Britain. The online petition, backed by 1.8 million people, does not call for Mr. Trump to be barred from Britain altogether, only that his visit be a political one, without the involvement of Queen Elizabeth II.

Another online petition, signed by more than 300,000 people, called for the state visit to take place. Petitions with more than 100,000 signatures are eligible for parliamentary debate, and any vote would not be binding. The government of Prime Minister Theresa May has been firm in saying that the invitation to Mr. Trump for a full state visit this year will not be withdrawn.

In Parliament, Mr. Flynn cited the need to keep public trust in politicians and noted that no president had ever been invited for a state visit in his first year in office. He also accused Mr. Trump of acting "like a petulant child" and said the queen should not be seen as approving either his actions or his attitudes toward women and Muslims.

But a Conservative legislator, Nigel Evans, said that Mr. Trump was the president of a great ally of Britain and that the critics should "get over it."

Mr. Trump was fairly elected, he said, adding, "I do respect that he stood on a platform on which he is now delivering."

World leaders who have addressed Parliament during state visits include:

- **1954** Haile Selassie I, emperor of Ethiopia
- **1960** Charles de Gaulle, French president
- **1986** King Juan Carlos I of Spain
- **1986** Richard Von Weizsäcker, German president
- **1996** Nelson Mandela, South African president
- **2005** Hu Jintao, Chinese president
- **2006** Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazilian president
- **2011** Barack Obama, American president
- **2014** Michael Higgins, Irish president
- **2015** Xi Jinping, Chinese president

Alex Salmond, a legislator from the Scottish National Party, argued that the invitation should be rescinded because members should not confuse respect for the United States with a personal invitation to Mr. Trump.

Traditionally, American presidents must wait several years before

getting a state visit, and many do not get one at all.

Mrs. May, after Britain's vote in June to leave the European Union, was eager to cement good relations with the new American president, and she arranged a rapid visit to Washington. During the visit, she conveyed the invitation, which Mr. Trump accepted.

Leaving the European Union could lock Britain out of the bloc's single market, a free-trade zone, as well as the customs union, which eliminates tariffs and customs checks. So Mrs. May has seemed eager to shore up her country's relations with the United States as a counterbalance.

During the debate, a Labour legislator, David Lammy, spoke of Mr. Trump's attitudes and asked why Britain should "abandon all its principles" and invite him, "because this country is so desperate for a trade deal that we would throw all our own history out the window?"

He said: "We didn't do this for Kennedy. We didn't do this for Truman. We didn't do this for Reagan. But for this man, after seven days, we say, 'Please come and we will lay on everything because we are so desperate for your company?'" He added, "I am ashamed that it has come to this."

But James Cartledge, a Conservative, said that if Britain canceled the visit, "there will be smiles all around in the Kremlin," which wants to "divide the West."

And another Conservative, Simon Burns, said that it was important to be "a candid friend" able to influence Mr. Trump and the United States, particularly so given Britain's plan to leave the European Union.

Various opinion polls indicate that a small majority of Britons support the state visit. But there are also concerns that it would be met with large protests, comparable to 2003, when President George W. Bush made a state visit and many came out to protest the Iraq war.

The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, supports the petition to disinvite Mr. Trump because of the president's "ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries" and his decision to block refugees from entering the United States.

"In those circumstances, we shouldn't be rolling out the red carpet," Mr. Khan said on Sunday.

On Monday, the House of Lords began at least two days of debate on a bill, already passed by the House of Commons, to authorize the government to enact Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which would inform the European Union of Britain's intention to leave the bloc.

The government intends to invoke Article 50 by the end of March, if not sooner, beginning at least two years of negotiations with the other 27 member states on the terms of Britain's exit and a framework for future relations.



U.K. Lawmakers Debate Condemnation of Trump's State Visit

Jenny Gross
Feb. 20, 2017

3:19 p.m. ET

LONDON—British lawmakers on Monday debated a call to block President Donald Trump from a state visit, putting Prime Minister Theresa May in an uncomfortable position as she seeks to strengthen ties with the new U.S. administration.

The nonbinding debate came in response to a petition signed by 1.8 million people calling for Mr. Trump's state visit to be canceled

and another with more than 300,000 signatures calling for it to go on.

As the U.K. exits the European Union, Mrs. May has sought to court support from Mr. Trump—one of the few world leaders who supported Brexit—and said she wants to strengthen trade and diplomatic ties with his administration.

While some parliamentarians cheered Mrs. May, others criticized her for cozying up to a leader they say is unfit for office and doesn't hold the same values as the U.K. Mrs. May has said the U.S. is

an important ally and that she stands by the invitation.

Queen Elizabeth II usually holds just one or two state visits a year, which are much grander affairs than regular visits by heads of state and tend to include state banquets and a stay at Buckingham Palace. Labour lawmaker Paul Flynn warned of the "great dangers" in giving Mr. Trump the rare honor.

"This would be terribly wrong because it would appear that British Parliament, the British nation, the

British sovereign is approving of the acts of Donald J. Trump," he said.

Nigel Evans, a Conservative lawmaker, said those opposing Mr. Trump should come to terms with the fact that he is U.S. president. "People in this room and maybe in this country as well, cannot understand why it is that the people voted for Donald Trump. Why people voted for Brexit."

Hundreds of protesters rallied against Mr. Trump's visit outside Parliament during the debate.



Maltby : The real meaning of UK's hot debate over Trump visit

Kate Maltby

London (CNN)Does the British parliamentary debate that took place tonight have a real chance of blocking Donald Trump's proposed state visit to the United Kingdom?

To find a good answer, look back three years ago to an introspective

interview Conservative MP Rory Stewart

gave to The Guardian newspaper

. It remains one of the most perceptive articulations of power in modern Britain. "In our situation we're all powerless," he said. "The secret of modern Britain is there is no power anywhere. ... The

politicians think journalists have power. The journalists know they don't have any. Then they think the bankers have power. The bankers know they don't have any. None of them have any power."

Answers about real political impact in Britain are always lost in the mists of an unwritten constitution, and in

ongoing battles between newspapers, politicians and the "non-political" civil servants who survive administration after administration. Politicians make speeches that they believe newspapers want to hear. Newspapers write editorials that they believe readers want to read. Financial elites and low-education

voters accuse each other bitterly of setting the agenda. Civil servants complain about the lot of them.

They are all wrong. If anything, the political temperature of this increasingly marginal nation is set externally: by migrant crises, by Middle Eastern conflict, and now, by an unpredictable US President. Monday night saw British parliamentarians debating a motion they couldn't vote on, about a US President they can't change, and a trip they can't cancel. All to please a few newspapers and a few voters. It is the definition of powerlessness.

How did we get to this point? To start with the basics: in 2011, in a hasty attempt to catch the rising tide of populism, the Conservative administration introduced a new initiative, which mandates that official online petitions garnering more than 100,000 signatures should be debated within the House of Commons.

A petition proposing that Trump's invitation be revoked has well surpassed that limit, with over 1.3 million signatures.

A debate, however, doesn't mean a vote. And "within the House of Commons" doesn't mean in the Palace of Westminster's formal Commons debating chamber. So tonight's discussion took place among MPs who bothered to show up to an ancillary chamber, Westminster Hall.

Westminster Hall is ancient space: Charles I, Guy Fawkes and Thomas More were put on trial here. So it's befitting a prominent debate of great moment.

But gathering here means taking a mini-vacation from real government business, which is always debated in the 20th-century, purpose-built Chamber. At the end of tonight, no formal vote was recorded, and the whips were not enforcing mandatory attendance to avoid a possible government defeat. It doesn't change anything -- just gives MPs a chance to put their views about Trump on the public record.

That didn't stop Americans from taking an interest in the vote, and the smart aleck reaction among British commentators was to dismiss that interest. It won't make a difference in law, they scoffed. And only a foreigner could fuss about our little local ritual.

But ritual matters in politics. It's clear from the seriousness with which many MPs are taking the debate that Britain is at a major crossroads in its relationship with the United States, as much of the country recoils at Trump's political revolution -- and a small but significant group agitates to replicate it here in Britain.

Americans shouldn't worry that tonight's tussle between British MPs is about to cause a major diplomatic storm by disinviting a UK ally, but they should listen carefully to what

was said this evening in the thousand-year-old Westminster Hall.

The government itself is in a bind.

The Observer reported recently

that Conservative ministers have grumbled at the speed with which Prime Minister Theresa May offered Trump his state visit. Conservative MP Crispin Blunt spoke for many in tonight's debate when he criticized the move, but noted that withdrawing an invitation

already proffered would cause a diplomatic crisis

that might embarrass the Queen even further. In briefings to British papers, Theresa May's office has blamed the Queen for issuing the invitation; the Queen's office has blamed the Prime Minister.

Indeed, nothing exemplifies the power vacuum at the heart of the British political system like the disagreement over which body is actually responsible for issuing state invitations. The Queen, as head of state, plays host, but in line with the democratically necessary convention that leaves executive decisions in the hands of the Prime Minister, she's hardly been the personal impetus behind state visits by previous controversial figures.

Most political insiders -- including Blunt, in his speech tonight -- agree that Prime Minister May offered to announce a state visit in order to

secure the first invitation to Trump's White House. So perhaps power in Britain still really lies with the President of the United States.

The ritual Trump denunciations -- and endorsements -- uttered by MPs tonight mask another problem of power in Britain. Conservative MPs, in particular, seem more scared of their voters than usual. They've seen anti-establishment movements sweep the United States, France and southern Europe. Many who privately regret the invitation extended to Trump speak of wanting to distance themselves from "London elites" and liberals leading the charge against him.

Yet voters consistently poll as feeling less powerful, less heard in Westminster than ever. For now, their anger is still defused between a populist left -- who led protests against the Trump visit outside Westminster Hall this evening -- and a reactionary right. But fear of their reaction at the polls drove posturing speeches from both Labour and Conservatives this evening.

A formal debate which has no legal consequences may look like a joke. But it's a metaphor for the increasing irrelevance of Britain's political power-brokers. It is not Donald Trump, but Hillary Clinton, who looms large as a warning about where that leads.



Editorial : Save Greece by Saving Its Economy First

With the Greek government set to run out of cash by the end of July, the country's main creditors in Europe continue to demand harsh budget cuts as a condition for crucial loans. But after a decade of failing to save Greece, Germany and other European nations, along with the International Monetary Fund, ought to try a different approach, one that makes reviving the economy a priority.

Greece's creditors appear willing to provide new loans to pay off debts coming due this year as long as the country commits to achieving a fiscal surplus of 3.5 percent of gross domestic product before interest payments by 2018. The I.M.F., more sensibly, has argued for a surplus of 1.5 percent. It also says that European officials should commit to reducing the Greek government's debt, which is so huge that it equals about 180

percent of the country's annual economic output. That debt relief could come in various forms, including giving the country more time to repay or reducing the amount owed.

The monetary fund is right. Requiring the country to run big budget surpluses when its economy is growing at an annual rate of only 0.4 percent is cruel and counterproductive. Based on current trends, the fund projects that the country's debt will increase to more than 250 percent of G.D.P. during the next several decades. European officials are much more optimistic, but that hopefulness is based on the dubious assumption that Greece can run large budget surpluses for decades to come.

European, I.M.F. and Greek officials ought to be coming up with ways to revive the Greek economy, reduce unemployment -- 23 percent in

November -- and strengthen the financial system; borrowers of nearly half of all loans are not making payments. Greece and other European countries can invest in improving crumbling public services and infrastructure. Buses in Athens make do with worn-out tires, often at great risk to public safety, because there is not enough money for spare parts. And hospitals cannot hire doctors or buy medicines and syringes.

Greece could pay those costs if creditors accepted lower surpluses. The European Union could offer grants and loans for projects that improve the economy. The government can raise money by making sure its tax collection agency is not subject to political pressure. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and previous leaders have committed to that, but experts say the agency is still subject to meddling. Getting more people,

especially the middle class, to pay taxes -- more than half of households don't -- would also help raise money without hurting the economy. And the country needs a more efficient system for restructuring mortgages and business debts to deal with bad loans and free up banks to lend money again.

Only once a recovery takes hold will the government have money to pay back its debts. After squeezing Greece no matter the cost, European officials ought to recognize that their analysis has been flawed. The more they insist on getting Greece to cut spending and raise taxes, the further they get from reviving the nation so that it no longer needs their financial support.



Don't Look Now, But There's Another Greek Debt Crisis Brewing

David Francis

There's been a familiar script since the Greek debt

crisis erupted seven years ago. Athens balks at austerity measures, but eventually caves to European

demands to stay solvent. Europeans tire of Greece's political leaders, but tolerate them to keep Europe whole.

Now, the storyline is about to change. European finance ministers are set to blow through a deadline

Monday to release a \$7.4 billion in bailout funds. Greece needs the money to pay a bill in July, but the International Monetary Fund won't pony up the cash unless Europe forgives some of Athens's debt. Germany refuses to do so.

The group of EU finance ministers known as the "Eurogroup" meet Monday in Brussels to address the situation. They have already conceded [nothing](#) will be decided on the funds at the gathering.

The impasse comes as a wave of nationalist sentiment in Europe is threatening the belief that Greece should remain a part of Europe. Nationalists Marine le Pen in France and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands are climbing in the

polls. The Dutch vote in March, while the French vote in April.

Meanwhile, German Chancellor Angela Merkel is facing a far-right challenge from the anti-EU Alternative for Germany in the fall. Berlin has footed more of the bill of any European country for Greece's rescue and voters there are getting fatigued. Athens is in a "danger zone," Ian Lesser, the-Brussels based executive director of the German Marshall Fund's Transatlantic Center, said.

Wolfgang Schäuble, Germany's finance minister and a close ally of Merkel, has said Greece must abandon the euro in order to get debt relief. He has also made clear he will not seek parliamentary

approval to release more tranches of the \$91 billion Greek rescue fund without the IMF on board. Yet the IMF won't sign off on a deal unless Greece's creditors give it a break on what it must repay. The IMF [insists](#) that Greece meet GDP projections two percent lower than Europe before it begins to pay back money it has borrowed.

The Greek government concurs with the IMF's forecast that it cannot reach a budget surplus of 3.5 percent, a European demand. Alexis Tsipras, the Greek prime minister who led his country through the 2015 crisis, has warned Germany to "stop playing with fire" and grant him relief.

"There has been a consistent unwillingness to address the issue head on in a way that would give the Greeks sufficient relief that it would put the issue aside for a few years," said Lesser.

Jan Kallmorgen, co-chairman of the Atlantic Initiative in Berlin, said he believes Germany will ultimately concede because the stakes of additional European fracture are too high.

Negotiations "are tough, longer than expected, emotions run high," he told FP. "At the end there will be a solution because Tsipras's main interest is to stay in power, and Europe cannot allow for any other exit scenario debate" after Brexit.

**The
New York
Times**

Eurozone Agrees to Greece Talks in Exchange for Bailout Payments

James Kanter
and Niki

Kitsantonis

BRUSSELS — Eurozone finance ministers agreed on Monday to begin negotiations in Athens as soon as next week over much-needed overhauls in exchange for bailout payments, with Greece appearing to win a reprieve from the crippling austerity that it has faced for years.

The agreement fell short of an all-encompassing deal, with key questions unresolved over the shape of the changes to Greece's pensions, as well as its tax and labor rules. But it is a positive sign ahead of a meeting this week between Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and Christine Lagarde, the head of the International Monetary Fund, who have taken contrasting positions on debt relief toward Athens.

Greece does not have to make another major debt repayment to its creditors until the summer. But with

elections due in France, Germany and the Netherlands this year, the country's bailout is threatening to become a major political issue across the region. European officials are particularly eager to head off another full-blown crisis if only to avoid giving succor to far-right parties in those polls.

Representatives of Greece's main creditors will "go back to Athens in the very short term," Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the president of the Eurogroup, which brings together the finance ministers of the 19-nation eurozone, said on Monday.

"I'm very happy with that outcome," he told a news conference in Brussels.

The negotiations are the latest step in Greece's yearslong debt crisis.

The country's finances first came up for question as the global financial crisis unfolded, and the country has been reliant on bailouts since. But as a condition of that help, creditors have demanded painful austerity in a bid to reduce Greece's debt, which

stands at 180 percent of gross domestic product. That has meant heavy cuts to pensions and benefits, as well as an increase in the number of Greeks who pay tax.

Those cuts have hit ordinary Greeks hard and sent the country's economy into a tailspin. Unemployment is above 25 percent, and the economy has shrunk by a fifth since the financial crisis. Effie Achtsioglou, Greece's labor minister, wrote in the Financial Times last week that Greek pensioners "already have barely enough to live on."

That issue of austerity has also formed a crucial divider between two of Greece's main creditors — Germany and the International Monetary Fund. The I.M.F., which has not yet said whether it would join a third bailout for the country, has argued for some measure of debt relief for Athens. Berlin and many other eurozone members have chafed at cutting Greece any slack, reluctant to seek taxpayer support for more aid.

Monday's meeting appeared, however, to raise the specter of easing off on those tough conditions, with Mr. Dijsselbloem suggesting there could be a "shift from austerity to structural reforms" as part of efforts to draw the I.M.F. into the bailout.

Greece's government welcomed what it called a "political agreement" and said that it had accepted creditors' demands that structural changes to the country's economy be enshrined in legislation. If agreed, those changes would come into force after the country's third international bailout expires at the end of next year.

The I.M.F. also gave an upbeat assessment of the meeting. It said in a statement that it welcomed Greece's progress in meeting the fund's requirements and said that, on that basis, it had agreed to send officials to negotiate for reforms.



Editorial : Romania's lesson in public integrity

The Christian
Science Monitor

February 18, 2017 —If a country were to put on display a popular desire for public integrity, it might look like this:

Since early February, tens of thousands of people in Romania have held almost daily protests against corruption in many cities. On weekends, the rallies are even larger. At night, masses of people held up their illuminated mobile phones, a signal of hope that has led the protests to be dubbed the "revolution of light."

This persistent and peaceful outcry on Romania's streets for honest governance began after the ruling party tried to roll back anti-corruption efforts that have already led to thousands of officials being put on trial since 2013. People were shocked at how easily their progress in suppressing corruption could be eroded by politicians. The protests did eventually force lawmakers to back down. But now demonstrators want the ruling party to resign.

It is difficult to see how Romania's drama will play out. Yet for now it offers an important lesson: For many countries, it is not enough to

merely constrain corruption, say, through aggressive prosecution, strict laws and ethics codes, or long jail time for officials who take bribes. Citizens must also be active in building up public integrity.

This requires them to insist on essential qualities in governance: independence for judges, transparency in budget spending, freedom of the press, openness in trade, and simplicity in government regulations. These standards are in fact part of a newly designed method of measuring corruption known as the Index of Public

Integrity, an effort funded by the European Union.

Other attempts to measure corruption, such as those by the World Bank and the watchdog group Transparency International, have relied mainly on surveys of perceptions about such wrongdoing. Corrupt practices are often so secretive that they are difficult to detect. Thus researchers have relied on the estimates and experiences of those doing business in a country or on experts.

In 2012, the EU set up a research group called ANTICORRP to

reconceptualize the struggle against corruption. The group aimed to uncover the fact-based resources and structures that give a country the capacity to “empower” public integrity. The project ended in February, offering insights on the top priorities for government reform as well as a new way to rank countries. The top countries on the Index of Public Integrity are the Scandinavian countries as well as New Zealand, the UK, Ireland, Luxembourg, and the United States.

The head of the effort, who happens to be a Romanian scholar, is Alina Mungiu-Pippidi of the Hertie School

of Governance in Berlin. In a recent article in the academic journal *Nature*, she wrote about this new anticorruption strategy, citing the success of Estonia after the liberation of that Baltic state from the Soviet Union:

“A smart strategy reduces opportunities and enables constraints, so that the monitoring of government by its own citizens takes effect. This is not just prospective theorizing: the world’s fastest evolving country on good governance, Estonia, did just that in the 1990s. Estonia opened up to honest competition, sold banks and

newspapers to ‘clean’ countries..., introduced e-government as a single digital card to pay taxes, parking meters and vote, cut red tape, removed all judges with communist regime ties and created a steady income (from EU funds), independent from the government, for its civil society to grow.”

Examples abound of countries minimizing corruption. Yet there may not be one template for reform. Each country must work within its own culture, history, and politics. In Romania, for example, the list of reforms demanded by protesters includes the election of an

ombudsman and a ban on holding public office for anyone convicted of corruption.

The common thread, however, is a widespread desire for public integrity. Reformers should not be discouraged by a persistent corruption in their country. “It would be wrong to believe that a country is entirely doomed by poor history,” states Dr. Mungiu-Pippidi. Sometimes it takes tens of thousands of people in the streets over many days to make that point.

The New York Times

More Migrants Storm Fence to Enter Ceuta, Spanish Enclave in Africa

Dan Bilefsky

About 600

Africans tried to breach a border fence between Morocco and the Spanish enclave of Ceuta early Monday, Spanish news organizations reported, three days after hundreds of migrants used wire cutters and other implements to storm the 20-foot-high barrier.

Ceuta and Melilla, territories of Spain on the

North African coast, have the only two land borders between the European Union and Africa, and they have become a magnet for sub-Saharan migrants willing to cross deserts, brave razor wire and endure perilous conditions in search of a better life.

Eleven migrants were injured while attempting to cross the five-mile barrier on Monday and have been hospitalized, the Red Cross said. The Spanish newspaper *El País*,

citing José Antonio Nieto, the secretary of state for security, said the authorities were considering using drones to strengthen security along the border.

Hundreds of migrants were injured on Friday morning, with wounds including cuts and fractures.

There are now more than 1,400 migrants crowding an immigration center in Ceuta, according to Spanish news reports. Reuters said

that many of the migrants would probably be sent back to Morocco or to their countries of origin.

On New Year’s Day, about 1,100 migrants tried to storm the border between Morocco and Ceuta. Five Spanish officers and 50 members of the Moroccan security forces were injured, including one guard, who lost an eye.

The Washington Post

Trump tries to shift the conversation on Sweden

By John Wagner

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. 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)

President Trump kept his curious comments about Sweden in the spotlight for another day, taking to Twitter on Monday to try to shift the

debate to what he says is the impact of “large-scale” immigration in the Scandinavian country.

On Saturday, while referring during a rally to countries that have taken in a disproportionate number of refugees and have recently been the target of terrorist attacks, Trump mentioned that something had happened “last night” in Sweden.

After a slew of news stories speculated that Trump had made a mistake — Sweden had seen no notable recent violence — the president said on Twitter on Sunday that he had been referring to a segment on Fox News on Friday about “immigrants & Sweden.”

[Sweden has no idea what Trump meant when he said, ‘You look at what’s happening ... in Sweden’]

The president was seemingly referring to a Tucker Carlson interview with Ami Horowitz, a filmmaker who has blamed refugees for a purported crime wave in Sweden and alleges that authorities are trying to cover up the incidents.

Instead of leaving it at that, Trump returned to the subject on Monday, trying to channel the conversation

away from whether he misspoke. Tweeting from Florida, where he was weighing his choices for a new national security adviser over the holiday weekend, Trump said that that media reports that are at odds with Horowitz’s conclusions are “fake news.”

“Give the public a break,” Trump wrote. “The FAKE NEWS media is trying to say that large scale immigration in Sweden is working out beautifully. NOT!”

Local Politics Alerts

Breaking news about local government in D.C., Md., Va.

Please provide a valid email address.

Those disputing Horowitz’s conclusions include two Stockholm-based police officers who were featured in Horowitz’s film talking about crime and the accessibility of weapons.

“I don’t understand why we are part of the segment,” one of the police officers, Anders Göransson, told the *Dagens Nyheter* newspaper Monday. “The interview was about something completely different to

what Fox News and Horowitz were talking about. It was supposed to be about crime in high-risk areas. Areas with high crime rates. There wasn’t any focus on migration or immigration.”

Sweden took in more refugees per capita than any other country in Europe at the height of the migrant influx in 2015, and the country has long viewed itself as having a moral obligation to take in refugees from war-torn countries. But Sweden reached its limits as other European Union neighbors refused to fulfill their commitments.

The influx of refugees has not come without problems in Sweden, but mainstream politicians and immigration experts say the criticism has been disproportionate. In summer 2016, Swedish embassies were tasked to counter rumors or false information about Sweden’s experience with taking in large numbers of immigrants.

Rick Noack contributed to this report.

The New York Times

From an Anchor’s Lips to Trump’s Ears to Sweden’s Disbelief (UNE)

Peter Baker and Sewell Chan

The Swedes were flabbergasted.

“We are used to seeing the president of the U.S. as one of the

most well-informed persons in the world, also well aware of the importance of what he says," Carl Bildt, a former prime minister of Sweden, said by email on Monday. "And then, suddenly, we see him engaging in misinformation and slander against a truly friendly country, obviously relying on sources of a quality that at best could be described as dubious."

While aides sought to clarify that Mr. Trump's remarks were about a rising tide of crime in general, rather than any particular event or attack, the president chose to escalate. In a Twitter post on Monday, he accused American journalists of glossing over a dark and dangerous situation in Sweden. "Give the public a break," he wrote. "The FAKE NEWS media is trying to say that large scale immigration in Sweden is working out just beautifully. NOT!"

Sweden's prime minister, Stefan Lofven, responded hours later at a news conference, noting that Sweden ranks highly on international comparisons of economic competitiveness and human development.

"We have challenges, no doubt about that," he allowed. But he added pointedly, "We must all take responsibility for using facts correctly and for verifying anything we spread."

Sweden is hardly the first American friend to find itself uncomfortably at odds with the new president. Mexico's president canceled a meeting with Mr. Trump over his plans to build a border wall and bill the United States' southern neighbor for it. Mr. Trump reportedly lit into Australia's prime minister over refugees in a telephone call that was said to have ended abruptly.

But the episode underscored that Mr. Trump

obtains, processes and uses information differently from any modern president. He watches television at night and tends to incorporate what he sees into his Twitter feed, speeches and interviews.

"It begs the question of where the president gets his information as he articulates his administration's global approach," said Mark Brzezinski, the ambassador to Sweden under President Barack Obama. "To do so in an improvisational way, based on snippets picked up from cable news, is a major mistake."

Immigration is a hotly debated issue in Sweden, Germany and many other European countries. Sweden, which prides itself as a humanitarian leader, processed a record 163,000 asylum applications in 2015. But statistics in Sweden do not back up the suggestion that immigrants have created a major crime wave.

Preliminary data released last month by Sweden's crime prevention council found no significant increase in crimes from 2015 to 2016, even with the influx of migrants. The council did note an increase in assaults and rapes last year, but it also recorded a drop in thefts and drug offenses. Still, a Pew Research Center survey last year found that 46 percent of Swedes said refugees were more to blame for crime than other groups.

Manne Gerell, a doctoral student in criminology at Malmo University in Sweden, said in an interview that immigrants were disproportionately represented among crime suspects, particularly in more serious and violent offenses. But he noted that many of the victims were other immigrants, whether members of criminal networks or simply residents of poor neighborhoods.

"post-West world order." He also used the occasion to deny Moscow's involvement in hacking U.S. and European elections, to announce that his government would recognize passports issued by its puppet state in eastern Ukraine, and to call for an end to the "post-truth" and "post-fact" state of international relations.

Mr. Lavrov understands something that ought to be increasingly clear to American and European audiences: The West—as a geopolitical bloc, a cultural expression, a moral ideal—is in deep trouble. However weak Russia may be economically, and however cynical its people might be about their regime, Russians continue to drink from a deep well of civilizational self-belief. The same

"Immigration will come with some cost, and we will likely have a bit more crime — but that's in a society with low crime rates and in a society that works really well, so in my opinion, it's something we can live with," he said. "I know everybody won't agree with that. But immigration will not double the crime rate, make everybody go broke or turn Sweden into a living hell."

Although terrorism is a concern for Sweden — an Iraqi-born Swede blew himself up in central Stockholm in 2010 — the authorities say they are equally worried about racist hate crimes, including attacks on migrants.

The Fox News segment featured an interview with Mr. Horowitz, whose short film, "Stockholm Syndrome," depicted Sweden as a place where rape and violence have been on the rise since it began accepting more refugees from Muslim countries.

In the Fox interview, Mr. Horowitz acknowledged that most Swedes do not see the situation as he does. "They'll make excuses for it," he said. "The majority of the population in Sweden still wants to have an open-door policy. It's confounding."

Mr. Trump was clearly struck by the interview, and he cited Sweden at a rally in Melbourne, Fla., on Saturday as he argued for stronger borders. "You look at what's happening last night in Sweden," he said. "Sweden! Who would believe this? Sweden. They took in large numbers. They're having problems like they never thought possible."

Aides later said "last night" referred to the Fox program, not to an episode the night before. Mr. Carlson argued on Monday that although "the president ought to be precise in what he says, there should be no confusion about what he means."

can be said about the Chinese, and perhaps even of the Islamic world too, troubled as it is.

The West? Not so much.

The United States has elected as president a man who has repeatedly voiced his disdain for NATO, the World Trade Organization and other institutions of the Western-led world order. He publicly calls the press "an enemy of the American people" and conjures conspiracy theories about voter fraud whose only purpose is to lend credence to his claim that the system is rigged. He is our first post-rational president, whose approach to questions of fact recalls the deconstructionism of the late Jacques Derrida: There are no truths; reality is negotiable.

Mr. Carlson said that assimilation had failed and that immigration was "in the process of totally changing these ancient cultures into something different and much more volatile and much more threatening."

Critics of Sweden's migration policies have pointed to a Facebook post on Feb. 3 by a police officer, Peter Springare, who said that migrants were taxing Sweden's pension, education and health systems and that they were the principal culprits in assaults. "Half of the suspects we cannot even be sure of because they don't have any valid papers," he wrote. "Most often this means they are lying about their country of origin and identity."

But the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter on Monday quoted two police officers interviewed by Mr. Horowitz, Anders Goranzon and Jacob Ekstrom, as saying that the filmmaker had selectively edited and distorted their comments to prove his thesis. They said that Mr. Horowitz had asked them about high-crime neighborhoods and that they did not agree with his argument about links between migration and crime. "We don't stand behind what he says," Mr. Goranzon said. "He is a madman."

Mr. Horowitz did not respond to a request for comment, but he went back on Mr. Carlson's show on Monday night to defend his work, citing crime statistics and asserting that the police officers had recanted because they were under pressure. "My record stands for itself," he said, "and what you saw on that video clear as day stands for itself."

Then there's Europe, where youth unemployment runs close to 20% and centrist politicians wonder why they have a problem. In France, the National Front's Marine Le Pen is gaining in the polls, despite expert predictions that she can't possibly win the presidency. In Holland, nationalist politician Geert Wilders says of Moroccan immigrants: "Not all are scum." Where have we heard these things before?

In Munich on Saturday, Mike Pence implored NATO members to spend more on their defense—a complaint Europeans also heard from the Obama and Bush administrations. Sigmar Gabriel, Germany's foreign minister, instantly brushed the vice president's plea aside. "I don't know where Germany can find billions of

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Stephens : Do We Still Want the West?

Bret Stephens

In the late 1980s Stanford University did away with its required Western civilization course after Jesse Jackson led students in a chant of "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western Civ has got to go!" Campus conservatives tried to bring it back last year, but the effort failed in a student vote by a 6 to 1 margin.

They should try pushing Western Civ again. To adapt the line in that Passenger song, you only know you love it when you let it go.

The thought comes to mind following Sergei Lavrov's Orwellian speech last week at the Munich Security Conference, in which the Russian foreign minister called for a

euros to boost defense spending," he said, "if politicians also want lower taxes."

Berlin spends 1.2% of its GDP on defense, well below the 2% NATO requirement and among the lowest in Europe. As of 2014, it could deploy a grand total of 10 attack helicopters and one submarine. Does Germany still want the West, insofar as it's able to contribute to its collective defense?

What about other countries? Twenty-five years ago, becoming a part of "the West" was the dream from Budapest to Ulan Bator. Not anymore.

Russia took itself off the Westernization track shortly after the

turn of the century. Turkey followed a few years later. Thailand is on its way to becoming a version of what Myanmar had been up until a few years ago, while Malaysia is floating into China's orbit. Ditto for the Philippines. Mexico may soon follow a similar trajectory if the Trump administration continues to pursue its bad-neighbor policy, and if a Chavista-like figure such as Andrés Manuel López Obrador comes to power in next year's presidential election.

One can point to many reasons, specific and general, why the West no longer attracts imitators. Let's point to the main reason.

There was a time when the West knew what it was about. It did so because it thought about itself—often in freshman Western Civ classes. It understood that its moral foundations had been laid in Jerusalem; its philosophical ones in Athens; its legal ones in Rome. It treated with reverence concepts of reason and revelation, freedom and responsibility, whose contradictions it learned to harmonize and harness over time. It believed in the excellence of its music and literature, and in the superiority of its political ideals. It was not ashamed of its prosperity. If it was arrogant and sinful, as all civilizations are, it also had a tradition of remorse and doubt to temper its edges and broaden its horizons. It cultivated

the virtue of skepticism while avoiding the temptation of cynicism.

And it believed all of this was worth defending—in classrooms and newspapers and statehouses and battlefields.

We've since raised generations to believe none of this, only to be shocked by the rise of anti-Western politics. If you want children to learn the values of a civilization that can immunize them from a Trump, a Le Pen or a Lavrov, you can start by teaching it.

INTERNATIONAL



U.S. troops in Iraq move closer to the front lines in fight for Mosul

[Iraq resumes offensive to retake Mosul]

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

BAGHDAD — The Pentagon is deploying U.S. military advisers closer to the front lines in the campaign against the Islamic State as Iraqi security forces wrestle for control of the city of Mosul, the top U.S. commander here said Monday.

Army Lt. Gen. Stephen Townsend said that the advisers, numbering about 450, are "operating closer and deeper into Iraqi formations" as a new assault on western Mosul gets underway. U.S. commanders made the adjustment during the fight for the eastern side of the city, which began in October and ended last month, and the deployment has continued with the attempt, beginning Sunday, to capture western Mosul, Townsend said.

It marks the first time the U.S. military has acknowledged how close American service members are to the front lines as it assists what Townsend characterized as a force of more than 40,000 Iraqi police officers and soldiers fighting to retake Mosul. The battle for the western half of the northern Iraqi city is likely to stretch for months in urban neighborhoods where up to 1,000 militants are believed to be entrenched, U.S. military officials said.

Checkpoint newsletter

Military, defense and security at home and abroad.

Please provide a valid email address.

Iraqi units encountered determined resistance Monday as they fought for control of Albu Seif, an Islamic State-occupied village south of Mosul. Later Monday, federal police forces and an elite squad belonging to the Interior Ministry had drawn within two miles of Mosul's main airport, at the city's southern edge, according to Lt. Gen. Raed Shakir Jawdat, the commander of the federal police.

The fight for the western half of the city is expected to be more challenging even than the grueling and bloody battle in the east, which lasted for months, according to Iraqi and U.S. commanders. The terrain, including the narrow streets of Mosul's old city, is more daunting. And hundreds of thousands of civilians will be caught between the militants and the advancing army.

Iraq's U.S.-trained counterterrorism forces, the country's most effective unit and the vanguard force during the fight in eastern Mosul, is expected to join the offensive in the coming days.

Townsend's comments came during a visit by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, a retired Marine general who led combat forces during the Iraq War. Mattis, the first senior member of the Trump administration to visit Iraq, said the U.S.-led military coalition will be able to simultaneously prosecute the war against the Islamic State in Mosul and the Syrian city of Raqqa, the capital of the group's self-proclaimed caliphate, along with

operations against militants in other cities.

"We're going to continue to go after them until we destroy them and any kind of belief in the inevitability of their message," Mattis told reporters after a day of meetings with senior U.S. commanders and Iraqi officials, including Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. "They are going to be shown exactly what they are, which is a bunch of murderous relics, to put it bluntly."

Mattis rejected a suggestion by President Trump that the United States might take Iraq's oil.

"I think all of us here in this room — all of us in America — have generally paid for our gas and oil all along, and I am sure we will continue to do so in the future," Mattis said during a meeting with reporters Sunday night. "We're not in Iraq to seize anybody's oil."

Trump had said repeatedly that the United States should have taken Iraq's oil during the Iraq War, most recently during a Jan. 21 visit to CIA headquarters when he said, "Maybe we'll get another chance."

The defense secretary's comments are among several he has made in efforts to reassure allies since leaving Washington last week. In Brussels and Munich, he promised audiences that the Trump administration will maintain its obligation to NATO, which calls for all members to help if one is attacked. But he also warned that the United States might "moderate" its support in other ways to nations

that do not meet defense spending guidelines set by the alliance.

Mattis is in the middle of a 30-day review of the U.S. strategy to defeat the Islamic State that is expected to make recommendations to the White House on whether additional U.S. troops are needed or whether new authorities should be granted to American forces to help prosecute the campaign.

The defense secretary said the United States and its allies are still sorting out what the fight for Raqqa will look like and whether Turkish forces will be involved. The issue is considered particularly sensitive because the Turks view Kurds allied with the United States as terrorists, while U.S. officials view them as the most credible local fighters.

Reuters reported Sunday that Turkey has submitted two plans to Washington for the Raqqa battle that would rely on local Arab forces potentially backed by the Turkish military, rather than the Kurds.

"The allies are still working it out," Mattis said. "They're sharing planning, and that's all I'm going [to say] right now. But the planning is still underway, so it has not all been decided upon who is going to do what and where. We're working together to sort it out."

Mustafa Salim in Irbil, Iraq, contributed to this report.

Syria Bombing Kills 4 Russians

Ivan
Nechepurenko

MOSCOW — Four Russian servicemen were killed and two were wounded in Syria last week when their car was blown up by a remote-controlled bomb, the Russian news agency Interfax reported on Monday, citing a statement by the Defense Ministry in Moscow.

The servicemen, identified by the ministry as military advisers, were

accompanying a Syrian Army convoy near the Tiyas air base in central Syria to the city of Homs on Thursday when they were hit by the roadside bomb. It was the largest loss of life for Russia since it intervened in the Syrian civil war.

“As a result of the blast, four servicemen have died and two were wounded,” Interfax cited the statement as saying. “Military doctors are fighting to save their lives.”

So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Russia intervened decisively in the Syrian civil war in the fall of 2015, with the stated purpose of providing air support to prop up the beleaguered forces of President Bashar al-Assad and to fight terrorism. With the Russian help, Mr. Assad has been able to regain large stretches of territory that had been lost to rebels and to militants from the extremist Sunni group the Islamic State.

Counting last week’s blast, 27 Russians have been killed in combat in Syria, according to official statistics, which Kremlin critics say understates the true figure. One of the victims, Vadim Magamurov, 31, was buried in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg on Monday, the Russian business daily Kommersant reported.

Tension Flares on Afghan-Pakistan Border Following Terror Attacks

Jessia Donati in
Kabul and Qasim
Nauman in Islamabad, Pakistan

Hostility between Afghanistan and Pakistan has soared after Islamabad responded to a series of attacks at home with military operations that officials in Kabul say included firing rockets into Afghan territory.

Pakistani officials blamed militant groups based in Afghanistan for the attacks last week across the country, which killed more than 100 people.

It closed two major border crossings with Afghanistan indefinitely, citing security concerns, and began operations that it said “effectively” targeted terrorist hide-outs close to the border.

The shelling has forced around 200 Afghan families near the border to flee their homes, the Norwegian Refugee Council said Monday. The aid organization works in Afghanistan’s remote eastern districts.

The Afghan government summoned the Pakistani ambassador over the alleged cross-border shelling, while Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, speaking over the weekend at a security conference in Munich, delivered a thinly veiled call for Pakistan to be isolated internationally.

Pakistan’s military on Monday issued a statement promising to improve coordination with Afghan forces along the border. It didn’t say if it had fired missiles into Afghan territory, or indicate when it might reopen the border between the two countries.

“Enhanced security arrangements along Pak-Af Border [sic] are to fight

common enemy [for example] terrorists of all hue and color,” it said in the statement.

Kabul and Islamabad have long accused each other of sheltering militants and frequently lash out at each other during surges of violence.

The deteriorating relationship complicates international efforts to coordinate the fight against terrorism in the region. Also, some level of cooperation between the two countries is necessary to restart peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

In a call with Afghan national security adviser Hanif Atmar, Pakistan’s de facto foreign minister Sartaj Aziz demanded strong action against Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, the Pakistani Taliban, and other militant groups that operate out of sanctuaries in Afghanistan.

The regional Islamic State branch is made up of both Afghan and Pakistani militants, but its main foothold is in Afghanistan’s eastern Nangarhar province.

A readout of the call reviewed by The Wall Street Journal said Mr. Aziz had “expressed serious concern that JuA continued to operate from its sanctuaries and safe haven in Afghanistan for undertaking terrorism in Pakistan.”

Afghanistan denied the accusation and said hundreds of Pakistani rockets falling over the disputed Durand Line, a British-drawn international border, had caused civilian casualties and forced large numbers of Afghan villagers to flee their homes.

President Ghani’s chief strategic adviser Nader Nadery called the

operations a violation of international law and an effort to divert attention from growing international pressure surrounding Pakistan’s role nurturing militant groups as proxy forces.

Kabul has long said that the Afghan Taliban and its ally, the Haqqani network, are allowed to operate from Pakistani territory, an accusation supported by Washington but denied by Islamabad.

“We believe the accusations are an attempt to divert their own public opinion away from the root causes of terrorism and the Frankenstein-like monster that they have created,” Mr. Nadery said, referring to the Taliban.

Tension has been particularly high since a bombing that killed six United Arab Emirates diplomats in Kandahar last month, Kabul officials have blamed Pakistan-based militants for the attack, which strained Islamabad’s relationship with the U.A.E.

Kabul has also recently grown bolder in urging the U.S. and its allies to take punitive action against Pakistan, further angering its neighbor.

“All too many times we see a state relying on malign nonstate actors as an instrument of policy,” Mr. Ghani said in Munich at the weekend. “Isolating states that rely on terrorism as instrument of state policy is the key challenge.”

The attacks last week in Pakistan began in the eastern city of Lahore, where a suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowd of protesters, killing 13 people, including two top police officials.

during a coup attempt in July, the latest in a series of trials in the plot.

The deadliest came Thursday, when 88 people were killed and more than 300 others wounded by a suicide bomber at one of Pakistan’s most prominent Sufi Muslim shrines in Sindh province. Islamic State claimed responsibility.

Pakistan closed the border crossings hours after that attack and launched nationwide raids in which hundreds of people have been killed or detained, the military said. On Friday, Pakistan’s military handed over a list of 76 terrorists to Afghan officials, demanding immediate action against them.

The Afghan government said it had never seen the list before but that it had weeks earlier presented Islamabad with a longer list—including the names and locations of 150 militants sheltering in Pakistan.

More than 600,000 Afghan refugees left Pakistan last year as tensions between the neighbors rose, and similar numbers are expected this year. The border closures are likely to hit landlocked Afghanistan particularly hard, as it relies on Pakistan for a large proportion of imports.

“Further displacement from cross-border offensives aggravates suffering and compounds the critical humanitarian needs among communities in these areas,” said Kate O’Rourke, the NRC’s country director in Afghanistan.

Corrections & Amplifications

The first name of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani was incorrectly given as Hassan in an earlier version of this article. (Feb. 19)

Turkey Tries 47 Ex-Soldiers in Erdogan Assassination Plot

Patrick Kingsley
IZMIR, Turkey — Dozens of former

Turkish soldiers were brought to trial on Monday on charges of trying to kill President Recep Tayyip Erdogan

during a coup attempt in July, the latest in a series of trials in the plot.

Prosecutors in Mugla, a city in the southwest, sought life sentences for 47 former soldiers who officials say

tried to assassinate Mr. Erdogan on July 15 during his vacation on the Mediterranean coast.

Hundreds of rebel soldiers accused of involvement in the coup attempt have been tried in several cases across Turkey in recent months, but this is the first trial to focus on the attempted assassination of Mr. Erdogan.

The charges were heard in the city's chamber of commerce because the local courthouse was too small for so many detainees.

Mr. Erdogan and his family escaped their hotel before the soldiers arrived that night, but two members of their security detail were killed in a subsequent shootout. More than 240 Turks died in separate episodes elsewhere in the country before loyalist troops restored order in the early hours of July 16.

Turkey has blamed followers of Fethullah Gulen, an American-

based cleric and former ally of Mr. Erdogan, for the coup attempt. Mr. Gulen has denied any role.

As a plaintiff in the case, Mr. Erdogan had his own lawyer, Huseyin Aydin, who said there was little doubt about the soldiers' intentions. "They arrived at the scene with the intention of killing the president," Mr. Aydin said, citing the evidence and the behavior of the defendants during the operation. "For the first time in our history, it is discussed that a commander in chief, a president, was subject to an assassination attempt by Turkish Army members," Mr. Aydin told reporters outside the chamber of commerce, the semi-official Anadolu news agency reported.

In court on Monday, one of the defendants, Gokhan Sonmezates, acknowledged involvement in the operation but denied that he or the others were trying to kill the president or that they had connections to Mr. Gulen, Reuters

reported. Mr. Sonmezates, a former brigadier general, reportedly said that he and his colleagues had intended to bring Mr. Erdogan to a rebel-held air base.

The coup attempt prompted Mr. Erdogan to begin a vast purge of state institutions that has extended far beyond the military. As many as 130,000 Turks have been fired from government posts since July, and 45,000 people have been arrested.

The government accuses those purged of having connections to Mr. Gulen or to terrorist groups. But critics argue that the crackdown has also given the state cover to single out members of the political opposition and reinforce Mr. Erdogan's increasingly autocratic rule.

The leaders of the country's main pro-Kurdish party have been jailed, as well as at least 81 journalists, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. No other country

jailed as many journalists in the past year, the group said.

Mr. Erdogan is asking Turks to grant him further powers in an April referendum. In recent speeches, he has argued that those who vote against him will have by default taken the side of the plotters.

Correction: February 20, 2017

An earlier version of this article misstated the location where Huseyin Aydin said, "For the first time in our history, it is discussed that a commander in chief, a president, was subject to an assassination attempt by Turkish Army members." He was speaking to reporters outside the chamber of commerce, not at the hearing.

The New York Times Trump Talk of Terror Listing for Muslim Brotherhood Alarms Some Arab Allies

Declan Walsh

For President Trump, the designation debate is an election promise made good. He has made no bones about taking an approach to the Middle East that is narrowly focused on counterterrorism, and that plays to domestic supporters who view all Islamist movements — or even all Muslims — as potentially hostile.

In much of the Middle East, though, the rapid pace and embattled rollouts of Mr. Trump's early orders have induced anxiety. Now many are following the potential indictment of the Muslim Brotherhood as a harbinger of things to come.

"The Obama administration moved us away from the 'clash of civilizations' narrative," said Emad Shahin, a dissident Egyptian academic who lectures at Georgetown University. "Trump is taking us deeper into it."

Not all are unhappy about the move to list the Brotherhood.

One leader the designation would surely delight is President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, the former general who has led a harsh crackdown on the Brotherhood since the military ousted a Brotherhood leader, Mohamed Morsi, as president in 2013. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also would support it.

But in countries where Brotherhood-linked parties are prominent in Parliament or are in power, experts

say a sweeping indictment could have serious implications for domestic politics, American diplomacy and the broader fight against Islamist extremism.

In Jordan, a crucial ally in the fight against jihadist groups, Islamists constitute a small but significant bloc in the Parliament. Tunisia's Ennahda party, which has won wide praise for its democratic engagement and moderate stance since 2011, might be shunned. The prime minister of Morocco, technically, could be considered a criminal.

"You would throw many babies out with the bath water," said Gerald M. Feierstein, a former United States ambassador to Yemen, now at the Middle East Institute in Washington.

The initial momentum toward such a designation appears to have slowed. A leaked assessment by the Central Intelligence Agency said isolating the Brotherhood would serve only to empower jihadist groups; some experts doubt that a broad designation would pass legal muster.

But the very fact that the ban is under consideration by Mr. Trump's aides is being taken as an ominous sign in a region where religion and politics are carefully, and often precariously, balanced.

The proposed designation has also reaffirmed Mr. Trump's apparent embrace of Mr. Sisi, who has weathered a barrage of international criticism for his country's dismal

human rights record in recent years. Mr. Trump has hailed him as a "fantastic guy" with whom he shares "good chemistry."

Since an initial meeting at the United Nations in September, the two leaders have spoken several times by phone — Mr. Sisi was the first foreign leader to congratulate Mr. Trump on his victory in November — and now a visit to Washington by Mr. Sisi is under preparation.

Egypt wants the United States to resume a military financing program, frozen by President Barack Obama in 2015, that helps it make billions of dollars in purchases of big-ticket weapons like F-16 warplanes and M1A1 Abrams tanks.

More than anything, though, a handshake in the White House for Mr. Sisi would offer a stamp of legitimacy to a leader who had been kept at arm's length by Mr. Obama.

Tens of thousands of Mr. Sisi's opponents languish in Egyptian prisons, human rights workers are routinely harassed, and his security forces have faced accusations of extrajudicial killings.

To some, it suggests Mr. Trump is set to take an approach in the Middle East that will not just tolerate strongmen and monarchs but also actively seek to embrace them — a throwback that evokes American alignment with autocrats like the shah of Iran in decades past.

"It's easy to say you will stand by your friends," said Mr. Feierstein at

the Middle East Institute. "But authoritarian regimes are always brittle, always fragile. We thought we would stand by the shah of Iran until the day he got on an airplane and left the country. Now what do we have to show for it? We have 40 years of not being able to have a relationship with Iran."

Brotherhood officials insist that the Trump administration has gotten it wrong. In a letter smuggled from the high-security Egyptian prison where he is being held, the Brotherhood spokesman Gehad el-Haddad admitted that his party had made serious mistakes during its yearlong stint in power in Egypt from 2012 to 2013. Citing the "hard-learned lessons of the Arab Spring," he said the Brotherhood had failed to heed loud opposition from millions of Egyptians who disliked Mr. Morsi's actions.

But, he insisted, the movement renounced bloodshed. "Our flaws are many," he wrote. "Violence is not one."

In other places, the reality can be harder to pin down. By nature secretive, the Brotherhood takes different forms around the world. In some places, its members have condoned or committed violent acts. Its Palestinian offshoot, Hamas, carries out suicide bombings; in Egypt, angry young supporters have been accused of attacking Mr. Sisi's security forces.

But that does not make terrorists of the many millions of people who

support the Brotherhood's political ideology across many countries.

One route for the Trump administration could be to narrowly designate specific Brotherhood branches as terrorists, said Mokhtar Awad, an expert on the group. But it would be better still, he argued, to "engage in a battle of ideas."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Famine Declared in South Sudan

Matina Stevis

Organization and Unicef.

NAIROBI, Kenya—South Sudan warned that more than 100,000 people were at risk of starvation and death, as it declared the world's first famine since 2012 in parts of Unity state.

"This famine is man-made. The WFP and the entire humanitarian community have been trying with all our might to avoid this catastrophe," WFP country director Joyce Luma said.

The United Nations, which joined the South Sudanese government in announcing the famine on Monday, blamed the country's economic collapse and the hunger crisis on fighting between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and his former deputy Riek Machar.

Chronic food shortages have frequently afflicted the territory now known as South Sudan, but it is the first time in more than two decades the region has been hit by famine.

It said another one million people out of a total population of 12.5 million were on the brink of famine.

According to the U.N.'s definition, famine conditions are reached when at least 20% of households in an area face extreme food shortages, acute malnutrition strikes one in three people and the daily death toll exceeds two people per 10,000.

The crisis could have been prevented had the fighting stopped and aid agencies been allowed by authorities to deliver food, said officials from three U.N. agencies—the World Food Program, the Food and Agriculture

The latest official famine was declared in parts of six West African nations in 2012. It was triggered by drought in the Sahel region, which spans the continent the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea.

"We engage with the Brotherhood knowing they are problematic actors, but they are also a reality," said Michael Wahid Hanna of the Century Foundation. "And the alternative — ignoring or repressing them — leads to a very bad place."

Correction: February 20, 2017

An earlier version of this article misstated the year that President Barack Obama froze Egypt's military financing program. It was 2015, not 2013.

humanitarian emergencies in Africa, as donors focus on needs in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East.

In January, the U.N. and several aid agencies launched an international appeal for \$1.6 billion to fund humanitarian operations in South Sudan. By Monday, they had raised \$14.4 million, or 0.9% of their request.

A similar appeal launched in January for \$825 million to help 5.5 million Somalis through midyear has raised just \$25.4 million.

Humanitarian appeals related to the war in Syria raised more than \$4.5 billion in 2016, half of what the U.N. says was needed. Fundraising campaigns for Somalia and Sudan, meanwhile, raised a combined \$1.5 billion.

U.S. and European powers hailed South Sudan's birth as an independent nation in 2011 following its split with Sudan. But two years later, fighting broke out between ethnic Dinka followers of Mr. Kiir and ethnic Nuer supporters of Mr. Machar.

Aid workers and the WFP have been ensnared in the violence, most recently last July when government forces looted food from a WFP facility in the capital Juba. The amount of stolen food was enough to feed hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese for a month.

Drought and war are also pushing millions in neighboring Somalia toward starvation. Some 1.1 million Somalis are on the verge of famine, and an additional five million are struggling to obtain adequate nutrition, the U.N. said.

Aid organizations have had trouble raising funds to address

The New York Times

Netanyahu's Planned Visit to Australia Is Met With Opposition

Jacqueline Williams

in respect of its illegal settlement building and its treatment of the indigenous Palestinian population," the letter said. It called on Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's administration to rethink its support of the Israeli government.

SYDNEY, Australia — The first visit to Australia by an Israeli prime minister was intended to be a warm meeting between the leaders of two countries with strong trade ties, giving Benjamin Netanyahu some positive coverage as his nation faces broad condemnation for pushing to expand settlements on the West Bank.

Australia was one of the few countries that spoke out against a United Nations Security Council resolution in December that condemned Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. While Israel's closest ally, the United States, tacitly supported the resolution, the Australian government called it "one sided" and "deeply unsettling."

But the four-day visit, scheduled to start on Wednesday, is generating a bit of pushback. Sixty notable Australians, including political, religious, cultural and business figures, have signed a letter opposing Mr. Netanyahu's visit because of his government's policies toward the Palestinians. And small groups of protesters have demonstrated in Melbourne and Canberra against the visit.

Mr. Netanyahu's visit, after a stop in Singapore, is meant to cement ties with the Turnbull government and to expand the two countries' trade, which now totals about 1.3 billion Australian dollars (\$1 billion) a year.

"Israel continues to defy all United Nations calls for it to comply with international law

It is also seen as something of a diplomatic salve for Israel, whose ties with Europe have been further

strained recently by new announcements of settlement construction and a new law to legalize settlements already built on private Palestinian land.

When Mr. Netanyahu visited Washington last week, President Trump appeared to back away from the United States' long insistence on a two-state solution for the Middle East conflict. In contrast, Mr. Turnbull told Australian reporters last Thursday that his government's support for a two-state solution had not changed.

Bill Shorten, the leader of the opposition Labor Party, is expected to meet with Mr. Netanyahu and to emphasize the rights of both Palestinians and Israelis to live within secure borders.

"I will make it clear to Mr. Netanyahu that where settlement building is an obstacle to the two-state solution, it should be stopped," Mr. Shorten said at a news conference on Monday.

Bob Carr, a former Labor foreign minister, said in an interview that he did not sign the letter because he did not want Mr. Netanyahu's visit to be canceled, but that "I support all the other sentiments."

He added: "Australian public opinion, whenever it's been measured in opinion polls, has supported the establishment of the Palestinian state. It's now hard to find many supporters of Israel outside the Jewish community in Australia or conservative politicians who enjoy the support of the Israel lobby."

Colin Rubenstein, executive director of the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council, an advocacy group, called the statements in the letter "misplaced, illogical and counterproductive," but he said he did not think they would affect Mr. Netanyahu's visit.

The New York Times

Leonhardt : Trump's Russia Motives

David Leonhardt

Kerry saw Russia, the key ally of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war, as necessary to ending Assad's slaughter. Many other Obama administration officials believed that seeking Putin's help was a fool's errand. But remember that Obama never came up with an effective approach to Syria. Any successor would be wise to see if Russia could help moderate the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Of course, Syria can't explain all of Trump's Russia ties. There are too many, and they're too ominous. Together, they point to the next three explanations — the conspiracies.

The second explanation is the business conspiracy. Because many American banks wouldn't lend money to Trump's debt-soaked company, he had to look elsewhere, like Russia. "Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets," Donald Trump

Jr. said in 2008, specifically mentioning projects in SoHo and Dubai.

Trump could clear up this issue by releasing his tax returns. That he has not, unlike every other modern presidential candidate, means that he deserves no benefit of the doubt. The fairest assumption is that he has Russian business ties he wants to keep hidden.

The third explanation is a political conspiracy, and it's at the center of the legal inquiries. The facts are certainly worrisome. Trump campaign advisers had close links to Putin's circle, and some of them spoke with Russian officials during the campaign. Meanwhile, Putin's government was directing pro-Trump cyberattacks. If there was coordination — and there has not been any evidence to date — it would indeed be a worse scandal than Watergate.

The fourth explanation is the flimsiest: the idea, contained in a dossier compiled by private investigators, that Russia has compromising material on Trump. Unless real evidence emerges, I'd encourage you to ignore this theory.

The final possible motive — an ideological alliance — is in some ways the most alarming. Putin isn't only a leader with "very strong control over his country," as Trump has enthused; Putin also traffics in a white, Christian-infused nationalism that casts Islam and "global elites" as the enemies.

He does not go as far pursuing these themes as hard-core Russian nationalists, much as Trump merely flirts with the alt-right. Either way, the themes are undeniable. As Michael McFaul, a former ambassador to Russia, says, "The inauguration speech sounded like things I've heard from Russian nationalists many times."

Stephen Bannon, who has emerged as the White House's most influential adviser, clearly believes in ideological alliances, and Trump seems open to them. After winning the election, he met with Britain's leading nationalist, Nigel Farage, before Britain's prime minister.

In recent days, Trump has tempered his pro-Russia comments and even criticized its actions in Ukraine. So it would be a mistake to imagine that we know the full story of Trump and Russia. But based on what we do know, it represents a shocking risk to American interests.

The Republicans who run the Senate and the F.B.I. need to pursue their investigations without the friendly deference they have generally shown to Trump so far. If they don't, it will be left for patriotic leakers, and journalists, to make sure the truth comes out.



O'Brien : Trump Can't Seem to Shake Those Russia Problems

Timothy L. O'Brien

The New York Times reported Sunday that one of Donald Trump's lawyers, Michael Cohen, along with two other men, attempted to deliver a sealed proposal for crafting a Ukraine peace accord and lifting Russian sanctions to then National Security Adviser Michael Flynn shortly before Flynn resigned.

Cohen disputed a portion of the Times' account to Washington Post reporters, arguing that he hadn't taken the sanctions plan to the White House nor had he spoken to anyone about it.

But Cohen didn't dispute that he conferred with two others who brought him the sanctions plan, nor did he dispute who the men were: Andrii V. Artemenko, a Ukrainian politician and member of an opposition party trying to oust Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on nebulous corruption charges, and Felix Sater, a businessman who, as they say in the trade, has a "very colorful past" (and who I once crossed paths with during a lawsuit).

At the highest level, the episode is yet another benchmark in the haphazard and troubling chronology of Trump's short history of diplomacy with Russia -- and his accommodating stance toward Vladimir Putin. Putin has already made incursions into Ukraine by annexing Crimea and it's unclear exactly how Trump plans to respond to other ambitions Putin might have in Eastern Europe. And, of course, there are ongoing federal

investigations of Russia's role in trying to influence the 2016 election and the nature of any contacts between Russia and the Trump campaign.

At a more down-to-earth level, the goals of the trio involved in Cohen's sanctions plan and what that may say about President Trump's judgment and the judgment of those advising him is also curious.

Artemenko has said that top Putin aides have encouraged his political forays against Poroshenko. So why is Artemenko, a potential Putin stalking horse in Ukraine, getting a meeting with Cohen, a close adviser to the president?

Cohen was a ubiquitous spokesman for the president during the 2016 campaign and he had worked for the Trump Organization for a decade before leaving the firm in January. He now serves in a loosely defined role as Trump's personal lawyer. Cohen, whose wife is from Ukraine and who has done business there, is among a handful of the president's associates whom the FBI is examining for possible contacts with Russia during the 2016 campaign. (Cohen has disputed that he had any improper contacts with Russia.)

Sater, whom I wrote about in a column last August, has worked on a number of real estate projects with Trump, including the Trump Soho, a luxury hotel in lower Manhattan. Sater worked for the Bayrock Group -- a development firm based in Trump Tower and founded by a former Soviet official -- when Bayrock launched the Trump Soho.

Cohen and Sater both told the Times that they hadn't spoken to Trump about their sanctions proposal. But as the Washington Post noted, the episode "suggests that some in the region aligned with Russia have been seeking to use Trump business associates as an informal conduit to a new president who has signaled a desire to forge warmer relations with Russia."

In that context, Sater's history in particular -- and his continued proximity to the president -- are troubling.

Sater is of Russian descent and over the years he has had repeated run-ins with law enforcement for, among other things, money laundering, helping organized crime families defraud stock investors, and stabbing a man in the face with the stem of a broken margarita glass. (To make matters more complex, Sater has cooperated with the federal government in a number of investigations, winning a delayed prison sentence in the money laundering case as well as praise from authorities for his help.)

Sater told Fox News in an interview last night that the only thing guiding him as he crafted the sanctions proposal was altruism. "What could be wrong in helping stop a war and trying to achieve peace?" he told Fox. "I have done so much for my country and thought that promoting peace was a good thing,"

For his part, President Trump has repeatedly denied knowing of anything untoward about Sater during the years they worked together, though he maintained a

relationship with Sater even after news accounts about his sordid background surfaced. In fact, their relationship remained close enough that Sater once carried a business card emblazoned with the Trump Organization logo.

Sater surfaced in a libel suit Trump brought against me in 2006, in which Trump claimed that my biography, "TrumpNation," had damaged his business prospects in Russia and elsewhere. Trump lost the case in 2011.

During a deposition of Trump in late 2007, my lawyers asked him whether he planned to sever his relationship with Sater because of his organized crime ties. Trump said he hadn't made up his mind.

"Have you previously associated with people you knew were members of organized crime?" one of my lawyers asked.

"No, I haven't," Trump responded. "And it's hard to overly blame Bayrock. Things like that can happen. But I want to see what action Bayrock takes before I make a decision."

(In fact, Trump had knowingly associated with mob figures before, episodes to which the news media has given relatively scant attention; there's more about Trump and organized crime in my account here and in the late Wayne Barrett's book, "Trump: The Greatest Show on Earth.")

Sater said in his own deposition with my lawyers in 2008 that he had made a number of business trips to Eastern Europe and Russia on

behalf of the Trump Organization over the years. Those included trips with two of Trump's children, Donald Jr. and Ivanka, and Trump's daughter-in-law, Vanessa Trump, to scout possible developments. Sater specifically said in the deposition that he had visited Moscow with Donald Jr. and Ivanka in February 2006.

The New York Times

Paddock

Mr. Hwang instructed his government to strengthen vigilance and precautions against possible North Korean terrorist attacks on the government and citizens of the South. He also warned that North Korea may try military provocations to divert international attention from the killing.

The statement came as tensions escalated Monday between North Korea and Malaysia as the police in Kuala Lumpur press on with their investigation of the killing, in which several North Korean citizens are being sought.

Fuji TV in Japan posted what appeared to be airport security video footage of the attack on YouTube, which was later reposted by other sources.

A posting on YouTube was purported to be an airport video of the attack. The Star Online

The North Korean ambassador to Malaysia, Kang Chol, called the Malaysian inquiry politically motivated and demanded that his government be allowed to take part. Mr. Kang also found fault with Kim Jong-nam's autopsy.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Timothy W. Martin, Jonathan Cheng and Eun-Young Jeong

Updated Feb. 20, 2017 3:01 p.m. ET

SEOUL—When Lee Jae-yong took Samsung Group's reins from his ailing father in 2014, the Harvard-educated heir moved to reshape the conglomerate along Silicon Valley lines, promising an era of transparency and accountability in an institution known for its opaque corporate culture—in a country whose modern history has seen a succession of business and political leaders engulfed in corruption scandals.

Mr. Lee pledged a more independent board. He told security

So it's all a bit odd when the president regularly loses his memory when asked about his relationship with Sater -- such as when the Associated Press inquired about it in late 2015. "Felix Sater, boy, I have to even think about it," he told the AP. "I'm not that familiar with him."

If Michael Cohen is playing a gatekeeper role for President Trump

as his personal attorney, then inevitably he is going to take meetings with a variety of White House supplicants, some of whom may have unsavory backgrounds. But Cohen's role means that he also has to prevent certain people from getting through the gate, people, one would think, like Felix Sater.

Regardless of whether Cohen personally delivered a sanctions

proposal to the White House, why was he even involved in something like this -- and why does someone like Felix Sater keep resurfacing in Trumplandia, and in the orbit of the president of the United States?

Kim Jong-nam Killing Was 'Terrorist Act' by North Korea, South Says

Choe Sang-Hun and Richard C.

"It has been seven days since the incident, but there is no clear evidence on the cause of death, and at the moment we cannot trust the investigation by the Malaysian police," Mr. Kang said.

The North Korean Embassy later released a statement trying to raise doubts about whether the body was that of Mr. Kim, faulting the Malaysian authorities for "identifying the other name alleged by the hostile foreign forces." The statement said the deceased man, whom it identified as Kim Chol, held a diplomatic passport, and it criticized the Malaysian authorities for requiring the presence of next of kin for the body to be released.

The Malaysian Foreign Ministry said it had summoned Mr. Kang to explain his accusation that Malaysia was "colluding" with North Korea's enemies in its handling of Mr. Kim's death.

Late Monday, the Malaysian foreign minister, Anifah Aman, responded to Mr. Kang's charges, saying they were based on "delusions, lies and half-truths." Mr. Kang's suggestion that someone else's hand was behind the investigation was "deeply insulting to Malaysia," he said in a statement issued by his office.

"In all civilized nations, it is the norm for cases such as these to be comprehensively investigated," Mr. Anifah said. "It is the responsibility of the government to do so."

Mr. Kim was apparently poisoned by a woman who grabbed him from behind at the airport and wiped his face with a cloth. He died on the way to a hospital.

The Malaysian police have arrested four people and are seeking seven others, most of them North Korean.

In its meeting with Mr. Kang, the Malaysian government called his accusations "baseless" and said the police were following normal procedures in the case of a death "under mysterious circumstances."

Malaysia has told North Korea that it will give the body to Mr. Kim's next of kin once the investigation is complete.

"The Malaysian government has been transparent," the statement said. "The Malaysian government takes very seriously any unfounded attempt to tarnish its reputation."

The South Korean unification minister, Hong Yong-pyo, said on Monday that eight North Koreans were involved in the case, including one who was arrested, four who were believed to have returned

home and three others who were still being sought by the Malaysian authorities.

Speaking to reporters in Seoul, Mr. Hong declined to reveal the additional information his government had that helped it determine North Korean involvement. But he said the fact that several suspects were from North Korea was significant evidence itself. He also noted that North Korea had a history of committing terrorist attacks abroad and executing its own officials deemed a threat to the country's leader.

"The North Korean regime depends on a reign of terror and fears to help maintain its grip on power," Mr. Hong said about the possible motive behind the killing.

In Indonesia, Agung Sampurno, an Immigration Department spokesman, said that at least three North Korean suspects who left Malaysia in the hours after the killing on Feb. 13 arrived in Jakarta later that day. They left Jakarta at 10:20 p.m. on a flight to Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, before they were believed to have returned to North Korea.

Samsung Heir, Seeking to Modernize Opaque Culture, Instead Faces Scandal (UNE)

guards not to bow to him. Employees were allowed to wear shorts, and mothers got longer maternity leave.

It was part of a plan, he told people privately, to nudge Samsung forward after years of complaints that South Korea's family-run *chaebol* conglomerates were too sprawling, conservative and corrupt. Mr. Lee told those around him that "the chaebol system is done," said people familiar with his thinking.

On Friday, the 48-year-old Mr. Lee was arrested in connection with a wide-ranging scandal that includes the impeachment of South Korea's president. Prosecutors accuse Mr. Lee, Samsung Electronics Co. vice

chairman, of bribery, embezzlement and perjury in connection with roughly 43 billion won (about \$37 million) in payments Samsung made to entities allegedly linked to a friend of President Park Geun-hye's.

Prosecutors allege the payments were in exchange for government backing of a contentious merger of two Samsung affiliates that bolstered Mr. Lee's control of smartphone maker Samsung Electronics, the crown jewel of a business empire that spans dozens of affiliates from theme parks to biologic drugs.

They also accused Mr. Lee of hiding assets abroad and concealing profit from criminal acts. At least four

other Samsung executives are under investigation, prosecutors said. Mr. Lee hasn't been charged. Prosecutors have 11 days from his arrest—or about 20 days if they are granted a requested extension—to bring a formal indictment against Samsung's de facto leader.

Mr. Lee has denied wrongdoing. He told prosecutors he felt coerced by President Park to make the payments, investigators said. Samsung said it made payments but denied they were in exchange for favors. It declined to make Mr. Lee available for this article. President Park and her friend have denied wrongdoing.

Much remains unknown about whether Mr. Lee was involved in the scandal. Interviews with people who know Mr. Lee and those familiar with Samsung long term paint a picture of him caught between his stated desire to overhaul the group's culture and the need to operate within long-established business practices in South Korea, with its history of cozy ties between politics and commerce.

"He is very much a Westernized businessman," said Park Yoon-shik, a George Washington University international-business professor and longtime Lee-family friend, "but he still operates in very much a Koreanized economic, political and business environment."

For all Mr. Lee's overhaul talk, his critics among investors, corporate-governance experts and South Korean lawmakers say Samsung spent more time fighting to preserve its privileged position and promoting Mr. Lee's interests. Mr. Lee could have pressed for more change, they say, but instead backed moves that enhanced his standing while avoiding actions that could have upstaged his father, Samsung's chairman, in a coma since a 2014 heart attack.

While working to strengthen his control, Mr. Lee kept many of his father's lieutenants in place, including at Samsung's Corporate Strategy Office, a powerful division that oversees the conglomerate's businesses and plays a role in acquisitions, risk management and other strategic decisions. A Samsung spokeswoman said the group coordinates with affiliates on "issues that individual companies alone may not be fully equipped to deal with."

In a December legislative hearing, Mr. Lee acknowledged public "suspicions and negative sentiments" toward the office, calling it a legacy established by his grandfather and pledging to close it.

Although Samsung doesn't officially specify the strategy office's responsibilities, people close to the office said it is akin to a chairman's office that also monitors company opponents and gathers information on lawmakers, prosecutors and judges for advocacy purposes.

Lobbying is illegal in South Korea, but governance experts say it is practiced in various forms. Officials from the strategy office are among those under investigation, prosecutors said.

The scandal comes as Samsung is recovering from its recall of Galaxy Note 7 smartphones following reports of devices catching fire.

Some foreign investors and opposition lawmakers have long agitated for change at South Korea's chaebols. President Park's father, military dictator Park Chung-hee, relied on them to help transform the poor country into a powerhouse driven by industries such as autos, steelmaking and electronics. Samsung, founded by Mr. Lee's grandfather, was a key player.

More recently, competitors have accused chaebols of using government ties to dominate industries. Chaebol heads have been convicted of bribery and other crimes. Mr. Lee's father, Samsung leader Lee Kun-hee, was convicted twice, in 1995 for bribing President Roh Tae-woo and in 2008 for embezzlement and tax evasion. The elder Mr. Lee at the time said the payments were customary, not bribes, in the earlier case and pleaded not guilty in the latter. The president pardoned him both times.

By the time Lee Kun-hee was incapacitated in 2014, his son had positioned himself as a face of change. He has a vastly different style, said company executives and people who know both men. He has a more international outlook, they said, and prefers Western-style management, prizing discussion and creativity. Unlike his imposing father and grandfather, he is known to be personable, introducing himself as "Jay."

His informality was on display in New York several years ago, when he surprised people by showing up to a meeting wearing khakis and munching on a soft pretzel, said someone familiar with the gathering.

Mr. Lee's first major job at Samsung was heading an internet venture that racked up losses after the dot-com bubble burst. As he moved up the ladder, he hobnobbed with the world's tech elite, speaking regularly with people such as late Apple Inc. founder Steve Jobs and his successor, Tim Cook, said people familiar with the relationships.

After Mr. Jobs's memorial in 2011, they said, Mr. Lee met Mr. Cook in Cupertino, Calif., where they discussed their desire to strengthen ties. Despite tensions since, the relationship has paid off for Samsung, which has supplied memory chips to Apple. Apple declined to comment.

Mr. Lee bucked Samsung tradition by backing sales of unsuccessful businesses. As chief operating officer in 2011, he advised selling Samsung's unprofitable hard-drive business, said someone familiar with the episode. Samsung sold it to Seagate Technology PLC. Still, many shareholders and governance experts said they wondered whether

he was up to running Samsung's vast empire alone.

When his father slipped into a coma, Mr. Lee eschewed public statements to avoid disrespect, said people familiar with his thinking. In private, they said, he argued almost everything Samsung did was open to reconsideration and said Samsung had spread into businesses where it had no natural edge.

To placate shareholders who wanted a simpler company, Samsung boosted dividends and share buybacks and promised other steps. Mr. Lee tweaked the culture, including limiting mandatory postwork drinking sessions common in South Korea.

Mr. Lee and his lieutenants have yet to implement many changes they promised, such as increasing independent board seats.

Then there was the merger that has dragged Mr. Lee into the scandal that has raised the biggest doubts yet about whether he has ushered Samsung into a new era.

The 2015 merger between Samsung's de facto holding company, Cheil Industries Inc., and Samsung C&T Corp., a construction-and-trading business, was crucial for Mr. Lee, according to investors. That's because despite being heir apparent, Mr. Lee personally owned only a small portion of Samsung Electronics.

The merger would help him consolidate his position, giving him a stronger foothold in the smartphone maker. That was all the more important considering Mr. Lee is expected to owe inheritance tax when his father dies that could force him to liquidate some shareholdings.

Samsung C&T presented the deal as necessary. Combining a construction unit with a fashion, resort and catering company would "provide integrated premium lifestyle services," a company statement said.

Opponents included several American state-pension funds, influential proxy-advisory firms and activist hedge-fund manager Elliott Management Corp. An Elliott spokesman declined to comment.

One South Korean individual shareholder recalls a low-ranking Samsung C&T employee showing up at his apartment one sweltering Saturday bearing a watermelon and begging him to sign a proxy form in favor of the merger. Feeling pity, the shareholder signed, though he says he likely would have made more money if shareholders had rejected the deal.

Chu Jin-hyung, who headed one of South Korea's biggest stock brokerages, Hanwha Investment & Securities Co.—part of the Hanwha chaebol—said he was pressured around the time he released reports characterizing the merger as harmful to shareholders. Three executives at Samsung called, urging him to forfeit his brokerage's Samsung C&T voting rights or vote for the deal, he said.

A senior Hanwha group executive warned him his report could damp ties between the two chaebols, he said. The executive later told Mr. Chu he had received a complaint call from Samsung.

Mr. Chu said Hanwha group officials later pressured him to step down, and he refused. He left when his contract ended in 2016. A Hanwha spokesman disputed this version of events, without elaborating.

At the December legislative hearing, Mr. Lee dismissed any link between the merger and his Samsung Electronics stake. He said his control over the company wasn't contingent on his stake but on recognition from his company and clients.

Still, he got personally involved, showing up unexpectedly at a meeting Samsung C&T executives were conducting with an opponent of the merger, Park Yoo-kyung, a Hong Kong-based director at a subsidiary of the Netherlands-based Stichting Pensioenfond ABP, Europe's largest pension fund. Attendees discussed corporate-governance matters, Ms. Park said. The Dutch plan's subsidiary voted against the deal.

Mr. Lee also told lawmakers he met personally with the head of the government-owned National Pension Service, which held an 11% Samsung C&T stake, to discuss the deal. NPS, the world's third-largest pension fund, backed the deal, which narrowly won approval in July 2015.

Prosecutors claim the Samsung payments made to entities allegedly controlled by President Park's friend were in exchange for government backing for the merger. A Samsung spokeswoman said the payments came after shareholders approved the merger.

Mr. Chu, the Hanwha broker, said he called an acquaintance at NPS to ask why it had voted for the deal. "It was the Blue House's wish," his acquaintance responded, referring to the president's office.

The NPS's head was indicted in January on charges of perjury and abuse of authority in relation to the vote. He has yet to submit a formal plea. He has previously denied

wrongdoing. NPS declined to comment.

In November, prosecutors raided NPS and Samsung's Corporate Strategy Office. Mr. Chu, the former brokerage head, said he learned that another acquaintance who tried to persuade him not to write a negative report relayed the conversation to a Samsung executive at the strategy office in a text message prosecutors obtained. A spokesman for the special prosecutor declined to comment.

Mr. Lee privately met with President Park in September 2014 and July 2015 about a week after the NPS vote helped Samsung's merger

pass. Several days before their second meeting, he traveled to Daegu city to show support for a Samsung-funded startup center. It was part of a government program to promote a "creative economy," a centerpiece of President Park's economic policy.

"I believe there will be good results if corporations, the government and regional authorities act in unison," Mr. Lee told reporters. Samsung's support for such startup centers totaled roughly 50 billion won.

A company spokeswoman said Mr. Lee wasn't the only conglomerate leader to meet with President Park in recent years and that the

meetings were at the request of the president's office. A lawyer for President Park confirmed that the meetings with Mr. Lee and other conglomerate heads came at her administration's request.

At the December hearing, Mr. Lee promised to turn over a new leaf at Samsung. "I'll throw away the old ways," he said, "and cut off the conventional ties between politics and business."

Ten weeks later, a court approved his arrest.

Write to Timothy W. Martin at timothy.martin@wsj.com, Jonathan Cheng at jonathan.cheng@wsj.com

and Eun-Young Jeong at Eun-Young.Jeong@wsj.com

Corrections & Amplifications
Samsung said its support for startup centers in South Korea totaled roughly 50 billion won. An earlier version of this article gave the figure as roughly 140 billion won, which Samsung said included spending on factors such as construction. The version misspelled the name of Park Yoon-shik, a George Washington University professor, as Park Yoon-shin. (Feb. 20, 2017)

ETATS-UNIS

Los Angeles Times

Sciubba : What the U.S. really needs is a wall to keep immigrants in

Jennifer Dabbs Sciubba

President Trump keeps reiterating his pledge to build a border wall between the United States and Mexico. He and his supporters have in mind a barrier that will keep Mexican immigrants out of the country. They should be thinking instead of a wall that will keep them in.

Since 2008, more Mexicans have left the U.S. than have come here — a net loss of 140,000 migrants, according to calculations by the nonpartisan Pew Research Center through 2014. Even without new immigration restrictions and border crackdowns, demographic and economic trends clearly show that America will continue to lose more Mexican immigrants than it gains. To deliver the economic growth Trump has promised, the U.S. will need producers and consumers, and there won't be enough of them without immigration.

People move among countries for all kinds of reasons. Large-scale, or macro, factors include where there is a strong economy and plentiful jobs or laws that prohibit or allow migrants. At the micro level, relocation is personal, for reasons such as family reunification. Changing forces at work on both these levels help explain why more Mexicans are leaving the U.S. than coming, and why that pattern is

likely to continue — with or without a border wall.

Economists theorize that migration is primarily a function of labor supply and demand. People move from low-wage to high-wage countries. And wages, too, are dependent on the supply and demand for workers.

During the past few decades, Mexico's labor supply has been large relative to the U.S., especially for jobs Americans didn't much want to do, such as agricultural field work and some kinds of construction. Labor has been cheaper in Mexico than here, so a border-crosser could earn more money for the same work in the U.S. than at home.

In the 1990s, it's estimated that 3 million Mexicans migrated to the U.S., pushed and pulled mostly by these economic forces. But since the 2008 economic recession, neither the push nor the pull has been nearly as strong as it once was.

In 2007 and in 2015, the Pew Center asked Mexicans who returned home from the U.S. why they made the move. At the micro level, fewer reported having family or friends in the U.S. with whom they kept in regular contact. In the Pew survey, 61% said reuniting with family in Mexico was the primary reason for their return. As for the macro level, the survey found

that one-third of the respondents believed that the standard of living was no different in Mexico than in the U.S. In 2015, that figure was up 10% compared with 2007.

Part of the reason for that perception is the fact that the supply of labor in Mexico is dwindling and wages are rising there. We can expect both trends to continue over the next few decades.

Mexican women now are barely having enough babies to replace their country's population, and their fertility rates are declining. As Mexico's economy has developed, the number of babies born to each woman on average has been dropping rapidly, from 6.5 children per woman in 1975 to 2.2 by 2010 — nearly on a par with the U.S. — according to data compiled by the United Nations. Now, labor shortages and, consequently, higher wages are on the horizon.

Here's another way to look at the data: Between 2000 and 2015, Mexico needed to create about 800,000 new jobs a year to employ young people who were part of large cohorts born when fertility was still high. But in 2015, fertility declines started to slow — the number of 15- to 19-year-olds peaked — meaning less need for new jobs and ultimately less reason for Mexicans to migrate for work.

Those trends aren't good for the U.S. For decades here, the fertility

rate hovered right around replacement level. Now, American mothers have on average fewer than two babies each. That results in an aging population and, without more immigrants, the economy won't have enough replacement producers and consumers. Forecasters calculate that everything from infrastructure to national defense can be strained by an aging population because spending on entitlements crowds out other budget items.

The United States has always attracted immigrants. Welcoming newcomers from around the world has been to our demographic, economic and social benefit. Building a wall on the border with Mexico will cost us dearly, in dollars spent and much more. If the wall succeeds in keeping migrants out, we won't have a labor force big enough and young enough to support our economy, let alone to "make America great again."

Jennifer Dabbs Sciubba is associate professor of international studies at Rhodes College in Memphis and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, specializing in the political implications of demographic trends.

The New York Times

Trump Chooses H.R. McMaster as National Security Adviser (UNE)

Peter Baker and Michael R.

Gordon

The choice continued Mr. Trump's reliance on high-ranking military officers to advise him on national

security. Mr. Flynn is a retired three-star general and Mr. Mattis a retired four-star general. John F. Kelly, the

homeland security secretary, is a retired Marine general. Mr. Trump's first choice to replace Mr. Flynn,

Robert S. Harward, who turned down the job, and two other finalists were current or former senior officers as well. General McMaster will remain on active duty.

General McMaster had the aura of disruption that Mr. Trump has valued in several cabinet secretaries, said a senior administration official who insisted on anonymity to describe internal deliberations. Another candidate, Lt. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, the superintendent of West Point, impressed Mr. Trump as being "from central casting," the official said. But the president wanted him to stay at West Point, which he reverses.

General McMaster, 54, made a name for himself as a young officer with a searing critique of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for their performance during the Vietnam War and later criticized the way President George W. Bush's administration went to war in Iraq.

As a commander, he was credited with demonstrating how a counterinsurgency strategy could defeat militants in Iraq, demonstrating the promise of an approach that Gen. David H. Petraeus adopted to shift momentum in a war the United States was on the verge of losing.

Stocky, smart and soft-spoken with a sense of humor, General McMaster, for all his war-making experience, has little background in navigating Washington politics, which could be a challenge for him in his new role with a fractious national security team to corral.

His task now will be to take over a rattled and demoralized National Security Council apparatus that bristled at Mr.

Flynn's leadership and remains uncertain about its place in the White House given the foreign policy interests of Stephen K. Bannon, the former Breitbart News chairman who is the president's chief strategist.

Meeting with Generals at Mar-a-Lago in Florida. Very interesting!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) Feb. 20, 2017

Most of the National Security Council staff is composed of career professionals, often on loan from military or civilian agencies, and they have complained privately about being shut out of their areas of expertise and kept in the dark about important decisions. Mr. Trump's aides look on many of those holdovers from the last administration with suspicion, blaming them for leaks. The atmosphere has grown so toxic that some council staff members have said they feared they were being surveilled.

Several security council aides said Monday that they learned about General McMaster's selection the same way the public did and expressed concern that Mr. Flynn's associates, derisively called the Flynnstones, would stick around. But General McMaster has the advantage of having served in Iraq with some officials currently on the staff, including aides like Derek Harvey and Joel Rayburn.

Mr. Trump said Keith Kellogg, another retired lieutenant general, would remain as the council's chief of staff. Mr. Kellogg has been acting national security adviser since Mr. Flynn's resignation a week ago and was one of the four candidates interviewed by Mr. Trump on Sunday for the permanent job. Mr.

Trump made no mention of K. T. McFarland, the top deputy national security adviser, and whether she would stay.

General McMaster thanked Mr. Trump but gave no insight into his plans. "I'm grateful to you for that opportunity," he told the president, "and I look forward to joining the national security team and doing everything that I can to advance and protect the interests of the American people."

The other finalist was John R. Bolton, a former ambassador to the United Nations under Mr. Bush. This was the second time Mr. Bolton, an outspoken conservative, had been considered for a high-level post in Mr. Trump's administration. Mr. Trump praised Mr. Bolton on Monday and said he would find a position for him.

"We had some really good meetings with him. Knows a lot," the president said. "He had a good number of ideas that I must tell you I agree very much with. So we'll be talking with John Bolton in a different capacity."

General McMaster has served as director of the Army Capabilities Integration Center at Fort Eustis in Virginia since 2014. A West Point graduate with a doctorate in military history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he commanded a unit that clashed with Iraq's Republican Guard in one of the biggest tank battles of the Persian Gulf war in 1991, earning him the Silver Star.

But he came to prominence with his 1997 book, "Dereliction of Duty," which critiqued the Joint Chiefs for not standing up to President Lyndon B. Johnson during the Vietnam War. He cemented his reputation in 2005

during the second Iraq war when he led the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment in regaining control of Tal Afar.

The operation was cited as a textbook example in a manual on counterinsurgency doctrine prepared by General Petraeus. Another commander who had a role in drafting that manual was Mr. Mattis, then a Marine general. General Petraeus took a similar approach when he assumed command in Iraq in 2007 with a surge of troops authorized by Mr. Bush.

Yet General McMaster was passed over for the rank of general until General Petraeus and Robert M. Gates, then the defense secretary, rallied support for him.

One protégé from that time was Mr. Cotton, who nearly resigned from the Army in 2007 when it looked as though General McMaster might be forced out.

After Mr. Flynn's resignation, Mr. Cotton reached out to Mr. Pence, Mr. Bannon and Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff, about General McMaster and forwarded his résumé and personal phone number, according to several officials involved in the process. Another advocate for the general was Chris Brose, the staff director of the Senate Armed Services Committee, whose chairman is Mr. McCain.

Mr. McCain, who has been sharply critical of Mr. Trump in recent days, praised the appointment and said, "I could not imagine a better, more capable national security team than the one we have right now."



McMaster Named as Trump's National Security Adviser (UNE)

Carol E. Lee in West Palm Beach, Fla., and Paul Sonne in Washington

Updated Feb. 20, 2017 7:48 p.m. ET

President Donald Trump chose an active-duty Army general as his new national security adviser on Monday, bringing one of the U.S. military's best-known strategists into the White House and adding to his team another warrior-scholar in the mold of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, whom Mr. Trump called "a man of tremendous talent and tremendous experience," accepted the post, making him the first active-duty U.S. military officer to take the job since Colin Powell

and John Poindexter held it under President Ronald Reagan.

"He is highly respected by everyone in the military, and we're very honored to have him," Mr. Trump said, with Gen. McMaster and acting National Security Adviser Keith Kellogg by his side.

Mr. Trump said Mr. Kellogg, a retired three-star Army general who was under consideration for the top job, would resume his role as chief of staff to the National Security Council. He made the announcement from his Mar-a-Lago home in Florida, where he interviewed at least four candidates for the job over the weekend, including Gen. McMaster and Mr. Kellogg.

- In Policy Dissent, Jim Mattis Wields Influence

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis appears to be at odds with President Trump on Russia and other key issues, setting up potential discord but also helping to nudge the White House toward more conventional policy stances.

[Click to Read Story](#)

- In Policy Dissent, Jim Mattis Wields Influence

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis appears to be at odds with President Trump on Russia and other key issues, setting up potential discord but also helping to nudge the White House toward more conventional policy stances.

[Click to Read Story](#)

- In Policy Dissent, Jim Mattis Wields Influence

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis appears to be at odds with President Trump on Russia and other key issues, setting up potential discord but also helping to nudge the White House toward more conventional policy stances.

[Click to Read Story](#)

- Pundit Brings Controversial Jihadist Theory to White House

Terrorism researcher and conservative pundit Sebastian Gorka was one of a handful of advisers who reviewed President Donald Trump's travel ban, and has gone on to become one of its most passionate defenders.

Click to Read Story

- Pundit Brings Controversial Jihadist Theory to White House

Terrorism researcher and conservative pundit Sebastian Gorka was one of a handful of advisers who reviewed President Donald Trump's travel ban, and has gone on to become one of its most passionate defenders.

Click to Read Story

- Pundit Brings Controversial Jihadist Theory to White House

Terrorism researcher and conservative pundit Sebastian Gorka was one of a handful of advisers who reviewed President Donald Trump's travel ban, and has gone on to become one of its most passionate defenders.

Click to Read Story

- Advertisement
- Advertisement
- Advertisement
- Trump Lashes Out at Sweden Over Immigration

President Donald Trump criticized Sweden's immigration policies after walking back his suggestion at the weekend that a major incident had recently occurred there.

Click to Read Story

- Trump Lashes Out at Sweden Over Immigration

President Donald Trump criticized Sweden's immigration policies after walking back his suggestion at the weekend that a major incident had recently occurred there.

Click to Read Story

- Trump Lashes Out at Sweden Over Immigration

President Donald Trump criticized Sweden's immigration policies after walking back his suggestion at the weekend that a major incident had recently occurred there.

Click to Read Story

- Vice President Mike Pence Vows U.S. Support for European Union

Vice President Mike Pence sought to reassure anxious European leaders, pledging stepped-up cooperation on terror, the economy and said the U.S. would continue to hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine.

Click to Read Story

- Vice President Mike Pence Vows U.S. Support for European Union

Vice President Mike Pence sought to reassure anxious European leaders, pledging stepped-up cooperation on terror, the economy and said the U.S. would continue to hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine.

Click to Read Story

- Vice President Mike Pence Vows U.S. Support for European Union

Vice President Mike Pence sought to reassure anxious European leaders, pledging stepped-up cooperation on terror, the economy and said the U.S. would continue to hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine.

Click to Read Story

- Vice President Mike Pence Vows U.S. Support for European Union

Vice President Mike Pence sought to reassure anxious European leaders, pledging stepped-up cooperation on terror, the economy and said the U.S. would continue to hold Russia accountable for its actions in Ukraine.

Click to Read Story

- Amid Trump Controversies, Tax Overhaul's Uncertain Path

Almost lost in the multiple recent Trump White House controversies, Gerald F. Seib writes, is the uncertainty hanging over the one matter that many Republicans would put atop their priority list: a big tax cut.

Click to Read Story

- Amid Trump Controversies, Tax Overhaul's Uncertain Path

Almost lost in the multiple recent Trump White House controversies, Gerald F. Seib writes, is the uncertainty hanging over the one matter that many Republicans would put atop their priority list: a big tax cut.

Click to Read Story

- Amid Trump Controversies, Tax Overhaul's Uncertain Path

Almost lost in the multiple recent Trump White House controversies, Gerald F. Seib writes, is the uncertainty hanging over the one matter that many Republicans

would put atop their priority list: a big tax cut.

Click to Read Story

- Amid Trump Controversies, Tax Overhaul's Uncertain Path

Almost lost in the multiple recent Trump White House controversies, Gerald F. Seib writes, is the uncertainty hanging over the one matter that many Republicans would put atop their priority list: a big tax cut.

Click to Read Story

- Advertisement
- Advertisement

TRUMP'S FIRST 100 DAYS

The decision fills a top White House position one week after Mr. Trump asked his first national security adviser, Mike Flynn, to resign for misleading Vice President Mike Pence about the nature of his conversations with Russia's ambassador to the U.S. Mr. Trump said Mr. Pence had a hand in choosing Gen. McMaster. Mr. Flynn hasn't commented on his departure since his Feb. 13 resignation letter, in which he said he inadvertently gave colleagues "incomplete" information.

Gen. McMaster steps in to lead a National Security Council that has largely been in disarray, with many career staffers uncertain about their roles and concerned about a lack of input into the policy-making process on a host of issues, according to administration officials.

The anxiety was stoked in recent days after an NSC staffer who was brought in by the Trump administration was dismissed after he criticized Mr. Trump in a private discussion at a Washington, D.C., think tank. White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said Sunday anyone who doesn't support Mr. Trump's agenda "shouldn't be part of the administration."

Gen. McMaster also is taking the job at a time when several high-stakes foreign-policy challenges are under review by the new administration, including North Korea, Russia, Syria and Iran. And the move comes amid a cloud of questions about ties between Russia and people close to Mr. Trump, which were fueled by Mr. Flynn's departure.

Mr. Trump's decision ends a search that raised questions about how much autonomy the new national security adviser would have. Some prospective candidates expressed

concerns about how much control they could exert over staffing decisions and NSC processes.

Those concerns in part prompted retired Vice Adm. Bob Harward's decision to drop out of contention, according to people familiar with the decision, as well as retired Gen. David Petraeus, though White House officials have suggested the former director of Central Intelligence Agency wasn't seriously under consideration.

The White House tried to quell that narrative on Sunday, with Ms. Sanders insisting the new national security adviser will have "full authority" to make decisions on staffing.

"I look forward to joining the national security team and doing everything that I can to advance and protect the interests of the American people," Gen. McMaster said. Mr. Kellogg called Gen. McMaster "a great statesman."

"This is a great team," Mr. Trump said. Others Mr. Trump interviewed for the job included former United Nations Ambassador John Bolton and U.S. Military Academy superintendent Lt. Gen. Robert Caslen.

Mr. Trump suggested he is considering Mr. Bolton for a different role in his administration, though he didn't elaborate.

The choice of Gen. McMaster drew praise in Washington, where he is well known. Rep. Mac Thornberry, the Texas Republican who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, called him "tremendously respected and admired as someone who is willing to look at things afresh and make changes where needed."

Sen. John McCain (R., Ariz.), the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, said: "I could not imagine a better, more capable national security team than the one we have right now."

Gen. McMaster is director of the Army Capabilities Integration Center at Fort Eustis, Va., a part of the Army's extensive training and doctrine command in charge of helping prepare for future warfare.

A military strategist with extensive battle experience, Gen. McMaster, 54 years old, is a decorated officer with leadership experience in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is a 1984 graduate of West Point, where he played rugby.

During the 1991 Gulf War, he gained renown as a captain commanding a tank troop in the Battle of 73 Easting. He was

awarded the Silver Star, and the battle is featured in several books about Operation Desert Storm—including Tom Clancy's "Armored Cav."

Like Mr. Mattis, Gen. McMaster has been a harsh critic of instances when the U.S. military has taken action at the behest of civilian leaders without properly developed strategies, clear goals and detailed exit plans.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

COMMENTS

President Trump likes government by billionaires and generals, and on Monday he chose another one as his National Security Adviser in Army Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster. This could be an inspired choice if Mr. Trump heeds his counsel and White House politicians don't interfere.

The three-star general certainly won't be intimidated by the bright lights of the White House. He made his early reputation as a tank commander during the Gulf War when his badly outnumbered unit cut apart Saddam's armor like target practice. In the Iraq war he adapted to the al Qaeda terror campaign in the city of Tal Afar with counterinsurgency tactics that sought to win over the local population. His methods inspired the strategy that in 2007 would become the "surge" that staved off U.S. defeat in Iraq.



President Donald Trump on Monday named Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster as his national security advisor, a seasoned military officer known for his combat leadership in two wars in Iraq, proven counterinsurgency savvy, and a hefty intellect. But while Trump's choice won universal praise in Washington, it remains unclear whether the president will grant the Army general the authority and access he needs to bring order and discipline to a chaotic White House run by political operatives.

McMaster, whose Ph.D. dissertation-turned-book in 1997 about the Vietnam War won accolades, has gained a reputation for bucking conventional wisdom as an officer in Iraq, and former colleagues say he has never shied away from speaking his mind or telling his superiors what they don't want to hear. His award-winning book, *Dereliction of Duty*, indicted

His 1997 treatise "Dereliction of Duty," known as a seminal work across the U.S. military, looks at how the failure of uniformed leadership to stand up to civilian decision makers helped Lyndon B. Johnson and his advisers lead the country deeper into a quagmire without a proper strategy in Vietnam.

Gen. McMaster is also well known for his command of the 3rd Armored

Cavalry Regiment in the city of Tal Afar when he was colonel during the early years of the Iraq war.

His regiment worked with Iraqi forces in 2005 to take control of the insurgency in the city, leading President George W. Bush to later hold up the achievements in Tal Afar as an example of what the U.S. military should be trying to achieve.

Later, Gen. McMaster took on another high-profile assignment, this time in Afghanistan, leading a task force to investigate and combat corruption in Afghanistan.

— Tom Burton and Julian E. Barnes contributed to this article.

Editorial : A Military Strategist for Trump's NSC

Feb. 20, 2017
6:50 p.m. ET 113

As for political warfare, his 1997 book "Dereliction of Duty" criticizes the high-ranking officers of the Vietnam era for not doing enough to challenge Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and LBJ. If Mr. Trump wants a yes-man who'll merely salute White House aide Stephen Bannon, he has picked the wrong general. Lt. Gen. McMaster also has extensive experience at Central Command, which conducts operations in the Middle East, and a 20-month deployment in Afghanistan.

One question for Lt. Gen. McMaster, like all generals, is whether he can step out of his military background to become a foreign-policy strategist. With former Marine General Jim Mattis at Defense and retired Army General John Kelly at Homeland Security, the Trump security team is top-heavy with distinguished Pentagon brass.

But someone—and we don't mean Mr. Bannon—has to plot and steer a

strategy for reclaiming U.S. influence as China, Russia and Iran press to drive the U.S. out of what they consider to be their spheres of influence in Asia, Europe and the Middle East. This means turning Mr. Trump's "America First" instincts into policies that don't merely mimic President Obama's strategic retreat.

Another challenge for Lt. Gen. McMaster is to use the government's intelligence community without letting it run policy. In our experience former generals aren't as skeptical of the intelligence "consensus" as they sometimes should be. Think of the Obama-era CIA's failure to anticipate Vladimir Putin's conquest of Crimea or his military moves into Syria. The general could work with the next director of national intelligence, former Senator Dan Coats, to streamline the DNI into a lean staff of analysts who make sure that consensus doesn't become a default for status-quo CIA or FBI thinking.

Above all Lt. Gen. McMaster will have to impose order and confidence in the NSC decision-making process. This means making sure that all relevant parties are heard in deputy meetings, that internal disputes are driven to a decision, and that the agencies then follow up and execute the decision. Condoleezza Rice's great mistake at the NSC in George W. Bush's first term was failing to settle the many Pentagon vs. State Department fights over Iraq.

Last week's resignation of Michael Flynn and the botched immigration order have created a perception of White House disarray. The choice of H.R. McMaster is an opportunity to build a better, more coherent national-security team. Mr. Trump is going to need it.

From 'Dereliction of Duty' to Trump's White House

Dan De Luce

the timidity of senior U.S. military leaders who failed to push back against the White House's political agenda during the early years of Vietnam, sowing the seeds for defeat.

McMaster is also revered for battlefield exploits during both Iraq wars — the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 Iraq invasion — especially his textbook campaign against al Qaeda in the northern Iraqi city of Tal Afar in 2005. With ideological firebrands in the White House with no battlefield experience in the Middle East, McMaster could serve as a counterpoint and a voice of experience in policy debates, experts and former officials said.

But McMaster enters an administration led by a president with a predilection for improvisation and who relies heavily on Stephen Bannon and other political aides that counseled him during his electoral campaign, making it

uncertain that the laureled general's strategic nous will be heard.

Trump announced the decision from his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida after his previous choice, retired Vice Adm. Robert Harward, turned down the job when he was told he could not pick his own team at the National Security Council.

Unlike Harward and other candidates for the job, McMaster is — and will remain — an active duty member of the military, and by custom and tradition does not have the option of rebuffing the commander in chief or imposing conditions before accepting the job.

"You're wearing the uniform of the nation, and when the president asks you to do something, the answer is, 'Yes, Mr. President,'" said Peter Mansoor, a close friend of McMaster's and retired Army colonel who served with him in Iraq. "My guess is being a serving military officer, he probably entered the job without preconditions."

The White House insisted the general would have the leeway needed to recruit his own team. The president "gave full authority for McMaster to hire whatever staff he sees fit," White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said.

Trump's insistence on maintaining former Fox News analyst K.T. McFarland as deputy national security advisor was a big reason Harward bowed out.

McMaster's noted book takes the military's top brass to task for deferring to the White House in the early 1960s and failing to provide their honest opinion of — or even substantially shape — a doomed war strategy. In the book, which McMaster wrote when he was a major, he refers to the chiefs of the armed services disdainfully as the "five silent men."

In his new job, McMaster could face his own test of leadership and conscience as the Trump

administration weighs its approach to the war against Islamic State. The president has promised to lift restraints on the military and to deliver a swift and decisive victory against the extremists, who are already on the retreat in Iraq. But McMaster is well-versed in the complexities and pitfalls of the region's sectarian and ethnic politics, and learned first-hand how Islamist extremists took root in Iraq.

When he led the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in the desert of northwestern Iraq in 2005, he arranged basic Arabic language instruction for many of his soldiers beforehand and assigned them before and after on Arab and Iraqi history.

And when McMaster had arrived at what he thought was a winning plan to take back the northern town of Tal Afar from al Qaeda in Iraq, the then-colonel concluded he needed additional troops to succeed. That idea was opposed by his commander, so he went over his superior's head and won approval



Trump taps Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster as his new national security adviser (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/greg.jaffe.5>

President Trump on Monday named Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster as his new national security adviser, replacing the ousted Michael Flynn — a move meant to help put the White House on firmer footing after missteps on multiple fronts.

Trump called McMaster “a man of tremendous talent and tremendous experience” while briefly introducing him to reporters at the president's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida before returning to Washington.

In tapping McMaster, Trump turned to a widely respected and fiercely outspoken military strategist who was recognized for his battlefield leadership during both the Persian Gulf War and the Iraq War.

But unlike many officers, McMaster has spent virtually no time at the Pentagon or in Washington, which could prove a challenge in his new role.

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Keith Kellogg, who has been serving as acting national security adviser, will return to his role as the National Security Council chief of staff.

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)

for his plan from more senior officers in Baghdad.

His plan worked and became a model for counterinsurgency tactics in Iraq. He went to help the then-commander of American forces in Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, reshape the Iraq campaign to enable U.S. forces to salvage a war effort that at the time was on the brink of failure.

His actions in Iraq and elsewhere put him at odds with some of the more conservative generals who ran the Army, and McMaster was twice passed over for promotion to brigadier general in 2006 and 2007. With one of the most innovative officers in the Army facing a forced retirement, Petraeus returned from Iraq to take over the promotion board, and made sure that the controversial colonel pinned on his first star in 2008.

In 2010, McMaster was sent to Afghanistan to head a task force given the thankless job of helping reform the Afghan military and stamping out corruption in its ranks.

(Peter Stevenson/The Washington Post)

“I think that combination is something very, very special,” Trump said, later adding: “What a team. This is a great team.”

Both men were among several candidates whom White House aides said Trump had planned to interview over the weekend to replace Flynn, a retired general and an early and vociferous Trump political supporter.

Flynn was asked to resign last week amid allegations that he discussed U.S. sanctions with a Russian official before Trump took office and then misrepresented the content of that conversation to Vice President Pence and other administration officials.

Trump's first choice of a replacement — retired Navy Vice Adm. Robert Harward — turned him down, compounding the embarrassment surrounding the episode.

[Trump notes new national security list 'in play' after first choice turns down offer]

Trump's bid to move forward with a replacement comes as his fledgling administration is seeking a reset on several fronts. The president has pledged to issue a new executive order this week replacing his court-frozen directive on immigration, which has come to symbolize his

struggle to translate ambitious campaign promises into policy.

The infamously crooked institution has made some progress since then, but it remains racked by graft, allegations of abuse of civilians, and indiscipline.

McMaster, unlike Trump's first pick, Army Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, has won broad applause. Sen. John McCain, who has accused the White House of presiding over a dysfunctional national security policy-making machine, promptly issued a statement hailing McMaster as “an outstanding choice.”

McCain and other lawmakers have also praised other picks to Trump's national security team, including Defense James Mattis, CIA Director Mike Pompeo and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly. But so far, their influence is a matter of debate.

Trump has continued to alarm foreign partners with his rhetoric questioning the value of long standing alliances like NATO, while his cabinet officers have labored to

many senior military officials say has gone unchecked, despite President Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Tehran.

McMaster “also brings a deep personal understanding of what it means to go to war, and be at war for a very long time,” said David Barno, a retired lieutenant general who knows him well.

The national security adviser, part of the senior White House staff, serves as the chief in-house counselor to the president on national security issues and has traditionally sought to play the role of a broker among agencies. The position does not require Senate confirmation.

Barno suggested that McMaster would distinguish himself at the White House in coordinating rather than dictating policy.

McMaster will assume the position at a time of widespread security challenges, including Russia's alleged meddling in last year's election and North Korea's ballistic missile test this month.

“I don't see H.R. as director of an orchestra; I see him as someone who is getting all the instruments to play together,” he said.

McMaster is widely known as smart, intense and fiercely outspoken, qualities that have won him wide praise among his fellow officers — and have sometimes grated on his superiors.

From his earliest moments as an officer, McMaster stood out among his peers. He earned a Silver Star for valor in the 1991 Gulf War when his armor company destroyed a much larger Iraqi formation in one of the opening battles. The Army's official history of the conflict opened with a vivid description of his tank crew in action that day.

A White House official said McMaster will not retire from the military but remain a three-star general, as Colin Powell did as Ronald Reagan's national security adviser.

Peter Feaver, a scholar on civil-military ties at Duke University, said he expected McMaster to take a skeptical view of Russia, seeing Moscow as a dubious partner and major potential threat to U.S. security. And Feaver said he expects a similar skepticism toward Iran, whose support for proxy groups across the Middle East

reassure nervous allies about the strength of U.S. commitments. And his executive order on a controversial travel ban affecting seven predominantly Muslim countries was reportedly drafted with little input from his cabinet.

The inexperienced and famously impulsive president has so far resisted embracing a centralized policy-making channel presided over by the National Security Council. And McMaster will face a daunting challenge to break through Trump's inner circle to forge a rapport with the president.

“The problem is there's another competing center of power in the White House,” Mansoor, now a professor of military history at Ohio State University, told FP.

But “if anyone can make it work, H.R.'s the man.”

In the Iraq War, McMaster commanded a 3,500-soldier brigade in the northern city of Tal Afar, which was being torn apart in 2005 by Iraq's civil war. He largely jettisoned the Bush administration's official strategy at the time of pulling back from cities and training Iraqi forces to take over the fight so U.S. troops could go home.

McMaster pushed his troops deep into Tal Afar, establishing 29 small American-manned command outposts. Instead of focusing on training the Iraqis, McMaster and his troops worked to stop the killing in the city and replace the local mayor and security forces.

"It's unclear to me how a higher degree of passivity would advance our mission," he said at the time in response to criticism.

Eventually his strategy, dubbed "clear, hold and build," became a model for the broader campaign, led by Gen. David H. Petraeus, to stabilize Iraq in 2007 and 2008.

McMaster's passion, intensity and high tolerance for risk sometimes put him at odds with his superiors. He was twice passed over for promotion to general before finally earning one-star rank. The panel that promoted

him was led by Petraeus, one of his staunchest backers in the Army.

In recent years McMaster oversaw an anti-corruption task force in Afghanistan for Petraeus that produced mixed results. Of late, he has focused on Army doctrine and modernization, relative backwaters within the service.

Trump also told reporters Monday that John Bolton, a former United Nations ambassador who had been considered for the national security adviser position, would be asked "to work with us in a somewhat different capacity."

"We had some really good meetings with him," Trump said. "Knows a lot."

In brief remarks, McMaster said it would be "a privilege" to continue to serve the nation. "I look forward to joining the national security team and doing everything that I can to advance and protect the interests of the American people," he said.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump "gave full authority for McMaster to hire whatever staff he sees fit."

As he introduced McMaster and Kellogg, Trump and his two

appointees sat on a couch at the Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla. The room was decorated with two massive chandeliers and dozens of roses in a large arrangement.

As the men spoke, classical music played. The event lasted roughly three minutes.

In response to a shouted question from a reporter about whether Pence played a role in the picks, Trump replied: "He did."

During a visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels on Monday, Pence made his first public comments about Flynn's ouster as national security adviser, saying he "fully supported" the move.

[Pence remains above the fray, but is he outside the inner circle?]

The vice president learned from a report in The Washington Post that Flynn had been captured on tape speaking to Russian Ambassador Sergei Kislyak about sanctions before Trump took office. The conversation happened the day the Obama administration announced measures against Russia to retaliate for what U.S. intelligence services say was the Kremlin's

efforts to influence November's presidential election.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

Please provide a valid email address.

Flynn told Pence that he had not spoken about sanctions with Kislyak, an assertion that Pence later repeated on television.

Trump's pick of McMaster drew praise Monday from several members of Congress, including Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who has not been shy about questioning other recent Trump moves.

McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called McMaster "an outstanding choice."

"I could not imagine a better, more capable national security team than the one we have right now," he said.

Jenna Johnson in Palm Beach, Fla., and Michael Birnbaum and Ashley Parker in Brussels contributed to this report.



Bergen : Trump's brilliant choice of McMaster

Peter Bergen,
CNN National

Security Analyst

(CNN)President Donald Trump's appointment of Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster to be his national security adviser is a brilliant decision.

McMaster, 54, is the smartest and most capable military officer of his generation, one who has not only led American victories on the battlefields of the 1991 Gulf War and of the Iraq War, but also holds a Ph.D. in history.

McMaster is, in short, both an accomplished doer and a deep thinker, a combination that should serve him well in the complex job of national security adviser.

McMaster's views

A key to McMaster's thinking is

his 1997 book,

"Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Lies that Led to Vietnam." Published two decades ago when McMaster was only a major, "Dereliction of Duty" caused something of a sensation in the US military because it took US military leaders to task for their dereliction of duty during the Vietnam War.

McMaster painted a devastating picture of the Joint Chiefs, who told President Lyndon Johnson what he wanted to hear about how the Vietnam War was going. He described how they went along with Johnson's ill-considered attempt to find a middle ground between withdrawing from Vietnam and fighting a conventional war there that — divorced from on-the-ground realities -- had no chance of success.

The Joint Chiefs never provided Johnson with useful military advice about what it might take to win the war, according to McMaster.

Instead, they accepted Johnson's preference for what the President termed "graduated pressure" against the North Vietnamese. This took the form of a gradually escalating bombing campaign that did not bend the North Vietnamese to American will, and instead confused activity — bombing raids and body counts -- with progress on the battlefield.

The major problem Johnson and his military advisers had, McMaster found, is that they went to war in Vietnam without a strategy. He explained: "The war in Vietnam was not lost in the field, nor was it lost on the front pages of The New York

Times or the college campuses. It was lost in Washington, D.C."

After Trump announced McMaster as his national security adviser, "Dereliction of Duty" became an instant

best-seller on Amazon

.

Its lessons will surely be weighing on McMaster's mind now, as Pentagon brass prepare to present to Trump and his national security team within a few days a menu of options for how to fight the war against ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Another key aspect of McMaster's thinking is that war -- as the Prussian military theorist Carl Von Clausewitz pointed out almost two centuries ago — is a fundamentally political endeavor. In an article that McMaster published in The New York Times four years ago he

wrote,

"Be skeptical of concepts that divorce war from its political nature, particularly those that promise fast, cheap victory through technology."

said that

was resulted from "fear, honor and interest."

McMaster believes that not much in the nature of war has changed since. However, in his view the United States has too often believed its technological superiority will prevail on the battlefield when, in fact, it is political and human factors that often blunt American power.

McMaster wrote in his Times article "... in the years preceding our last two wars, thinking about defense undervalued the human as well as the political aspects of war. Although combat operations unseated the Taliban and the Saddam Hussein regime, a poor understanding of the recent histories of the Afghan and Iraqi peoples undermined efforts to consolidate early battlefield gains into lasting security."

This is an important lesson to remember as the United States and its allies continue to increase pressure on ISIS. The Sunni militants that make up ISIS are not the underlying problem in Syria and Iraq, but rather they are a symptom of other deeper problems. McMaster knows that there surely will be a "son of ISIS" and a "grandson of ISIS" if there is not some kind of political solution to the wars in Syria and Iraq that produced ISIS in the first place.

McMaster at war

McMaster has fought in the key American wars of the past 2½ decades. He understands what it is to fight in a classic, state-on-state war, such as the 1991 Gulf War, in which the United States forced the army of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait in only 100 hours.

He has also fought in the messier counterinsurgency wars the United States is still fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan today and that have ground on for 14 and 16 years respectively, with no end in sight.

In the Gulf War then-Capt. McMaster led a US tank troop in the Battle of 73 Easting

on February 26 1991. McMaster's armored forces, acting as scouts, suddenly encountered a large force of the Iraqi army. In a 2014 interview with National Geographic Television, McMaster recalled, "I can see the enemy with the naked eye. I mean, they're at very close range."

In a battle that lasted only 23 minutes, McMaster's force destroyed an astonishing 28 Iraqi tanks, 16 personnel carriers and more than 30 trucks.

This battle is often studied by young US military officers as the exemplary case study of high intensity conventional combat.

The lesson that McMaster took away

from the Gulf War: "There are two ways to fight the United States military: asymmetrically and stupid. Asymmetrically

means you're going to try to avoid our strengths. In the 1991 Gulf War, it's like we called Saddam's army out into the schoolyard and beat up that army."

Almost a decade and a half later McMaster was back in the Middle East. This time he wasn't fighting the orderly tank regiments of Saddam Hussein's conventional army, but instead the guerrilla forces of al Qaeda in Iraq, which had taken over much of western Iraq and were proving to be a far harder nut to crack than Saddam's military.

Al Qaeda had also learned from the Gulf War and wasn't fighting "stupid;" it was fighting "asymmetrically" and not engaging the US military in a conventional war.

McMaster's innovation

In 2005 then-Col. McMaster led the first successful full-scale battle against al Qaeda in the western Iraqi city of Tal Afar, a city of a half-million people.

In his National Geographic interview, McMaster recalled that al Qaeda had turned Tal Afar into a living hell: "All the schools were closed because of violence, all the marketplaces were closed. There was no power. There was no water. The city was lifeless. People lived in abject fear."

McMaster established 29 small outposts in the city. His regiment lived among the Tal Afar population and partnered with tribal elders to offer protection against al Qaeda. The citizens began to trust the

Americans and provided them with intelligence on al Qaeda's movements. Within a few months al Qaeda had retreated from Tal Afar.

McMaster's approach was the exact opposite of the US strategy of the time, which was to hand over ever more control to the Iraqi army and withdraw the bulk of American soldiers to massive bases.

Instead of reducing the American footprint, McMaster pursued a strategy in Tal Afar of increasing the US military presence in an effort to tamp down the intensifying Iraqi civil war and undermine al Qaeda. McMaster also implemented classic "clear, hold and build" counterinsurgency operations.

McMaster's Tal Afar campaign is considered by many military experts to be the classic example of counterinsurgency tactics during the Iraq War.

His work there would also become a model for the George W. Bush administration's new military strategy in Iraq.

In October 2005, Bush's Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in congressional testimony

said

that, "Our political-military strategy has to be to clear, hold, and build: to clear areas from insurgent control, to hold them securely, and to build durable, national Iraqi institutions."

This approach would also soon be codified in the US military's new counterinsurgency manual, written by Gen. David Petraeus and Gen.

James Mattis, who is now the secretary of defense.

McMaster's lesson from the Iraq War: "We didn't adapt fast enough, largely because in the beginning of the war in Iraq we were in denial. We wouldn't even call it an insurgency. We wouldn't call it insurgency because it evoked the images of Vietnam."

Al Qaeda in Iraq would eventually morph into ISIS, which controls the city of Tal Afar today. McMaster knows this ground well, which will help him as the new plans are presented to the President in coming days about how to shape the final phase of the war against ISIS.

After Iraq, McMaster deployed to Afghanistan, where he was tasked by Petraeus to lead an anti-corruption task force.

Again, McMaster's on-the-ground expertise in Afghanistan will be very useful as President Trump considers his options there.

The Taliban now control or contest a third of the Afghan population. That's 10 million people; more than ISIS controlled at the height of its power in summer 2014, when it might have controlled 8 million people at most.

Whether with Afghanistan or the fight against ISIS, McMaster has his work cut out for him, but he is the best man for the job and credit should go to President Trump for making this inspired choice.

press as injurious to democracy and a block to conservative governance. When they watched that crazy press conference Thursday, they didn't share the media's alarm. They saw Trump fighting for survival, trying to break what they regard as the media's damaging monopoly on the truth. They're asking themselves, "Why doesn't the media let Donald get on with the job he was elected to do?"

Aside from hatred of the press, the other thing I've found that binds Trumpites together is a fear of decline. It's often noted

that Trump supporters are wealthier than the working-class they claim to speak for, but that's beside the point. These are concerned citizens who have a patriotic dislike of unemployment or Islamist terrorism. They voted for Trump because he promised to restore the nation's

press as injurious to democracy and a block to conservative governance. When they watched that crazy press conference Thursday, they didn't share the media's alarm. They saw Trump fighting for survival, trying to break what they regard as the media's damaging monopoly on the truth. They're asking themselves, "Why doesn't the media let Donald get on with the job he was elected to do?"

Stanley : Why Trump's supporters still love him

Timothy Stanley

(CNN)They still love him. On Saturday, Donald Trump addressed a rally in Florida that was as big and adulatory as any he'd seen during the campaign. He attacked the federal judges who challenged his travel ban order. He attacked the reporters who ask tough questions. "They have their own agenda and their agenda is not your agenda," he said. This crowd was "our people," he said.

And those people have lost none of their faith. Don't expect them to.

Their fidelity is impressive given the events of the last month. Trump has had to

accept the resignation

of his national security adviser, had his travel ban stymied, and ended last week with a

bizarre anti-press press conference

that, in the opinion of many journalists, was not only inappropriate but frightening.

But we journalists need to be reminded that not everyone is a journalist. Outside the media bubble, opinion of the media is colored by partisan prejudice and is often quite low. Trump has identified an enemy that, many conservatives believe, needs calling out.

Full disclosure: I did not go to the rally in Florida. But I have been to many, many Trump rallies, and as I've tried to score interviews with the audience, I've noticed that Trumpites have two things in common. One is a suspicion of journalists. They always want to know what outlet I represent and what questions I'm likely to ask. Once the interview is over, they usually say the same thing: "Why does the media hate Donald Trump so much?"

I reply that we're just doing our job - asking questions in the same way that we do of every politician. But there's no escaping that the media does have an institutional leaning.

My conservative politics are unusual within journalism. The average Trumpite would think I was a pinko. But the average editor probably thinks I'm to the right of

Chuck Norris.

And while that institutional liberalism is not universal -- after all, Fox and Breitbart are part of the media, too - and does not routinely translate into bias, the right-wing skepticism of our motives is understandable. If the media keeps politicians on their toes, political activists are at liberty to keep us on our toes, too.

In the last few years -- particularly since Sarah Palin -- confronting the press has become part of the right's program, like securing the border or cutting taxes. They see a liberal

greatness, by building a wall and locking jobs inside.

From this point-of-view, conservatives are keeping faith with Trump because Trump is keeping faith with them. His list of executive orders is a wish list for the right: reverse Obamacare's spiraling costs, start planning for a border wall, reduce regulations, etc. His

Supreme Court pick is a younger Antonin Scalia

. The whiteness, maleness and conservatism of his Cabinet proves he's not making any concessions to political correctness.

If Trump had done what so much of the media expected him to do and come into office promising unity, compassion and lollipops, it would've amounted to a betrayal of his base. What's striking -- almost impressive -- about Donald Trump is the consistency between candidate and president.

And here's the genius of his anti-media strategy: Even if he fails, it's not his fault. Trump and his base believe the conspiracy against them is enormous and almost unbeatable. By attacking the media as forcefully as Trump has, he has primed his supporters for defeat. That's why many will forgive the mistakes he has made in the past month. They'll regard them as inevitable. Donald, they'll say, is doing his best.

Donald Trump needs the media. Attacking the media is part of the reason he won. Hatred of the media is one of things that will rally his troops around him as he tries to do his job. Ironically, the media needs Trump, too. As the President has often said, he's great for ratings.

**The
Washington
Post**

For a Trump adviser, an odyssey from the fringes of Washington to the center of power (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/greg.jaff>
e.5

Deputy assistant to President Trump Sebastian Gorka is taking on an increasingly visible role in the White House. Deputy Assistant to President Trump Sebastian Gorka is taking on an increasingly visible role in the White House. (Video: Sarah Parnass/Photo: U.S. Army/The Washington Post)

(Sarah Parnass/The Washington Post)

On the night of President Trump's inauguration, Sebastian Gorka attended the celebratory balls in a high-necked, black Hungarian jacket. Pinned on his chest was a Hungarian coat of arms, a tribute to his father who had been tortured by the communists, and a civilian commendation from the U.S. military.

For years, Gorka had labored on the fringes of Washington and the far edge of acceptable debate as defined by the city's Republican and Democratic foreign policy elite. Today, the former national security editor for the conservative Breitbart News outlet occupies a senior job in the White House and his controversial ideas — especially about Islam — drive Trump's populist approach to counterterrorism and national security.

Amid the cheering, music and confetti that night, Gorka talked about Trump's opening shot in a high-stakes civilizational war, still in its early days.

Checkpoint newsletter

Military, defense and security at home and abroad.

Please provide a valid email address.

"Everything's changed," Gorka said.

He homed in on three words from Trump's dystopian inaugural

address that day: "Radical Islamic terrorism."

"When he used those three words today — radical Islamic terrorism — he put the marker down for the whole national security establishment," Gorka told an interviewer from Fox News.

For Gorka and his allies, the words are more than just a description of the enemy. They signal a radical break with the approach that Republicans and Democrats have taken over the past 16 years to counterterrorism and the Muslim world.

[Trump redefines the enemy and years of counterterrorism policy]

Only days after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, President George W. Bush insisted the terror strikes had "violated the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith."

"Islam is peace," he told a nation still reeling from grief.

President Barack Obama sounded the same theme routinely during two terms in office.

Gorka has relentlessly championed the opposite view.

For him, the terrorism problem has nothing to do with repression, alienation, torture, tribalism, poverty, or America's foreign policy blunders and a messy and complex Middle East.

"This is the famous approach that says it is all so nuanced and complicated," Gorka said in an interview. "This is what I completely jettison."

For him, the terror threat is rooted in Islam and "martial" parts of the Koran that he says predispose some Muslims to acts of terror.

"Anybody who downplays the role of religious ideology ... they are deleting reality to fit their own world," he said.

Gorka is a deputy assistant to the president. He reports to Stephen K.

Bannon, Trump's chief strategist, and is a member of his Strategic Initiatives Group. Bannon has spoken in similarly apocalyptic terms of a "new barbarity" that threatens the Christian West.

[Bannon film outline warned U.S. could turn into 'Islamic States of America']

Most counterterrorism experts dismiss Gorka's ideas as a dangerous oversimplification that could alienate Muslim allies and boost support for terrorist groups.

"He thinks the government and intelligence agencies don't know anything about radicalization, but the government knows a lot and thinks he's nuts," said Cindy Storer, a former CIA analyst who developed the agency models that trace the path from religious zealotry to violence.

Religious scholars are equally withering. "I can't overstate how profoundly dangerous this is," said Omid Safi, a professor of Middle Eastern studies at Duke University. "This is music to the ears of [the Islamic State]. This is what they seek."

Gorka has heard all of those criticisms before and fought against them — often ferociously. Last month, as he celebrated at the inaugural ball, those critics no longer seemed to matter. Trump's victory demonstrated to Gorka and his supporters that the common sense of the American people counted for far more than the opinions of experts in Washington and the cloistered world of academia. His side had won.

Before he wrapped up his inauguration night interview, Gorka said he had one last message for America's troops — "the guys inside the machine" — and its enemies. He turned toward the host, his medal glinting in the TV lights.

"The alpha males are back," he said.

'The Islamic laws of war'

Gorka's ideas about radical Islam began with his father's fight against the communists in his native Hungary and his deep Catholic faith.

The elder Gorka and a small group of Christian students in Budapest were sending secret, coded messages to London when he was captured by the communist regime, tortured and given a life sentence. In 1956, he escaped and fled to the United Kingdom, where Gorka was born and raised.

When al-Qaeda struck on Sept. 11, Gorka said, he immediately saw the event through the prism of his father's decades-old life-and-death struggle.

"Yes, it was jihadi terrorism ... but, more importantly, that event was linked to communism. It was linked to fascism," he said. "Why? Because al-Qaeda, ISIS, all of these groups are totalitarians — either you surrender to them or they will kill you."

His other insight, he said, was that the Washington foreign policy elite was too quick to discount the role of religion.

"Their worldview is fundamentally challenged by anybody who takes religion seriously, and you know what? I take religion seriously," Gorka said. "Because when you take seven minutes on a video to decapitate another human being by manually sawing off their head, that's the power that religion can have or a distortion of religion or whatever you want to call it. ... My father was tortured — tortured for weeks — by the communist secret police in Hungary. I didn't start decapitating people when I found out what happened to my father."

Gorka's core idea is that the United States should partner with a shortlist of Muslim allies — Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt — that he describes as "secular" or willing to separate Islam from the

running of the state. Together, they should fight the jihadist religious ideology in the same manner that America fought to discredit communism during the Cold War.

That insight, he said, led him to study Islam, starting with the faith's ancient texts. "There's a lot of misinformation out there," he said. "Would you take anybody's views on Christianity seriously if they hadn't read the New Testament? Of course you wouldn't. So I read the Koran."

Gorka's academic credentials, particularly on the subject of Islam, are thin. He went to college in London and spent three years as a reserve intelligence soldier in the British army, focused on the conflict in Northern Ireland. In the 1990s and early 2000s, he cycled through think tanks in Washington and Europe, dabbled in Hungarian politics and taught courses in counterterrorism at the George C. Marshall Center in Germany, which focuses on educating midcareer NATO and allied military officers.

He earned his doctorate from a Hungarian university in 2008 and a few months later landed a faculty job at the College of International Security Affairs (CISA), a new Pentagon-funded school that was still working toward accreditation.

There, he was a dynamic lecturer and an uneven scholar, said retired Col. Mike Bell, the school's chancellor.

Gorka does not speak Arabic and has never lived in a Muslim-majority country. His knowledge of Islam comes largely from reading English translations of Islamic texts and interacting with foreign officers who account for about two-thirds of the CISA student body and come largely from Muslim nations.

Sometimes, the Muslim students would object to his views of their religion. "I tell them very simply that I am not here to debate Islam," Gorka said. "Nobody has the right — even a Muslim — to talk for all Muslims." His goal, he said, was to understand how the enemy interpreted the faith.

In other instances, his fellow professors would challenge his contention that the Koran's violent passages are the primary driver of terrorism.

"There's crazy stuff in the Bible, too," said David Ucko, who taught alongside Gorka for three years at CISA.

[How a series of fringe anti-Muslim conspiracy theories went mainstream — via Donald Trump]

Gorka countered that the argument misrepresents Christianity, and he cited the Crusades, which are often invoked as a war against Islam. "The fact is that none of what happened in the Crusades can be justified by the message of Jesus Christ on the cross taking all of our sins upon himself," he said in an interview. "It's just not possible. . . . If a crusader killed a woman and child or a heathen, that cannot be theologically justified and therefore it's wrong and it's a sin."

Islam's martial passages and intermingling of faith and politics makes it different, Gorka said. "If you are pro-fundamentalist in interpretation," he said, "you have a lot of argumentation on your side."

Ucko said he quickly dropped the argument "for the sake of harmony."

Gorka's former supervisors pushed him to incorporate other perspectives on Islam and publish in peer-reviewed journals where his ideas would be challenged and perhaps tempered, Bell said.

But Gorka insisted that he wasn't interested in that kind of scholarship.

"What I care about is if somebody in the field is reading my article," he said. "I see myself as somebody who supports the bravest of the brave — the warfighter. Publish or be damned? I'll be damned, thank you very much."

Off campus, Gorka began meeting with conservative members of Congress and lectured regularly at the Army's Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C.

In 2014, Gorka left to take a teaching job at Marine Corps University that would give him more freedom and new influential connections. The school is part of the Defense Department, but Gorka was not hired as a government employee. His academic chair was funded by Thomas Saunders III, a major Republican Party donor and chairman of the conservative Heritage Foundation.

Saunders and Gorka were related by marriage, but Marine officials who oversaw the selection process said they were not aware of the tie. Saunders said he did not advocate for him.

Gorka began appearing regularly on Fox News and caught the eye of Bannon, who was then editor of Breitbart. Bannon offered him a job at the news outlet. A conservative publishing house signed him to a book contract.

[How Bannon's Navy service during the Iran hostage crisis shaped his views]

At Marine Corps University, enthusiastic officers eagerly packed Gorka's lectures, even as many faculty members took a dim view of his work.

"He made a difficult and complex situation simple and confirmed the officers' prejudices and assumptions," said retired Lt. Col. Mike Lewis, who served as an assistant professor and Special Operations chair at the school.

Said James Joyner, an associate professor: "The guy he was on Fox News is the guy he was here — bombastic and a showman."

A few complained that Gorka's TV appearances, which touted his ties to the school and bashed Obama, made it appear as though the government-funded school for Marine officers actively opposed the commander in chief. The school's vice president for academic affairs said he raised the matter with Gorka. But the controversy never spread much beyond the university's Quantico campus.

Shortly after the Islamic State burned alive a Jordanian pilot in 2015, Saunders invited Gorka to New York to do lectures on terrorism and Islam.

Saunders had made his fortune as a managing director at Morgan Stanley and founder of a successful private equity fund. He had done business all over the world. Like many Americans, he said his thoughts often turned to the Middle East and the threat of terrorism.

"What the hell is going on?" he said he often found himself thinking. What possible explanations could exist for the savage behavior he was seeing on television and online?

In Gorka, he had finally found someone with answers. One of Gorka's lectures took place at the Colony Club, an exclusive all-women's club on Park Avenue.

"Why do they behead us?" he recalled Gorka asking the standing-room-only crowd. "And why did they choose to burn alive this Jordanian pilot who had flown missions over Syria?"

Gorka explained that the answer could be found in the "Islamic laws of war," which, he said, ordered Muslims to behead infidels and prescribed an even worse punishment for apostates, who should "suffer as if they are already in hell."

When Gorka was finished, the "place could not stop talking about terrorism," Saunders said. "It was spellbinding. . . . This is a true scholar telling you what happened

and why. He is very detailed and very specific."

'The crucible of public policy'

For much of the past 16 years, Bush and Obama had played down Islam's role in fueling terrorism. Like many in Washington, they worried about provoking a backlash against Muslims or feeding the jihadists' clash-of-civilizations narrative.

"Islam is not part of the problem," Obama said in his seminal 2009 speech at Cairo University. "It is an important part of promoting peace."

[Islamic militant groups hail Trump's travel ban as a victory]

Such characterizations not only failed to describe the war being waged within Islam but they didn't match what people such as Saunders were seeing in blood-drenched news reports from the region and hearing on the campaign trail, especially from Republican candidates.

In speech after speech, Trump described the threat posed by radical Islamic terrorists in grisly terms: "Children slaughtered, girls sold into slavery, men and women burned alive, crucifixions, beheadings and drownings. Ethnic minorities targeted for mass execution. Holy sites desecrated," he said in a fiery 2016 address in Youngstown, Ohio. ". . . We cannot let this evil continue."

The solution, Trump said, was to mount a Cold War-style campaign that "would take on the ideology of radical Islam." He spoke of banning immigrants from terrorist hotbeds and imposing religious tests to weed out those who "believe that sharia law should supplant American law."

Many of the ideas in Trump's terrorism speeches had their origins in Gorka's work. Other elements traced back to Frank Gaffney Jr., a senior Reagan-era Pentagon official who founded the Center for Security Policy, a Washington-based think tank.

Gaffney has long been politically radioactive in Washington. He drew widespread condemnation for suggesting that Grover Norquist, a Republican anti-tax stalwart, had ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. In a much-derided piece in Breitbart, he suggested that the logo for the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency "bore a disconcerting resemblance to an amalgamation of the Obama campaign's logo and the symbols of Islam."

The Washington Times pulled his column and he was barred from speaking at the annual

Conservative Political Action Conference. "It has been my lot in life to be criticized and even punished ... for telling the truth," Gaffney said in a recent interview.

But outside Washington, Gaffney has amassed a considerable following that knows him through his speeches and "Secure Freedom" radio program. Both Gorka and his wife, Katharine, a counterterrorism analyst and a Trump political appointee in the Department of Homeland Security, have been regular guests on the show.

Dire warnings from the likes of Gaffney, Gorka and many others seem to have had an effect on Americans' view of Muslims. In the first years after the 9/11 attacks, about 25 percent of Republicans said they had an unfavorable view of Muslims, according to soon-to-be-published research by Charles Kurzman, a professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Since 2012, the percentage of Republicans with negative views has been consistently more than 50 percent.

"Part of the reason for the increase is this campaign on the part of people like Gorka and Gaffney to inflate the terror threat," Kurzman said. "It's troubling."

Gaffney is still too controversial to land a job in the administration, but for the first time in nearly three decades, he has allies in the White House and real hopes, he said, that his ideas will finally be "tested in the crucible of public policy."

Chief among those allies is Gorka.

Few in Washington noticed when Gorka began

advising Trump and his ideas began showing up in the candidate's speeches. Despite a best-selling book and numerous Fox News appearances, he existed outside the orbit of established national security experts.

'A new sheriff in town'

Just three days after Trump's election, Gorka addressed a cheering room of people who had helped pave his way to the halls of power. The audience consisted mostly of retirees who had gathered at the Breakers hotel in Palm Beach, Fla.

They were Gorka's admirers: regular people, deeply afraid of terrorism and eager to listen to a man whose frightening insights would soon be receiving a hearing at the highest levels of the U.S. government.

"I'm accused by many people of being the most serious man on television," Gorka said in his plummy British accent. "Today, it might be a little different. I am in a different mood. Today, I am going to start with something a tad naughty."

He moved through the crowd of people who had paid up to \$1,500 to hear him speak. "We are happy, right? We are happy," he said.

There were nods and quiet applause as Gorka fished around in the pocket of his yellow blazer, searching for his remote.

"I am going to show a picture I am not meant to show usually," he said.

He paused to draw out the suspense before pressing the remote's button.

Up popped a photograph of a dead, bloodied brown-skinned man, lying on the ground next to an AK-47 assault rifle. The audience began to cheer — first hesitantly and then with gusto. Gorka's booming voice filled the room.

"We can win now," he thundered. "We can win!"

Gorka's former colleagues view his ascent with a mixture of surprise and alarm.

"It's quite staggering," said Ucko, Gorka's former teaching colleague. "If you are a fan, you are enthralled. If not, it's crazy to think we live in a time when he's wandering the halls of the West Wing and advising the president. It is surreal."

At the Pentagon and the State Department, senior officials scrambled to figure out who he was and what his populist foreign policy views might mean for America's approach to the Muslim world and counterterrorism.

A few changes seem possible. Trump could boost support to strongmen such as Egypt's Abdel Fatah al-Sissi, whom the president has hailed as a stalwart ally in the war against radical Islam. Gorka has described Sissi, criticized by human rights groups for his assault on political opponents, in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, as "enlightened" and a "reformer."

Trump could designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization — a move that Gorka and his wife have long advocated. Such a designation would put the United States in direct conflict with the Middle East's largest Islamist

movement and its millions of followers.

[How an obscure U.S. policy effort could hurt American Muslims]

Gorka's high-profile role in the administration's earliest days suggests that Trump's populist foreign policy instincts, at least for the moment, are ascendant.

In the first hours after the troubled rollout of the president's executive order on immigration and refugees, the White House dispatched Gorka to defend the move on Fox News. Within days, he was everywhere — and loving it.

"There's a new sheriff in town and his name is Donald Trump," he told CNN anchor Jake Tapper.

On the BBC, he blasted the media for its "absolutely fallacious" coverage.

On NPR, he insisted that even Iraqis were "thankful" for Trump's order, which banned them from entering the United States.

Then he disparaged the thousands of protesters demonstrating at airports as the "chattering classes ... people totally disconnected from the reality of November 8."

"I find it quite amusing, sadly so," he said.

The NPR host thanked him for his time.

"It's been a delight," Gorka replied, his voice brightening.

Julie Tate contributed to this report.

The
Washington
Post

Trump to roll back Obama's climate, water rules through executive action

<https://www.facebook.com/steven.mufson>

President Trump is preparing executive orders aimed at curtailing Obama-era policies on climate and water pollution, according to individuals briefed on the measures.

While both directives will take time to implement, they will send an unmistakable signal that the new administration is determined to promote fossil-fuel production and economic activity even when those activities collide with some environmental safeguards. Individuals familiar with the proposals asked for anonymity to describe them in advance of their announcement, which could come as soon as this week.

One executive order — which the Trump administration will couch as reducing U.S. dependence on other countries for energy — will instruct the Environmental Protection Agency to begin rewriting the 2015 regulation that limits greenhouse-gas emissions from existing electric utilities. It also instructs the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to lift a moratorium on federal coal leasing.

[Scott Pruitt, longtime adversary of EPA, confirmed to lead the agency]

A second order will instruct the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to revamp a 2015 rule, known as the Waters of the United States rule, that applies to 60 percent of the water bodies in the country. That regulation was issued under the

1972 Clean Water Act, which gives the federal government authority over not only major water bodies but also the wetlands, rivers and streams that feed into them. It affects development as well as some farming operations on the grounds that these activities could pollute the smaller or intermittent bodies of water that flow into major ones.

President Obama has used his authority under the 1906 Antiquities Act to create national monuments 34 times, more than any other president. With an incoming Trump administration vocally opposed to Obama's executive actions on many issues, will those monuments continue to stand? The Post's Juliet Eilperin explains. With an incoming Trump administration vocally opposed to Obama's executive

actions on many issues, will those monuments continue to stand? (Daron Taylor/The Washington Post)

President Obama has used his authority under the 1906 Antiquities Act to create national monuments 34 times, more than any other president. With an incoming Trump administration vocally opposed to Obama's executive actions on many issues, will those monuments continue to stand? The Post's Juliet Eilperin explains. (Daron Taylor/The Washington Post)

Trump has joined many industry groups in criticizing these rules as examples of the federal government exceeding its authority and curbing economic growth. While any move to undo these policies will spark new legal battles and entail work

within the agencies that could take as long as a year and a half to finalize, the orders could affect investment decisions within the utility, mining, agriculture and real estate sectors, as well as activities on the ground.

Trump, who signed legislation last week that nullified a recent regulation prohibiting surface-mining operations from dumping waste in nearby waterways, said he was eager to support coal miners who had backed his presidential bid. "The miners are a big deal," he said Thursday. "I've had support from some of these folks right from the very beginning, and I won't forget it."

[Barack Obama's evolution on climate change]

Bloomberg reported several elements of the executive orders Friday.

The greenhouse-gas limits on existing power plants, dubbed the Clean Power Plan, represented a central component of President Barack Obama's climate agenda. The regulations, which were put on hold by the Supreme Court and are being weighed by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, direct every state to form detailed plans to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from such sources as coal-fired power plants, enough to decrease carbon pollution by about

one-third by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

Trump repeatedly criticized these and other rules aimed at reducing fossil-fuel use as an attack on the U.S. coal industry. Myron Ebell, a senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute who served on Trump's EPA transition team, said the president "is fulfilling his campaign promise" by directing key agencies to shift course. Ebell warned, however, that undoing these rules "will take time. It could take days, months and years."

[A call to 'modernize' a coal leasing program that's cost taxpayers billions]

One measure — lifting the moratorium on federal coal leasing — could take immediate effect. That freeze has been in effect since December 2015, and last month the Interior Department proposed major changes to a program that guides coal exploration and production across 570 million publicly owned acres.

Days before Obama left office, the Interior Department issued a report saying the federal government should explore options that include charging a higher royalty rate to companies, factoring in the climate impact of the coal being burned through an additional charge to firms and setting an overall carbon budget for the nation's coal leasing

permits. But the new administration has expressed little interest in pursuing these policies and appears to be opening up the option of coal leasing again without any preconditions.

Energy and Environment newsletter

The science and policy of environmental issues.

Please provide a valid email address.

The House has already passed legislation that would eliminate a BLM rule curbing the release of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from oil and gas operations on federal land. The resolution, which needs Senate and presidential approval to take effect, uses the 1996 Congressional Review Act to reverse one of the final rules the Obama administration issued. While Trump administration officials have discussed whether to address methane regulation in the upcoming executive order, it may not be included in light of Congress's recent action.

Separately, Trump and his deputies are reopening a question of water policy that has bedeviled government officials from both parties for two decades. Two Supreme Court decisions that came down during the George W. Bush administration, in 2001 and 2006, spurred uncertainty over exactly which bodies of water fall under the

federal government's jurisdiction. The Bush administration worked on drafting regulations to address the issue, but once Obama took office the EPA began rewriting them. The current rule gives the federal government wide latitude to protect smaller tributaries as well as some, such as wetlands, that may be dry periodically, on the grounds that they still need to be preserved as critical water supplies.

But groups such as the American Farm Bureau Federation argue that the new restrictions could require farmers to pay significant fees to gain federal permission for filling in areas on their property and could halt some operations altogether.

Hunter and angler groups, however, have expressed concern about any rollback of the rule, which they say will preserve wetlands and other habitat that is crucial for outdoor recreation.

"If they have a better way to do it, we're all for it," said Whit Fosburgh, president of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. "But we want to make sure the wetlands and streams covered in the Obama rule can be covered in whatever they develop as a replacement. That's our bottom line."



Editorial : Anyone home in Trumpville

IN NORMAL times, the State Department holds a daily briefing, like the White House, to respond to urgent developments around the globe. But there hasn't been one in weeks. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is now on his first trip abroad, but no permanent deputy has been nominated. Hard-working government officials are holding down posts in an acting capacity, but hundreds of vital sub-Cabinet appointments have not been made. President Trump boasts of a "fine-tuned machine," but his government halls are more echo than beehive.

The president is correct that his Cabinet nominees have run into flak from Democrats in the Senate; nine of 15 department secretaries have been confirmed. The situation is much worse when you include those below Cabinet level. Of 549 key

appointments, the White House has yet to name 515, according to a tracker by The Post and Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. Only 14 have been confirmed, and 20 are waiting. These key positions are among the roughly 1,200 total that require Senate confirmation and about 4,100 overall that the new administration must fill.

The incoming Trump team wasted no time in forcing Obama appointees overseas to hurry home and vacate their positions by Inauguration Day, but the new administration has moved with far less speed to find replacements. The only three ambassadors nominated so far are to China, Israel and the United Kingdom. Not a single assistant secretary of state has been named, much less confirmed.

National News Alerts

Major national and political news as it breaks.

Please provide a valid email address.

The business of finding good people and steering them through the labyrinth of approval and security clearance is complex and difficult. But it also seems that the White House chaos is taking a toll. One can only imagine Mr. Tillerson's frustration when his choice for deputy secretary of state, Elliott Abrams, was torpedoed by Mr. Trump because of an op-ed Mr. Abrams had written earlier. The New York Times reports that a top aide to Ben Carson, nominated to be housing and urban development secretary, was fired and escorted out of the department Feb. 15 after writings critical of Mr. Trump turned up in his vetting. The National Security Council, the nerve center for foreign and defense policy, lost

its first Trump-appointed chief, Michael Flynn, after less than four weeks on the job, and when the position was offered to a retired vice admiral, Robert Harward, he reportedly turned it down in part because of the unpredictable behavior of the president. On Monday, Army Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster was named to the post. Congressional Republicans, who have the legislative majority, are saying they are having difficulty finding someone to ask about priorities for the Trump administration.

Mr. Trump's calling card to be an effective president was his business experience, that he built skyscrapers. If he is to succeed in building government, he ought to pay extra attention to the high vacancy rate in Trumpville.



Gerson : The terrible consequences of abandoning American exceptionalism

Michael Gerson

"Well, I preach the Church Without Christ," says a vivid Flannery O'Connor character named Hazel Motes. "I'm member and preacher to that church where the blind don't see and the lame don't walk and what's dead stays that way."

At the heart of President Trump's public rhetoric is a similar emptiness. He is a president who preaches America without exceptionalism. He is the leader of the free world who seldom mentions freedom. He belongs to a political faith in which America's political miracle is only for us, and dissidents and democratic activists are on their own, and those who are oppressed stay that way.

Trump's inaugural address was intended to signal the end of exceptionalism, at least in its international expression. In the speech, the American "way of life" is depicted as one among many — a homegrown product that is not for export. Two academics (perhaps with too much time on their hands) have calculated the frequency with which Trump uses "freedom" and "liberty" in speeches. Both words appear far less often than in other recent presidencies. Neither word breaks into the top 1,000 he uses.

[Read These Comments](#)

The best conversations on The Washington Post

Please provide a valid email address.



Robinson : Obamacare's enduring victory

What's the holdup, House Republicans?

During the Obama administration, you passed literally dozens of bills to repeal all or part of the Affordable Care Act — knowing that none had any chance of being signed into law. Now that Donald Trump is in the White House, why can't you seem to pull the trigger?

That's a rhetorical question, of course. Republicans see that they have two choices: They can snatch health insurance away from millions of people, or they can replace Obamacare with something that looks suspiciously like Obamacare-with-a-different-name. Wary of both alternatives, erstwhile anti-ACA zealots have spent the first month of the Trump administration doing little more than clearing their throats.

The framework laid out by House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (Wis.) and other GOP officials last week is part capitulation, part evasion. In no way is it worthy of being called policy.

[Read These Comments](#)

Trump's rhetorical rejection of internationalism is an aberration from the United States' bipartisan, post-World War II foreign policy consensus. It is also a culmination of recent trends.

During the Barack Obama years, the United States retreated from internationalism in practice. At first, this may have been a reaction against George W. Bush's foreign policy. But Obama's tendency became a habit, and the habit hardened into a conviction. He put consistent emphasis on the risks of action and the limits of American power. In the revolt against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, following the Russian invasion of the Ukraine, as Russian influence returned to the Middle East, America's inaction was taken as accommodation. "The fear of making things worse has paralyzed the United States from trying to make things better," said Russian dissident Garry Kasparov in recent congressional testimony.

This geostrategic retreat is consistent with a broader political trend. Summarizing recent survey data, researchers Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk conclude: "Citizens in a number of supposedly consolidated democracies in North America and Western Europe have not only grown more critical of their political leaders. Rather, they have also become more cynical about the value of democracy as a political system, less hopeful that anything

The best conversations on The Washington Post

Please provide a valid email address.

The surrender comes in the promise to keep the most popular features of Obamacare, which are a guarantee of coverage for those with preexisting medical conditions and a provision ensuring that dependents can remain on their parents' insurance until age 26. Republicans accurately calculate that taking either of these benefits away would be politically suicidal — and that Trump, who has promised health care for "everybody," probably would balk.

The evasion — let's go ahead and call it dishonesty — is that the GOP framework promises not to "pull the rug out from anyone who received care" under the ACA's expansion of eligibility for Medicaid, the federal health insurance program for the poor. But Republicans also plan to change Medicaid into a program of block grants to the states, with sharp reductions in federal funding.

they do might influence public policy, and more willing to express support for authoritarian alternatives."

This is a sobering development — the deconsolidation of support for liberal democracy itself. Both the United States and Europe are seeing the rise of leaders who have chosen to ride this trend rather than buck it. Trump's version of strongman democracy and his abandonment of the language of liberal democracy are imaginable only in this environment.

This shift has outward-facing consequences. Dissidents and democratic activists — often driven by a stubborn, defiant passion — are not going to give up because America loses its ideological nerve. But regimes tempted to crack down on them have greater confidence in impunity. The United States is now less likely to criticize their "way of life," even when these regimes evangelize with the gallows.

This shift also has inward-facing consequences. A nation that ceases to speak for human rights may become less confident in civil rights. This type of relativism — this neutrality between freedom and authoritarianism — is easily imported across the border.

But we are not there yet. And the Trump administration itself is divided on these matters. Stephen K. Bannon certainly has the

In effect, House Republicans threaten to force states to do the dirty deed and strike millions from the Medicaid rolls. Governors from both parties are not amused.

The fundamental lie of omission in the GOP's "repeal and replace" framework is the absence of any sense of what the new system would cost — or how it would be paid for. A plan without a budget is little more than a daydream.

Republicans do make clear that they want to eliminate Obamacare's direct subsidies designed to help the working poor afford insurance. Instead, they prefer a system of tax credits, based not on income but on age. A 50-year-old billionaire would receive the same amount of tax relief as his or her 50-year-old gardener. Anything that makes our tax system even slightly less progressive warms the hearts of today's GOP leaders.

But whether the federal government pays out more in subsidies or takes in less revenue because of tax credits, the reality is the same:

president's ear and control of the speechwriting shop — which is strategic high ground. His ethno-nationalists are anxious to get a running start on the road that would take America toward dishonor and failure. But the Defense and State departments are headed by committed internationalists who understand that the growth of freedom and the spread of prosperity are essential to long-term global stability and American security.

The tools of internationalism — a strong military, strong alliances, strong international institutions, strong support for global development and democracy promotion — have a considerable cost. "Such investment," said Kasparov, "is far more moral and far cheaper than the cycle of terror, war, refugees and military intervention that results when America leaves a vacuum of power."

In assuming this calling of leadership, it is not ethnicity that grips the American imagination and justifies sacrifice; it is the animating ideals of the country. And it is a national advantage that our deepest beliefs are in accord with the durable hopes of humanity.

We will not find security, only darkness, by dousing America's sacred fire.

Guaranteeing access to affordable health care is expensive. Republicans can decide it's too costly and throw people off the insurance rolls, but if they do, they will pay a grievous political price.

Make no mistake, this has been a bad patch for the ACA. The chief executive of one health insurance giant, Aetna, opined last week that Obamacare has finally entered the "death spiral" that Republicans have so gleefully predicted. And officials of another mega-provider, Humana, announced that the firm will not participate in the Affordable Care Act exchanges in 2018.

That is called self-fulfilling prophecy: Republicans predicted from the start that Obamacare would fail — and then did everything they could think of to sabotage the program.

But in one crucial sense, the Affordable Care Act succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams: It fundamentally changed the nature of the health-care debate in this country. Access to affordable health care is now seen as a right not just

for the elderly and the desperately poor but for all Americans; and government is seen as the guarantor of that right.

The fact that Republicans pledge to continue protections for those with preexisting conditions, dependents up to age 26 and the 12 million individuals covered by Medicaid

expansion illustrates how things have changed. The GOP once fought these provisions tooth and nail, calling them socialism disguised as compassion. Now the party embraces core elements of Obamacare as the new normal.

House Republicans have been hearing from constituents who

would be bereft without the insurance they obtained under the ACA. A couple of GOP senators have even begun talking about repairing the law rather than replacing it. And whatever Congress eventually comes up with will have to pass muster with Trump, who

promised to expand health coverage, not reduce it.

Republicans will win the battle over the "Obamacare" label. But Barack Obama already won the war.

The New York Times Phillips : Move Left, Democrats

Steve Phillips

In Wisconsin, according to the exit poll data, Mrs. Clinton received 193,000 fewer white votes than Mr. Obama received in 2012, but Mr. Trump's white total increased over Mitt Romney's by just 9,000 votes. So where did the other 184,000 Wisconsin whites go? A majority went to third and fourth parties, which, together, received 100,000 more white votes than they did in 2012.

In Michigan, where 75 percent of the voters were white, Mrs. Clinton received about 295,000 fewer votes than Mr. Obama did, but the Republican total increased by just 164,000 votes. The ranks of those voting third and fourth party leapt to more than 250,000 last year from about 51,000 in 2012, and Mrs. Clinton fell short by just 10,704 votes.

In Pennsylvania, the Democrats' problem was not with white voters, but with African-Americans. Mrs. Clinton actually improved on the Democratic 2012 results with whites, but over 130,000 unenthused black voters stayed home, and she lost by about 44,000 votes.

If Democrats had stemmed the defections of white voters to the Libertarian or Green Parties, they would have won Michigan and Wisconsin, and had they also inspired African-Americans in Pennsylvania, Mrs. Clinton would be president.

If progressive whites are defecting because they are uninspired by Democrats, moving further to the right will only deepen their disillusionment. But if the next D.N.C. chairman can win them back, the country's demographic trends will tilt the field in Democrats' favor. As Mrs. Clinton's popular vote margin showed, there is still a new American majority made up of a meaningful minority of whites and an overwhelming majority of minorities. Not only is there little evidence that Democrats can do significantly better with those white working-class voters who are susceptible to messages laced with racism and sexism, but that sector of the electorate will continue to

shrink in the coming years. Nearly half of all Democratic votes (46 percent) were not white in 2016, and over the next four years, 10 million more people of color will be added to the population, as compared with just 1.5 million whites.

Keith Ellison, a D.N.C. chairman candidate, has a proven record of engaging core Democratic voters rather than chasing the elusive conservative whites, and the party would be in good hands under his stewardship. (Thomas E. Perez, the former labor secretary, has less electoral history, but his reliance on political superstars such as the strategist Emmy Ruiz, who delivered victories for Democrats in Nevada and Colorado, is encouraging.)

Whoever prevails as chairman must resist the pressure to follow an uninformed and ill-fated quest for winning over conservative white working-class voters in the Midwest. The solution for Democrats is not to chase Trump defectors. The path to victory involves reinspiring those whites who drifted to third-party candidates and then focusing on the ample opportunities in the Southwest and the South.

Mrs. Clinton came closer to winning Texas than she did Iowa. She fared better in Arizona, Georgia and Florida than she did in the traditional battleground state of Ohio. The electoral action for Democrats may have once been in the Rust Belt, but it's now moving west and south.