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FRANCE - EUROPE

The
New York
Times

François Fillon, Facing Calls to Quit French Race, Enjoys a Day of Gains

Aurelien Breeden and Benoit Morenne

Even so, Mr. Fillon's troubles are not over. With less than 50 days to go before the first round of voting on April 23, the rifts on the French right that have been exposed by the scandal surrounding Mr. Fillon are unlikely to heal before the presidential and legislative elections.

Hundreds of Mr. Fillon's former backers have distanced themselves from him, and some in his party continue to doubt that he can win now. But the developments on Monday seemed to bolster Mr. Fillon's claims that there is no one suitable to replace him.

"No one can stop me from being a candidate," Mr. Fillon said on Sunday in an interview on the television channel France 2.

Mr. Juppé, who is mayor of the southeastern city of Bordeaux, told reporters there on Monday that the presidential campaign had been dominated by "unprecedented" confusion.

"What a waste," he said, accusing Mr. Fillon of squandering the center-right party's chances of winning.

Mr. Juppé, a moderate, ran in the Republicans presidential primary in November but lost to Mr. Fillon, who campaigned on a harder line.

He criticized Mr. Fillon on Monday for his

"obstinacy," and he called Mr. Fillon's dismissive response to the corruption allegations against him "a dead end."

But Mr. Juppé, 71, said that he was not the man to replace Mr. Fillon now. He said that French voters were hungry for new political faces untainted by scandals, and that he did not quite fit the bill. "It is too late for me," he said.

Mr. Fillon, who like Mr. Juppé is a former prime minister, won primaries on the right and center-right in November, led in the polls and appeared to be on track to reach the second round of voting, where he would have a good chance to defeat his likely opponent, Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front.

But Mr. Fillon's campaign was upended by reports in the satirical and investigative newspaper *Le Canard Enchaîné* that his wife and two of his children were paid with taxpayer money to be parliamentary aides, posts that might not have involved much genuine work.

The reports prompted an investigation by financial prosecutors, and they deeply dented Mr. Fillon's standing in the polls, dropping him to third place behind Ms. Le Pen and the independent candidate Emmanuel Macron, a former economy minister.

Mr. Fillon said last week that judges investigating the embezzlement

allegations had summoned him for questioning on March 15. But he defiantly vowed to continue running, even if, as expected, he is formally charged.

That defiance turned what, until then, had been mostly uneasy grumbling into a cascade of defections, with more than 300 backers dropping their support for Mr. Fillon and calling for the Republicans to find a new candidate. An allied party, the centrist Union of Democrats and Independents, also dropped its support for Mr. Fillon.

Nicolas Sarkozy, a former president who also lost to Mr. Fillon in the primaries, said in a statement Monday morning that he wanted to organize a meeting with Mr. Fillon and Mr. Juppé to find a "dignified and credible way out of a situation that can no longer last."

So far, Mr. Fillon has dug in his heels. At a rally organized on Sunday in Paris, he lashed out at those calling for him to drop out.

"They think I'm alone; they want me to be alone," a combative Mr. Fillon told the crowd as he stepped on stage at the Trocadéro, across from the Eiffel Tower. "Am I alone?" he asked, and the crowd roared.

"If, by magic, the French had been able to witness what I've seen these last weeks, a wave of disgust would submerge them," Mr. Fillon said,

denouncing "those who desert the sinking ship."

Mr. Fillon has consistently denied any wrongdoing in the scandal. His wife, Penelope, spoke publicly on Sunday about the matter for the first time since it broke, telling the newspaper *Journal du Dimanche* that she had carried out "very different tasks" for her husband as a parliamentary assistant, including writing memos and press reviews.

Ms. Fillon also said she had urged her husband to continue his campaign, as did the thousands of supporters who stood under pouring rain Sunday afternoon in Paris, waving French flags and chanting for Mr. Fillon to "hold fast" because "France needs you."

"It's the union between the people and the future president," Franck Patti, 53, a project manager for the City of Paris, said about the rally.

A core faction within the Republicans rank and file has stood by Mr. Fillon, dismissing the allegations against him and warning that they could stay home on Election Day if he were to drop out.

"The Republicans must see that Fillon is their natural candidate," Mr. Patti said.



What's Happening in the French Presidential Elections

Emily Tamkin

Ah, the French presidential election. Months of twists and turns. At one point, some thought it would be a showdown between former President Nicolas Sarkozy and current French President François Hollande. Months later, neither of those men are even in the race, while current candidates are nearly all embroiled in scandal, and there is plenty of uncertainty whether either of the two main parties will make it through this election as they exist now.

With the first round of voting on April 23, here's a rundown of where each

candidate stands (or stands set to fail):

François Fillon, the Republicans: Once upon a time, it was thought that the center-right candidate in this race was bound to be the next president of France, given the deep unpopularity of the current Socialist president, Hollande.

And indeed, Fillon pulled off a brilliant primary upset against Sarkozy and former Prime Minister Alain Juppé in the second round. But then it turned out that Fillon had allegedly used about 1 million euros in parliamentary funds for jobs his family members did not, in fact, do. At first, Fillon said he would resign

from the race if charged. But on March 1, Fillon announced that he was indeed going to be put under formal investigation on March 15, two days before candidates are due to officially register. And at a rally in Paris on Sunday, Fillon said, contrary to his earlier statements, he would not step down. Almost as if taking his cues from across the Atlantic, he has called the allegations a political assassination; questioned the independence of the judiciary; criticized the media; and, on Sunday, he and his team hailed their own crowd size.

Meanwhile, on Monday, Juppé disappointed the euro by announcing he would not be running

or replacing Fillon, leading many a France-watcher to wonder who could take Fillon's place if anyone can convince him that it is in the best interest of his party and country (never mind that he's gone out of his way to undermine institutions dear to both) to step down.

Marine Le Pen, National Front: Speaking of undermining institutions! Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right, anti-immigrant National Front, is also embroiled in scandal, both because she tweeted "gruesome images" of Islamic State killings, and because she allegedly used European Parliament funds to pay political staffers.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that she was literally born into politics (she took over the National Front after ousting its former leader, her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen), Le Pen and her openly anti-Islamic, arguably xenophobic, Euroskeptic, fiscally questionable policies are popular with those who claim to be tired of “establishment” politics — and increasingly women and members of the LGBTQ community. At present, she is expected to be one of the two top finishers and the first round of voting, which is to say she will likely make it into the second round.

Emmanuel Macron, Forward: Another politician ostensibly from outside the establishment, Macron is running not with an established party, but with his own En Marche (“Forward”) movement. He’s central-casting establishment, nevertheless: He worked for Goldman Sachs and, briefly, Hollande’s government, speaks English (*quelle horreur*), and is a believer in the European project. If he and Le Pen make it to the second round and other candidates give Macron their unambiguous support, he could be the next president of France.

On Monday, his economic advisor, Jean Pisani-Ferry, said Macron represents “real reform, real change.” If he somehow manages to get elected, however, he’ll still need to deal with June’s legislative elections. If he can’t field enough candidates from his own new party, or pull enough defectors from left and right, he’ll be stuck trying to push through reforms with a hostile or indifferent parliament. Such is the plight of the outsider trying to come in.

Benoît Hamon, Socialist Party: This candidate, representing the incumbent party, has virtually no

chance of winning. But, in a bid to feel the Benoît anyway, he is expected to reveal a plan for universal income in the coming days.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the Left Party: The far-left candidate is polling last among quasi-major candidates, but his campaign has borrowed a few tricks from the front runners Fillon and Le Pen in disparaging the media, a stance that apparently does not know party in French politics.

The
Washington
Post

Ahead of pivotal European elections, rightist websites grow in influence (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/michael.berbaum1>

AMSTERDAM — On the brand-new political news website, the headlines could have been ripped from a speech by President Trump: Immigrants commit more crime, Syrian refugees are raping girls, and Muslim education is taking over the school system.

But the two-month-old Gatestone Europe website is based in the Netherlands; the contributors are Dutch. And their aim, their editor says, is to swing the debate ahead of European elections this year to deliver a tide of anti-immigrant leaders to office in the Netherlands, France, Germany and elsewhere.

Websites that focus on the perils of open borders, immigration and international alliances are expanding in scope and ambition in Europe, seeing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to harness the energy from Trump’s win to drive deep into a continent where traditional political parties are struggling. Some of the websites are registered in Russia. Others, like Gatestone Europe, are being supported by Americans with ties to Trump.

Today’s WorldView

What’s most important from where the world meets Washington

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In the Netherlands, some online activists are backing a handful of anti-Muslim candidates, including the fiery Geert Wilders, who is running in a dead heat against the ruling party ahead of March 15 elections. In France, news blogs are spreading innuendo about the rivals of the anti-immigrant Marine Le Pen, who is the most popular presidential

candidate in the lead-up to the election in April and May. And in Germany, some of the outlets have spread false stories about refugees raping people that were repeated by the Russian foreign minister. Fed by public anger about refugees, the Muslim-bashing Alternative for Germany party is poised to seize seats in Germany’s Parliament in September.

“There’s quite a lot of news, quite shocking, often with rape or violence and immigrants,” said Timon Dias, 29, who started Gatestone Europe last month after several years of writing for a different anti-establishment website in the Netherlands. “We want people to learn what’s happening in Europe and vote accordingly, especially ahead of elections this year.”

Although many of the sites are small — the Amsterdam-based Gatestone Europe has only four writers, and no office — they do not need to be well established to score big on Facebook or Twitter. A spicy individual post can go viral with little regard for the history of the outlet.

“It’s a crowbar in the system,” Dias said. “The main line is highly vigilant, highly critical about what the effects are of having a significant Muslim minority in the inner cities.”

The project is funded by the New York-based Gatestone Institute, which is chaired by former U.N. ambassador John Bolton, who was a finalist in Trump’s search for a new national security adviser. Contacted for comment, the Gatestone Institute made available one of its board members, retired Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz, who said that the organization is nonpartisan and that its aim is to “move the debate to the center.” Bolton did not reply to a request for comment.

As with other similar sites, many of Gatestone’s posts are based on true events, spun aggressively to feed the narrative that mainstream, pro-European Union politicians are selling out their countries to immigrants. The site does not support any one candidate in the Dutch elections, but the anti-E.U. leader of the small Forum for Democracy party, Thierry Baudet, is a contributor.

“We report the news to our readers in a directed way,” Dias said.

Although Wilders is likely to face trouble forming a coalition and Le Pen is forecast to lose the second round of France’s presidential election, both candidates have had success in shifting debate in their nations onto more anti-immigrant, Euroskeptic ground. Far-right websites are often their megaphone.

In the Netherlands, similar news outlets have already made successful forays into Dutch political life.

Meet the European leaders hoping to cause the next Brexit

A referendum last year on whether the Dutch government should ratify a trade deal with Ukraine was triggered by a far-right news site, GeenStijl.

The eventual rejection of the trade deal turned into an embarrassing defeat for the Dutch government, which was forced to backpedal on its commitment to Ukraine. Opponents of the trade deal, including GeenStijl, cited an opposition to E.U. expansion and a desire not to antagonize the Kremlin as reasons to vote it down.

Pro-Ukraine-deal campaigners say they suspect that the Kremlin put a finger on the scale by supporting activists and pro-Russian trolls

online, although no link has been proved. The activists, including GeenStijl, deny any connection.

But even absent ties to Russia, the news sites demonstrated a powerful ability to disrupt the pro-E.U. agenda of the Dutch mainstream, creating a political headache for Dutch leaders and feeding Western disunity that coincides with Kremlin efforts.

“The Ukraine referendum has shown what kind of mayhem they can cause,” said Cas Mudde, a Dutch scholar of far-right movements at the University of Georgia. “What impressed a lot of people was their ability to mobilize people who were commenting on websites to go out and actually vote for a cause. People weren’t expecting that.”

Now GeenStijl’s political arm, GeenPeil — Dutch for “no poll” — has spun off into a political party and is contesting the parliamentary election on the promise to hold Dutch leaders accountable.

“Until my generation, everybody had a better life than their parents. That has stopped,” said Jan Dijkgraaf, 54, a former journalist who is now the leader of GeenPeil.

He said he did not consider himself a far-right politician, but he seized on immigration as a major focus for Dutch voters.

Dijkgraaf said he could understand if a mother of three needed temporary refuge from war. “But when there are boys of 25 with these kind of muscles, you have to think, are they really victims of a war, or do they have plans to get rich, or to do something like in Brussels or in Paris?”

The Ukraine referendum sparked a number of political parties, most of which have struggled to break through Wilders’s lock on anti-

immigrant discourse in the Netherlands.

Wilders was using Twitter to spark outrage and publicity long before Trump turned to electoral politics. A tweet last month of a leading political opponent, Alexander Pechtold, Photoshopped into a pro-sharia demonstration in London dominated political coverage for days. Wilders later acknowledged that the photo was fake but said Pechtold had recently been to a similar demonstration.

"They don't care about what is really true, what is a little true, or what is fake," Pechtold said. "And that's of course what we have seen in the United States."

In the far-right Web universe, the faked picture caused no uproar.

"It's a way of speaking to people," said Bert Brussen, editor of ThePostOnline, another far-right website where headlines on recent articles have included "Iraqis on Trial for Gang Rape in Vienna" and "Massacre by Islamic terror was again prevented in Germany."

"A lot of what Wilders says, it's Internet language," Brussen said. "The Internet makes them stronger, and they make the Internet stronger."

In other countries with elections this year, far-right sites are also thriving, attracting the attention of some of the American outlets that helped propel Trump to victory. Last year, Breitbart News — whose former head, Stephen K. Bannon, is now Trump's chief strategist — said that it would take the plunge into the French and German markets, although there is so far little sign that it is readying to open.

But anti-establishment activists in those countries may need little help.

In France, where far-right candidate Le Pen wants to take a hard line against Muslim immigration, hold a referendum on E.U. membership and embrace relations with the Kremlin, far-right news sites have taken aim at whichever candidate appears most likely to challenge her in the final round of the presidential election, due to be held May 7. (Le Pen is expected to win the first round.)

For months, that was center-right candidate François Fillon. More recently, a surge from the centrist Emmanuel Macron has drawn a volley of darts from rumor-mongering websites, some of them branches of Russian state media. Macron recently took on the rumors, joking that his apparent ability to have gay affairs puzzled his wife, who is usually by his side.

And in Germany and Austria, experts say roughly 30 German-language "alternative websites" are currently operating. Many have existed for years, but they have transformed into machines to undermine traditional politicians, especially since the start of Europe's refugee crisis.

The majority of them, experts say, tend to have opaque ownership structures, making it difficult to ascertain who is behind them. They are almost universally pro-Russian in tone, and some of the German-language sites are operated from Russian servers, though direct links to the Russian government are hard to find.

"They publish stories with a true core, building their own atmosphere around this core, what we call 'hybrid fake,'" said Andre Wolf, a spokesman for Mimikama, an Austria-based fact-checking website.

Many stories seem aimed at undermining German Chancellor Angela Merkel's bid for reelection on Sept. 24. But as a center-left challenger, Martin Schulz, rose in the polls in recent weeks, along surged a flurry of fake reports — including one by the website AnonymousNews.ru falsely claiming that his father once ran a Nazi concentration camp.

Across Europe, Dias said, the possibility of change is alive.

"People feel the epicness of the times they're living in," he said.

Annabell Van den Berghe in Amsterdam, Anthony Faiola in Berlin and James McAuley in Paris contributed to this report.

Bloomberg

Emons : The ECB's 'High-Class Problem'

Ben Emons

The European Central Bank has been in a difficult position when it comes to addressing inflation with conventional policy. The main reason is that, during the debt crisis, the bank faced a trade-off between stabilizing European sovereign bonds, consumer inflation and lending.

Financial stress from sovereign bonds spilled over into the real economy and left the ECB with residual deflation, high unemployment and a rising tide of populism. Now euro-zone inflation that has risen to 2 percent, increasing populism and an improving economy may lead to a potential rate hike sooner than the bank wants.

A disconnect between political and market risks is one of the underlying catalysts for a hike. Historically, political uncertainty and market volatility were closely related until Brexit. There has been a disconnect (see fig. 1) caused by narratives fueling populism, as markets were anchored by ECB policy. This schism may be changing because political risks are seeping into European sovereign bonds even as

rising inflation may bolster the case for tapering the QE program. The ECB could face a trade-off between fighting inflation and stabilizing sovereign bonds. In 2011, this proved an ill-timed strategy as the ECB "mistakenly" tightened too soon amid an intensifying sovereign debt crisis.

ECB. Speech by Peter Praet.

Most sensitive to a combination of political and market risk is the front end of European sovereign yield curves. In a higher-inflation environment, markets can pressure the ECB to choose between forward guidance and tapering quantitative easing. As this choice gets complicated by dynamics of rising inflation and political risks, market risk will likely increase, as can be seen from the recent rise in short-term French, Italian and German forward interest rates (fig. 2).

Bloomberg

Markets are also changing their mind about the probability of a rate hike by the ECB (fig. 3). Without signals of any imminent policy

change from the ECB, the markets determined the possibility of a hike is about 30 percent higher than at the last bank's meeting. Interest rate expectations have been emboldened by a similar shift regarding the future of U.S. rates after Fed officials confirmed that a rate hike in March is almost a certainty. Because of correlation between European and U.S. short-term interest rate expectations, and because those projections in turn correlate with the short end of the European sovereign yield curves, the ECB is already confronted with a rate hike in "stealth form."

Bloomberg

Resorting to a rate hike is what ECB President Mario Draghi called a "high-class problem." If the euro-zone economy improves with inflation near or above the target, the ECB would have to tighten measures. If, in that case, ECB does not do enough QE, financial conditions may tighten too quickly. If the ECB does too much QE and inflation overshoots, markets won't see rising inflation as transitory and may price more future rate hikes. Historically, the ECB dealt with

higher inflation by adjusting the "corridor system," in which the deposit rate acts as a floor and the lending rate as a ceiling on interest rates (fig. 4).

The history in fig. 4 suggests that for every 0.1 to 0.2 percent inflation that is above the target, two sequential rate hikes followed. Because of the debt crisis and today's ongoing political uncertainty, the ECB cannot just change interest rates. Rather, the market seems to do the work for the ECB as shown in fig. 2 and 3.

Markets believe the ECB may no longer have a high-class problem of doing not enough QE but rather doing too much. If the ECB were to strictly adhere to its mandate of inflation at or below 2 percent, a tightening stance could risk a repeat of the 2011 situation when political risk and market risk both rose sharply. The ECB is at a tangent and options are limited. Economists expect the ECB to stay on hold for the next few months. But whatever policy choice the ECB eventually makes, a negative outcome for European sovereign bonds and global markets may be all but certain.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

EU Approves New Military Training Command

Julian E. Barnes 8:22 a.m. ET

March 6, 2017

BRUSSELS—The European Union on Monday took a halting step toward more security cooperation,

agreeing to establish a new headquarters to oversee its military training missions.

Though its powers are limited, the long-discussed command nonetheless marks a significant element of coordinated defense at a time Europe has struggled to reach consensus on new initiatives.

Serious disagreements within Europe over how far to take expanded military cooperation have blocked agreement on the way forward on other measures that could increase or improve European military procurement, a key demand of the Trump administration.

EU officials agreed to curtail the command's powers because of British objections that it would duplicate the work of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It won't officially be called a headquarters, it will be led by an existing general on the EU staff and it won't have the power to oversee missions where force may have to be employed.

An EU military headquarters has been under consideration for more

than a decade, but was long viewed suspiciously by some countries, including the Baltics, that saw it as a step toward a European army, which EU officials have repeatedly dismissed.

"It will allow us to have a more unified, more rational, more efficient approach to the existing military training missions we have and I think this is a major step forward," said Federica Mogherini, the EU foreign policy chief. "It is not a European army ... but it is a more effective way of handling our military work."

Britain's impending exit from the EU softened its opposition to the proposal, as long as it was focused on training missions.

British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said because of U.K. objections the new military office would minimize additional costs and ensure the EU did not create a rival to NATO's military headquarters.

"We don't need new institutional structures," Mr. Fallon said. "We want to see EU countries to continue to work on cooperation and bring the complimentary structures of Europe to bear."

Mr. Fallon said while the U.K. remains a member of the EU it will work to ensure the bloc does not rival NATO's efforts.

While the Trump administration has not taken a position on EU defense efforts, under the new president the U.S. has stepped up its push for Europe to spend more on its military and take on a greater share of security responsibilities.

The new EU military headquarters could clear the way for the bloc to take on more training missions in Africa, an area where the U.S. military presence has been more minimal. The headquarters, officially called a "Military Planning and Conduct Capability," will initially oversee the existing EU military

training missions in Somalia, the Central African Republic and Mali.

The headquarters will have be about 30 people in it and will be operational "in the coming weeks," Ms. Mogherini said.

Ms. Mogherini has been pushing for European powers to cooperate more on defense through an initiative that could allow a smaller group of member states to work closely together on joint military procurement or operations.

But the bloc is deeply divided over what form it should take and whether any equipment created under the programs should be routinely available to NATO.

Ms. Mogherini has promised to have proposals on the new cooperation, as well as the use of the EU's standing battle groups, ready before the June summit of European leaders.

The New York Times Peugeot Maker's Deal for G.M.'s Opel Faces Political Headwinds

Jack Ewing

To make the deal work, PSA will have to navigate elected officials and labor leaders in three countries where it has big plants — Britain, France and Germany. The focus of the deal has already been centered on saving jobs. In a conversation on Sunday with Mary T. Barra, the chief executive of General Motors, the British prime minister emphasized the need to protect the plants and the homegrown brand, Vauxhall.

Car companies provide particularly fertile ground for nationalist appeals. The closing of a car factory is often devastating for the surrounding community, and it can fall hardest on less-educated, lower-income workers who feel neglected by elites and victimized by global finance.

And car manufacturers are often entangled with national identity. Opel, which has belonged to G.M. since 1929, is based in Rüsselsheim, near Frankfurt, and it is widely perceived as a German brand. PSA, the maker of Peugeot and Citroën cars, is 14 percent owned by the French government.

"What better industry to express a view of 'France first' than the auto industry?" said David J. Herman, who was chief executive of Opel in the 1990s. Making the acquisition work, he said, "is going to be excruciatingly difficult."

Adding to the political tension, France and Germany have national elections this year.

In France, Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front has an outside

chance at winning the presidency in May. Ms. Le Pen has sought in her campaign to capitalize on high unemployment, calling for "targeted protectionism" and "economic patriotism" for French companies.

In Germany, which will hold elections in September, Frauke Petry and her Alternative for Germany party are trying to win at least 5 percent of the vote, the threshold to seat a delegation in Parliament. Ms. Petry's party has tried to cast the sale of Opel in nationalist terms. Last month, Paul Hampel, a member of Alternative for Germany's national governing board, called the deal a "sellout of German know-how."

At a time when European unity is under threat, the sale of Opel to PSA could strain relations among Britain, France and Germany as they try to ensure that any pain is imposed in someone else's backyard. PSA's Peugeot and Citroën factories are concentrated in France, while the biggest Opel and Vauxhall factories are in Germany and Britain.

It is difficult to see how PSA's takeover of Opel, which would create the second-largest carmaker in Europe after Volkswagen, could succeed without major job cuts and, probably, shutting some factories. Opel has not been profitable since the 1990s, and both companies have more factories than they need. Unused factory space is deadly to a car company's bottom line because it requires expensive upkeep without producing revenue.

"The idea is that this deal makes a strong second to VW," Mr. Herman said, "but they've got to make money."

The two British plants, with the Opel and Vauxhall brands, could be particularly vulnerable to political and economic forces. Britain's vote to exit the European Union means that cars exported to the Continent could face substantial tariffs.

"Tavares is talking about saving \$2 billion," said Peter Wells, an automotive expert at Cardiff University in Wales, referring to the chairman of the managing board of PSA, Carlos Tavares. "It has to come from somewhere."

The pressure on automakers had made the industry a point of contention in the discussion over a so-called Brexit.

Mrs. May, the prime minister, made undisclosed concessions to persuade Nissan to agree to build two new vehicles at its factory in Sunderland, England. Labor unions are preparing to try to block Ford from making threatened job cuts at an engine plant at Bridgend, Wales.

"The uncertainty caused by Brexit is harming the U.K. auto sector," said Len McCluskey, general secretary of the union Unite, which represents many British autoworkers. "We need assistance from the government to give this sector a fighting chance."

Such cases have prompted Mrs. May to speak of an industrial policy, repudiating years of Conservative Party free-market doctrine.

In January, the prime minister announced "a modern industrial strategy" as part of her plan to prepare Britain for a future outside the European Union. The government will no longer be laissez-faire, she said, but will be "stepping up to a new, active role that backs business."

The French government has backed PSA's acquisition of Opel, a bright spot in an otherwise gloomy economy. President François Hollande commended the alliance on Monday as the "birth of a European champion of the automotive industry."

The deal represents a remarkable turnaround for PSA, which had a record loss just four years ago. Freed of constraints imposed by G.M., Opel may be able to establish a stronger presence in Asia and South America, potentially allowing the company to reduce its heavy reliance on the slow-growing European market.

But Opel will require work. In a reflection of the troubles, G.M. is selling its European operations for just \$2.3 billion, and it is taking a charge of up to \$4.5 billion as it books a paper loss from the deal. (PSA is spending about \$1.85 billion, with BNP Paribas kicking in the rest in exchange for part of the financial group.)

"We think, with humility, but with a certain trust, that we can help Opel to accelerate its economic reconstruction," Mr. Tavares told reporters at a news conference on Monday. "We see that there's a

similarity between the difficulties Opel is going through today and PSA's situation three, four years ago."

The French government would certainly balk if there were hints of further cuts by PSA in France. Amid huge protests, PSA closed a Peugeot and Citroën factory in Aulnay-sous-Bois, an economically disadvantaged suburb of Paris. The 3,000 job losses hit workers who have for the most part been unable

to find work since, adding to an undercurrent of tension in the area.

The French government has already demonstrated that, at least during an election year, it will intervene to protect jobs. The Hollande administration threatened several years ago to nationalize an ailing steel plant run by ArcelorMittal to stem possible job losses, and it prevented Yahoo from taking a majority stake in a French company, Dailymotion.

When Alstom tried to shut down a train factory in the working-class city of Belfort in the autumn, Mr. Hollande, who had come under fire for France's high unemployment rate, reacted with fury. Although the company vowed that the factory's 400 jobs would be relocated to a larger site in northern France, the government insisted that the site remain open, and it then placed a multibillion-euro order for trains to keep the operation running.

Mr. Tavares of PSA emphasized several times on Monday that the Opel deal was not based on job cuts. "Shutting down a plant is rather simplistic," he said. "The only thing that protects us is performance."

But politics cannot defy economics forever. Without growth, PSA will have no choice but to cut costs.

**The
Washington
Post**

By selling its European brands, GM 'gets rid of a perennial loser'

By Thomas Heath

With General Motors' decision to abandon the European car market by selling its Opel brand, chief executive Mary Barra is making good on her vow to refashion the 109-year-old goliath's sell-everywhere-to-everyone ethic into one driven by share price.

"They want to change the culture, get out of a money-losing business ... and send a message that they really want to focus on places they think that on the long-term basis, they can generate a return," said Matthew Stover, an analyst with Susquehanna Financial Group.

The largest U.S. car company by sales said Monday that it had agreed to sell its Opel and Vauxhall brands to Peugeot in a \$2.3 billion deal, exiting a European market that has not produced a profit in nearly 20 years. PSA, the maker of Peugeot and Citroën cars, is 14 percent owned by the French government.

"It's very smart," former GM vice chairman Bob Lutz said. "GM gets rid of a perennial loser."

[GM pulls back from European auto market]

GM's exit from Western Europe to concentrate elsewhere doesn't come without risk, including giving up market share and expertise. GM sold 1.2 million cars in Europe last year. And Germany, where Opel is headquartered, is considered the industry's birthplace and a primary source for engineering and design innovation.

"The risk is that they will need that

volume in Europe to absorb investment costs for vehicles they also sell around the world," Stover said. "The Cruze here in North America shares a common platform with products in Europe."

Another risk: GM is leaving one of the world's biggest markets.

Barr is under pressure to improve the stock price, which was more than \$37 a share Monday, below the \$40 when she took over in January 2014. It has jagged above \$30 for most of her tenure but hasn't climbed back to \$40.

"By immediately improving General Motors' overall business profile, the transaction will enable us to increase our returns to shareholders," GM President Dan Ammann said at a news conference early Monday in Paris, according to Automotive News.

The U.S. auto manufacturer said it would take a \$4 billion charge on the Opel sale, which also frees up cash that it will use to help buy back its shares and invest in new initiatives. The company said it plans to buy back \$4 billion of its stock this year.

The company is also spending money on a line of electric cars, including the Chevrolet Bolt, as well as investments such as its \$500 million interest in the popular Lyft ride-hailing service.

Analysts called the sale a welcome course correction for GM, whose 2009 federal bailout was justified on the grounds that the car manufacturer's bankruptcy could help drag the United States into a second Great Depression.

Once referred to as a health-care company on wheels because of its massive pension and health-care obligations, GM has since reconstituted itself into a profitable business built around strong North American and Chinese sales.

"We are disrupting ourselves, so we're not trying to preserve a model of yesterday," Barra told Business Insider in November 2015.

"The history behind GM has always been slow to respond to anything," said analyst Bill Selesky of Argus Research. "Mary Barra is saying, 'We are going to be more proactive.'"

The company had revenue of \$166 billion last year on record sales of 9.97 million vehicles. Sales in China topped the list, with 3.87 million units sold, while North American sales were 3.6 million. The company has \$27 billion in unfunded pension obligations and nearly \$80 billion in debt.

"GM is doing phenomenally well," said Ivan Feinseth, chief investment officer at Tigress Financial Partners. He has a "strong buy" rating on the company, saying, "They have the best lineup of cars in the history of the company."

GM has owned Opel, based near Frankfurt and widely seen as a German brand, since 1929.

If the deal goes through later this year, GM will have all but rolled out of Europe, where rival Ford has thrived. GM sells Chevrolet Corvette sports cars in Europe but has been unable to establish a beachhead with its Chevrolet brand.

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"Ford enjoys a huge and wildly profitable commercial-vehicle business in Europe," said Lutz, onetime chief executive of Ford of Europe. "GM has never been able to penetrate that market. They missed the boat on that over 30 years ago. It would require several billions" to match Ford.

European drivers prefer diesel motors over conventional gasoline-powered vehicles. And they do not share Americans' love for pickup trucks and SUVs — the strongest anchors of GM's lineup.

GM had justified its Opel investment over many years of losses on the grounds that it provided engineering that could be used to develop small cars in other markets — a line of business it thought had growth potential. But with gas plentiful and cheap, sport-utility vehicles and pickup trucks, not small cars, are driving much of GM's North American sales.

Ammann echoed that Monday, saying the European auto market had changed so dramatically that only 1 in 5 Opels could be sold in other regions.

Why did GM keep Opel for so long? "The next 'five-year business plan' always showed a great hockey stick with profits just around the corner," Lutz said.

Bloomberg

Gilbert : European Banks Start to Get Their Mojo Back

Mark Gilbert

Banks in the euro zone have enjoyed a 20 percent jump in their share prices so far this year, and are up more than 50 percent from the lows reached last July. It's unclear, however, whether the improvement is down to the bloc's better growth outlook, or whether it reflects

investor optimism that the finance industry finally has a post-crisis business model that can deliver a decent return on equity.

QuickTake Global Banking Regulation

Joy has been in short supply in the European investment banking

industry these past few years. Firms have been relentlessly shrinking their activities, cutting staff against a backdrop of a weak economy, increased regulation and the need to bolster capital. Now, according to Deutsche Bank AG Chief Executive Officer John Cryan, the tide may finally be turning. "There's gonna be

a lot more fun as we develop the business in future," Cryan told Bloomberg Television's Francine Lacqua in an interview on Monday, explaining his decision to raise 8 billion euros (\$8.4 billion) from investors in a rights issue:

It's difficult when you're in a company that's in reconstruction,

and we're always talking about shrinking or reducing risk. Now we can stop talking about that and start talking about how we engage with clients and counterparties and provide solutions.

Deutsche Bank's fundraising effort comes on the heels of Unicredit SpA's success in raising 13 billion euros last month, which Cryan acknowledged was a "factor" in the decision to tap investors along with a near doubling of Deutsche Bank's share price in the six months prior to the capital-raising announcement.

Investors certainly seem to have found a renewed appetite for European bank stocks. In the past six months, euro zone banks have mostly kept pace with their U.S. peers in terms of stock-market performance (albeit they've lagged a bit in the past month on expectations of a loosening of U.S. banking rules under President Donald Trump):

Keeping Pace

Relative performance in the past six months

Source: Bloomberg

Compare that achievement since September with the past five years of underperformance by the euro region's financial firms, and the improvement is clear to see:

Left Behind

Relative performance in the past five years

Source: Bloomberg

The biggest driver of the improved outlook for banks in the euro region is a better economic outlook -- hence Cryan felt emboldened to ask investors for additional cash in Deutsche Bank's fourth capital-raising exercise since 2010. "A year ago it would have been much more difficult for us," he said in his Bloomberg TV interview. "We're feeling much more positive, the environment is good, we're seeing growth again."

Figures compiled by Citigroup Inc. show that data releases in the euro region have consistently surprised on the upside since September, marking the most sustained period of the economy outpacing economists' expectations since the start of the decade.

A charitable reading might be that improved bank balance sheets are also helping to drive share prices higher. Banks in the euro region are now much better capitalized; the European Banking Authority estimates that the average Core Tier 1 ratio -- retained earnings and common equity divided by risk-weighted assets -- improved to an average of 14.1 percent by September, up from 12.5 percent at the end of 2014.

Big issues remain. European banks may have ceded too much market share in activities such as stock and bond underwriting to their U.S. peers in recent years to claw it back with clients anytime soon. The 1 trillion euros of non-performing loans is

taking far too long to deal with, amid German reluctance to sanction an EU-wide bad bank to absorb the bad loans.

Nevertheless, ECB figures show loan growth in the bloc has accelerated steadily for the past three years and is near its fastest pace this decade, suggesting financial firms are making the most of the economic recovery:

A Brighter Future

Euro zone loan growth, year-on-year change

Source: ECB via Bloomberg

It's too soon to talk of a renaissance in European finance; but a move into what Cryan called "modest growth mode" after years of shrinkage is a welcome sign of renewed health for euro zone banks.

**The
New York
Times**

E.U. Moves to Create Military Training Headquarters

James Kanter

BRUSSELS —

Foreign and defense ministers of European Union members reached a deal on Monday to create a headquarters for military training operations — setting aside, at least for now, concerns that the step might lead to the establishment of a "European army" to rival NATO.

France and Germany support the proposal and have pressed the European Union to do more to ensure its own defense and counter the threat of terrorism.

Britain has long opposed anything that resembled a European military command — but it has voted to leave the European Union, and that has altered the dynamic of the debate. With the United States appearing to take a step back in its role in the world, the core pair of France and Germany is pushing the European Union to take greater responsibility for its security.

The European Union and NATO have overlapping memberships: Of the 28 nations in the European Union, all but six — Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Sweden — also belong to NATO. Albania, Iceland, Norway and Turkey are in NATO but are not part of the European Union, as are Canada and the United States.

The creation of the union's headquarters is specifically intended not to undermine NATO's role.

To placate countries like Poland and the Baltic states that look to NATO as a counterweight to possible Russian aggression, the mandate of the so-called Military Planning and Conduct Capability office is expected to be relatively modest.

"The European Union always takes a soft approach to hard security, but we also have some hard power that we are strengthening," Federica Mogherini, the European Union foreign policy chief, said on Monday. The new office is "not the European army — I know there is this label going around — but it's a more effective way of handling our military work," she added.

In a second announcement, in the early afternoon, Ms. Mogherini said that ministers had agreed to the step unanimously, without a vote.

"It's a first step," said Didier Reynders, the Belgian foreign minister. As for "a European army, maybe later," he said.

Michael Fallon, the British defense minister, said he would urge the European Union "to cooperate more closely with NATO to avoid unnecessary duplication and structures."

The Military Planning and Conduct Capability office will be based in a building in Brussels that is already used by European military experts, and it will have a core staff of about 30.

Its first job will be to take over the direction of training missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Somalia that are currently overseen by commanders in the field, an arrangement that European Union officials say poses strategic challenges. Under the existing system, field commanders often must return to Brussels to handle matters like administration and funding. The new structure should ensure more support and guidance from Brussels so that those commanders could remain in the field longer.

The three missions are expected to come under new command from Brussels in the next month, European Union officials said.

Ministers also discussed a separate initiative that could allow member states to join a permanent structure to develop equipment or even to engage in combat operations. A so-called Permanent Structured Cooperation was included in the Lisbon Treaty, which went into force in 2009, but the structure was never established.

Stepping up efforts to set up the permanent structure is a response to what European Union officials have said are decreasing levels of military cooperation among member states despite repeated promises in recent years to do more together. But the structure would be voluntary, and member states may not qualify if they lack the military capabilities and equipment, or if they are unable to make certain investments.

The approach of allowing member countries of the European Union to proceed at different speeds, even in major policy areas like security and defense, is a new reality for the bloc, which is facing enormous internal strains as a result of factors including the unresolved debt crisis in Greece and a large influx of migrants from the Middle East and Africa.

Last week, Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, set out five possible paths for the bloc's future. Though some of the avenues envision things continuing as they are, or even tighter integration, others acknowledge that Europe can work at different speeds and would roll back powers exercised from Brussels.

**The
New York
Times**

Fearing U.S. Withdrawal, Europe Considers Its Own Nuclear Deterrent

Max Fisher

Even proponents, who remain a

minority, acknowledge enormous hurdles. But discussion of a so-called "Eurodeterrent" has entered

the mainstream — particularly in Germany, a country that would be

central to any plan but where antinuclear sentiment is widespread.

Jana Puglierin of the German Council on Foreign Relations said that a handful of senior European officials had “for sure triggered a public debate about this, taking place in newspapers and journals, radio interviews and TV documentaries.”

She added: “That in itself is remarkable. I am indeed very astonished that we discuss this at all.”

A Nuclear ‘Plan B’

Jaroslaw Kaczynski, Poland’s former prime minister and now the head of its ruling party, provided the highest-level call for a European Union nuclear program in a February interview with a German newspaper.

But the most important support has come from Roderich Kiesewetter, a lawmaker and foreign policy spokesman with Germany’s ruling party, who gave the nuclear option increased credibility by raising it shortly after President Trump’s election.

In an interview in the German Bundestag, Mr. Kiesewetter, a former colonel who served in Afghanistan, calibrated his language carefully, providing just enough detail to demonstrate the option’s seriousness without offering too much and risking an outcry from German voters or encouraging the American withdrawal he is hoping to avoid.

“My idea is to build on the existing weapons in Great Britain and France,” he said, but acknowledged that Britain’s decision to leave the European Union could preclude its participation.

The United States bases dozens of nuclear warheads in Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands as both a quick-reaction force and a symbol of its guarantee to protect the Continent. Mr. Kiesewetter said his plan would provide a replacement or parallel program.

This would require, he said, four ingredients: a French pledge to commit its weapons to a common European defense, German financing to demonstrate the program’s collective nature, a joint command and a plan to place French warheads in other European countries.

The number of warheads in Europe would not increase under this plan, and could even decrease if the United States withdraws.

“It’s not a question of numbers,” Mr. Kiesewetter said. “The reassurance and deterrence comes from the existence of the weapons and their deployability.”

He envisioned a program designed to deter nuclear as well as conventional threats — a clear nod to Russia’s military superiority.

This would require a doctrine, he said, allowing Europe to introduce nuclear weapons to a non-nuclear conflict. He compared it to the Israeli program, which is believed to allow for a nuclear strike against an overwhelming conventional attack.

“These are political weapons. Their use must be unpredictable,” he said. Smaller nuclear powers often maintain vague doctrines to deter more powerful adversaries.

The goal, he said, would be to maintain Europe’s defense, seen as crucial for its internal unity, as well as its international diplomatic standing.

German lawmakers across the political spectrum worry that Mr. Trump could strike a grand bargain with Russia that excludes Europe, a potential first step toward Washington and Moscow dictating Europe’s future. Mr. Kiesewetter believes a European nuclear program would allow Europe to preserve its autonomy.

‘A Political Minefield’

Mostly, Mr. Kiesewetter said he hoped to spur Mr. Trump to end doubts over American security commitments to Europe, rendering unnecessary the nuclear “Plan B.”

For now, Mr. Kiesewetter’s intention is merely to “trigger a debate” over addressing “this silent, gigantic problem.”

It has worked. A small but growing contingent of German analysts and commentators have endorsed versions of a European nuclear program.

Mr. Kiesewetter said he had heard interest from officials in the Polish and Hungarian governments, at NATO headquarters in Brussels and within relevant German ministries, though he would not say which.

But any European nuclear program would face enormous hurdles.

“The public is totally opposed,” Ms. Puglierin said, referring to German antinuclear sentiment, which has at times culminated in nationwide protests against the weapons.

In practical terms, the plan would change the flag on Europe’s nuclear deterrent from that of the United States to that of France. But this would risk making an American exit from Europe more permanent.

Oliver Thränert, a German analyst with the Switzerland-based Center for Security Studies, warned in a white paper that any plan “would not

only be expensive, but also a political minefield full of undesirable potential political consequences.”

The biggest challenge may be who controls the French arsenal and where it is based.

The United States currently shares warheads with allies like Germany, whose militaries are equipped to deliver the weapons, granting the program credibility as a Pan-European defense.

But France has shown no willingness to share its weapons, much less put them under a joint European command. If Paris maintains final say over their use, this might cause an adversary to doubt whether France would really initiate a nuclear conflict to protect, say, Estonia.

France and ‘a Special Responsibility’

These sorts of problems are why Bruno Tertrais of the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris said, “In other times I would have told you don’t bother, there’s no story here.”

Similar proposals have been floated before, including by the French government, and always rejected as politically risky and strategically unnecessary. But, he said, that calculus appears to have a potential to change with Mr. Trump.

“There’s already a bit more interest in Berlin and in Paris,” Mr. Tertrais said, though he emphasized that this talk would become action only if there were “a serious loss of trust in the U.S. umbrella.”

But a joint European command or funding scheme would most likely be impossible, he warned. The French government would insist on maintaining “the final decision to use nuclear weapons.”

That is also United States policy in Europe, which is why Mr. Tertrais believes a more workable plan would be for France to reproduce American-style practices of basing its warheads abroad, while keeping them under French control.

While most French warheads are lodged on submarines, a few dozen are fitted to air-launched cruise missiles that could be housed in, for example, German airfields. These are smaller, shorter-range tactical weapons — exactly the American capability that Europe most fears losing.

French policy already allows for, though does not require, using nuclear weapons in defense of an ally.

With Britain’s exit from the European Union, “the French might feel they

have a special responsibility” as Europe’s sole nuclear power.

Vipin Narang, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor who studies regional nuclear powers, was initially skeptical but came to see such a plan as both technically and politically feasible.

For France, he said, “it extends their frontier,” making it likelier that a nuclear conflict would be fought far from French soil. For Germany and other European states, it would “increase the credibility of the forward deployment against Russian aggression.”

An Insurance Policy

Some observers believe that official shows of support are intended only to pressure Mr. Trump into maintaining the status quo, which Mr. Kiesewetter emphasized is his preferred outcome.

But Mr. Narang said that, regardless of intentions, there is a blurry line between mere signaling and actually pursuing a fallback nuclear option.

Nuclear scholars call this “insurance hedging,” in which a protectee comes to doubt its protector and responds by taking steps toward, but not actually completing, its own nuclear program. This is meant to goad the protector into staying, and to prepare in case it doesn’t.

Japan, for instance, has quietly developed latent capabilities that are sometimes figuratively described as a “screwdriver’s turn” away from a bomb.

Because Europe’s primary challenges are political rather than technical — France already possesses the warheads — sparking public discussion and exploring options makes those challenges more surmountable and the option more real.

“In order for it to be credible there has to be some sort of workable option,” Mr. Narang said.

‘I Never Thought We Would See This Again’

Mr. Kiesewetter hopes the United States will come around. He puts particular faith in Jim Mattis, the defense secretary, whom he met in Afghanistan and Brussels while both were military officers.

But Mr. Mattis has echoed Mr. Trump’s warnings that the United States could lessen its support for Europe, saying in a recent speech in Brussels, “I owe it to you to give you clarity on the political reality in the United States.”

If Europeans grew more serious about a nuclear program, Mr. Tertrais said, “you would not

necessarily see it." Negotiations would most likely remain secret for fear of giving Mr. Trump an excuse to withdraw — or of triggering a reaction from Russia.

Mr. Narang said he was reeling from the seriousness of the discussion, the first since a failed and now-forgotten effort in the 1950s for French-German-Italian nuclear cooperation.

"I never thought we would see this again. I never thought there would actually be this concern," he said. But, he added, "You can see where the debate is surfacing from. There is a logic to it."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

U.S. Shift on Russia Pleases Europe, Worries Moscow

Jay Solomon and Alan Cullison in Washington and Nathan Hodge in Moscow

March 6, 2017 6:16 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump's election was greeted with elation in Russia and trepidation in Europe because of his public overtures to Russian President Vladimir Putin. But the six weeks since the start of the Trump presidency have begun to reverse the emotional tide.

Throughout his campaign and presidential transition, Mr. Trump struck a conciliatory line toward Russia and spoke critically of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and other alliances.

Since taking office, however, he has selected a roster of top aides who have advanced a hard line toward the Kremlin, initially seeming at odds with the president. Mr. Trump himself has spoken in more supportive terms about NATO, including in his address to Congress last week.

The shift has taken place during a period when Mr. Trump's administration has been buffeted by controversy over undisclosed contacts between top associates and Russia. Disclosures of the contacts have been politically charged, given that they followed the U.S. intelligence assessment that Russia interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election with the aim of aiding Mr. Trump's campaign.

Mr. Trump's term and many of his policies are in their early stages, leaving even some top experts guessing at his real intentions. Kremlin watchers in the U.S. say the president may be posturing ahead of negotiations with the Kremlin aimed at pursuing reconciliation with

Russia and a common approach toward Europe and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the administration's turn toward a surprisingly tough stance on Russia has generated applause in Europe, and alarm in Moscow.

European diplomats said they have been assured that the U.S. won't sell out Eastern Europe and Ukraine to Russia by recognizing Moscow's greater sphere of influence.

"We have made a lot of progress on developing a unified position," said a senior European diplomat who had consultations in Washington last week. "No one came away with the idea that the U.S. was striking some grand bargain with Russia."

Mr. Putin's government, conversely, is already paring back its hopes for any rapprochement with the U.S. or a softening of American positions.

"Thus far, it's difficult for us to get oriented," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said last week, when asked if the recent appointments to Mr. Trump's policy team bode well for Russian-American relations. "For the time being, it does not make it possible to substantively engage in bilateral affairs."

Others in Moscow worry that congressional probes into contacts between Russian officials and Trump aides before the inauguration is creating a frenzied atmosphere in Washington that will make cooperation between the U.S. and Russia impossible.

"The hysteria in the U.S. has driven politicians into a trap," said pro-Kremlin lawmaker Alexei Pushkov on Twitter. "I met with a Russian? End of career. I hid it? Off to jail."

Mr. Trump's key appointees have significantly diverged from the views he advanced during his campaign.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, in a recent speech in Europe, said that the U.S. isn't interested in any military cooperation with Russia, and that the U.S. must in any negotiations operate from "a position of strength."

More recently, Mr. Trump tapped Fiona Hill, a well-regarded Russia scholar who is often a tough critic of Kremlin policies, to be the National Security Council's senior director for Europe and Russia.

Mr. Trump himself has pledged strong support for NATO, which candidate Trump roundly criticized last summer. In particular, the Trump White House has voiced support for Montenegro joining NATO, a step that the Kremlin has repeatedly described as an existential threat to its security.

Montenegrin officials have accused the Kremlin of trying to overthrow their government in October, a charge Russia has denied.

The discernible shift has cast a pall over the Kremlin. Asked in recent days if Ms. Hill's appointment would mean the continuation of a hard line from Washington, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova was blunt. "That's not a question to direct to Moscow," she said.

Mr. Pushkov, the pro-Kremlin lawmaker, said the spirit of the Russia-baiting U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy of the 1950s "is just waiting in the wings."

Mr. Trump criticized the way the issue of relations with Russia has been covered at a wide-ranging news conference in February. "The false reporting by the media, by you people, false, horrible fake reporting, makes it much harder to make a deal with Russia," he said then.

Kremlin watchers in the U.S. say a fundamental reset in relations with Russia has always been difficult because Mr. Putin doesn't really want one for internal reasons.

Mr. Putin faces his next presidential elections in 2018. The Kremlin has long maintained that the U.S. is trying to unseat Mr. Putin through pro-democracy protests, and it has traditionally ramped up a tide of anti-Americanism at home whenever it faces elections to inoculate itself against charges of election fraud.

Still, some Russia experts in Washington voiced skepticism that Mr. Trump will be deterred in the long-term from seeking rapprochement with Mr. Putin.

"I think that reports of the death of Donald Trump's Moscow outreach are premature," said Andrew Weiss, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a liberal Washington think tank. "It has been an idea-fix of his foreign policy outlook, despite the fact that his cabinet and political establishment are against it."

Paul Saunders, executive director of the Center for the National Interest, a Washington think tank, said that Mr. Trump's critics fundamentally misunderstand his plans to improve relations, and that affairs with Moscow may in fact grow tense in the short run as Mr. Trump shores up what he believes is a weak negotiating position with the Kremlin.

"When he says he wants to improve relations, doing it from a position of strength is very important to him," he said. "And it's obvious that the Russians won't like it."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

West Doesn't Want New Cold War, Says U.K. Foreign Minister

Laurence Norman
March 6, 2017
7:23 a.m. ET

BRUSSELS—British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson will soon make the first official visit to Moscow by a senior U.K. minister in five years, sending a message that Britain and its allies want no "new Cold War" with Russia, he said.

Mr. Johnson's visit, announced over the weekend, is an effort to improve years of frosty ties between the U.K. and Russia. The move comes as U.S. President Donald Trump's administration is also considering closer relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

British officials stressed the trip doesn't signal a change in Britain's support for the economic sanctions

on Russia over the conflict in Ukraine and its opposition to Russia's actions in Syria.

Asked on Monday about his coming trip as he entered a meeting of European Union foreign ministers in Brussels, Mr. Johnson said it is now up to Russia to demonstrate that it can be trusted again.

"Let's be very clear. Russia is up to all sorts of no good," he said. "They are I'm afraid engaged in cyberwarfare, they are engaged in undermining countries in the western Balkans...to say nothing of Russia's actions in Ukraine, which are, as you know, completely unacceptable."

Britain's relations with Russia have been tense for the last decade,

starting with the murder of former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko in London in 2006. Ties worsened after Russia's annexation of Crimea in early 2014.

British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said there was worry about Russian involvement in the Balkans, including allegations of Russian support for last year's coup attempt in Montenegro, and concerns about interference in elections in Germany and elsewhere.

"Certainly, the foreign secretary will be warning Russia to keep its nose out of the democratic process we have in western Europe," Mr. Fallon said. "This is not business as usual. It is engage but beware."

However, Mr. Johnson said the U.K. and its western allies need to step up engagement with Russia.

"Neither the U.K. nor our friends in the rest of the EU, nor in Washington is there any appetite for a new Cold War," he said. "So it's vitally important that we try to engage with the Russians, we try to understand where they're coming from and we try to shape their policies and help them onto a better path."

British officials said Mr. Johnson's trip followed an invitation by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. A date for the visit hasn't yet been announced.

Mr. Johnson declined to say whether he would meet Mr. Putin on the trip. Russia's Tass news agency

reported Sunday that the Russian leader currently has no plans to meet Mr. Johnson.

While British officials were eager to tamp down expectations of a reset in ties, the planned visit comes at an important time.

The European Union must decide by July whether to continue broad economic sanctions against Russia over Moscow's intervention in Ukraine. Britain had been among the strongest supporters of those measures and the EU has until now linked easing the sanctions to Russia fulfilling the terms of the Minsk 2015 peace and cease-fire agreements between Moscow and Kiev.

EU governments are watching to see whether Washington will ease

its pressure on Moscow as part of Mr. Trump's push for warmer ties with Mr. Putin.

Before he became foreign secretary, Mr. Johnson already supported greater engagement with Russia on issues such as Syria. In December 2015, he penned an article suggesting the U.K. and the U.S. should work with Russia and the Assad regime to fight Islamic State.

U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron visited St. Petersburg in 2013 to attend a summit of the Group of 20 major economies.

—Jason Douglas in London and Julian Barnes in Brussels contributed to this article.

The New York Times Turkish Referendum Has Country Trading Barbs With Germany Over Free Speech

Alison Smale and Patrick Kingsley

But the campaign has put Chancellor Angela Merkel's government in a deeply awkward position. Mr. Erdogan's opponents in Germany, both Turkish and German, say the president wants to use the freedoms of Western democracy to further consolidate his anti-democratic powers at home, and they accuse him and his men of using their right to free speech in Germany while denying it in Turkey.

Of particular concern to Germany is a German-Turkish journalist, Deniz Yucel, who turned himself in last month, was held for 13 days and last week was ordered held indefinitely, with the Turkish authorities — including Mr. Erdogan himself — labeling him a terrorist.

Mr. Erdogan and his supporters have jailed tens of thousands of people they claim supported a failed military coup against him last July. Turkey jailed more journalists than any other country in 2016, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

But both sides are now accusing each other of stifling free speech, with Turkish officials charging that they are being blocked from campaigning in Germany.

Two Turkish ministers campaigning in Germany on Mr. Erdogan's behalf scrapped rallies last week after local German authorities said they could not guarantee security. Germany's federal government has denied intervening in any way.

On Sunday, Mr. Erdogan accused Berlin of using Nazi tactics and threatened to stir a revolt if he decided to go to Germany himself

and was somehow prevented from entering. (He previously campaigned in Germany in 2008, 2011 and 2014.)

"Some friends talked about fascism," Mr. Erdogan said at a dinner event in Istanbul. "I was thinking that fascism is over in Germany, but it is still ongoing. It is ongoing, obviously."

Then he added: "My brothers, now they think Erdogan is supposed to come to Germany. I would come if I want to. I could come and set the world on fire if you don't let me come in, or you don't allow me to talk."

On Monday, Ms. Merkel told reporters, "One can't even really seriously comment on such misplaced statements."

Ms. Merkel's chief of staff, Peter Altmaier, said Mr. Erdogan's language was "absolutely unacceptable" and that the government would relay that message to Turkey.

"Concerning the rule of law, tolerance and liberalism, Germany is not to be bested," Mr. Altmaier said.

Analysts and commentators urged calm and noted that the sparring would benefit no one. Germany and Turkey are bound by the NATO alliance, aid from the European Union and an additional European Union agreement, negotiated by Ms. Merkel and worth up to six billion euros, or \$6.3 billion, if Turkey keeps refugees from fleeing across the Aegean Sea to Greece and into Central Europe.

"The most important thing is that we have no interest in a rising spiral of

insults — an insult arms race, or however you want to put it," said Volker Perthes, the director of the German Institute for Security and International Affairs, a government-funded think tank in Berlin. "That will not help us."

He predicted relations could get back on track after April 16.

In the meantime, Mr. Erdogan — labeled the "dictator on the Bosphorus" by Andreas Scheuer, a leading politician in Bavaria — has come under fierce attack, and not only in Germany.

In Austria, which has a sizable Turkish minority and a strong right-wing opposition, Chancellor Christian Kern said Turkish politicians should not campaign abroad. In the Netherlands, the nationalist Geert Wilders, who leads polls for elections this month but is unlikely to become prime minister, said he would declare all of Turkey's ministers persona non grata.

In Turkey, opposition politicians criticized the decision to block Mr. Erdogan's allies from speaking to German Turks. The leader of Turkey's main opposition party, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, accused Germany of hypocrisy.

"You teach democracy to the world, but you forbid two ministers from speaking with this or that excuse," Mr. Kilicdaroglu said on Friday, in comments reported by Hurriyet Daily News.

But some of Mr. Erdogan's opponents noted the irony of the president defending his right to free speech in Europe, while eroding that of citizens at home.

Aysun Gezen, one of an estimated 4,000 academics purged from Turkish universities since the failed coup last year, said her case highlighted the Turkish government's intolerance of dissident voices within its own borders.

"It is impossible to say that there is freedom of speech in Turkey," argued Ms. Gezen, who was a political scientist at Ankara University before being fired last year for signing a petition that criticized the government's actions toward Kurds. She and her fellow petitioners were accused of creating terrorist propaganda.

In addition to academics like Ms. Gezen, more than 120,000 government employees are estimated to have been fired or suspended in recent months for perceived opposition to the government.

On the day that Mr. Kilicdaroglu, the opposition leader, defended his opponents' right to campaign in Germany, he also lamented his side's inability to campaign freely in Turkey.

In an interview last week with The New York Times, he said that the whole Turkish state apparatus was being mobilized behind the yes campaign, while voices in the private news media are stifled.

State officials had made it hard for his colleagues to rent spaces for campaign events, Mr. Kilicdaroglu argued, while the police in Istanbul had failed to properly investigate claims that a group of no-campaigners had been shot at.

"We repeat the same thing 100 times, but with the problem in the media, we can't deliver our message

to the masses," Mr. Kilicdaroglu said.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Germany Condemns Turkish President Erdogan's 'Nazi Practices' Slur

Andrea Thomas

Updated March 6, 2017 1:02 p.m. ET

BERLIN—Germany has condemned weekend remarks by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in which he said Germany is employing "Nazi practices" after authorities here withdrew permission for two political rallies to go ahead, stepping up a war of words between the two allies.

German-Turkish relationships have been tense since last summer's aborted coup in Turkey and Mr. Erdogan's ensuing crackdown on opposition and media. But they plumbed new lows in recent weeks after the arrest of a prominent German-Turkish journalist in Turkey and the decision by two German towns to ban political rallies by Turkish government ministers ahead of a referendum next month on constitutional changes that would grant Mr. Erdogan sweeping new powers.

Speaking on Sunday after news that two German towns had canceled planned rallies by Turkish ministers, Mr. Erdogan said Germany doesn't "let our friends speak in Germany...Germany, you have nothing to do with democracy. Your current practices are no different than Nazi practices in the past."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has relied on Turkey to help stem a flow of migrants to Europe and Ankara is also an ally in fighting Islamic State in Syria. Mr. Erdogan, meanwhile, has been eager to court

the votes of Germany's large Turkish community ahead of the constitutional referendum. But the succession of spats has made cooperation between the two North Atlantic Treaty Organization members increasingly awkward.

"We strongly reject any comparison between the policies of the democratic Federal Republic and Nazi Germany," Ms. Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert told journalists in Berlin on Monday, adding that such comparisons could "result in trivializing the crimes against humanity committed by National Socialism."

Ms. Merkel's top aide, Chancellery Head Peter Altmaier, said on German ARD television Mr. Erdogan's accusations were "absolutely unacceptable."

Germany is home to an estimated 3.5 million people of Turkish descent, the world's biggest such diaspora, some 1.4 million of whom will be able to vote at the referendum. Since giving Turkish expatriates the right to vote, Mr. Erdogan has assiduously courted their vote, holding numerous rallies in Germany in recent years.

While Germany is more liberal than most other European countries in allowing foreign politicians to hold political rallies on its soil, it requires these to be registered as such. In the past, municipalities have largely tolerated such rallies even though they were often registered as cultural events. Many are no longer willing to do so.

Mr. Seibert said such rallies should be "properly and timely registered and announced honestly and then approved" by local authorities, as stated by German law.

"Let us be open and where necessary talk to each other critically, but let's keep in mind the special significance of our close German-Turkish partnership and relation and let's stay cool," Mr. Seibert said.

Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz said Monday his country didn't allow campaign events by Turkish politicians in Austria. Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders said his government had also told Turkish officials that they didn't want ministers to appear at campaign rallies in the country and Turkey "shouldn't export the issues of Turkey into the Netherlands."

In Germany, officials from local governments are now looking more closely at planned events and whether Turkish organizers are complying with German rules. Some have complained that organizers of the rallies hadn't been open about the speakers and the purpose of the meetings, raising security concerns because the expected number of visitors might exceeded the available space.

The recent detention in Turkey of Deniz Yucel, a reporter with German daily Die Welt, and the widespread perception that Mr. Erdogan's planned constitutional reform would make Turkey less free and democratic have also helped harden feelings among local German

politicians who used to put harmonious community relations before a strict interpretation of German law.

Still, some Turkish government members have been able to address rallies in Germany in recent days. On Sunday, Turkish Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci spoke at a private event in Cologne and at a public gathering in Leverkusen that had been registered as a musical event.

Turkey's foreign minister will meet his counterpart in Berlin on Wednesday and the tourism minister will be in Germany for the Berlin international trade show ITB that starts later this week, according to the German foreign ministry. The ministry said it hadn't receive a request for Mr. Erdogan to visit the country.

Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu is scheduled to speak in Hamburg on Tuesday evening. But the police said Monday evening the event couldn't take place in the planned venue because the local municipality found insufficient fire protection on site. Earlier Monday, policy had said the event could go ahead because organizers had submitted the necessary security concept. It's unclear whether organizers will find an alternative venue for Tuesday's planned rally.

—Yeliz Candemir in Istanbul and Laurence Norman in Brussels contributed to this article.

INTERNATIONAL

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Tens of Thousands Join Exodus From Mosul as Iraq Renews Offensive

Ben Kesling and Awadh Altaie

Updated March 6, 2017 2:05 p.m. ET

MOSUL, Iraq—The fight against Islamic State in west Mosul has unleashed a torrent of people, with the International Organization for Migration estimating Monday that more than 50,000 people have fled their homes in the two weeks since Iraqi forces renewed their offensive.

Some 200,000 people remain displaced from Mosul's east and west sides since the operation to retake the city from Islamic State began in October, according to the United Nations agency that helps displaced persons, refugees and migrant workers. On its outskirts, workers are building new camps to accommodate the continued exodus.

People carried newborns while men pushed old women in wheelbarrows on the road out of Mosul Monday as

Iraqi forces seized another western neighborhood from the militant group, continuing their advance toward the city center. Thousands of people walking out of embattled neighborhoods were forced to cross a boulevard known as Baghdad Street, as militants likely a few hundred yards away targeted a key intersection with mortar fire.

Iraq's military announced its ground offensive to drive Islamic State from west Mosul, its remaining urban stronghold in Iraq, on Feb. 26 after a

weekslong pause following victory in the east.

Residents who had been living under Islamic State rule for more than two years poured out to aid stations and camps. The militants forced people into urban areas for use as human shields and punished those who tried to leave, according to locals and officials.

UNHCR, the U.N.'s refugee agency, has 10 camps near Mosul that can still host thousands more people,

said spokeswoman Caroline Gluck. Another 9,300-capacity camp is opening in the coming weeks, she added. Yet the influx of displaced residents could still strain resources.

"Finding suitable land to build camps has been our No. 1 challenge, and we raised our concerns about this months ago," she said. "For the moment, we have enough capacity. The problem is we don't know what will happen in the coming days [and] weeks, and if there is a major exodus, this will be very difficult to manage."

Despite the danger of fleeing through an active war zone, people scrambled to leave the city. A man with a bad limp dispatched his son to wrangle a donkey grazing by the road so he could ride it. The donkey ran away, leaving the man dejected.

The New York Times

Samaan

The Islamic State appeared to suffer an important setback on Monday when American-backed militia fighters in Syria seized the main route that connects Raqqa, the Islamic State's de facto capital, to its territory in southeastern Deir al-Zour Province.

The development essentially severed the last remaining access for supply deliveries to Raqqa and may have eliminated an escape route for Islamic State fighters.

Syrian government forces lost control of Raqqa in 2013 to the opposition, and the Islamic State captured the city later that year. Raqqa was the Islamic State's most important territorial triumph at the time, and the extremist movement regards the city as the center of its self-proclaimed caliphate.

The seizure of the Raqqa exit route on Monday by the American-backed militia, known as the Syrian Democratic Forces, was confirmed by a Pentagon spokesman, Capt. Jeff Davis, and by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group. The Syrian Observatory said the militia fighters were just five miles outside the Raqqa city limits.

An assault on Raqqa to expel the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, is widely

Up the road and out of mortar range, U.S. special operations forces provided cover for a food relief distribution point in a neighborhood that had days earlier been retaken by Iraqi forces.

U.S. troops have become more conspicuous on the battlefield since November, after taking a less visible role in other fighting against Islamic State. In Mosul, they have operated more openly near the front lines since Defense Department restrictions eased in November. The U.S. has backed Iraqi forces in Mosul since the battle to reclaim the city began in October.

"More logistical support from the Americans supports the morale of our troops," said Lt. Gen. Sami al-Aardhi, a commander with Iraqi special forces. "It lets us know we

are not alone in the fight against terrorism."

On Monday U.S. troops sat at a command post with Iraqi counterparts about a mile from west Mosul's front lines, coordinating air support and flying surveillance drones. American forces regularly drive around west Mosul in armored vehicles. They also set up a checkpoint near the front lines to screen fleeing civilians.

Residents of areas cleared days earlier who are intent on staying behind in their homes swarmed two trucks loaded with aid including rice, oil, tea and sugar.

People waved ration cards that had been issued by the Iraqi government before Islamic State swept into the city in the summer of 2014, part of a

blitz that saw it seize about one-third of Iraq.

The extremist group had used the existing government cards to issue rations of their own, said Rafih Muhammad, a 47-year-old resident. Beginning Monday, the Iraqi government was again in charge of distributing rations using those cards.

Seven people were officially listed as family on Mr. Muhammad's card. The eighth, a son born while the militants controlled the city, had been written in by an Islamic State official.

ISIS Appears to Lose Ground in Fight for Its Raqqa Base

Rick Gladstone and Maher

expected in coming weeks, and if successful, it would deliver the organization's biggest defeat in its short and violent history.

The impending assault also represents a test of the complex array of competing forces in Syria fighting the Islamic State — forces that also could turn on one another.

They include rebel Kurdish and Arab militia members trained and equipped by the United States, Turkish soldiers, the Syrian forces of President Bashar al-Assad and his militia allies supported by Russia and Iran.

Mr. Assad's forces, which recaptured the city of Aleppo from insurgents in December after a prolonged siege, have been rapidly advancing east toward Raqqa in the past few weeks, Reuters reported Monday.

In a sign that the Islamic State is preparing for a possible retreat, male civilians in Raqqa were recently ordered to start dressing similarly to the group's fighters, according to the Syrian Observatory and a second monitoring group known as Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently.

By blending into the population, Islamic State fighters not only improve their escape prospects, but make distinguishing civilians from combatants difficult for the American-backed coalition of aerial forces hitting targets around Raqqa.

Activists from Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently reported last month that coalition warplanes had destroyed Euphrates River bridge connections into Raqqa. So the Syrian Democratic Forces' seizure of the land route from Raqqa to Deir al-Zour was seen as a major step in isolating the city.

President Trump has said his objective in Syria is to eradicate the Islamic State, but precisely how he intends to accomplish that goal has not been made clear.

The risk of clashes between the Syrian Democratic Forces and Turkish soldiers in Syria has increasingly worried American military officials. Turkey, a NATO ally of the United States, regards the Kurdish component of the militias as an enemy aligned with Turkey's Kurdish separatists.

Over the weekend, American military officials said the United States had strengthened its contingent of Syria-based forces to help deter clashes around Manbij, a town in northern Syria near the Turkish border, which Kurdish militia members helped capture from the Islamic State in August.

Turkey has complained that the Kurds have not vacated Manbij as promised.

Fighting in the Syrian civil war, which is about to enter its seventh year, has declined in recent weeks, partly because of a tenuous cease-

fire negotiated by Russia and Turkey when Aleppo was retaken by Mr. Assad's forces.

But the prospects for a political settlement remain remote, and the humanitarian crisis has only worsened. Hundreds of thousands have been killed since the conflict began in March 2011 as an uprising against Mr. Assad. Roughly five million people have fled the country, and millions more have been displaced.

In a new sign of the toll, Save the Children said in a report issued Monday that the war traumas suffered by Syrian children had increased their long-term risks of suicide, heart disease, diabetes, substance abuse and depression. The report, based on interviews with more than 450 children, adolescents and adults across the country, described a growing child-health crisis that could leave many suffering a condition known as toxic stress.

"The children we spoke with in Syria are terrified to play outside, afraid to go to school, and soiling themselves when they hear a loud noise," Carolyn Miles, the president and chief executive of Save the Children, said in releasing the report.

The Washington Post

By Mustafa Salim and Kareem Fahim

Iraq, excluded from travel ban, praises new White House executive order

IRBIL, Iraq — Iraqi officials on Monday praised the Trump administration's decision to exclude

Iraq from a list of Muslim-majority countries whose citizens will be temporarily banned from entering

the United States, calling it an acknowledgment of their nation's

unique role in the struggle against global extremism.

A previous ban had prompted widespread anger and disbelief in Iraq, a country destabilized by cycles of conflict since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 and a front-line battlefield in the fight against the Islamic State militant group.

A revised executive order signed by President Trump on Monday imposes a 90-day ban on the issuance of new visas to citizens of Iran, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, Syria and Libya, citing national security concerns, but it called Iraq "a special case."

Today's WorldView

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Despite the continued presence of the Islamic State in the country, the order said, other factors justified Iraq's exclusion from the list, including close cooperation between Baghdad and Washington, as well as "the significant presence of United States forces in Iraq."

[Revised executive order bans people from 6 Muslim-majority nations from getting visas]

A spokesman for Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said that Trump and the Iraqi leader had discussed the ban in a telephone call several weeks ago and that the U.S. president had promised to review

Iraq's status. The decision on Monday "showed an appreciation for the partnership with Iraq in fighting terrorism" and would speed up the fight against the Islamic State, the spokesman said.

The relief in Iraq was in sharp contrast to the criticism of the revised order from human rights groups, which derided it as effectively a ban on Muslims as well as refugees and their advocates. The order suspends the U.S. refugee program for 120 days.

The order "heartlessly targets the most vetted and most vulnerable population to enter the United States," David Miliband, president and chief executive of the International Rescue Committee, which resettles refugees in the United States, said in a statement.

"This ban doesn't target those who are the greatest security risk, but those least able to advocate for themselves. Instead of making us safer, it serves as a gift for extremists who seek to undermine America," he said.

The Trump administration says the ban is critical to public safety, and officials asserted Monday that the revised order would eliminate the chaos at airports worldwide that accompanied the initial executive order issued in January.

Mohamed Gabr, a Syrian refugee who lives with his family in Cairo and said he was supposed to be resettled in New Jersey before the initial ban, was still waiting to hear

from his resettlement agency about when — and if — his family would be able to travel.

[Trump's new travel ban still wouldn't have kept out anyone behind deadly U.S. terror attacks]

(Sarah Parnass/The Washington Post)

Trump administration officials spoke to members of the media, March 6, about a new executive order imposing a ban on U.S. entry for new visa seekers from six majority-Muslim nations. Here are key moments from that news conference. Key moments from a news conference about a new executive order imposing a 90-day ban on U.S. entry for new visa seekers from six majority-Muslim nations (Sarah Parnass/The Washington Post)

"My condition is intolerable. For a year and eight months, we have been stuck here. For two months, I have been told to wait," he said.

Despite the uncertainty about their future, Gabr and his wife, Lamis el-Hamawi, said they were happy that the executive order had been narrowed, if only slightly.

"We wish the Iraqis all the best," Hamawi said. "They are just like us, they faced the same horrors. We don't see any difference between us and them. We don't hate or discriminate."

"They do," she said, referring to U.S. officials. "But we don't."

The revised executive order comes as the United States is stepping up its involvement in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq, including by sending hundreds of military advisers to front-line positions with Iraqi security forces wrestling for control of the northern city of Mosul.

The original White House ban was seen as especially egregious by Iraqi troops and commanders representing units that have suffered heavy losses in the grinding fight for Mosul.

"It showed no appreciation at all for the sacrifices of Iraqis in fighting terrorism," said Lt. Gen. Sami al-Aridhi, commander of the second division of Iraq's U.S.-trained counterterrorism forces. "It had a negative impact on the psyche and morale of fighters, especially for the special forces, because we deal directly and closely with the Americans," he said.

On Monday, some of the resentment abated, Aridhi said, adding that he hoped to visit the United States someday, when the fight against the Islamic State has ended, "and enter the country with respect: as an Iraqi who fought against terrorism consistently since 2003."

Heba Mahfouz in Cairo and Louisa Loveluck in Beirut contributed to this report.

The New York Times

U.S. Air Campaign in Yemen Killed Guantánamo Ex-Prisoner

Eric Schmitt

WASHINGTON — For a fifth consecutive night, American warplanes and drones on Monday pummeled suspected Qaeda targets in Yemen as the Pentagon said an earlier attack in the country had killed a former prisoner held at the United States detention center at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Capt. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said an airstrike last Thursday — the first night of a larger Pentagon campaign to roll back gains made by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or A.Q.A.P. — killed the former detainee, who was using the name Yasir Ali Abdallah al Silmi. While at Guantánamo, he was held as Detainee No. 679 and went by the name Mohammed Tahar, according to military records.

Including an airstrike overnight on Monday that Captain Davis said killed seven Qaeda fighters, the United States has conducted more than 40 attacks across central and southern Yemen in the past week.

By comparison, the military carried out 41 strikes in all of 2012, the most in a single year against the Qaeda affiliate in Yemen.

Soon after taking office, President Trump authorized the stepped-up air campaign against the Qaeda branch, one of the deadliest in the world, at the same time he approved the ill-fated Special Operations raid in January that left one member of Navy SEAL Team 6 dead and three others wounded. An estimated two dozen civilians were killed in that raid.

"It's a reflection of growing concern about the reconstitution of A.Q.A.P. in Yemen," Gerald M. Feierstein, a former United States ambassador to Yemen who is now at the Middle East Institute in Washington, said of the flurry of airstrikes.

"The key issue is how they identify targets, the fidelity of the intelligence, and the care they take to maintain the standard of near certainty on no collateral damage," Mr. Feierstein said, referring to

civilian casualties. "I don't know the answer to those questions."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has scheduled a hearing for Thursday on Yemen, the first since the raid in January.

Mr. Tahar was imprisoned at Guantánamo Bay from 2002 to 2009. Because Yemen was in chaos at that time, officials were reluctant to repatriate detainees there. But Mr. Tahar was among a small group the Obama administration repatriated in December 2009 as part of an experiment.

Later that month, however, after the attempted bombing of a Detroit-bound airliner by Al Qaeda's Yemen branch, President Barack Obama halted further repatriations to Yemen. Years later, the Obama administration resettled many Yemenis in other countries.

Military records show that Mr. Tahar's brother, who went by the name Ali Abdullah Ahmed, was also a Guantánamo detainee. He was

among three detainees who died in June 2006 in what the military said was a coordinated suicide.

Captain Davis said that Usayd al-Adnani, whom he described as a "longtime explosives expert who served as the organization's emir" within Abyan Province, was killed in the same March 2 strike as Mr. Tahar.

Yemeni civilians in three provinces where Al Qaeda has strongholds described the American bombing campaign as unrelenting.

For three days beginning Friday, American drones and attack planes extensively hit the rugged mountains and valleys in central Baydha Province, where Qaeda military camps have long existed outside the control of the weak central government in Sana, the capital, according to residents reached by phone.

"They appear on the sky at nearly the same time and quickly launched heavy fire against Al Qaeda gatherings," said Nayef, a resident

who for security reasons preferred to be identified only by his first name.

"The U.S. planes become more aggressive when Al Qaeda militants fire back," he said. "We can see

balls of fire on the sky when the Americans exchange fire with Al Qaeda."

Abdul Aziz Awadh, a resident of Abyan Province in the south, the birthplace of Yemen's president,

Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi, said that an American drone struck a taxi carrying a number of Qaeda militants on Thursday afternoon.

"The airstrike completely burned the car and killed at least four Al

Qaeda," he said. "We later learned that they came from Aden to Abyan. The U.S. drone chased them until they passed through a farm and hit them."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

March 6, 2017 7:38 p.m. ET

The controversy over President Trump and Russia is, at base, a battle between rival conspiracy theories. To hear the president's enemies tell it, he colluded with Vladimir Putin to get elected. Mr. Trump sees himself as victim of a plot, hatched by Barack Obama, to smear him as Mr. Putin's Manchurian candidate.

At 6 a.m. on Saturday morning Mr. Trump opened a new round in this fight by claiming on Twitter that "President Obama was tapping my phones in October, just prior to Election!" Many press outlets immediately denounced Mr. Trump's tweet as baseless. James Clapper, who was Mr. Obama's last director of national intelligence, seemed to agree: "For the part of the national-security apparatus that I oversaw," Mr. Clapper told NBC's Chuck Todd on Sunday, "there was no such wiretap activity mounted against the president, the president-elect at the time, or as a candidate, or against his campaign."

Mr. Trump's accusation and Mr. Clapper's categorical denial can't both be right—or can they? Mr. Clapper may be staking his position on a legalistic definition of the phrase "mounted against the president."

What if the NSA was monitoring the calls of close associates of Mr. Trump who were not part of the campaign—people who talked to him regularly? In mid-January both the BBC and McClatchy reported that on Oct. 15 a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court approved an

investigation into Russian activities in the U.S. that focused on nameless Trump associates—three of them, according to the BBC. Also in mid-January, the New York Times reported on "a broad investigation into possible links between Russian officials and associates of [Mr.] Trump."

If we assume that the National Security Agency was indeed tasked, as a result of the Oct. 15 decision or in some other context, with monitoring the phone calls of three Trump associates, then it is easy to build a scenario whereby Mr. Trump's accusation and Mr. Clapper's denial are both true.

Who might be the targets of such an investigation? On the basis of publicly available information, let's speculate: First, Roger Stone, an informal political adviser to Mr. Trump. Second, Michael Cohen, Mr. Trump's personal lawyer, who in January helped generate a peace plan for Ukraine that the Times depicts as pro-Russian. Third, Mike Flynn, Mr. Trump's former national security adviser, who in 2015 received money for a speech from the Russian government. All three had some connection with Moscow or its friends, so the idea that they were monitored is at least plausible.

Stipulating that they were, the government would find itself monitoring all of Mr. Trump's calls with one of his political advisers, his lawyer and his national security adviser. Transcripts of those intercepts would be available to the Obama administration's senior national-security officials. In this scenario, the tapping of Mr. Trump's calls would be extensive, but Mr. Clapper's denial would still be

true—at least in a literal sense—because Mr. Trump wasn't the direct target.

Critics of Mr. Trump have heaped special scorn on his claim that the theorized wiretaps were ordered by Mr. Obama directly. The former president's spokesman issued a carefully worded statement that "neither President Obama nor any White House official ever ordered surveillance on any U.S. citizen."

In terms of bureaucratic procedure, the spokesman certainly has a point: The White House never directly generates FISA investigations; that task falls to the Justice Department, to then-Attorney General Loretta Lynch. It strains credulity, however, to believe that Ms. Lynch would have refrained from informing the president if Mr. Trump's associates were indeed being monitored, since such an investigation risked exposing Mr. Obama to a grave accusation of domestic spying.

How valid is this scenario? At this stage, we simply do not know. Everything hinges on whether the press reports regarding the FISA investigation are true, on who the targets were, and on the scope of the surveillance. The Trump administration has asked Congress to look into the matter, so perhaps we will soon have more-solid information on which to make a judgment.

In any case, we already know more than enough to dismiss the claim that Mr. Trump's complaints are "baseless." The NSA's collection of communications by Trump associates—whether conducted through a FISA investigation or

simply as part of routine surveillance of foreign officials—has so far generated no evidence of an alliance between the Trump campaign and the Russian government. It has, however, generated a torrent of leaks fostering the impression of such an alliance.

President Obama took at least one direct step that could not help but deepen that impression. In the final days of his administration, he changed the regulations on the distribution of NSA transcripts, ensuring their wide dissemination across multiple agencies, while minimizing the effort to conceal the identity of American citizens accidentally caught up in the surveillance. Officials justified the step as an effort to protect information about malign Russian behavior from a coverup. That justification alone furthered the notion that Mr. Trump was allied with Mr. Putin, while the change in procedure served up fresh material available to anti-Trump leakers.

The president's critics treat as outrageous any suggestion that senior officials in the Obama administration tailored NSA surveillance to assist them in their efforts to foil Mr. Trump. They would ask us, instead, to believe an alternative conspiracy theory—that Mr. Trump is Mr. Putin's puppet. For now, at least, the preponderance of evidence favors Mr. Trump.

Mr. Doran is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

Doran : Trump and Russia: A Clash of Conspiracy Theories

Michael Doran

The Washington Post

It would have been impossible to imagine a year ago that the Republican Party's leaders would be effectively serving as enablers of Russian interference in this country's political system. Yet, astonishingly, that is the role the Republican Party is playing.

U.S. intelligence services have stated that the Russian government interfered in the 2016 presidential election with the intention of swinging it to one side. Knowing

Kagan : Republicans are becoming Russia's accomplices

By Robert Kagan

how cautious the intelligence community is in making such judgments, and given the significance of this particular finding, the evidence must be compelling. At the very least, any reasonable person would have to conclude that there is enough evidence to warrant a serious, wide-ranging and open investigation. Polls suggest that a majority of Americans would like to see such an investigation carried out.

It's important at this time of intense political conflict to remain focused

on the most critical issue. Whether certain individuals met with Russian officials, and whether those meetings were significant, is secondary and can eventually be sorted out. The most important question concerns Russia's ability to manipulate U.S. elections. That is not a political issue. It is a national security issue. If the Russian government did interfere in the United States' electoral processes last year, then it has the capacity to do so in every election going forward. This is a powerful and dangerous weapon, more than

warships or tanks or bombers. Neither Russia nor any potential adversary has the power to damage the U.S. political system with weapons of war. But by creating doubts about the validity, integrity and reliability of U.S. elections, it can shake that system to its foundations.

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The United States has not been the only victim. The argument by at least one former Obama administration official and others that last year's interference was understandable payback for past American policies is undermined by the fact that Russia is also interfering in the coming elections in France and Germany, and it has already interfered in Italy's recent referendum and in numerous other elections across Europe. Russia is deploying this weapon against as many democracies as it can to sap public confidence in democratic institutions.

The democracies are going to have to figure out how to respond. With U.S. congressional elections just 20 months away, it is essential to get a full picture of what the Russians did do and can do here, and soon. The longer the American people remain in the dark about Russian manipulations, the longer they will remain vulnerable to them. The longer Congress fails to inform itself, the longer it will be before it can take steps to meet the threat. Unfortunately, the present administration cannot be counted on to do so on its own.

There's no need to ask what Republicans would be doing if the shoe were on the other foot — if the Russians had intervened to help elect the Democratic nominee. They would be demanding a bipartisan select committee of Congress, or a congressionally mandated blue-ribbon panel of experts and senior statesmen with full subpoena powers to look into the matter. They would be insisting that, for reasons of national security alone, it was essential to determine what happened: what the Russians did, how they did it and how they could be prevented from doing it again. If that investigation found that certain American individuals had somehow participated in or facilitated the Russian operation, they would insist that such information be made public and that appropriate legal proceedings begin. And if the Democrats tried to slow-roll the investigations, to block the creation of select committees or outside panels, or to insist that investigations be confined to the intelligence committees whose inquiries and findings could be kept from the public, Republicans would accuse them of a coverup and of

exposing the nation to further attacks. And they would be right.

But it is the Republicans who are covering up. The party's current leader, the president, questions the intelligence community's findings, motives and integrity. Republican leaders in Congress have opposed the creation of any special investigating committee, either inside or outside Congress. They have insisted that inquiries be conducted by the two intelligence committees. Yet the Republican chairman of the committee in the House has indicated that he sees no great urgency to the investigation and has even questioned the seriousness and validity of the accusations. The Republican chairman of the committee in the Senate has approached the task grudgingly. The result is that the investigations seem destined to move slowly, produce little information and provide even less to the public. It is hard not to conclude that this is precisely the intent of the Republican Party's leadership, both in the White House and Congress.

This approach not only is damaging to U.S. national security but also

puts the Republican Party in an untenable position. When Republicans stand in the way of thorough, open and immediate investigations, they become Russia's accomplices after the fact. This is undoubtedly not their intent. No one in the party wants to help Russia harm the United States and its democratic institutions. But Republicans need to face the fact that by slowing down, limiting or otherwise hampering the fullest possible investigation into what happened, that is what they are doing.

It's time for the party to put national security above partisan interest. Republican leaders need to name a bipartisan select committee or create an outside panel, and they need to do so immediately. They must give that committee the mission and all the necessary means for getting to the bottom of what happened last year. And then they must begin to find ways to defend the nation against this new weapon that threatens to weaken American democracy. The stakes are far too high for politics as usual.



Editorial : Ukraine's suit of moral armor against Russia

The Christian Science Monitor

March 6, 2017 —For a country under attack since 2014 from Russian-backed forces, Ukraine certainly has faith in the power of moral law. On March 6, it opened a legal case against Russia in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The suit seeks remedies for the killing of civilians in Ukraine based on several international laws. Merely convincing the United Nations' highest court of such atrocities could help put a needed spotlight on President Vladimir Putin's role in this hot conflict.

"Truth is stronger than arms!" Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko wrote on his Facebook

page as the court case opened before 16 judges in The Hague. Russia's forceful taking of the Crimean peninsula three years ago and its ongoing military support of separatists in eastern Ukraine have challenged the security order in Europe at its core. The court case is an attempt to restore the Continent's moral norms, such as respect for territorial integrity, that have kept Europe at peace for decades.

Russia is a party to the ICJ and obliged to follow its rulings. Ukraine's suit also seeks remedies for the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight 17 in 2014, which killed 298 passengers and crew. An investigation led by the Netherlands found the plane had been shot down

with a Russian-made missile from an area controlled by pro-Russian forces. The suit also calls on Russia to end discrimination against the non-Russian minorities in Crimea.

The EU has already imposed economic sanctions on Russia for its actions in Ukraine but with little effect so far on Kremlin behavior. If the ICJ decides in Ukraine's favor, it could deliver a blow to Russia's reputation. Mr. Putin's aggressive meddling in European elections, as well as Russian hacking in last year's American presidential campaign, has begun to backfire on him.

Putin may now realize that Russia needs to use "soft power" to achieve its objectives in Europe. Last week,

for example, he finally admitted that Russian athletics had engaged in large-scale doping at international competitions. Russia's anti-doping system had failed, he said, adding that it was "our fault and we should acknowledge it." His admission may help persuade Olympic organizers to allow Russian athletes to participate in future Games.

If Ukraine's president is right, a court's recognition of the truth about Russian-backed violence in his country may be an effective weapon. Exposing a grievous error against the light of universal justice is a way to triumph over it.



Canada to Extend Military Mission in Ukraine

David George-Cosh and Paul Vieira

Updated March 6, 2017 4:39 p.m. ET

Canada said Monday it plans to extend its military mission in Ukraine by another two years as the country's Liberal government maintains a defiant tone against Russian aggression in the region.

Canadian Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan and Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland told reporters in Ottawa about 200 Canadian soldiers would continue to provide military training and capacity-building assistance to their Ukrainian counterparts through March 2019. Much of that training will be focused on small-team training, explosive-ordnance disposal, military policing and medical training, the officials said.

"The assistance is crucial to ensure a sovereign, secure and stable Ukraine," Mr. Sajjan said. He added that the move underscores Canada's commitment to "be at the forefront of the international community's response to Russian aggression in Ukraine."

A representative from the Russian embassy in Ottawa wasn't immediately available for comment. Ukraine's ambassador to Canada

wasn't immediately available to comment.

The decision comes at a time of heightened interest over the direction President Donald Trump will take in relations with Moscow. And in recent weeks, there has been renewed deadly fighting between Moscow-backed separatists and government troops in eastern Ukraine.

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has said the

White House wouldn't compromise on its support for Ukraine sovereignty while pursuing the possibility of closer relations with Russia. In Brussels on Monday, U.K. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said Russia's actions in Ukraine are "completely unacceptable."

The Canadian mission was set up under the previous Conservative government back in 2015, involving 200 soldiers on a two-year mission to advise and train Ukraine's armed forces. Former Canadian Prime

Minister Stephen Harper was among the West's most vocal critics of Russia's actions in Ukraine and of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Mr. Harper attracted global headlines in the fall of 2014 for telling the Russian leader at a Group of 20 leaders' summit to "get out of Ukraine."

David Perry, senior analyst at Ottawa-based Canadian Global Affairs Institute, said there is no discernible difference in the policy on Ukraine between the current Liberal government and earlier

Conservative administration. "There's complete agreement that this is the right thing to do," he said.

Mr. Perry added Ms. Freeland is arguably more hawkish on Ukraine than her Conservative predecessors. Ms. Freeland is of Ukrainian background and was a journalist based in Moscow earlier in her career. In 2014, Moscow banned her and a number of other Canadian lawmakers from traveling to Russia, in retaliation for Canadian sanctions against Russian officials. That ban remains in effect.

Conservative Party lawmaker Peter Kent said the government's move marked a "bare-bones extension" to the military mission and offers no expansion of Canadian help just as fighting picks up. He added Canada should have heeded Ukraine's request for antitank weaponry.

There are roughly 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian descent, representing the largest diaspora outside of Eastern Europe.

The New York Times U.S. Starts Deploying Thaad Antimissile System in South Korea, After North's Tests

Gerry Mullany and Michael R. Gordon

Mr. Trump emphasized that the United States was taking steps to "enhance our ability to deter and defend against North Korea's ballistic missiles using the full range of United States military capabilities," the White House said in a statement.

China has been incensed over the deployment of the system, fearing it could give the United States military the ability to quickly detect and track missiles launched in China, according to analysts. A spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Geng Shuang, said Tuesday that China would "take the necessary steps to safeguard our own security interests, and the consequences will be shouldered by the United States and South Korea."

Mr. Geng warned the two countries not to "go further and further down the wrong road."

Yang Xiyu, a former senior Chinese official who once oversaw talks with North Korea, said China was worried that the deployment of the system would open the door to a broader American network of antimissile systems in the region, possibly in places like Japan and the Philippines, to counter a growing Chinese military.

"China can see benefits only for a U.S. regional plan, not for South Korea's national security interest," he said.

The state media recently encouraged Chinese citizens to boycott South Korean products and companies over the Thaad issue. The Chinese authorities recently forced the closing of 23 stores owned by Lotte, a South Korean conglomerate that agreed to turn over land that it owned for use in the Thaad deployment. Hundreds of

Chinese protested at Lotte stores over the weekend, some holding banners that read, "Get out of China."

Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., the head of the United States Pacific Command, announced the start of the deployment, saying that "continued provocative actions by North Korea, to include yesterday's launch of multiple missiles, only confirm the prudence of our alliance decision last year to deploy Thaad to South Korea."

The developments come as South Korea is consumed by turmoil over the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye, whose administration agreed to the Thaad deployment. But with the president facing possible removal from office over a corruption scandal, the fate of the system had been in doubt. Its accelerated deployment could make it harder, if not impossible, for her successor to head off its installation.

Moon Jae-in, an opposition leader who is the front-runner in the race to replace President Park, acknowledged that it would be difficult to overturn South Korea's agreement to deploy the system. But he has insisted that the next South Korean government should have the final say on the matter, saying that Ms. Park's government never allowed a full debate on it.

Last year, thousands of people in Seongju, a rural southern county in South Korea, protested when it was announced that a Thaad battery would be established there. They said they feared that the system would harm their agricultural livelihoods. Many South Koreans also worry that any expansion of military ties with the United States could worsen already festering tensions with North Korea and China.

Under its deal with Washington, South Korea is providing the land for the missile system and will build the base, but the United States will pay for the system, to be built by Lockheed Martin, as well as its operational costs.

The United States military statement said that "the first elements" of Thaad were deployed on Monday, the same day as the North's missile launchings.

A C-17 cargo plane landed at the United States military's Osan Air Base, about 40 miles south of Seoul, on Monday evening, carrying two trucks, each mounted with a Thaad launchpad. More equipment and personnel will start arriving in the coming weeks, South Korean military officials said.

"South Korea and the United States are doing their best to make the Thaad system operational as soon as possible," the South Korean Defense Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday, adding that the system was necessary "to protect South Korea from the nuclear and missile threat from North Korea."

The ministry declined to specify when the system would be operational. But the South Korean news agency Yonhap reported that the deployment was likely to be completed in one or two months, with the system ready for use by April.

The arrival of Thaad equipment was announced after South Korea's acting president, Hwang Kyo-ahn, talked with Mr. Trump on the phone on Tuesday morning. The two leaders condemned the North's missile tests as a violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and agreed to beef up the allies' joint defense posture, strengthen sanctions and step up

pressure against the North, Mr. Hwang's office said.

On the phone with Mr. Trump, Mr. Hwang called the North's nuclear and missile threat a "present and direct danger" to its allies, his office said.

The Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, said he spoke for 25 minutes on Tuesday with Mr. Trump, who reiterated his pledge to stand by Japan "100 percent," according to the public broadcaster NHK. "I appreciate that the United States is showing that all the options are on the table," Mr. Abe said, adding that Japan was "ready to fulfill larger roles and responsibilities" to deter North Korea.

Takashi Kawakami, a professor of international politics and security at Takushoku University in Tokyo, said the deployment of Thaad could put the United States in a stronger position to consider a pre-emptive strike on North Korea. If the United States took such action, he said, "North Korea is going to make a counterattack on the U.S. or Japan or another place, so in this case they will use Thaad."

With tensions increasing over the deployment of the system, some in China have advocated stern measures, including severing diplomatic relations with South Korea, or more.

A retired general, Luo Yuan, even suggested that China destroy the system with a military strike.

"We could conduct a surgical hard-kill operation that would destroy the target, paralyzing it and making it unable to hit back," General Luo wrote in Global Times, a state-run newspaper.

North Korea says it was practicing to hit U.S. military bases in Japan with missiles

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TOKYO — North Korea was practicing to strike United States military bases in Japan with its latest barrage of missiles, state media in Pyongyang reported Tuesday, and it appeared to be trying to outsmart a new American antimissile battery being deployed to South Korea by firing multiple rockets at once.

Kim Jong Un presided over Monday's launch of the four missiles, "feasting his eyes on the trails of ballistic rockets," the state-run Korean Central News Agency reported in a statement that analysts called a "brazen declaration" of the country's intent to strike enemies with a nuclear weapon if it came under attack.

"If the United States or South Korea fires even a single flame inside North Korean territory, we will demolish the origin of the invasion and provocation with a nuclear tipped missile," the KCNA statement said.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

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The four ballistic missiles fired Monday morning were launched by the elite Hwasong ballistic missile division "tasked to strike the bases of the U.S. imperialist aggressor forces in Japan," KCNA said. The United States has numerous military bases and about 54,000 military personnel stationed in Japan, the legacy of its postwar security alliance with the country.

Three of the four missiles flew about 600 miles over North Korea and landed in the sea, within Japan's exclusive economic zone off the Oga Peninsula in Akita prefecture, home to a Japanese self-defense

forces base. The fourth fell just outside the zone.

(Reuters)

A new round of North Korean ballistic missile launches on Mar. 6 has triggered anger from Japan. Video: N. Korea fires more missiles into the sea near Japan (Reuters)

[U.S. military deploys advanced defensive missile system to South Korea, citing North Korean threat]

North Korea did not say what kind of missiles it had fired, but after poring over photos released by state media, analysts at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in California said they were extended-range Scuds capable of flying more than 600 miles.

North Korea has tested these types of missiles before, so the point of Monday's launches was not to see if the rockets would fly, but to test how quickly the unit could set them up and deploy them — classic training for a wartime situation, said Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Middlebury Institute.

"They want to know if they can get these missiles out into the field rapidly and deploy them all at once," Lewis said. "They are practicing launching a nuclear-armed missile and hitting targets in Japan as if this was a real war."

[North Korea launches more missiles; 3 land in Japanese waters]

North Korea's extended-range Scud is halfway between a traditional short-range Scud and the medium-range missile known as the Rodong. But they can be produced much more cheaply than the Rodong, Lewis said, meaning that North Korea could fire them with more abandon.

KCNA reported that the four missiles were launched simultaneously and that Kim commented that they "are

so accurate that they look like acrobatic flying corps in formation."

This appeared to be a further challenge to the United States and South Korea, which said Tuesday that it had started deploying the advanced antimissile battery called Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, designed to protect the region against North Korea's rockets. The first parts of the THAAD system arrived Monday at Osan Air Base south of Seoul, South Korea's Defense Ministry said.

But THAAD would have difficulty intercepting four missiles launched at the same time, analysts said.

Furthermore, Osan Air Base is less than 300 miles from the missile launch site in North Korea — another apparent message to Pyongyang's enemies.

The launches coincided with joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises on the southern half of the Korean Peninsula, drills that take place every year and that North Korea views as preparation for an invasion. After the missiles were launched Monday, the U.S. Strategic Command said it had determined that the missile launch "did not pose a threat to North America."

But KCNA reported that the 33-year-old Kim had ordered the strategic forces to be on high alert, "as required by the grim situation in which an actual war may break out anytime, and get fully ready to promptly move."

North Korea has been making clear progress on its missile program and has a declared goal of developing an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the West Coast of the United States. It has also conducted five nuclear tests and claims to be able to miniaturize a warhead so that it could be fitted onto a missile.

However, it has not yet proven the ability to either attach a warhead to a missile or to be able to deliver a missile to a target — something that would involve mastering the difficult step of reentry.

[Did North Korea just test missiles capable of hitting the U. S.? Maybe.]

The launches also appeared designed to send a message to both President Trump and the Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, said Joshua Pollack, editor of the Nonproliferation Review.

"We might infer that the choice of Japan as a target might be based on a desire to do something new compared to last year — raising the stakes of the exercises — but also on Abe's visit to the U.S. and joint appearances with Trump," Pollack said.

North Korea launched a medium-range missile last month — its first since Trump was elected — while the president was hosting Abe for dinner at his Mar-a-Lago Club in Florida.

Trump spoke by phone with Abe and South Korea's acting president, Hwang Kyo-ahn, Tuesday morning.

"Both Japan and the U.S. confirmed that this North Korean missile launch was a clear violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and was an obvious challenge to the region and the international community," Abe told reporters in Tokyo, repeating his assertion that the North Korean threat had "reached a new stage."

In New York, a spokesman for U.N. Secretary General António Guterres said he condemned the actions, which "violate Security Council resolutions and seriously undermine regional peace and stability."

North Korea Launch Could Be Test of New Attack Strategy, Japan Analysts Say

Motoko Rich

TOKYO — The apparent success of four simultaneous missile launchings by North Korea on Monday raised new alarms about the threat to its neighbors and its progress toward developing an ability to overcome their ballistic missile defense systems, including those that have yet to be deployed.

According to the South Korean military, North Korea launched four ballistic missiles from its long-range rocket launch site on Monday morning.

In Japan, analysts said the launches suggested that North Korea could pose a more serious threat than indicated by previous tests.

Indeed, North Korea said on Tuesday that the tests were conducted by units "tasked to strike the bases of the U.S. imperialist aggressor forces in Japan in contingency."

"That would mean a lot in terms of the defense of Tokyo, because North Korea might have been conducting a simulation of a

'saturation attack' in which they launch a number of missiles simultaneously in order to saturate the missile defense that Japan has," said Narushige Michishita, director of the Security and International Studies Program at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo. "It would be difficult for Japan to shoot down four missiles

all at the same time because of our limited missile defense.”

The North's Korean Central News Agency said Tuesday that the launches were timed to counter a joint United States-South Korean military exercise. The missile tests came three weeks after North Korea tested a missile during a visit to the United States by Japan's prime minister, Shinzo Abe, to meet with President Trump.

Japan's Coast Guard sent out navigation warnings and stepped up air and sea patrols on Monday after three of the missiles landed within the country's so-called exclusive economic zone, where fishing and cargo ships are active. The fourth landed outside it, though nearby.

This was not the first time that North Korean test missiles have fallen within that zone. In both August and September of last year, missiles came within 125 and 155 miles of the Japanese coastline. Monday's missiles landed about 185 to 220 miles west of Akita Prefecture, on the northern coast of the main island, Honshu. The September launches involved three missiles

fired simultaneously, but this time North Korea set off four missiles at once, all of which seemed to land successfully.

During a parliamentary committee session Monday morning, Mr. Abe said that the launches “clearly represent a new threat from North Korea.”

Japan and the United States requested an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to discuss the launches, most likely for Wednesday.

The missiles took off from Tongchang-ri, in northwestern North Korea, and flew an average of 620 miles before falling into the sea between North Korea and Japan, said Noh Jae-chon, a South Korean military spokesman. The type of missile fired was not immediately clear, but Mr. Noh said it was unlikely that they were intercontinental ballistic missiles, which the North had recently threatened to test launch.

In South Korea, the launch prompted South Korean security officials to call for the early deployment of the Terminal High-

Altitude Area Defense System, or Thaad, an advanced American antimissile system. China has protested Thaad as a threat to its own nuclear deterrence because its powerful radar would be able to track Chinese missile launches.

Mr. Michishita, of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, said the missile launches could accelerate a discussion within the Japanese government about whether Japan should acquire more missile defense systems, including Thaad. In January, Japan's defense minister, Tomomi Inada, visited a United States Air Force base on Guam for a briefing on Thaad.

After North Korea's missile test last month, Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party formed a committee to discuss the country's ballistic missile defenses, and it plans to debate various options, including Thaad, early warning satellites and other defense systems that could intercept incoming missiles.

North Korea's provocations could also embolden Mr. Abe in his campaign to raise military spending.

“This can be used by the government as a pretty credible reason why we have to spend more on defense at the expense of other budget items,” including social welfare programs, Mr. Michishita said.

The Mainichi Shimbun newspaper reported in its evening edition that residents in Akita Prefecture, which sits closest to where the missiles landed in the Sea of Japan on Monday, were concerned by the increasing frequency of the tests.

Kazuhiro Asai, director of the Kitaura branch of the Fishermen's Cooperative of Akita Prefecture, told The Mainichi Shimbun that members of the group were frightened by the launches.

According to the Korean Central News Agency, North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, inspected the weekend missile tests. Mr. Kim was quoted as saying, “the four ballistic rockets launched simultaneously are so accurate that they look like acrobatic flying corps in formation.”

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

North Korea Missile Test Stirs ICBM Fears

Jonathan Cheng in Seoul and Alastair Gale in Tokyo

Updated March 6, 2017 10:02 p.m. ET

North Korea's firing of a burst of midrange missiles aimed at Japan underscores Pyongyang's immediate threat to the U.S. military, even as it pushes toward a promised launch this year of an intercontinental ballistic missile that could potentially hit the U.S. West Coast.

Missile experts haven't identified the four intermediate-range missiles that landed on Monday off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula, about 620 miles from its launch site in the northwest of North Korea. A U.S. military official said a fifth missile failed to launch.

North Korea's state media reported on Tuesday morning that the missiles were aimed at U.S. military bases in Japan, a reminder that the North Korean threat to U.S. troops isn't reliant just on its ability to hit the American homeland with an ICBM.

The burst of four ballistic missiles was ordered by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency reported, highlighting the country's ability to deliver a synchronized burst of missiles to a target.

The launch was conducted by artillery units of the Korean People's Army Strategic Force, which were “tasked to strike the bases of the U.S. imperialist aggressor forces in Japan in contingency,” KCNA reported.

The U.S. has roughly 54,000 troops stationed in Japan, spread out over 85 facilities, though most of them are based in the southern islands of Okinawa. Another 28,500 U.S. troops are in South Korea.

Pyongyang regularly criticizes South Korea and Japan for hosting U.S. troops, calling the two countries puppets of the U.S. North Korea's rhetoric against its two neighbors is also traditionally heightened in the spring, when the U.S. and South Korean militaries conduct joint military exercises around the Korean Peninsula.

The test launch came on the sixth day of U.S.-South Korean drills. North Korea has long complained about the exercises, calling them a rehearsal for invasion. The U.S. says the exercises are defensive.

Most North Korean missile tests are made into the sea in the direction of Japan, including tests in 1998 and 2009 that sent missiles over Japan's main island of Honshu before they crashed into the Pacific Ocean.

A Pentagon spokesman, Capt. Jeff Davis, said the latest launches

followed a path similar to missiles launched last September, and were the latest in a “long history of provocative behavior” by Pyongyang.

North Korea often accuses Japan, like South Korea, of conspiring with the U.S. to invade, and threatens it with attack.

Three of the latest missiles landed about 200 miles from Japan's northwest coast. In August, North Korea fired a missile that landed in the same region, followed in September by three more. Japan has since been reviewing whether its current missile defenses—ship-based SM-3 interceptor rockets and surface-to-air PAC-3 missiles—provide a sufficient shield.

In January, Defense Minister Tomomi Inada visited Andersen Air Force Base in Guam to observe a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery there. Japanese officials have been noncommittal on deploying a Thaad battery, which would provide an added, but costly, layer of protection from multiple incoming missiles.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in parliament Monday that Tokyo would further discuss its ability to defend itself.

“North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities have improved, making prediction difficult,” he said, calling

the latest launches a sign that Pyongyang “has reached another level of threat.”

Mr. Abe also spoke with President Donald Trump by phone on Monday evening about the missile launch. The two leaders agreed to coordinate closely in responding to the launch, along with South Korea, Mr. Abe said.

North Korea has never launched an ICBM, though in 2006 it did fire a missile powerful enough to be used later as a space launcher. In his New Year address in January, Mr. Kim warned that preparations for an ICBM test were nearing completion.

A day later, Mr. Trump tweeted in response: “It won't happen!” He didn't elaborate. The White House is reviewing a wide range of options for North Korea, from diplomacy to military action to force regime change.

The White House condemned the launch and recounted defensive measures under way. “The U.S. stands with our allies in the face of this very serious threat,” press secretary Sean Spicer said. “The Trump administration is taking steps to enhance our ability to defend against North Korea's ballistic missiles,” including by deploying an advanced missile-defense system in South Korea.

The launch was met with denunciation on Capitol Hill in Washington, where lawmakers have been considering more strenuous sanctions.

"No amount of words, however clear or forceful, will prevent this kind of aggression," said Sen. Tom Cotton (R., Ark.). "Only firm action to defend America and our allies will stop them in their tracks."

The threat of more sanctions comes amid the release of a United Nations report that concludes that North Korea has evaded international sanctions with help of a vast network of front companies and governments. Japan, South Korea and the U.S. on Monday called for an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council over the missile launch.

A U.S. official said the latest launch wasn't viewed as "a particularly serious test that somehow crossed a new Rubicon," but that North Korea's continued provocations are a matter of deep concern and part of a trend of misconduct.

However, if North Korea were to demonstrate the capability of launching an ICBM, that would mark a step up from what is happening now and would sharply raise concerns, the official said.

In South Korea, a debate over the deployment of a Thaad battery has become a central campaign issue in an expected snap presidential election that could be announced as soon as this week.

That may have discouraged Pyongyang from conducting a more

dramatic launch on Monday, said Go Myung-hyun, an analyst at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul.

Most of the leading presidential candidates favor better relations with Pyongyang and oppose deployment of Thaad, the prospect of which has also soured South Korea's relationship with China.

"South Korea is at a very sensitive stage, and if North Korea launches too big of a provocation—a nuclear test or a long-range missile test—that's going to materially affect the elections in South Korea," Mr. Go said. "North Korea is taking very careful steps right now to find a balance."

In Beijing, officials delivered the usual message, condemning the

North Korean launch but also calling for restraint from the U.S. and South Korea in their military exercises.

China opposes "such launch activities in violation of [U.N.] Security Council resolutions," said Geng Shuang, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres also condemned the launch, saying the ballistic missiles "violate Security Council resolutions and seriously undermine regional peace and stability."

—Dion Nissenbaum and Rebecca Ballhaus in Washington and Jeremy Page in Beijing contributed to this article.



How Not to Fix the Liberal World Order

Stephen Walt
Adam Rawnsley |

45 mins ago

We are all still trying to figure out what the Trump administration's foreign policy will be, which is why Michael Anton's "America and the Liberal International Order," in the inaugural issue of *American Affairs*, merits some degree of attention. Anton doesn't have a lot of original or insightful things to say in this piece (about which more below), but since he is now deputy assistant for strategic communications at the National Security Council, one might read his essay in the hope of decoding the administration's underlying beliefs and anticipating its future course.

One thing is clear: Anton has mastered the template for conservative jeremiads about U.S. foreign policy and grand strategy. First, employ an authoritative but conversational style that suggests these issues are really pretty simple and only a fool or a knave would fail to understand them. Second, keep the analysis at 40,000 feet, avoid nitty-gritty policy details, and employ appealing alliterative concepts, such as Anton's trinity of "prestige, prosperity, and peace." Third, leaven the essay with selective historical examples and put in some well-chosen references to classical Greeks, Romans or other long-dead political philosophers to give the piece a shiny intellectual veneer. Lastly, treat your targets with a degree of contempt and suggest they are unpatriotic, incompetent, naive, intellectually lazy, or all of the above.

Anton's main goal is to defend the president who subsequently appointed him and his main target is

the coalition of liberal internationalists and neoconservatives who questioned Trump's fitness for office during the 2016 campaign and have continued to criticize him since November. He sees them as part of an inbred foreign policy "priesthood" or "guild" that is defending a liberal international order it can no longer define, explain, or justify. Our entire approach to foreign policy needs to be rethought, in short, and Donald J. Trump is the man to do it.

You might think I'd greet this article with loud cheers, given my own misgivings about America's foreign-policy establishment and my belief that U.S. grand strategy needs to be revised. That is not the case, alas, because with one important exception,

Anton's fusillade misses its target. Even worse, there's little evidence he (or Trump) has any idea how to improve the situation.

Anton's fusillade misses its target. Even worse, there's little evidence he (or Trump) has any idea how to improve the situation.

To begin with, Anton maintains that opposition to Trump is based largely on an unthinking commitment to a U.S.-led "liberal international order." He concedes that a "few critics" were worried about Trump's "temperament" but maintains most of the naysayers were motivated by objections to Trump's policy preferences. I don't know how he knows what's inside the critics' heads, however, and the available evidence suggests that concerns about Trump's character and temperament were far from trivial. Former GOP national security officials published two "open letters" denouncing Trump during the 2016

campaign: one of them spent three paragraphs detailing Trump's personal deficiencies as a candidate and the other concluded by calling him "utterly unfit for the office." Sounds to me like character and temperament loomed rather large in his opponents' assessments.

And not without cause, since Trump's behavior since Election Day confirms that their concerns were justified. We now have a president who reneged on his pledge to release his tax returns, remains unconcerned by his own multiple conflicts of interest, has uttered dozens of easily refutable falsehoods, appointed a number of top officials who have inexplicable difficulties telling the truth under oath, insulted the leaders of close U.S. allies in routine "get-acquainted" phone calls, and presided over an unhinged press conference that will provide YouTube fare for years. One could agree with all of Trump's policy initiatives and still find his erratic conduct disturbing.

Second, Anton's attacks on defenders of the liberal international order are uninformed and misleading. He portrays Trump's critics as clinging to outmoded ideas and institutions in a reflexive and unthinking way, and claims they never define what the liberal order is and "can no longer articulate the original rationale for the policies [they] advocate." But he hasn't done his homework: there are in fact a raft of serious books and articles laying out the case for a U.S.-led international order, some of them appearing in prominent policy journals like *Foreign Affairs*. There are also mounds of think tank reports and official policy documents (like the official "National Security

Strategy" reports issued by Clinton, Bush, and Obama) laying out the case for a liberal order in some detail.

To be clear: I happen to think there are lots of problems with these defenses of U.S.-led "liberal hegemony," both in its scholarly versions and in its more official manifestations. Anton's article would make a useful contribution if it explained why these views were mistaken and if he had offered some concrete alternatives. But claiming that opposition to Trump is just a reflexive and unthinking defense of an outmoded status quo is both simplistic and unhelpful, because it doesn't tell us where liberal hegemony went wrong or identify what should be done differently.

Indeed, with one important exception, Anton's critique of the current liberal order is unconvincing, most notably in his discussion of international trade. Not surprisingly, he echoes Trump's false but endlessly repeated claim that China (and others) are "stealing American jobs." This argument was a key part of Trump's pledge to "make America great again," but Anton devotes only a single, data-free paragraph to this vital issue. He pokes fun at "phone-book thick" trade agreements, but he never identifies how the existing trading order is flawed or explains how it should be reformed. And as numerous mainstream economists have confirmed, the claim that China or other "bad trade deals" have stolen U.S. jobs is a myth.

Like the president he now serves, Anton doesn't understand how the global trading order actually works. Trade agreements are long and complicated today because they are no longer primarily concerned with reducing tariffs (which are already

quite low). Instead, contemporary trade agreements are mostly about harmonizing labor, regulatory, environmental, and copyright standards across many different societies, precisely for the purpose of creating *fairer* competition between states. Agreements of this kind are very much in America's interest, because otherwise U.S. workers would have to compete with foreign industries where labor and environmental standards are much lower than they are in the United States.

Fourth, because Anton wants to portray Trump's predecessors (and especially Obama) as weak, naive, and irresolute, he ends up relying on one of the hard right's favorite myths: the idea that other states are prone to bandwagon with strong or threatening powers. The only "evidence" he offers for this dubious assertion is the distinguished foreign-policy expert Osama bin Laden's claim that "When people see a strong horse and a weak horse, by nature, they will like the strong horse."

This statement might be true at the race track, but how people might respond to different horses tells you

precious little about international politics. If states were strongly inclined to jump on the bandwagon, as Anton apparently believes, then Napoleon and Hitler's initial victories would have attracted more and more states to their side and guaranteed their ultimate triumph. (Needless to say, the opposite is what actually occurred.) Similarly, if bandwagoning were common, the Islamic State's initial victories would have rallied millions to their banner and led local powers to kowtow before them. Instead, the Islamic State managed to attract only a tiny fraction of the world's Muslim population (many of whom were marginalized misfits and therefore susceptible to its message), and its emergence quickly provoked the formation of a balancing coalition that is now in the process of defeating them.

Anton's embrace of the bandwagon myth is especially peculiar because it is at odds with Trump's stated desire to get U.S. allies to contribute more to their own defense.

Anton's embrace of the bandwagon myth is especially peculiar because it is at odds with Trump's stated desire to get U.S. allies to contribute

more to their own defense. If you really believe that states will bandwagon, then logically you must also believe that reducing the U.S. role in Europe or Asia would lead our present allies to realign with China or Russia (or whomever they think is the "strong horse"). By contrast, those who believe states tend to balance against threats maintain the United States could reduce its commitments in some areas and let local powers uphold the balance on their own.

In short, Anton's essay is not a serious guide to how the present liberal order might be updated. This failure is unfortunate, because the case for rethinking America's global role is manifest and Anton does make one extremely important point. In particular, both he and Trump are correct to question the wisdom of trying to spread democracy into distant areas, and especially in places that are not vital interests and where the preconditions for effective liberal democracy are lacking. Had he confined his critique to this particular feature of recent U.S. foreign policy — a feature that liberal interventionists and neoconservatives have both embraced and defended in the past

— he would be on much firmer ground.

Finally, Anton's essay is long on criticisms of the present order but surprisingly short on practical advice for how to alter it. He believes the current liberal order is outmoded and needs to be reformed, but he neither elaborates an underlying logic to guide this reform, nor offers concrete policy steps that the United States should now undertake. Should NAFTA be revised and if so, how? Should the United States stay in NATO? Should it deploy more military forces in Asia, reduce them, or leave them about the same? Does chasing terrorists around the greater Middle East still make sense, given that we've been doing it for more than fifteen years and there seem to be more of them today than there were on 9/11? Does a big military buildup make sense if you're trying to get others to shoulder more of the burden? And so forth. Anton never answers these (and other) critical issues, leaving us in the dark about what he is really proposing. In that sense, of course, he fits in very well with the rest of Team Trump.



Editorial : The travel ban do-over

The highly anticipated sequel to President Trump's Jan. 27 travel ban is an improvement on the original, which spurred mass confusion at airports and was blocked by the courts. But, as with most sequels, the revised plan is still a disappointment.

The do-over version, announced Monday, strips away some of the more onerous and legally questionable sections of the hastily prepared original.

Legal U.S. residents are now clearly exempt from the ban, along with visitors with existing visas. The White House also excised wording that appeared to require preferential treatment for non-Muslim refugees, and another area of the order that indefinitely banned refugees from Syria, a nation where millions of women and children are aching to flee a brutal civil war.

But core restrictions from the original order survive, and the rewrite remains stubbornly arbitrary about who it bans, as if the president and his people remain hellbent on slamming the door on certain nations of people even if there's no logic to it.

The new directive still bans entry into the U.S. for 90 days people from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. (Iraq, a crucial ally for the U.S. in fighting the Islamic State, has been pulled from the list.) The order also continues to bar all refugees for 120 days.

The almost leisurely pace with which the second version was rolled out cut the legs out from under the president's argument that the original needed to be sprung without warning to keep "bad dudes" from rushing in. The sequel allows a 10-day grace period.

To be sure, the responsibility of safeguarding the U.S. homeland is Job #1 for any president, and there's nothing wrong with a review of

vetting procedures. But in a global war with radicals who offer twisted interpretations of Islam, much of battle terrain is a struggle over ideas.

The military and law enforcement need cooperation from Muslims at home and abroad to uncover terror plots and identify targets. Alienating them with sweeping policies that cast suspicion on entire populations is a dangerous game.

That's especially true when the facts don't support wholesale bans, even if they're temporary. Research by the Department of Homeland Security concluded that immigrants from the named countries posed no unique risk of becoming terrorists and that, in any case, "country of citizenship is unlikely to be a reliable indicator of potential terrorist activity," according to an internal report obtained by the Associated Press.

Trump often raises the specter of fear when pushing these policies, telling a joint session of Congress

last week that "we have seen the attacks at home, from Boston to San Bernardino to the Pentagon and, yes, even the World Trade Center." So true, as the president likes to say. But none of those attacks were conducted by emigrants from the countries in his new order.

Whether the new order passes legal muster remains to be seen.

One man who faced exclusion from the United States because of the original Trump dictate was Asghar Farhadi, an acclaimed Iranian filmmaker who won an Oscar for best foreign language film. Farhadi never made it to the Academy Awards, boycotting last month's event to protest the travel ban.

"Dividing the world into categories of 'us' and 'our enemies' creates fear," Farhadi said. That's what the president's executive order does, and it's no way to fight terrorism.



Editorial : Trump's Un-American Travel Ban, Part II

The Editors

President Donald Trump's latest executive order restricting immigration from several majority-Muslim countries is less sweeping and careless than his last one,

which federal courts put on hold last month. But even if it withstands judicial scrutiny, it is still un-American and unwise -- and if it doesn't, the president needs to resist his impulse to lash out.

The new ban affects six nations instead of seven, exempts permanent U.S. residents who may be working or traveling abroad, and deletes a provision that seemed aimed at providing special

protections to Christians. That's all for the good.

That said, it's a mistake to think that this order will make the U.S. safer, and it can still be used as a propaganda tool by terrorist

organizations, giving false credence to the idea that the U.S. is engaged in a war with Islam. And bear in mind: The number of visas issued to nationals from these countries is relatively small and the refusal rate is already high. In addition, although the order requires enhanced vetting of immigrants from the six nations, the president has proposed drastic cuts to the agency -- the State Department -- that would play a central role in carrying it out.

In the courts, meanwhile, controversial policies are routinely put on hold until full hearings can be held. When this happened with the previous version of the travel ban last month, Trump accused a "so-

called judge" of putting the country in peril. "If something happens," Trump tweeted, "blame him and the court system."

Sorry, Mr. President. The buck stops on your desk. Presidents are responsible for upholding both the nation's security and the rule of law. This is not an either/or proposition. Attempting to shift blame to the judiciary for future terrorist attacks is gutless and duplicitous.

Too few Republicans objected to Trump's belittling and bullying comments, but his Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch, said he found the attacks on the judiciary disheartening and demoralizing. In

truth, they are worse than that: They are dangerous.

The genius of the U.S. Constitution is the checks and balances it places on the three branches of government. The separation of powers is essential to the preservation of individual rights and the survival of the nation's democracy.

Trump has thus far shown precious little capacity for mature restraint. If he cannot be persuaded that demeaning the courts is dangerous for democracy, his advisers would do well to tell him that it's also a foolish legal strategy -- not because judges may feel insulted, but

because it will be difficult for them not to see Trump as a threat to their constitutional authority.

As much as Trump loves winning, he will face judicial and legislative setbacks during his term, as every president does. He needs to understand that losing with dignity -- or at least a bit of decorum -- is part of the job.

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



Revised executive order bans travelers from six Muslim-majority countries from getting new visas (UNE)

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

President Trump signed a new travel ban Monday that administration officials said they hope will end legal challenges over the matter by imposing a 90-day ban on the issuance of new visas for citizens of six majority-Muslim nations.

In addition, the nation's refugee program will be suspended for 120 days, and the United States will not accept more than 50,000 refugees in a year, down from the 110,000 cap set by the Obama administration.

The new guidelines mark a dramatic departure from Trump's original ban, issued in January and immediately met by massive protests and then ordered frozen by the courts. The new ban lays out a far more specific national security basis for the order, blocks the issuance only of new visas, and names just six of the seven countries included in the first executive order, omitting Iraq.

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[Read the full text of the revised executive order]

Trump signed the new ban out of public view, according to White House officials. The order will take effect March 16.

What Trump changed in the new travel ban

"This executive order responsibly provides a needed pause so we can carefully review how we scrutinize people coming here from these

countries of concern," Attorney General Jeff Sessions said in announcing that the order had been signed.

The order also details specific sets of people who would be able to apply for case-by-case waivers to the order, including those previously admitted to the United States for "a continuous period of work, study, or other long-term activity"; those with "significant business or professional obligations"; and those seeking to visit or live with family.

Trump's campaign, meanwhile, sent out an email asking people to sign a petition in support of the new order.

"As your President, I made a solemn promise to keep America safe," the email signed by Trump said. "And I will NEVER stop fighting until we implement the policies you — and millions of Americans like you — voted for."

Democrats and civil liberties groups said Monday that the new order was legally tainted in the same way as the first one: It was a thinly disguised Muslim ban. Trump, in his email, used the phrase "radical Islamic terrorism" to describe his concern with the countries whose citizens would be blocked from acquiring visas.

That seems to portend more litigation — though how soon remains unclear. The attorney general of Washington state, Bob Ferguson, who successfully sued to have the first ban blocked, said he was still reviewing what to do.

The new order, Ferguson said, represented a "significant victory" for Washington state because the administration had "capitulated on numerous key provisions that we contested in court." But he said state lawyers would need two or three

days to see what action they would take in the court case.

(The Washington Post)

Attorney General Jeff Sessions outlined President Trump's new travel ban, calling it 'lawful,' during a news conference on March 6 at the Department of Homeland Security. Sessions insists Trump's new travel ban is 'lawful' (The Washington Post)

"We're reviewing it carefully, and still have concerns with the new order," Ferguson said.

The Justice Department argued in a court filing that even if the litigation were to move forward, it should do so at a slower pace, and with the new ban in place. The government noted that visa applicants typically have to wait months and asserted there was "no imminent harm" from the president's temporary suspension of the issuance of new visas to certain people.

That assertion, though, did little to assuage the concerns of Democrats and civil liberties groups, who said the new ban was just like the old.

Karen Tumlin, the legal director of the National Immigration Law Center, predicted that federal judges who ordered a restraining order on the earlier ban are likely to do so again, and that pending lawsuits filed by her organization and others will not need to be filed anew. "From our vantage point, that litigation lives on," she said.

New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman (D), who joined the legal fight against the first ban, said, "While the White House may have made changes to the ban, the intent to discriminate against Muslims remains clear."

Omar Jadwat, director of the American Civil Liberties Union's

Immigrants' Rights Project, said, "The only way to actually fix the Muslim ban is not to have a Muslim ban. Instead, President Trump has recommitted himself to religious discrimination, and he can expect continued disapproval from both the courts and the people."

The revised travel ban also came under quick fire from refugee advocates, who said it unfairly penalizes refugees without improving U.S. security.

"President Trump still seems to believe you can determine who's a terrorist by knowing which country a man, woman or child is from," said Grace Meng, an immigration researcher with Human Rights Watch. "Putting this executive order into effect will only create a false sense of security that genuine steps are being taken to protect Americans from attack, while undermining the standing of the U.S. as a refuge for those at greatest risk."

Officials from the State, Homeland Security and Justice departments defended the new order as a necessary measure to improve public safety. They said the countries named — Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Syria and Yemen — were either state sponsors of terrorism, or their territories were so compromised that they were effectively havens for terrorist groups. Iraq was omitted, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said, because it is an "important ally in the fight to defeat ISIS" — the Islamic State militant organization — and Iraq's leaders had agreed to implement new, unspecified security measures.

[Iraq, excluded from travel ban, praises new White House executive order]

The ban is among several measures the administration has introduced in

the name of border security. Also Monday, Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly said he was “considering” separating undocumented immigrant parents from their children to deter people from trying to enter the country. Those people, he said, are often moved to the United States by a “terribly dangerous network” that originates in Central America.

Civil rights advocates said Monday that the new ban’s sudden exclusion of Iraq, as well as the omission of other countries with active terrorist groups — such as Colombia, Venezuela, Pakistan and the Philippines — underscored the ban’s arbitrariness as a national security measure.

The new order provides other exceptions not contained explicitly in previous versions: for travelers from those countries who are legal permanent residents of the United States, dual nationals who use a passport from another country, and those who have been granted asylum or refugee status. It removes an exception to the refugee ban for members of religious minority groups — which critics had pointed to as evidence the first ban was meant to discriminate against Muslims — and it no longer imposes an indefinite prohibition on travelers from Syria.

Anyone who holds a visa now should be able to get into the country without any problems, although those whose visas expire will have to reapply, officials said.

The order claims that since 2001, hundreds of people born abroad

have been convicted of terrorism-related crimes in the United States. It cites two specific examples: Two Iraqi nationals who came to the United States as refugees in 2009, it says, were convicted of terrorism-related offenses, and in October 2014, a Somali native brought to the country as a child refugee was sentenced to 30 years in prison for plotting to detonate a bomb at a Christmas tree-lighting ceremony in Oregon. That man became a naturalized U.S. citizen.

[Trump’s new travel ban still wouldn’t have kept out anyone behind deadly U.S. terrorist attacks]

“We cannot risk the prospect of malevolent actors using our immigration system to take American lives,” Homeland Security Secretary John F. Kelly said.

The new ban also says that more than 300 people who entered the country as refugees were the subject of active counterterrorism investigations. U.S. officials declined to specify the countries of origin of those being investigated, their immigration status, or whether they had been charged with crimes.

Charles Kurzman, a sociology professor who studies violent - extremism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said that since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, there have been no fatalities caused by Muslim extremists with family backgrounds in the six countries covered by the new ban. A Department of Homeland Security report assessing the terrorist threat posed by people from the seven countries covered by

the president’s original travel ban had cast doubt on the necessity of the executive order, concluding that citizenship was an “unreliable” threat indicator and that people from the affected countries had rarely been implicated in U.S.-based terrorism.

The Department of Homeland Security official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, criticized the report as being incomplete and not vetted with other agencies, and he said the administration should not be pressed by the judiciary to unveil sensitive national security details to justify the ban.

The order represents an attempt by the Trump administration to tighten security requirements for travelers from nations that officials said represent a terrorism threat. A more sweeping attempt in January provoked mass protests across the country as travelers en route to the United States were detained at airports after the surprise order was announced. The State Department had provisionally revoked tens of thousands of visas all at once.

[Read the fact sheet and Q&A on the new travel executive order]

Officials sought to dismiss the idea that there would be any confusion surrounding the implementation of the new order. They said they delayed implementation so the government could go through the appropriate legal processes and ensure that no government employee would face “legal jeopardy” for enforcing the order.

The revisions to the order will make it more defensible in court — limiting

the number of people with standing to sue — but the changes might not allay all the concerns raised by judges across the country. The three-judge panel with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, for example, said that exempting green-card and current visa holders from the ban would not address the court’s concern about U.S. citizens with an interest in noncitizens’ travel.

The administration, too, will have to wrestle with comments by the president and top adviser Rudolph W. Giuliani that seemed to indicate the intent of the order was to ban Muslims from entering the United States, which could run afoul of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

On the campaign trail, Trump called for a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States.” After the election, Giuliani, a former New York City mayor, said: “So when [Trump] first announced it, he said, ‘Muslim ban.’ He called me up. He said, ‘Put a commission together. Show me the right way to do it legally.’”

A federal judge in Virginia referenced those comments in ordering the ban frozen with respect to Virginia residents and institutions, calling it “unrebutted evidence” that Trump’s directive might violate the First Amendment.

Carol Morello, Matea Gold, Missy Ryan, Mark Berman and Rachel Weiner contributed to this report.

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**NATIONAL
REVIEW
ONLINE**

Editorial : Trump’s New Travel Ban: Executive Order Clarified and Improved

The Trump administration’s revised executive order on refugees, issued on Monday, is in substance and presentation what the White House should have done from the beginning.

In late January, the White House issued an executive order halting admission of all refugees for 120 days and halting travel from seven majority-Muslim countries — Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Libya, and Somalia — for 90 days to give the federal government time to review admission procedures. That Islamic State terrorists have tried to use the refugee-admission system to infiltrate Europe is well documented, and there are good reasons to believe that the United States’ vetting procedures need bolstering. Visa screenings have routinely failed to identify foreign nationals who later committed

terrorist attacks in the United States. However, the White House’s overly broad legal language, which entangled legal permanent residents, Iraqi allies of U.S. forces, and others in the travel ban, distracted from its legitimate aims, as did a Friday-afternoon rollout that caught many people by surprise, among them several of the government officials responsible for executing the order. The result was a weekend of chaos at the nation’s airports, abetted by thousands of protesters.

This political backlash probably contributed to Seattle judge James Robart’s decision to temporarily enjoin the order, and the Ninth Circuit’s decision to uphold his injunction. The president’s legal authority, under Section 212(f) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, to “suspend the entry of all aliens or

any class of aliens . . . he may deem to be appropriate” is indisputable — which is probably why the Ninth Circuit did not even bother to cite it. Instead, the appeals court justified an extravagant breach of the separation-of-powers doctrine by citing Donald Trump’s campaign statements about a “Muslim ban,” which his order most assuredly wasn’t, given that the countries it targeted were identified as concerns by the Obama administration, and its terms were temporary.

The Trump administration has wisely retreated from a battle at the Supreme Court and refashioned a narrower, clearer travel ban explicitly designed to pass muster with the judiciary. Some of the key elements are still in place, including a 120-day suspension of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and an annual refugee cap of 50,000,

but Iraq has been removed from the list of countries from which travel is temporarily suspended (applicants from Iraq will be treated on a case-by-case basis), and the indefinite halt to Syrian refugees has been rescinded. Additionally, the administration has supplied a list of exceptions, among whom are green-card holders and foreign nationals traveling on diplomatic visas. The order also includes more-detailed justifications for the temporary travel bans on the six remaining countries, provides the sources of the president’s legal authority for the order, and expressly rejects the idea that the order discriminates against Muslims. (Regrettably, in its effort to rebut those claims, the White House removed language that permitted the prioritization of asylum claims from persecuted religious minorities.)

The clarity of the order was reflected in its rollout. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions convened to present the new order at a press conference on Monday morning, explaining what it is and isn't. Also, a ten-day delay is built into the order

to give the appropriate agencies time to coordinate before the order goes into effect.

Despite the woolly reasoning of the Ninth Circuit, there was never any question of the president's legal authority to issue his original travel ban. The problems were political — and, to that extent, self-inflicted.

This new travel ban has been crafted with more care, and its implementation suggests a welcome preference for deliberateness over haste. Hopefully, strengthened vetting procedures will result that will enable the United States to accept asylum-seekers without compromising our vital national-

security interests. And, hopefully, the White House has learned its lesson: that if something is worth doing, it's worth doing right — the first time.

**The
Washington
Post**

Editorial : Trump's new travel ban is as arbitrary and senseless as the first

SUCH WAS the urgency of President Trump's temporary travel ban on citizens of seven mainly Muslim countries that he characterized its suspension by federal courts last month as a grave threat to national security. Then his administration moved rather deliberately in formulating a replacement. Three times Mr. Trump and his spokesmen announced the imminent issuance of a new order; three times they postponed it. Now, three weeks after the president first said a new order was imminent, he has signed it — a watered-down version of the original, tweaked to withstand court challenges but no less arbitrary and misguided as a means of enhancing national security.

Fortunately, federal courts had the spine to stand up to Mr. Trump's verbal assault on the judicial system's integrity, forcing the administration to strip some blatant excesses from the original ban, such as the exclusion of people holding

valid green cards and previously issued visas. In other cases, specific cohorts of immigrants would be granted travel or visa waivers on a case-by-case basis, replacing the original order's blanket ban. Those are significant changes.

The new order also drops Iraq from the targeted list of countries whose citizens are barred from traveling to the United States, not because the administration suddenly deemed them a diminished threat but because alienating Iraq was a grievous diplomatic and military blunder. With U.S. forces fighting alongside Iraqi troops against a common enemy, the Islamic State, it dawned on the White House that it could ill afford to antagonize a critical ally.

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However, in the case of the six countries that remain on the new temporary travel blacklist — Iran, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Libya and Syria — the justification for their inclusion remains as flimsy as it was before.

It is still the case, as a report last month from the Department of Homeland Security reiterated, that few people from the banned countries have mounted or tried to mount terrorist attacks in the United States. It is still the case that most of those convicted or killed attempting such attacks in recent years were U.S.-born citizens. And it is still the case, as U.S. District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema found in regard to Mr. Trump's first order, that a travel ban "may be counterproductive to its stated goal" of keeping the nation safe.

That's because the ban, while doing virtually nothing to deter terrorist attacks in this country, aids the recruitment efforts of the Islamic State and other extremist groups by

substantiating their case that anti-Islamic bigotry thrives in the United States.

At least this time, the Trump administration subjected the executive order to careful legal vetting before the president signed it. By limiting the order mainly to people with few personal connections to or roots in the United States, the administration hopes to deter fresh lawsuits by states and others arguing that the order inflicted harm on them.

The courts will decide whether the order, which renews the suspension of all refugee resettlement for 120 days, passes legal muster. Already clear is that it remains antithetical to American interests, values, tradition and security.

**The
New York
Times**

Editorial : President Trump's Muslim Ban Lite

President Trump was center stage when his administration hastily rolled out a sweeping travel ban targeting Muslims in late January, vowing it would ensure "we are not admitting into our country the very threats our soldiers are fighting overseas."

He was out of sight on Monday as administration officials unveiled a downscaled, but still pernicious, version of the ban, which targets refugees and travelers from six predominantly Muslim nations. It's not hard to see why. The Muslim Ban Lite is an implicit acknowledgment that the Trump administration stumbled spectacularly in its first major attempt to deliver on a campaign promise.

And yet, as administration officials made the case on Monday for the revised measures, there was no hint of contrition and plenty of reckless fearmongering. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the president was exercising his "rightful authority to

keep our people safe." Attorney General Jeff Sessions warned, without providing context or evidence, that more than 300 people admitted to the United States as refugees had been investigated by the F.B.I. for possible terrorism links. Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly, meanwhile, lamented that "our enemies often use our own freedoms and generosity against us."

The administration has failed to make a reasonable — let alone persuasive — case for barring people from the six nations. Intelligence experts at the Department of Homeland Security found that "country of citizenship is unlikely to be a reliable indicator of potential terrorist activity," according to a memo leaked to The Associated Press.

Yet, as Mr. Trump has pressed ahead with this dangerous campaign promise, he has missed his own deadline to unveil a secret plan to defeat ISIS. That plan remains a mystery.

The initial ban, which was imposed through an executive order issued on Jan. 27, locked out all travelers from seven predominantly Muslim nations: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. It indefinitely suspended the admission of Syrian refugees and temporarily halted the entrance of all other refugees. The order indicated that Christian refugees would get priority over Muslims.

In February, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit blocked key portions of the original travel ban, rejecting the administration's arguments that the exclusions were lawful and necessary to keep the nation safe.

The new order no longer bans citizens of Iraq. It also exempts people from the remaining six countries who have a valid American visa. The revised ban includes no mention of religious preferences and makes the ban on Syrian refugees temporary. Like the initial order, the new one reduces the number of refugees the United

States is willing to admit this year to 50,000, down from last year's ceiling of 110,000.

While it may disrupt fewer lives, the new ban, and its justification, conveys the same spurious messages: that Muslims are inherently dangerous and that resettling refugees represents a dire threat. As part of the new order, the government intends to disseminate data on "honor killings" committed by foreigners in the United States. This step, and Mr. Sessions's unsubstantiated claim about refugees under F.B.I. investigation, can be read only as a cultural smear.

Resorting to these bunker mentality tactics, which are being peddled with plenty of innuendo and little convincing evidence, will do lasting damage to America's standing in the world and erode its proud tradition of welcoming people fleeing strife. While these steps are being sold as a means to make the nation safer, they stand to do the opposite.

Trump Signs New Travel Ban in Bid to Avoid Original Order's Legal Pitfalls (UNE)

Laura Meckler and Brent Kendall

Updated March 6, 2017 11:16 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump signed a scaled-back travel ban that addresses some of the legal challenges to his original executive order, while blocking new visas for people living in six Muslim-majority nations and suspending admission of refugees to the U.S.

The fate of the new order, issued Monday, is likely to hinge on whether courts see the restrictions as a constitutional effort to protect the nation from terrorism—the administration's stated reason for imposing it—or a dressed-up version of the "Muslim ban" Mr. Trump promised during his campaign.

Unlike the original order, signed during Mr. Trump's first week in office, the revised version issued Monday is the product of internal vetting and consultation with administration officials responsible for immigration and security. It doesn't take effect for 10 days, with officials hopeful that the delay and other changes will prevent the sort of chaos and confusion that unfolded at airports the first time around.

The original order sparked widespread protests and multiple court challenges and was put on hold by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. Opponents argued it was wrong for the U.S. to shut its doors to desperate refugees and pointed to data showing people from nations singled out for the ban are no more likely than others to pose a terror risk in the U.S.

Administration officials said the travel pause is needed to institute better vetting procedures.

"It is the president's solemn duty to protect the American people, and with the order, President Trump is exercising his rightful authority to keep our people safe," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Monday.

The Justice Department said about 300 people admitted to the U.S. as refugees are currently under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for potential terrorism-related activities. The agency declined to give any details about that figure, including what countries they came from or the status of the probes.

Some opponents promised to file fresh court challenges to the revised order. Protesters gathered in the park across from the White House. "We are all Muslim now," read one sign. "No hate, no fear! Refugees are welcome here!" the crowd chanted.

Other opponents suggested they had already won a measure of victory.

"By rescinding his earlier executive order, President Trump makes one thing perfectly clear: His original travel ban was indefensible—legally, constitutionally and morally," said Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson, who successfully sued to block implementation of the first order.

Mr. Ferguson, a Democrat, said while the new order is "drastically narrowed" and removes harms to many thousands of travelers, he still had concerns about the president's motivation. He said his state would make a decision by the end of the week on whether to pursue more legal action.

The new executive order makes several major changes from the first version.

It suspends travel for people from six nations—Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen—for 90 days beginning March 16. Iraq was removed from the original list, which was based on an Obama-era set of countries singled out for additional screening to get visas.

The decision to remove Iraq came after lobbying by senior administration officials, diplomats and Iraqis, who warned that including it risked doing lasting harm to bilateral relations at a critical moment in the war with Islamic State. Officials said Iraq agreed to increased cooperation and information sharing in vetting applicants.

In another important change, the new order won't apply to people who have valid visas or to anyone already legally in the U.S., including permanent residents known as green-card holders. The original version affected nearly 60,000 existing visa holders from seven nations, according to the State Department, and left the treatment of green-card holders unclear.

The new order still suspends the admission of refugees to the U.S. for 120 days and caps the annual total

admission of refugees at 50,000, as opposed to the 110,000 the Obama administration originally set for 2017. But it treats Syrian refugees the same as those from other countries, whereas the original executive order indefinitely suspended admission of refugees from that war-ravaged country.

The legal problems that most directly stymied the original order related to charges that it violated constitutional guarantees of due process. The appellate court said it failed to provide basic protections, including advance notice of the new policy and an opportunity for travelers to challenge being denied entry.

The changes could go a long way toward addressing that issue, partly with the 10-day phase-in period and partly because it doesn't apply to the people who had the strongest due-process claims the first time around: green-card and visa holders already screened and approved for U.S. entry.

"I think they're better on due process," said Susan Cohen, chair of immigration practice at law firm Mintz Levin, who was part of the legal team that challenged the original travel ban in a Boston court.

Ms. Cohen said the new order could still present problems for foreigners who have been in the U.S. but are traveling abroad and need a government waiver to return for work, education or to be with family members. The White House has outlined a case-by-case waiver process for people in a variety of circumstances, but if the waivers are hard to obtain, that could lead to litigation, she said. Officials said multi-entry visas would remain valid.

A more pressing legal question is whether the order amounts to religious discrimination by unconstitutionally singling out Muslims for unfavorable treatment. A federal judge in Virginia, Leonie Brinkema, concluded the original order likely violated the Constitution's Establishment Clause, which prohibits the government from making religious preferences.

The new order removes a provision that gave preference to Christian refugees from Muslim counties. It also includes a paragraph that explicitly refutes claims that the travel ban discriminates based on religion.

But the judge found that the original ban was spurred by anti-Muslim animus, citing Mr. Trump's previous campaign statements as well as recent statements by adviser Rudy Giuliani about Mr. Trump's intent and motivations for the executive order. Nothing in the new order alters that history.

"The core constitutional problem of religious discrimination remains, so we will continue to challenge the ban," said Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's Immigrants' Rights Project, who filed the first legal challenge to the original travel ban. "The new order fixes certain due process problems, as we expected, but not the central constitutional problem of discrimination against Muslims."

He said the ACLU is likely to file a new challenge before the order takes effect on March 16.

Still, the case may be harder to challenge as Mr. Trump offered a nondiscriminatory explanation for the rules, said Vikram Amar, dean of the University of Illinois law school. "I don't think the Supreme Court would be eager to essentially call the president a liar," he said.

Mr. Trump's administration had previously sent mixed messages about the fate of the original executive order, with aides saying it wouldn't be rescinded. The new order revokes the first one as of the effective date. The Justice Department began notifying courts Monday afternoon that a new order had been issued and the previous one was being rescinded.

Mr. Trump signed the order at the White House Monday morning but didn't speak publicly about it. Rather, Mr. Tillerson, along with Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly and Attorney General Jeff Sessions, made the administration's case in brief statements to the media. That is a contrast to the original order, which Mr. Trump signed and touted on a visit to the Pentagon.

Mr. Kelly said he had spent the morning talking with members of Congress about the new policy, another effort to give the order stronger political support. "There should be no surprises," he said.

—Felicia Schwartz contributed to this article.

Trump's New Travel Ban Blocks Migrants From Six Nations, Sparing Iraq (UNE)

Glenn Thrush

But the heart of the sweeping executive action is still intact, reflecting Mr. Trump's "America first" pledge to safeguard against what he has portrayed as a hidden influx of terrorists and criminals — a hard-line campaign promise that resonated deeply with white working-class voters.

The new order retains central elements of the old one, cutting the number of refugees admitted to the United States each year to 50,000 from about 110,000. Mr. Trump is also leaving open the possibility of expanding the ban to other countries, or even putting Iraq back on the banned list if the country's leaders fail to comply with a requirement that they increase intelligence sharing, officials said.

"Unregulated, unvetted travel is not a universal privilege, especially when national security is at stake," said John F. Kelly, the homeland security secretary, appearing alongside Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson and Attorney General Jeff Sessions at the Ronald Reagan Federal Building in Washington on Monday.

Mr. Kelly said the order was now "prospective" and applied "only to foreign nationals outside of the United States" who do not have a valid visa. None of the men took questions.

The Trump administration quickly tried to break the legal logjam, filing papers in United States District Court in Washington late on Monday seeking to lift an order blocking the fulfillment of the initial ban.

But the president's revisions did little to halt criticism from Democrats and immigrant rights advocates, who predicted a renewed fight in the courts.

The Senate Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer of New York, described the new order as a "watered-down ban" that was still "meanspirited and un-American."

Margaret Huang, the executive director of Amnesty International USA, said in a statement that the new order would "cause extreme fear and uncertainty for thousands of families by, once again, putting anti-Muslim hatred into policy."

The new measure will be phased in over the next two weeks to avoid the frenetic, same-day execution of the order in January, which prompted protests across the country and left tearful families stranded at airports abroad and in the United States.

The redrafted order, delayed by a week so it would not overshadow Mr. Trump's address to a joint session of Congress last Tuesday, represented a recognition that the rushed first attempt at the ban did not pass muster legally or politically.

Administration officials privately conceded that the initial version of the order was a political debacle that damaged Mr. Trump's nascent presidency. But they were much more sanguine about the second order, arguing that the new, multiagency review process could be used in the future to bend Mr. Trump's uncompromising messages toward Washington's bureaucratic realities.

Mr. Trump signed the first ban with great fanfare, in front of reporters, at the Pentagon. "We don't want them here," Mr. Trump said of Islamist terrorists. "We want to ensure that we are not admitting into our country the very threats our soldiers are fighting overseas. We only want to admit those into our country who will support our country, and love deeply our people."

This time, the White House issued a photograph of the president signing the order alone at his desk in the Oval Office.

Justice Department lawyers said the revisions rendered moot legal cases against the original travel ban. But opponents said the removal of a section that had granted preferential treatment to victims of religious persecution was a cosmetic change that did nothing to alter the order's prejudicial purpose. Immigrant rights

lawyers had argued that the provision was intended to discriminate against Muslims, pointing to recent statements by Mr. Trump.

"This is a retreat, but let's be clear — it's just another run at a Muslim ban," said Omar Jadwat, the director of the Immigrants' Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union, one of the groups that sued to stop the first order. "They can't unring the bell."

Eric T. Schneiderman, the attorney general of New York and a plaintiff in a suit seeking to block the first order, said his office was reviewing the new ban, adding, "I stand ready to litigate — again — in order to protect New York's families, institutions and economy."

Congressional Republicans, who were split over the first travel ban, had a more muted reaction. But Speaker Paul D. Ryan, who backed the first order, issued a statement saying the revised order "advances our shared goal of protecting the homeland."

Citizens of Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Libya will face a 90-day suspension of visa processing as the administration analyzes how to strengthen vetting procedures, according to a homeland security summary of the order.

The removal of Iraq from the list came after talks with security officials in Baghdad and at the urging of Mr. Mattis and State Department officials, who have been in communication with Iraqi officials alarmed that the ban will turn public sentiment in their country against the United States.

"On the basis of negotiations that have taken place between the government of Iraq and the U.S. Department of State in the last month, Iraq will increase cooperation with the U.S. government on the vetting of its citizens applying for a visa to travel to the United States," homeland security officials wrote in a fact sheet given to reporters.

The timing of the ban seemed intended to reset the White House political narrative, after a turbulent week that began with Mr. Trump's well-received address to Congress. That success was quickly overshadowed by the controversies over Mr. Sessions's failure to inform the Senate of his contacts with the Russian ambassador and Mr. Trump's unsupported accusation that President Barack Obama tapped Mr. Trump's phones during the 2016 campaign.

Critics say that Mr. Trump's vow to impose "extreme vetting" on migrants, especially those fleeing the war in Syria, disregards already stringent screening measures, and the fact that none of the recent terrorist attacks or mass shootings on American soil were perpetrated by people from the nations listed in the ban.

Last week, The Associated Press reported that it had obtained a draft homeland security assessment concluding that citizenship was an "unlikely indicator" of a threat.

Homeland security officials, speaking to reporters by telephone on Monday, pushed back against that news report, arguing that it was culled from public sources and excluded classified information that paints a more dangerous picture.

An official speaking on the call said the Justice Department had identified 300 "refugees" who were being investigated for their links to Islamist terrorist groups or for holding pro-Islamic State positions. Some of those people already have permanent resident status, the official said.

But homeland security and Justice Department officials declined to provide further details, and would not say how many of the 300 people being investigated came from the countries covered by the revised travel ban.

Somebody at the White House must have recognized that this wasn't the good kind of shock and awe. The tighter, cleaned-up order reduces the number of countries to six, with

President Trump signed a revised version of his immigration executive order on Monday, and the larger question remains whether a travel ban is really needed. But at least

this time the White House seems to have thought it through and tried to avoid the obvious legal traps.

Mr. Trump's original order, rolled out at the end of his first week in office, received little public explanation and wasn't well understood even by the

people who were supposed to enforce it. Mr. Trump's overly broad and imprecise instructions to bar or detain aliens from seven nations associated with terrorism risks resulted in disruption at airports world-wide. The uproar galvanized the political left and then the order

was blocked nationally by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Somebody at the White House must have recognized that this wasn't the good kind of shock and awe. The tighter, cleaned-up order reduces the number of countries to six, with

an honorable and necessary exception for Iraq, a U.S. ally and the point of the spear in the war on Islamic State. The order also now exempts permanent residents with green cards and those holding a visa when the order was signed, which wasn't made clear in the old order.

In general, the new order is more reasonable and works though the practical consequences of a temporary 90-day immigration pause while the government reviews the vetting process. It provides for waivers for business travellers, dual citizens, military translators, urgent

medical cases and foreign nationals with a long-term history of work or study in the U.S.

The order also does a better job justifying the ban or, rather, does the job for the first time. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 gives the President discretion to prevent the entry of "any aliens or any class of aliens" he determines undermine national security, but government lawyers couldn't explain in court why the detained foreigners were a threat or why they should be denied due process.

In fact, Congress and President Obama singled out Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for heightened scrutiny in the visa-waiver program in 2015. The order has a rational discussion about these six countries as state sponsors of terrorism or how their civil societies have been compromised by terror groups or even active combat zones. It also adds to the factual record about the disrupted terror plots committed by immigrants from these nations.

Mr. Trump would have been better served by withdrawing the order and trusting his Department of

Homeland Security to protect the U.S. from dangerous aliens case-by-case. The legal and constitutional danger is that willful courts like the Ninth Circuit will again intrude on core presidential powers over foreign affairs once the inevitable legal challenges come to the new order.

Still, Mr. Trump rarely admits he makes mistakes. The implicit concessions in the new order are a good sign if they mean that going forward he and his White House staff can learn from their rough start.



Toobin: Will courts bless Trump's do-over?

Jeffrey Toobin is CNN's senior legal analyst and author of "The Oath: The Obama White House and the Supreme Court." Follow him on Twitter @JeffreyToobin. The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

(CNN)For President Trump and his travel ban, the second time may be the charm.

The revised executive order, revealed Monday during a rare joint appearance by three Cabinet members, addresses many of the legal problems that led Trump's first executive order to be stymied by the

courts.

The new order makes plain that holders of green cards and valid visas are now clearly exempt. There is no longer an exception to allow Christian refugees to jump to the head of the line.

The government's explanation for why it selected the covered countries does not mention religion; rather, the administration says the six countries -- down from seven in the previous order -- either support terrorism or lack sufficient controls to identify dangerous visitors to the United States. The order also removes Iraq as one of the countries covered by the order.

The courts, which invalidated the original ban, did so, in effect, because they found the order amounted to religious discrimination against Muslims. This new order, unlike the first, makes no mention of the religions of any applicants to come to the United States.

Still, opponents of the order will insist the new rules are merely pretexts -- that the new order once again fulfills President Trump's campaign promise to ban Muslims from entering the United States.

As Thomas Perez, the new head of the Democratic National Committee, put it

in a statement Monday

, "Trump's obsession with religious discrimination is disgusting, un-American and outright dangerous. Don't be fooled -- he promised again and again during his campaign that he would single out and persecute a specific religious group, and that's exactly what he's trying to do now. This second Muslim ban is just as unconstitutional as the last one."

That assertion will surely be before the courts in short order. But the Trump administration's return to the drawing board may have resulted in an order that, while still controversial, may pass constitutional muster.



Trump's streamlined travel ban still faces headwinds

March 6, 2017
Washington—It

might be called the kinder, gentler travel ban -- but don't expect the revised version of President Trump's executive order aimed at keeping Islamist terrorists out of the country to quell opposition and end legal challenges.

In the eyes of critics, it's still an unconstitutional Muslim ban.

The new order Mr. Trump signed at the White House Monday now targets six Muslim-majority countries -- Iraq was dropped from the list of seven countries in the original order signed Jan. 27 -- and still suspends the resettlement of refugees for 120 days.

But the new executive action specifically exempts US green-card holders and other foreigners in possession of a valid visa. It no longer singles out Syrians for indefinite suspension from entry. And it will not take effect until March 16 -- a delay aimed in part at avoiding the mass confusion that ensued at the nation's international airports when the first order took effect immediately.

The revised order also allows immigration officials to issue visas to individuals from the six temporarily banned countries on a case-by-case basis -- for example, for students and work-visa holders, or children and individuals requiring urgent medical care.

In addition, the new order no longer prioritizes the resettlement of religious minorities -- read Christians, by and large -- from those six Muslim-majority countries. That prioritization was one of the key features of the original order that had critics and some jurists concluding the travel suspension was actually a Muslim ban that would not pass constitutional muster.

"This is not a Muslim ban in any way, shape, or form," a senior Department of Homeland Security official said Monday on a conference call with reporters. The call also included senior officials from the State Department and Department of Justice. The fact that the ban does not affect the vast majority of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims is

proof the measure is not a Muslim ban, the DHS official said.

The six countries carried over from the original 90-day travel ban are Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

Aiming for national security

What the executive order is, administration officials say, is a legitimate exercise of executive authority to keep Americans safe. And given the very senior level at which administration officials weighed in on the order, it appeared the administration intends to zero in on the president's prerogative and duty to take steps to enhance national security.

"With this order, President Trump is exercising his rightful authority to keep our people safe," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Monday morning. "This order is part of our ongoing efforts to eliminate vulnerabilities that radical Islamist terrorists can and will exploit for destructive ends." Secretary Tillerson appeared on a Washington stage with Attorney General Jeff

Sessions and DHS Secretary John Kelly.

All three cabinet members gave statements in support of the new executive order but left the stage without answering reporters' questions.

Indeed, in an effort to strengthen the national security justification for the travel ban, the new order specifies that the six countries listed are either failed states where enhanced vetting of visa applicants is problematic and where governments do not have full control of national territory, or are state sponsors of terrorism.

Iran and Sudan are listed by the State Department as state sponsors of terrorism.

Trump appears to have hinted at this ramped-up national security justification for the travel ban when he said in his speech to Congress last week that it is "not compassionate but reckless to allow uncontrolled entry from places where proper vetting cannot occur."

Why Iraq was dropped

Officials said Iraq was dropped from the list of countries subject to a 90-day travel ban because of its strides over the past month to address shortcomings in citizens' documentation. Tillerson said the government of Iraq had joined with the US in an "intense review" that had identified "multiple security measures" the two countries would take to enhance the vetting of Iraqis seeking entry to the US.

At the same time, Tillerson seemed to acknowledge the objections the Pentagon and State Department had raised over inclusion in the original ban of a country whose military is battling the Islamic State alongside US soldiers.

"Iraq is an important ally in the fight to defeat ISIS, with their brave soldiers fighting in close coordination with America's men and women in uniform," Tillerson said.

As justification for the suspension of refugee resettlement, the new order cites 300 FBI cases where individuals who entered the country as refugees are under investigation for terrorist activities. The officials would not specify how long ago those 300 individuals entered the country, whether they still hold refugee status, or how many of the 300 were from the six countries named in the ban.

"The salient fact here is that there were 300 individuals admitted and welcomed to the United States as refugees... and either entered with hostile intent or were radicalized in the United States," the DHS official said.

Like the original order, the new executive action suspends the refugee resettlement program for 120 days, while reducing the number of refugees to be accepted by the US this fiscal year from the 110,000 figure set by President Obama last year to 50,000. Trump administration officials have said that about 35,000 refugees have already been admitted since the beginning of the fiscal year in October.

Yet if the swift objections raised to the revised immigration order are any indication, its implementation could be as problematic as the previous one, which was suspended by a federal judge Feb. 3. That suspension was subsequently upheld by a federal court of appeals.

Will US be less safe?

Targeting the administration's national security justification for the order, many critics say the travel ban would actually make the country less safe.

"A watered down ban is still a ban. Despite the Administration's

changes, this dangerous executive order makes us less safe, not more, it is mean-spirited, and un-American," said Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer (D) of New York in a statement. "It must be repealed."

Some say the revised travel order will be counterproductive because it will raise tensions with Muslim countries whether or not they are affected by the ban, while playing into the propaganda efforts of terrorists, particularly anti-Western jihadists.

"This clear attempt to exclude Muslims from entering our country undermines core American values, opens the door to further discrimination against Muslim-Americans here at home, and provides a recruitment tool for terrorists around the world who seek conflict with the United States and its allies," says Stephen Miles, director of Win Without War, an advocacy group that promotes a national security based on American values.

Critics also question whether the revised order will address the objections of federal courts over the original order. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals noted in upholding the federal court suspension that none of the foreigners found to have carried out terrorist attacks in the

country was from the countries subject to the travel ban.

Trump's revised order may smooth over the rough edges of the original version, national security experts say. But some concur with critics who say the tenor of the measures is likely to undermine rather than enhance security.

"Even though this order is calmer, more professionally executed, and less likely to cause mass chaos that its predecessor, its issuance marks a sad day for American leadership in the modern world," says David Schanzer, an expert in domestic radicalization who is a professor at Duke University in Durham, N.C., and director of the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security.

Combined with other Trump actions taken in the name of national security, Professor Schanzer says the order "symbolizes that America fears engagement with the outside world and believes national security is advanced by building barriers that isolate America. This withdrawal of American leadership," he adds, "will make the world a more dangerous place."

ETATS-UNIS



Republicans Just Watch as Donald Trump Goes Wild

Michael Tomasky

As Trump throws wild, flimsy shots at American institutions, who other than Ben Sasse will stand up to him?

The day Donald Trump took office, I wrote a column arguing that what was new and frightening here was that he had no reverence for the civic and governmental institutions of this country. This had never been true of a president before, at least in the modern era. George W. Bush's administration twisted facts to get their war in Iraq. But even Dick Cheney understood that it had to *appear* as if everything was above board, as if the intelligence agencies were arriving at their conclusions independently.

Trump and the people advising him just don't care. He is interested in our institutions only insofar as they can be used to help Trump. And the

flip side was on display this weekend in his reckless Saturday morning tweets about Barack Obama. He'll say anything about anyone without giving the slightest thought to how those words might damage these institutions and demoralize the people within them.

Because not only did he accuse Obama of something terrible and illegal, with no evidence to support the charge, but he also accused the law-enforcement and intelligence communities of colluding with the outgoing president to do something obviously illegal. Only a person with no respect for any of those institutions could make such a charge.

But it's time now to focus not only on Trump and his psyche (although just quickly, before I turn away from that topic, I have to note that the most plausible theory I heard all weekend about why Trump did what

he did was the hypothesis that he was miffed that the Obamas got that joint \$65 million book advance; that's just so Trump in every way).

But let's talk about the Republicans.

When will they stand up to this guy? With one lone exception that I saw, most Republicans' responses over the weekend were pathetically weak. Let's start with this especially lame one, from Arkansas Senator Tom Cotton. After saying he knew of no evidence to support Trump's claim, it must have struck him that someone in the White House might get mad at him, because he added: "It doesn't mean that none of these things have happened, just means I haven't seen them yet." Ah. Thanks for that, Tom.

Others sounded less pliant but substantively were little better. Lindsey Graham has built up a lot of cred in this department, and understandably so, because he's

been a pretty tough Trump critic at times. But this, at a town hall over the weekend, where he obviously didn't want to face a chorus of catcalls, was from weaseltown: "I'm very worried that our president is suggesting the former president has done something illegal. I'd be very worried if in fact the Obama administration was able to obtain a warrant lawfully about Trump campaign activity with foreign governments. It's my job as United States senator to get to the bottom of this."

No, it's your job to say that unless he has evidence that he is ready to adduce yesterday, a president of the United States has no business saying anything like this.

And here's erstwhile stand-up comic Marco Rubio: "I've never heard that before. And I have no evidence or no one's ever presented anything to me that indicates anything like

that... But again, the president put that out there, and now the White House will have to answer as to exactly what he was referring to."

The lamest of all was House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes, who vowed to look into Trump's claims. Yes, this is the same Devin Nunes who said recently that his committee will not look into any claims that Trump may have spoken with former National Security Adviser Mike Flynn about the latter's contacts with Russia. Likewise, House Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz said that while he'd seen no evidence to support Trump's

claim (that's the part of his comments that was more widely picked up), he also added that his committee would take a "hard look" at Trump's allegations.

The only statement by a Republican that was even somewhat informed by principle was the one issued by Nebraska Senator Ben Sasse. He used far sharper rhetoric than any of his colleagues to put the onus on Trump to deliver some proof: "The president today made some very serious allegations, and the informed citizens that a republic requires deserve more attention." He demanded that if there was a court order authorizing a wiretap of

Trump, the president obtain and copy of it and show it to the public or at least to the Senate.

Sasse is getting plaudits for saying what he said, and yes, comparatively speaking, he was a veritable Cincinnatus here. But it's pretty pathetic that his statement stood out. What Trump did here was unbelievable. What will he say next about somebody, on the basis of no evidence? Obama is a former president who has millions of people who adore him and will have his back. But what will happen when Trump—the president of the United States, the most powerful man in the world—says something

unsubstantiated about a judge, or a civil-liberties or immigration lawyer, or a journalist, or who knows, any citizen who gets on his bad side?

This is what despots do. In the olden days, when a despot said X committed a crime, poor X was usually led away to the stockade. That can't happen here today. We think. Or can it? If Republicans don't take a stand—not in defense of Obama, but in defense of our civic institutions and norms—we may yet find out.

**The
Washington
Post**

Milbank : It's the truth according to Trump. Believe it.

President Trump has no evidence for his incendiary claim that Barack Obama ordered wiretaps on Trump Tower, and denials have come not just from the former president and his director of national intelligence but from Jim Comey — the man Trump has showered with praise and retained as his FBI director.

But Trump has something more powerful to him than any evidence, no matter how compelling: He believes. Firmly.

"The president firmly believes that the Obama administration may have tapped into the phones at Trump Tower," Trump spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders declared on NBC's "Today" show Monday morning. But what about all the credible people saying it didn't happen? "I think the president firmly believes that it did."

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ABC's George Stephanopoulos tried a more direct question on "Good Morning America" on Monday: "Does President Trump accept the FBI director's denial?"

"You know, I don't think he does," Huckabee Sanders said. "I think he firmly believes that this is a story line that has been reported pretty widely."

**The
Washington
Post**

Editorial : Trump may regret asking for an investigation into wiretapping

ALL PRESIDENTS enter the White House with a store of credibility that comes with the office, which they can use to press an agenda, move Washington's policy machinery or

The reports mostly say that Trump had made a groundless claim, but never mind that. The White House defense isn't that what Trump said was true. The defense is that "I think he firmly believes" it.

The Trump White House is the ultimate faith-based initiative — and The Donald is the deity. Things aren't true because they can be proven via the scientific method or any other. They are true because Trump believes them to be true.

His advisers' contacts with the Russians? He doesn't believe it: "I saw one story recently where they said nine people have confirmed. There are no nine people. I don't believe there was one or two people."

His fabricated claim that 3 million to 5 million people voted illegally, causing him to lose the popular vote? "It was a comment that he made on a long-standing belief," White House press secretary Sean Spicer explained. An official White House statement called this "a belief he maintains."

He maintains beliefs — herbs in a garden.

Among those attempting to bestow the divine power on Trump to declare absolute truths is Ann Coulter, who last year published the book "In Trump We Trust." She tweeted after a meandering media appearance by Trump: "Trump is already head of state. After that press conference, in my eyes, he's now head of church."

Trump, in this position as head prelate, directs us to "believe" any number of things: that manufacturers are returning to the United States, there will be a massive military expansion, that he "inherited a mess" from Obama and that his Supreme Court nominee is a "great writer." Trump asked listeners to "believe me" seven times in a single speech last month, saying, "I will never, ever disappoint you. Believe me."

The Yemen raid was a success because "the president believes" it. The courts may have struck down Trump's first travel ban, but it's legal because "we believe" it is. "We are not going to let the fake news tell us what to do, how to live or what to believe," Trump told supporters at a rally last month.

Clearly. When Trump expressed his belief that news organizations weren't reporting on terrorist attacks, Spicer attempted to document this falsehood with a list of 78 terrorist attacks, most of which had been widely covered.

When Trump expressed his belief that 1.5 million people came to his inauguration, he leaned on the National Park Service to find evidence to support the falsehood and dispatched Spicer to furnish what another Trump aide, Kellyanne Conway, called "alternative facts."

It's not clear, as I've written, whether Trump knows the difference between fact and fiction as he makes up statistics about crime and jobs, alleges he never feuded with the intelligence

community, alludes to mysterious happenings in Sweden, insists he opposed the Iraq invasion and claims there was bright sunshine during his rainy inaugural address. Survivors of the Bowling Green Massacre know some Trump aides have the same problem.

But look closely and you can sometimes see Trump aides squirm when called upon to defend his beliefs.

"You said the president believes that there was voter fraud," Spicer was asked at one news briefing. "I wonder if you believe that?"

Spicer explained that saying so wasn't "my job" and that Trump "believes what he believes based on the information that he's provided."

That was quite similar to Huckabee Sanders saying on Monday that "the president firmly believes" that Obama wiretapped Trump — without saying *she* believed it.

Likewise, Huckabee Sanders, pressed by ABC's Martha Raddatz on Sunday about Trump's wiretap claims, attempted to demur. "I will let the president speak for himself," she said.

"You're his spokesperson," Raddatz reminded her.

And that could test anybody's faith.

to rely on a handful of news stories containing no significant evidence the former president personally ordered any wiretapping, let alone of Mr. Trump.

For some time, there have been suggestions that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which operates behind closed doors, issued a warrant allowing federal agents to examine potential contacts between Trumpworld and Russia. But The Post and others have not confirmed these reports, and none of them personally implicate Mr. Obama. Nor would they: The president cannot order wiretaps. According to U.S. officials cited by The Post and others, FBI Director James B. Comey has asked the Justice Department to publicly knock down Mr. Trump's allegations.

Read These Comments

The New York Times Trump's Wiretapping Claims Puncture Veneer of Presidential Civility (UNE)

Peter Baker

"We're in a unique period," said Newt Gingrich, the Republican former House speaker who has been an outside adviser to the new president. "Trump is a genuinely disruptive figure who threatens everything Obama stands for."

Mr. Obama's camp insisted they are simply defending their legacy. "It takes two people to duel, and only one seems to be aiming his weapon," said Jennifer Psaki, White House communications director under Mr. Obama. "The uniqueness of the time is the fact that you have one unhinged and misinformed sitting president pointing his gun at a former. That is unprecedented."

Denis R. McDonough, Mr. Obama's last White House chief of staff, said the former president's team could not remain silent in the face of false assertions. "What I have witnessed in recent days is former colleagues speaking out against untruths when needed," he said. "That is best characterized as not backing down from attacks; it is not seeking out conflict."

But inside the Trump White House, it has become an article of faith that people seeded throughout the government by Mr. Obama have been leaking everything they could get their hands on to damage the new president.

"I think that President Obama is behind it, because his people are certainly behind it," Mr. Trump said in a recent interview with "Fox & Friends." "And some of the leaks possibly come from that group, you

The best conversations on The Washington Post

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Mr. Trump has nevertheless asked Congress to investigate his accusations. To which we say: fine, as long as doing so serves congressional investigators' larger purpose. The intelligence community has united around the conclusion that the Russian government interfered with the country's democratic process, and that the interference was tilted toward helping Mr. Trump. The nation must know what methods the Russians used, why they acted, to what extent any Americans wittingly or unwittingly aided them, and how to combat future intrusions.

In the process of answering these central questions, it would be only

know, some of the leaks, which are really very serious leaks, because they're very bad in terms of national security."

Other presidents have endured fractious relations. After leaving office, Herbert Hoover regularly castigated Franklin D. Roosevelt, who ostracized his predecessor. Harry S. Truman was so estranged from Dwight D. Eisenhower that they did not speak during a frosty ride to the 1953 inauguration. Ronald Reagan publicly blamed his woes on the mess he said Jimmy Carter had left him, just as Mr. Obama from time to time pointed the finger at George W. Bush.

But none of those moments compared to what America has seen in recent days. "Trump is on new ground in going after Obama," said the historian Robert Dallek, who has written acclaimed books on John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon. Most presidents have publicly ignored their predecessors "until we get to Trump," he added. "He is either ignorant of recent presidential history or simply doesn't care."

The closest analogue in modern times may have been Johnson and Nixon, both presidents who favored secret wiretapping. In his last days in office, Johnson was furious at Nixon after wiretaps revealed that a Republican intermediary seemed to be trying to undercut possible peace talks before the 1968 election. For his part, Nixon was convinced that Johnson had bugged him. Yet neither Johnson nor Nixon publicly aired those grievances at the time.

natural for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, many of whose members are committed to conducting a serious investigation, to inquire about any foreign intelligence surveillance relating to Mr. Trump and Russia, as well as the suspicions on which any warrants might have been based. As long as lawmakers see that a judge authorized any direct surveillance of Mr. Trump, his circle or his property, they can quickly discard concerns about improper wiretapping and reassure the public about federal officials' propriety. After all, Mr. Trump asked. He may not like the answer he gets back.

If anything, the "Towergate" episode underlines the importance of a fair and thorough investigation into how and why a hostile foreign power meddled in the most fundamental process of American democracy. As the controversy continued to unfold

Monday, Trump spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said on "Good Morning America" that the president wants the House Intelligence Committee to examine his allegations against Mr. Obama. This is yet another warning sign about the direction of the House panel's work, which, under the leadership of Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), already appears to be poisoned with partisanship. It would be better for the House to run no investigation than to conduct a slanted one.

Meanwhile, the members of the Senate panel still have the credibility to proceed, even as Mr. Trump and his enablers lose more and more by the hour.

Trump. Other officials appeared on television talk shows and newspaper op-ed pages to speak out against the new president's policies.

Mr. Trump's team has been angered by the criticism but even more by what they see as the enemy within. With so few of his own political appointees in place, much of the government is still operating with acting officials, some held over from the Obama administration. Moreover, the federal Civil Service, while officially neutral politically, is not dominated by Trump supporters, judging by vote results in Washington and its suburbs.

So when Mark Levin, the conservative radio host, contended that Mr. Obama had targeted Mr. Trump for surveillance in what he called a "silent coup," an assertion picked up by Breitbart News, the former website of the White House chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon, it struck a chord. Along with reports that in Mr. Obama's last days in office his administration changed the rules on distributing intelligence and made a point of spreading information about Mr. Trump's team and Russia to different parts of the government to "preserve" it, the wiretapping allegation pushed Mr. Trump over the top.

"It's a sign of how deeply frustrated he is," Mr. Gingrich said. "They have a much bigger assault against them than people have had in the past."

And so, Mr. Gingrich added, Mr. Trump needs to figure out how to

get control of his own bureaucracy. "He's not going to survive," he said, "unless he profoundly rethinks what

they're doing and how they're doing it."

Los Angeles Times

Editorial : Republicans: Don't enable Trump's absurd Obama wiretapping accusation

The Times Editorial Board

The Times Editorial Board

Donald Trump's absurd accusation that Barack Obama wiretapped his telephones "during the very sacred election process" is a depressing reminder that a president who has access to the resources of the nation's intelligence agencies prefers to believe conspiracy theories.

Even more depressing than Trump's weekend tweetstorm was what followed: his staff trying to justify his outburst, and some Republicans — including House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes (R-Tulare) — indulging the president in his attempt to shift public attention away from persistent questions about his campaign's ties to Russia and onto a supposed plot against him by the Obama administration and the intelligence bureaucracy. That could introduce even more friction into congressional investigations of Russian interference in last year's presidential election, which already have been strained by partisanship.

Nunes said that his panel's investigation would also include "inquiries into whether the government was conducting surveillance activities on any political party's campaign officials or surrogates." That sounds as if the allegation is based on serious reports of illegal politically motivated surveillance of a political campaign, which would be a scandal comparable to Watergate. But where is the evidence of such abuse?

Trump's sensational assertion that Obama ordered the tapping of telephones at Trump Tower "just before the victory" has been denied by Obama and former Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper. Multiple news organizations have reported that FBI Director James B. Comey asked the Department of Justice to publicly repudiate Trump's claim. Finally, there is the inconvenient fact that presidents don't order wiretaps.

So where did Trump get the idea that Obama wiretapped him? The best explanation seems to be that he was inspired by a report in Breitbart News, which itself cited a commentary by radio host Marc

Levin in which he urged Congress to investigate Obama's "silent coup" against Trump.

The Breitbart story also linked to stories in other publications about an order supposedly issued by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court for inspection of a computer server at Trump Tower in connection with an investigation of Russian banks. But even the author of the original report about the supposed court order says that she never wrote that it included authorization for a wiretap. (The Washington Post's fact-checker has cast doubt on these reports, and gave Trump the dreaded "Four Pinocchios" rating for his wiretapping claim.)

Trump's reckless accusation is inseparable from his longstanding view that concerns about Russian meddling in the election are raised in an effort to delegitimize his presidency. In fact, one can denounce Russian interference and still acknowledge Trump as the winner of the election — provided, of course, that his campaign wasn't involved in Russian efforts to sabotage Clinton's prospects. And so far there is no evidence of that. Clapper said over the weekend that

he had no knowledge of evidence that Trump's campaign colluded with the Russians.

But it is in the president's interest, as well as the nation's, to put to rest suspicions about any such collusion if they are untrue. That is why it is imperative that the Senate and House intelligence committees expedite their investigation of possible contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian intelligence, perhaps coordinating their investigations to avoid duplication. Other aspects of the investigation can wait until this matter is resolved.

For the congressional investigation to be credible, it must be bipartisan. That means Democrats must be willing to refrain from using it to score extraneous points against a president who is deeply unpopular with their base, and Republicans must be willing not to endorse or acquiesce in outrageous allegations such as the wiretapping charge.

Meanwhile, if the president expects to be treated fairly he will stop the baseless attacks on others — including his predecessor.

The New York Times

House Republicans Unveil Plan to Replace Health Law (UNE)

Robert Pear and Thomas Kaplan

House Republican leaders said they would keep three popular provisions in the Affordable Care Act: the prohibition on denying coverage to people with pre-existing conditions, the ban on lifetime coverage caps and the rule allowing young people to remain on their parents' health plans until age 26.

Republicans hope to undo other major parts of President Barack Obama's signature domestic achievement, including income-based tax credits that help millions of Americans buy insurance, taxes on people with high incomes and the penalty for people who do not have health coverage.

Medicaid recipients' open-ended entitlement to health care would be replaced by a per-person allotment to the states. And people with pre-existing medical conditions would face new uncertainties in a more deregulated insurance market.

The bill would also cut off federal funds to Planned Parenthood clinics through Medicaid and other government programs for one year.

"Obamacare is a sinking ship, and the legislation introduced today will rescue people from the mistakes of the past," said Representative Kevin McCarthy of California, the majority leader.

Democrats denounced the effort as a cruel attempt to strip Americans of their health care.

"Republicans will force tens of millions of families to pay more for worse coverage — and push millions of Americans off of health coverage entirely," said Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the Democratic leader.

Two House committees — Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce — plan to take up the legislation on Wednesday. House Republicans hope the committees will approve the measure this week, clearing the way for the full House to act on it before a spring break

scheduled to begin on April 7. The outlook in the Senate is less clear. Democrats want to preserve the Affordable Care Act, and a handful of Republican senators expressed serious concerns about the House plan as it was being developed.

Under the House Republican plan, the income-based tax credits provided under the Affordable Care Act would be replaced with credits that would rise with age as older people generally require more health care. In a late change, the plan reduces the tax credits for individuals with annual incomes over \$75,000 and married couples with incomes over \$150,000.

Republicans did not offer any estimate of how much their plan would cost, or how many people would gain or lose insurance. The two House committees plan to vote on the legislation without having estimates of its cost from the Congressional Budget Office, the official scorekeeper on Capitol Hill.

But they did get the support from President Trump that they badly need to win House passage.

"Obamacare has proven to be a disaster with fewer options, inferior care and skyrocketing costs that are crushing small business and families across America," said the White House press secretary, Sean Spicer. "Today marks an important step toward restoring health care choices and affordability back to the American people."

The release of the legislation is a step toward fulfilling a campaign pledge — repeal and replace — that has animated Republicans since the Affordable Care Act passed in 2010. But it is far from certain Republican lawmakers will be able to get on the same page and repeal the health measure.

On Monday, four Republican senators — Rob Portman of Ohio, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, Cory Gardner of Colorado and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska — signed a letter saying a House draft

that they had reviewed did not adequately protect people in states like theirs that have expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act.

Three conservative Republicans in the Senate — Mike Lee of Utah, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Ted Cruz of Texas — had already expressed reservations about the House's approach.

In the House, Republican leaders will have to contend with conservative members who have already been vocal about their misgivings about the legislation being drawn up. "Obamacare 2.0," Representative Justin Amash, Republican of Michigan, posted on Twitter on Monday.

Representative Mark Meadows, Republican of North Carolina and the chairman of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, also offered a warning on Monday, joining with Mr. Paul to urge that Republican leaders pursue a "clean repeal" of the health care law.

"Conservatives don't want new taxes, new entitlements and an 'ObamaCare Lite' bill," they wrote on the website of Fox News. "If leadership insists on replacing

ObamaCare with ObamaCare-lite, no repeal will pass."

The move to strip Planned Parenthood of funding and the plan's provisions to reverse tax increases on the high-income taxpayers will also expose Republicans in more moderate districts to Democratic attacks.

The bill would provide each state with a fixed allotment of federal money for each person on Medicaid, the federal-state program for more than 70 million low-income people. The federal government would pay different amounts for different categories of beneficiaries, including children, older Americans and people with disabilities.

The bill would also repeal subsidies that the government provides under the Affordable Care Act to help low-income people pay deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs for insurance purchased through the public marketplaces. Eliminating these subsidies would cause turmoil in insurance markets, insurers and consumer advocates say.

However, the House Republicans would provide states with \$100 billion over nine years, which states

could use to help people pay for health care and insurance.

The tax credits proposed by House Republicans would start at \$2,000 a year for a person under 30 and would rise to a maximum of \$4,000 for a person 60 or older. A family could receive up to \$14,000 in credits.

Even with those credits, Democrats say, many people would find insurance unaffordable. But Republicans would allow insurers to sell a leaner, less expensive package of benefits and would allow people to use the tax credits for insurance policies covering only catastrophic costs.

While Republicans have argued over how to proceed, Mr. Trump has expressed only vague goals for how to repeal the Affordable Care Act and improve the nation's health care system. On Capitol Hill, lawmakers and their aides are waiting to see whether he uses his platform, Twitter account and all, to press reluctant Republicans to get behind the House plan.

The new version of the House Republican bill makes several changes to earlier drafts of the legislation.

It drops a proposal to require employees with high-cost employer-sponsored health insurance to pay income and payroll taxes on some of the value of that coverage. In addition, it would delay a provision of the Affordable Care Act that imposed an excise tax on high-cost insurance plans provided by employers to workers.

Congress had already delayed this "Cadillac tax" — despised by employers and labor unions alike — by two years, to 2020. The new legislation would suspend the tax from 2020 through 2024.

House Republicans would offer tax credits to help people buy insurance if they did not have coverage available from an employer or a government program. Under earlier versions of the bill, the tax credits increased with a person's age, but would not have been tied to income. Backbench Republicans said the government should not be providing financial assistance to people with high incomes.

Accordingly, under the new version of the bill, the tax credits would be reduced and eventually phased out.



House GOP Releases Plan to Repeal, Replace Obamacare (UNE)

Stephanie Armour, Kristina Peterson and Michelle Hackman

Updated March 7, 2017 8:04 a.m. ET

House Republicans on Monday released a detailed proposal that marks their first attempt in the new Congress to unite fractious GOP members behind a plan to replace the Affordable Care Act and deliver on a central campaign promise by Republicans.

The proposed legislation would dismantle much of the 2010 law known as Obamacare and create a new tax credit tied to an individual's age and income, aimed at helping Americans buy insurance if they don't get it at work.

It is unclear how much the plan will cost or how many people could potentially lose health insurance under the changes as the proposal doesn't provide an estimate.

The proposed plan would end the requirement that most Americans have health coverage or pay a penalty, a provision long derided by Republicans, and a mandate that larger employers provide health insurance to workers. It also would repeal most of the health law's taxes starting in 2018 and freeze funding in 2020 for the 31 states

that expanded Medicaid under the law.

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Trump's unsubstantiated assertion that his predecessor ordered a wiretap of Trump Tower during the presidential campaign has thrust the president's pick for the No. 2 position in the Justice Department into the cross hairs.

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TRUMP'S FIRST 100 DAYS

The bill is a political gamble for House Republican leaders. The party and President Donald Trump ran for office on promises to repeal and replace the health law. Republicans have said their plan is aimed at decreasing costs and boosting choice for consumers. But to do so, their proposals would likely provide coverage for far fewer people than the ACA, according to a number of research reports.

"Working together, this unified Republican government will deliver relief and peace of mind to the millions of Americans suffering under Obamacare," said House Speaker Paul Ryan.

"Trumpcare doesn't replace the Affordable Care Act, it forces millions of Americans to pay more for less care," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.)

Earlier versions included provisions opposed by both conservative and centrist Republicans, whose support for the now-altered bill will be crucial.

House Republican leaders hope the package will be passed by Congress by mid-April.

Mr. Trump praised the bill on Tuesday morning, writing on Twitter, "Our wonderful new Healthcare Bill is now out for review and negotiation. ObamaCare is a complete and total disaster—is imploding fast!"

In a statement Monday night, White House press secretary Sean Spicer called the bill "an important step toward restoring health care choices and affordability back to the American people."

"President Trump looks forward to working with both Chambers of

Congress to repeal and replace Obamacare,” Mr. Spicer said.

The legislation would provide tax credits to people who don't get coverage through their job, replacing the subsidies the ACA gave to a narrower set of lower-income people to help them afford insurance policies.

The proposal wouldn't kill the ACA's exchanges where people can obtain insurance, but far fewer people are expected to use them because the subsidies that reduce premium costs would no longer exist. Those subsidies are only available now to people who obtain coverage through the state and federal ACA exchanges.

The refundable tax credits have been a thorny issue for Republicans. Conservative Republicans vowed not to support an earlier draft that would have provided the tax credits regardless of income.

Under the House GOP proposal released Monday, the refundable tax credits would be tied to age, with people under 30 eligible for a credit of \$2,000 a year, increasing steadily to \$4,000 for those over 60. The size of a tax credit would grow with the size of a family, but would be capped at \$14,000.

To assuage the concern among conservative lawmakers that the credits would be available to wealthy Americans, the tax credits would start to shrink for individuals making more than \$75,000 or households making more than \$150,000. For every \$1,000 in income over \$75,000, the tax credit would be reduced by \$100.

In a sign GOP leaders' changes may have assuaged some conservative concerns, Republican Study Committee Chairman Mark Walker (R., N.C.) said in a statement Monday night that the bill reflects “the right direction.” Mr. Walker, who had opposed an earlier version of the bill, said his group of conservative lawmakers would meet Tuesday evening to review it closely.

In a provision sure to draw resistance from moderate Republicans in the Senate, the House proposal would bar federal funding for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, which provides reproductive-health services to women.

The bill also maintains the ACA's Medicaid expansion temporarily. Sixteen Republican governors lead states that chose to expand Medicaid under funding provided by the health law, and they have been pressuring GOP leaders not to repeal the extended federal funding outright.

The GOP plan aims to appease their concerns by leaving the expansion untouched through the end of 2019. After that, funding would begin to be reduced in an attempt to make up for the revenue lost by repealing the taxes contained in the existing health law.

Beginning in January 2020, the federal government would transition into a system in which a set amount of funding would be sent to the states each year. The move is expected to save the federal government significant money over time but could result in fewer people having insurance coverage.

Bruce Siegel, president and chief executive officer of America's Essential Hospitals, an association of public and nonprofit hospitals, urged Congress to wait for a Congressional Budget Office evaluation, or score, of the bill before taking action. “Without a CBO score, there are too many unknowns and too great a risk of coverage losses without affordable alternatives for many Americans,” he said.

Republican Sens. Rob Portman of Ohio, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Cory Gardner of Colorado and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia sent a letter Monday to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) expressing concerns over the House's approach to overhauling the Medicaid program in an earlier draft of the bill.

“We believe Medicaid needs to be reformed, but reform should not come at the cost of disruption in access to health care for our country's most vulnerable and sickest individuals,” the four lawmakers wrote.

Ms. Capito said Monday night that the House's health-care plan was “moving in the right direction,” but that she needed to look at it more closely before backing it. She said she worried that the tax credit might not be generous enough for low-income individuals. “My understanding is that it's on the low side,” she said.

House Republicans ducked one fight by deciding not to change the popular tax break on health plans that people get through their employer.

Instead, they are planning to pay for the bill by allowing the ACA's taxes to remain in place until the start of 2018. They also would allow the tax on expensive employer health plans to kick in on Jan. 1, 2025, instead of being repealed. Congress already had voted to delay the tax until 2020.

That could prove unpopular with conservative Republicans, who wanted to get rid of all of the 2010 health law's taxes immediately.

The House GOP bill also would expand health savings accounts aimed at helping people save money for health costs.

The proposal would also end a special executive compensation limit that the 2010 law applied to health insurers. That law prevented companies from deducting more than \$500,000 in pay to executives. Other companies face a \$1 million limit, but that cap doesn't apply to performance-based compensation.

The bill, which was largely completed over the weekend in closed-door meetings with the White House and GOP leadership, is expected to be voted on in House committees this week.

To pass the bill, Republicans can't lose more than two GOP votes in the Senate and 22 in the House, assuming no support from Democrats.

Write to Stephanie Armour at stephanie.armour@wsj.com, Kristina Peterson at kristina.peterson@wsj.com and Michelle Hackman at Michelle.Hackman@wsj.com



House Republicans release long-awaited plan to replace Obamacare (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/kelsey.snell.3>

House Republicans on Monday released long-anticipated legislation to supplant the Affordable Care Act with a more conservative vision for the nation's health-care system, replacing federal insurance subsidies with a new form of individual tax credits and grants to help states shape their own policies.

Under two bills drafted by separate House committees, the government would no longer penalize Americans for failing to have health insurance but would try to encourage people to maintain coverage by allowing insurers to impose a surcharge of 30 percent for those who have a gap between health plans.

The legislation would preserve two of the most popular features of the 2010 health-care law, letting young adults stay on their parents' health plans until age 26 and forbidding insurers to deny coverage or charge more to people with preexisting medical problems. It would also target Planned Parenthood, rendering the women's health organization ineligible for Medicaid reimbursements or federal family planning grants — a key priority for antiabortion groups.

The debate, starting in House committees this week, is a remarkable moment in government health-care policymaking. The Affordable Care Act, former president Barack Obama's signature domestic policy achievement passed in 2010 with only Democratic support, ushered in

the most significant expansion of insurance coverage since the creation of Medicare and Medicaid as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society programs of the mid-1960s.

There is no precedent for Congress to reverse a major program of social benefits once it has taken effect and reached millions of Americans.

President Trump, Vice President Pence and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) keep saying a plan to repeal and replace Obamacare will be released soon, but few details have been released so far. Here's what they've said. Trump, Pence and Ryan keep saying a plan to repeal and replace Obamacare will be released soon, but few details have been released so far. (Video:

Sarah Parnass/Photo: Jonathan Newton/The Washington Post)

(Sarah Parnass/The Washington Post)

Taken together, the bills introduced Monday night represent the Republicans' first attempt — and best shot to date, with an ally in the White House — to translate seven years of talking points about demolishing the ACA into action.

At the same time, major aspects of the plans, notably the strategy for tax credits and Medicaid, reflect the treacherous terrain that Republicans face to win enough votes within their own conferences in the GOP-controlled House and Senate.

The bills must address concerns of both conservatives worried about

the cost of the overhaul and worries that it might in effect enshrine a new federal entitlement, as well as more moderate members who want to ensure that their constituents retain access to affordable health care, including those who received Medicaid coverage under the ACA.

Even so, signs emerged on Monday that Republicans in Congress's upper chamber could balk either at the cost of the proposal or if it leaves swaths of the country without insurance coverage.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), one of at least three conservative senators who opposes the plan to provide income-based tax credits, tweeted: "Still have not seen an official version of the House Obamacare replacement bill, but from media reports this sure looks like Obamacare Lite!"

And four key Republican senators, all from states that opted to expand Medicaid under the ACA, said they would oppose any new plan that would leave millions of Americans uninsured.

"We will not support a plan that does not include stability for Medicaid expansion populations or flexibility for states," Sens. Rob Portman (Ohio), Shelley Moore Capito (W.Va.), Cory Gardner (Colo.) and Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) wrote in a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

As Republicans in Congress gear up to repeal the Affordable Care Act, two Pennsylvanians reflect on their different experiences under Obamacare. (Alice Li/The Washington Post)

(Alice Li/The Washington Post)

The four senators were split on exactly what proposals would meet their standards, but with 52 Republicans, McConnell would not have enough votes to pass repeal without the support of at least two of them.

Democrats, meanwhile, have given no indication that they intend to work with Republicans, and top party leaders decried the GOP plan Monday as a betrayal of everyday Americans. "Trumpcare doesn't replace the Affordable Care Act, it forces millions of Americans to pay more for less care," said Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.).

In particular, the plan to target Planned Parenthood has already generated fierce pushback from Democrats and doubts from some Republicans who have noted that federal funds are already barred from funding abortions and that Planned Parenthood provides

routine medical care to millions of American women.

The tax credits outlined by the Ways and Means Committee's portion of the legislation incorporate an approach that Republicans have long criticized: income-based aid to help Americans afford health coverage.

Until now, the GOP had been intending to veer away from the ACA subsidies that help poor and middle-class people obtain insurance, insisting that the size of tax credits with which they planned to replace the subsidies should be based entirely on people's ages and not their incomes. But the drafts issued Monday proposed refundable tax credits that would hinge on earnings as well as age — providing bigger credits for older and poorer Americans.

This big pivot, developed by the Ways and Means Committee under the guidance of House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.), stems from a combination of problems that were arising with the idea of age-only credits that would have been available to any individual or family buying insurance on their own, no matter how affluent.

The Republican plan would offer tax credits ranging from \$2,000 per year for those under 30 to \$4,000 per year for those over 60. The full credit would be available for individuals earning up to \$75,000 a year and up to \$150,000 for married couples filing jointly. The credits would phase out for individuals earning more — for each \$1,000 in additional income, a person would be entitled to \$100 less in credit, meaning a 61-year old could make up to \$115,000 and still receive some credit.

The income-based phase-out of the credit allows the GOP plan to be funded without taxes on employer-provided insurance that had been considered earlier in the drafting process. In addition, the latest proposal would delay the ACA's "Cadillac" tax, a levy on the most generous employer-provided health plans, until 2025. It also retains the tax exclusion for premiums paid for employer-provided health plans.

Estimates from congressional budget analysts and the White House's Office of Management and Budget kept showing that the credits would be both too small to provide enough help to lower-income people and too expensive overall for a GOP determined to slash federal spending that the ACA has required.

Those analysts have not had time to assess how this new configuration

would affect federal spending or the number of people with insurance coverage.

While the number of Americans who can afford health insurance has never been the priority for the GOP that it is for Democrats, President Trump has made clear that he is sensitive to any changes that would strand large numbers of people who gained coverage under the ACA.

[Conservative groups and lawmakers demanding 'full repeal' could derail Obamacare rollback]

Compared with the ACA's subsidies, the tax credits would go to more people but provide less financial help to lower-income people, according to Larry Levitt, senior vice president of the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Meanwhile, the portion of the legislation drafted by the Energy and Commerce Committee would substantially redesign Medicaid in a way that attempts to balance the GOP's antipathy toward the ACA's expansion of the program against the concerns of a significant cadre of Republican governors — and the lawmakers from their states — who fear losing millions of dollars that the law has funneled to help insure low-income residents.

Medicaid would be converted from its current form of entitlement to anyone eligible into a per capita cap on funding to states, depending on how many people they had enrolled. In states that expanded Medicaid under the ACA, the government for now would continue paying for virtually the entire cost of the expansion.

Thirty-one states, plus the District of Columbia, have adopted that expansion. Starting in 2020, however, the GOP plan would restrict the government's generous Medicaid payment — 90 percent of the cost of covering people in the expansion group — only to people who were in the program as of then. States would keep getting that amount of federal help for each of those people as long as they remained eligible, with the idea that most people on Medicaid drop off after a few years.

For the other 19 states that did not expand Medicaid, the legislation would provide \$10 billion spread over five years. States could use that money to subsidize hospitals and other providers of care that treat many poor patients.

[A divided White House still offers little guidance on replacing Obamacare]

While members of the two committees working on the

replacement drafts were determined to begin considering legislation this week, final work on them was still underway over the weekend and Monday, according to three individuals with knowledge of the process.

The change in thinking about tax credits emerged since Friday, when a White House meeting chaired by Budget Director Mick Mulvaney and attended by key GOP congressional figures was called to finalize key provisions.

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At the same time, the shift to take income into account could create a potentially difficult ripple effect for Republicans, who regard a reduction in the federal government's role in health care as a central reason to abandon the sprawling 2010 health care law. One motivation for the GOP thinking that credits could depend only on age was that the Internal Revenue Service would no longer have needed to verify the eligibility of people for financial help, as it has for ACA subsidies. If income is taken into account, the IRS would still need to be involved.

Coming out of a closed-door GOP conference meeting last week, several House Republicans expressed concerns that the committees might start to work on the legislation without a complete fiscal assessment. To be eligible for special budget rules known as "reconciliation" — allowing bills to pass in the Senate by a simple majority — the legislation cannot increase the deficit after its first 10 years in effect.

Several House GOP aides involved in drafting the legislation could not say when the Congressional Budget Office would provide its formal analysis of the bill, but the two committees of jurisdiction are poised to advance the bill without it. One said committees "regularly go through the markup process without a formal CBO score."

But House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said Monday that Republicans should not move the legislation through committees without the CBO analysis: "The American people deserve to see what Republicans are trying to do to their health care."

Brady and Walden : The Health Bill You've Waited For

Kevin Brady and Greg Walden

March 6, 2017 7:44 p.m. ET

'ObamaCare is collapsing,' President Trump said during his address to Congress last week, "and we must act decisively to protect all Americans." House Republicans have heard the president's message loud and clear. On Monday night the congressional committees we lead released the American Health Care Act, which will rescue those hurt by ObamaCare's failures and lay the groundwork for a patient-centered health-care system.

Our fiscally responsible plan will lower costs for patients and begin returning control from Washington back to the states, so that they can tailor their health-care systems to their unique communities. The bill will improve access to care and restore the free market, increasing innovation, competition and choice.

The legislation provides immediate relief from ObamaCare by eliminating the penalties attached to the individual and employer mandates. Washington will no longer force Americans to purchase expensive, inadequate plans they don't need and cannot afford.

Our bill also dismantles the ObamaCare taxes that have hurt patients, job creators and health-care providers. It repeals taxes on prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, health-insurance premiums and medical devices.

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More in Health Care

The legislation works to ensure a stable transition away from ObamaCare. It preserves and protects insurance for the more than 150 million Americans who receive employer-sponsored health coverage. It provides ObamaCare enrollees with access to the existing financial support for their plans through the end of 2019. People will also be able to use their ObamaCare subsidy to purchase expanded insurance options—including catastrophic coverage—

without being tied to the failing exchanges.

Our plan preserves vital patient protections. Young Americans can continue coverage on their parents' plans until age 26. People with pre-existing conditions cannot be denied policies. Nobody can be charged more for getting sick—period.

To prevent people from unfairly gaming the system, driving up costs for everyone else, we propose a new protection for patients who maintain continuous coverage in the individual and small-group markets. A similar "continuous coverage" provision already exists for those who get insurance through an employer. Extending this safeguard is a simple but important reform that will give patients an incentive to enroll and stay enrolled. This protection is based solely on enrollment status, ensuring that patients will be treated equally no matter how healthy or sick they are.

Additionally, our legislation establishes a Patient and State Stability Fund to help low-income Americans afford health care and to repair the damage done to state markets by ObamaCare. States that take advantage of this new fund will have broad flexibility to develop innovative programs like Maine's invisible high-risk pool or Alaska's state-based reinsurance program. If they choose, states may also use these resources to increase access to preventive services, like getting an annual checkup. This program gives states new tools and flexibility to care for their unique patient populations.

Our legislation strengthens Medicaid, which is a critical lifeline for millions of Americans. But Medicaid's flaws—it offers patients fewer choices and less access to quality care than private insurance—were worsened by ObamaCare's expansion of the program. To unwind it responsibly, our legislation would freeze new enrollment in ObamaCare's Medicaid expansion, while grandfathering in existing enrollees. People currently covered under the expansion would stay in the program if they remain eligible. Over time, as their incomes or eligibilities change, they will naturally cycle off Medicaid and receive other help accessing private insurance.

We also refocus Medicaid's limited resources to the patients most in need. Our legislation proposes a bipartisan idea known as a "per capita allotment" to determine a fair amount of funding for each state based on the number of enrollees in its Medicaid population.

Following President Trump's direction, our legislation provides tax credits to help Americans pay for the health-care options they want—not the ones forced on them by Washington. The bill repeals ObamaCare's flawed subsidies, effective in 2020. After that, individuals and families who don't receive insurance through work or a government program become eligible for between \$2,000 and \$14,000 in tax credits a year. These credits, based on age and family size, will give millions of people new flexibility and freedom to buy insurance tailored to their needs. The full credit would be available to Americans with low or middle incomes and would slowly phase out as they climb the pay scale.

Our plan will strengthen and expand health-savings accounts so Americans can save and spend their health-care dollars the way they want and need. We nearly double the amount of money people can contribute into their HSAs—\$6,550 for individuals and \$13,100 for families. And the bill will broaden HSAs to cover even more expenses, including over-the-counter medications.

The bill is now online for our constituents and colleagues to review, and the committees we lead will consider it later this week. Our open process will give lawmakers on both sides of the aisle the opportunity to weigh these policies, offer amendments and vote on the final product.

After seven years of ObamaCare's failures, Republicans are committed to lowering costs, expanding choices and putting the American people back in charge of their own health care.

Mr. Brady, a Texas Republican, is chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Walden, an Oregon Republican, is chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

POLITICO Conservatives pan House Obamacare repeal bill

By Katelyn Fossett

'This is Obamacare by a different form,' former Freedom Caucus

chairman Jim Jordan tells POLITICO.

A handful of House conservatives on Monday evening criticized GOP leadership's newly released

Obamacare replacement bill, foreshadowing trouble for the repeal effort even after leaders tried to assuage the far-right.

Some House Freedom Caucus members dismissed the bill as creating a new "entitlement program" by offering health care tax credits to low-income Americans. A Republican Study Committee memo sent to chiefs of staff, obtained by POLITICO, echoed those comments and blasted the bill's continuation of the Medicaid expansion for three years.

Story Continued Below

"This is Obamacare by a different form," former Freedom Caucus chairman Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) told POLITICO. "They're still keeping the taxes in place and Medicaid expansion, and they're starting a new entitlement."

Freedom Caucus member Dave Brat (R-Va.) piled on, telling POLITICO he'd vote against it in its current form because "the bill maintains many of the federal features including a new entitlement program as well as most of the insurance regulations."

"Now [they] are saying we're going to do repeal and replace but the bill does nothing of the sort," he said. "[Speaker] Paul Ryan has always said the entire rationale for this bill is to bend the cost curve down, and so far I have seen no evidence that this bill will bring the cost curve down."

His comments come just a few hours after Ryan and his top lieutenants publicly released their much-awaited Obamacare replacement plan. Two House committees will begin marking up the bill this week, and GOP leadership hopes to send the measure to the Senate in three weeks.

President Donald Trump signaled his support for the bill by tweeting a link to a Ryan statement about the

proposal on Monday evening.

"House just introduced the bill to #RepealAndReplace #Obamacare," he wrote. "Time to end this nightmare."

House GOP leadership, meanwhile, is gearing up for a major effort to whip support for the bill. On Tuesday Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) will bring the deputy whip team to the White House in an effort to rally the troops — and begin some arm-twisting.

Leaders hoped to alleviate concerns expressed by the far-right over tax credits that will replace the current Obamacare subsidies. The bill phases out the credit for individuals earning more than \$75,000 and joint-filers up to \$150,000.

It doesn't appear to be enough though. Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich) just minutes after the bill was released called the plan "Obamacare 2.0" on Twitter. And RSC policy staffers huddle Monday night to draft a memo detailing their concerns.

"This is a Republican welfare entitlement," the RSC memo reads. "Writing checks to individuals to purchase insurance is, in principle, Obamacare. It does allow more choices for individuals, and is more patient-centered, but is fundamentally grounded on the idea that the federal government should fund insurance purchases."

It is unclear if conservatives who still don't like the bill would be willing to vote against it, potentially blocking the repeal effort from passage. While Brat said he'd vote against it, few others have taken a position yet. House Republican leaders expect some conservatives and moderates to oppose the measure on the floor. But they can only afford to lose 21 votes.

RSC chairman Mark Walker in a statement thanked leadership for their work on it and said "I applaud

the movement and believe it is the right direction."

"We are carefully reviewing this legislation looking in three main areas of shared conservative concern: protection of the unborn, elimination of Obamacare's Medicaid expansion and ensuring the tax credits are fiscally responsible," the North Carolina Republican said.

The RSC's steering committee will meet Tuesday to discuss next steps forward.

Freedom Caucus members, meanwhile, talked amongst themselves about the bill. While many believed the final version was more to their liking than older drafts, one source wasn't sure if conservatives could get on board with GOP's plan to offer advanceable, refundable tax credits. Such credits are a key pillar of the Ryan plan and one of the most controversial issues for conservatives. They worry the plan will create an entitlement and have been pushing for a tax deduction instead.

Many other Republicans — from leadership to centrists to Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price — believe such credits are necessary since the nation's poorest don't pay taxes and therefore wouldn't benefit from a deduction.

In addition to criticism of the tax credit proposal, the RSC memo jabbed at the House's plan to keep the Medicaid expansion for three years before winding down in 2020. The memo says the plan "continues to contribute to the worsening of the federal and state budgets by incentivizing states to maintain expansion or to initiate new expansions and leaving the federal government picking up the majority of the bill."

Conservatives have been calling for House GOP leaders to advance a repeal-only bill that Congress sent

to President Barack Obama's desk in 2015. They worry getting into the replacement details on the repeal bill is slowing the process.

Republican rank and file who support the plan find their demands ironic, in part because it's conservatives like Sen. Rand Paul and HFC Chairman Mark Meadows (R-N.C.) who first called for repeal and replace to occur simultaneously. House GOP leadership in December had laid out a plan to pass a simple repeal bill early, then go back and replace it after. But Paul blasted the process, and conservatives in the Freedom Caucus agree that the two needed to happen at once.

Paul's interview on the topic had caught Trump's attention, and the president eventually agreed they should be done together, forcing House GOP leadership to upend their plans. Now, however, conservatives want what they call a "clean" repeal bill, sans alternative provisions.

Speaking to Sean Hannity on Fox News Monday night, Meadows applauded leadership's move to ditch a controversial pay-for that capped health care tax exclusions for employers. But he said "we really need to look at some amendments to make sure we get rid of some of the taxes."

The bill extended for one year how long the Obamacare taxes would remain in place, in part to pay for part of the alternative.

"We've got to do better and hopefully with some amendments we can," Meadows said, though he wouldn't take a position on the proposal. "Will it lower health care costs and premiums for the people I serve? ... Until we get that answer we've got to hold off judgment."

The New York Times Supreme Court Won't Hear Major Case on Transgender Rights (UNE)

Adam Liptak

Instead, in a one-sentence order on Monday, the Supreme Court vacated an appeals court decision in favor of the student, Gavin Grimm, and sent the case back for further consideration in light of the new guidance from the administration.

The Supreme Court had agreed in October to hear the case, and the justices were scheduled to hear arguments this month. The case would have been the court's first encounter with transgender rights,

and it would probably have been one of the biggest decisions of a fairly sleepy term.

"Thousands of transgender students across the country will have to wait even longer for a final decision from our nation's highest court affirming their basic rights," said Sarah Warbelow, the legal director of the Human Rights Campaign.

Kerri Kupec, a lawyer with Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative Christian group, welcomed Monday's development.

The Teenage Transgender Population

The estimated share of teenagers age 13 to 17 who would identify as transgender if asked.

"The first duty of school districts is to protect the bodily privacy rights of all of the students who attend their schools and to respect the rights of parents who understandably don't want their children exposed in intimate changing areas like locker rooms and showers," she said.

There are other cases on transgender rights in lower courts,

including a challenge to a North Carolina law that, in government buildings, requires transgender people to use bathrooms that correspond with the gender listed on their birth certificates. The law has drawn protests, boycotts and lawsuits.

The question in the Virginia case was whether Mr. Grimm, 17, could use the boys' bathroom in his southeast Virginia high school. The Obama administration said yes, relying on its interpretation of a federal regulation under a 1972 law, Title IX, that bans discrimination "on

the basis of sex” in schools that receive federal money.

The Department of Education said in 2015 that schools “generally must treat transgender students consistent with their gender identity.” Last year, the department went further, saying that schools could lose federal money if they discriminated against transgender students.

The Trump administration withdrew that guidance last month, saying it had been formulated without “due regard for the primary role of the states and local school districts in establishing educational policy.”

The letter announcing the new policy, signed by officials in the Education and Justice Departments, said schools must still take steps to protect all students from “discrimination, bullying or harassment.”

Individual school districts remain free to let transgender students use the bathrooms of their choice. The practical effect of the Trump administration’s change in position was limited, as a federal court had issued a nationwide injunction

barring enforcement of the Obama administration’s guidance.

It will now be up to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in Richmond, Va., to answer whether Title IX protects the rights of Mr. Grimm and other transgender students.

Mr. Grimm attends Gloucester High School. For a time, school administrators allowed him to use the boys’ bathroom, but the local school board later adopted a policy that required students to use the bathrooms and locker rooms for their “corresponding biological genders.” The board added that “students with gender identity issues” would be allowed to use private bathrooms.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which represents Mr. Grimm, told the justices that requiring Mr. Grimm to use a private bathroom had been humiliating and had, quoting him, “turned him into ‘a public spectacle’ before the entire community, ‘like a walking freak show.’”

After Mr. Grimm challenged the school board’s bathroom policy in

court in 2015, a divided Fourth Circuit panel ruled the policy unlawful. A trial judge then ordered school officials to let Mr. Grimm use the boys’ bathroom.

A 1975 regulation adopted under Title IX allowed schools to provide “separate toilet, locker rooms and shower facilities on the basis of sex.” The Fourth Circuit said that the rule was ambiguous and that the Education Department’s interpretation of it was entitled to “controlling weight.”

Both sides had hoped the Supreme Court would decide the case, Gloucester County School Board v. G.G., No. 16-273, even after the Trump administration withdrew its guidance on the meaning of the regulation.

In a letter to the justices last week, Joshua A. Block, a lawyer with the A.C.L.U., said the administration’s change in position did not render the case moot, as the basic question of what Title IX meant remained. “The underlying principle that discrimination against transgender individuals is a form of discrimination on the basis of sex

has been widely accepted in the lower courts for years,” he wrote.

“Delaying resolution would provide no benefit to the court and would needlessly prolong harm to transgender students across the country awaiting this court’s decision,” Mr. Block wrote.

In a second letter, S. Kyle Duncan, a lawyer for the school board, agreed that the case should proceed, though he suggested a brief delay to allow the Trump administration to weigh in.

A ruling on the meaning of Title IX, Mr. Duncan wrote, “will save the parties — as well as public and private parties involved in similar disputes throughout the nation — enormous litigation costs as well as needless and divisive political controversy.”

The Supreme Court rejected those requests, apparently preferring to wait for a cleaner presentation of the issues in a different case.



Summers : Picking on robots won’t deal with job destruction

Lawrence Summers is a professor at and past president of Harvard University. He was treasury secretary from 1999 to 2001 and an economic adviser to President Obama from 2009 through 2010.

I usually agree with Bill Gates on matters of public policy and admire his emphasis on the combined power of markets and technology. But I think he went seriously astray in a recent interview when he proposed, without apparent irony, a tax on robots to cushion worker dislocation and limit inequality. The Microsoft co-founder is right about the gravity of the problem and need for action, but he’s profoundly misguided in his proposed solution — and in ways that point up problems with the current public debate.

First, I cannot see any logic to singling out robots as job destroyers. What about kiosks that dispense airplane boarding passes? Word-processing programs that accelerate the production of documents? Mobile banking technologies? Autonomous vehicles? Vaccines that, by preventing disease, destroy jobs in medicine? There are many kinds of innovation that allow the production of more or better output with less labor input. Why pick on robots?

Does Gates think anyone, let alone Congress, the Trump administration or a commission composed of his fellow technocrats, can distinguish labor-saving activities from labor-enhancing ones? Surely even if experts could draw such distinctions, the ability of the Internal Revenue Service to administer them is in doubt.

Second, much innovative activity, even of a robotlike variety, involves producing better goods and services rather than simply extracting more output from the same input. Autonomous vehicles will likely be safer than ones driven by humans. Robotics already help surgeons perform certain operations better than they can on their own. Online reservation systems are faster and more convenient than travel agents. Moreover, because of emulation and competition, innovators capture only a small part of the benefit of their innovation. It follows that there is as much a case for subsidizing as taxing types of capital that embody innovation.

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Third, and perhaps most fundamentally, why tax in ways that

reduce the size of the pie rather than ways that assure that the larger pie is well-distributed? Imagine that 50 people can produce robots who will do the work of 100. A sufficiently high tax on robots would prevent them from being produced. Surely it would be better for society to instead enjoy the extra output and establish suitable taxes and transfers to protect displaced workers. It is hard to see why shrinking the pie, rather than enlarging it as much as possible and then redistributing, is the right way forward.

This last point has long been standard in international trade theory. Indeed, it is common to point out that opening a country to international trade is like giving it access to a technology for transforming one good into another. The argument, then, is that since one surely would not regard such a technical change as bad, neither is trade, and so protectionism is bad. Gates’s robot tax risks essentially being protectionism against progress.

None of this is to minimize the problem of job destruction and rising inequality (although it is a major paradox that we seem to be seeing unprecedentedly rapid job destruction by machinery while at the same time observing extraordinarily low productivity

growth). Rather, it is to suggest that staving off progress is a poor strategy for helping less fortunate workers. In addition to difficulties of definition and collateral costs, there is the further problem that in an open world, taxes on technology are likely to drive production offshore rather than create jobs at home.

There are many better approaches. Governments will, however, have to concern themselves with problems of structural joblessness. They likely will need to take a more explicit role in ensuring full employment than has been the practice in the United States. Among other things, this will mean major reforms of education and retraining systems, consideration of targeted wage subsidies for groups with particularly severe employment problems, major investments in infrastructure and, possibly, direct public employment programs.

This will be a major debate that I suspect will define a large part of the politics of the industrial world over the next decade. Little is certain. But we will do better going forward than backward. That means making America even greater, not great again. And it means embracing rather than rejecting technological progress.

Editorial : President Trump's Blinkered Fiscal Vision

Donald Trump may have veered from self-inflicted crisis to self-inflicted crisis over the course of his young presidency, but he has kept one policy goal steadily before him: tax cuts for the wealthy. A case in point is his recent proposal to find \$54 billion more for military spending by slashing Head Start, food aid for low-income pregnant women, environmental protection and other programs. Those trade-offs are bad enough in themselves. But they also reveal a ruinous worldview in which nondefense spending is always excessive and tax cuts are necessary for growth. This sort of thinking will only weaken the economy and betray the people who put their hopes in Mr. Trump.

Spending on the nonmilitary discretionary programs that have been targeted by Mr. Trump comes to 3.2 percent of the economy — well below the average of 3.8 percent going back to 1962. By calling for cuts that would average about 15 percent in almost every category other than defense and “mandatory” programs like Social Security and Medicare, Mr. Trump would undermine his promises to make sure “every child in America has access to a good education,” to help the “poorest and most vulnerable” and to rebuild infrastructure. Other categories at risk of being cut include scientific and medical research, job training, national parks, air traffic control and maintenance of dams.

Worse yet, some Republicans may call for limiting Mr. Trump's proposed reductions by cutting instead from Social Security and Medicare, which Mr. Trump has pledged to protect. That would be needlessly tightfisted. A rich nation with a resilient economy can afford to care for both the poor and the elderly. Besides, support for the elderly is already becoming stingier as a result of changes instituted years ago, including an increase in the Social Security retirement age from 65 in 2002 to 67 by 2027.

That is not to imply that all spending cuts are off limits. But it's sensible to mix them with tax increases. The approach of Mr. Trump and congressional Republicans would deeply cut taxes even as spending is slashed.

Mr. Trump has essentially called for three tax cuts: a personal income tax cut, a corporate income tax cut and a cut achieved by repealing the Affordable Care Act. Specifics are scant, but one thing is clear: All three would overwhelmingly benefit

the wealthiest Americans. A campaign draft of the income tax plan indicated that at least half of the proposed multitrillion-dollar tax cut would flow to the top 1 percent of earners in 2025, according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center. Repealing the A.C.A. would end the additional 0.9 percent Medicare Hospital Tax on incomes above \$200,000 (\$250,000 for married couples).

Mr. Trump and Republican lawmakers say tax cuts spread prosperity by generating economic growth and thus increasing federal revenue — a thoroughly debunked claim. Experience shows that large tax cuts either deepen the nation's debt or necessitate spending cuts. Forecasts from the Congressional Budget Office indicate that if tax revenue is not increased in the coming decade, spending cuts of \$3 trillion — or about 25 percent outside of Social Security and Medicare — will be required to keep the debt at its current level of 77.5 percent of the economy. Clearly, if defense spending rises in the coming decade, as Mr. Trump has called for, while tax revenue declines, either the debt will rise or spending cuts will need to be even deeper.

Both outcomes can be avoided by abandoning deep tax cuts. It would be wise to take on new debt for stimulus during economic downturns or for infrastructure investments, but not to finance tax cuts during a military buildup. Economic activity could be encouraged by bolstering wages, including federal overtime protections. Tax revenue could be raised in constructive ways, including a carbon tax.

Giving the wealthy never-ending tax cuts while gutting programs for the middle class would create more of the resentment and inequality Mr. Trump has promised to address.