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## FRANCE – EUROPE



### France promises proof Assad regime behind chemical attack

Published April 20, 2017

FILE - In this Tuesday, April 4, 2017 file photo, victims of the suspected chemical weapons attack lie on the ground, in Khan Sheikhoun, in the northern province of Idlib, Syria. Israeli defense officials say Syrian President Bashar Assad still has up to three tons of chemical weapons. The officials

delivered the assessment on Wednesday, April 19, 2017, weeks after a chemical attack in Syria killed at least 90 people. (Alaa Alyousef via AP, File) (The Associated Press)

PARIS – France says it will provide proof within days that Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime carried out the April 4 chemical attack in Syria that killed at least 90 people.

Speaking Wednesday evening on French TV, Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said: "We will provide proof that the regime did indeed organize these strikes with chemical weapons."

He said he couldn't provide evidence now because analysis is still underway but added: "In a few days I'll be able to provide proof."

Assad has denied that he was behind the attack. Syria agreed to

give up its chemical weapons arsenal in 2013.

Speaking Thursday, French presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon called on the United Nations to punish those behind the attack and said "whoever uses chemical weapons should be condemned."



### France says it will prove Syria's Assad used chemical weapons

John Bacon , USA TODAY 3:34 p.m. ET April 19, 2017

Bashar al-Assad said in an interview that the chemical attack in Syria is 100% fabrication. Elizabeth Keatinge (@elizkeatinge) has more. Buzz60

A Syrian child receives treatment at a hospital in Khan Sheikhoun, a rebel-held town in the northwestern Syrian Idlib province, following a chemical weapons attack on April 4, 2017. (Photo: Omar Haj Kadour, AFP/Getty Images)

French intelligence services will soon provide proof that Syrian President Bashar Assad's military used chemical weapons in an attack this month that killed scores of civilians, most of them women and children, Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said Wednesday.

Ayrault made his assertions on French TV the same day an international investigative group confirmed the victims were exposed to sarin or a sarin-like substance. Sarin disrupts the nervous system, and one drop can be fatal. The gas, like all chemical weapons, is banned under international law.

"As far as French intelligence services and military intelligence are concerned, in a matter of days we will prove that the regime has indeed organized these strikes with chemical weapons," Ayrault said.

The attack April 4 on the town of Khan Sheikhoun killed more than 90 people and left hundreds more suffering from effects of the gas. Images of the tiny victims sparked global outrage against Assad. The U.S. responded by firing 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at the air base where the Syrian attack originated.

Russia and Syria have claimed conventional Syrian weaponry struck a rebel chemical weapons depot, causing the tragedy.

A similar global outcry after a sarin attack in 2013 resulted in a U.S. and Russian program to destroy Syria's chemical weapons stockpile. However, chemical weapons attacks in 2014 and 2015 have been verified by the U.N.

#### Read more:

On Wednesday, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced that bio-medical samples collected from three victims during their autopsies indicated they were exposed to sarin or a sarin-like substance. Tests on seven people undergoing treatment at hospitals indicated the same thing, said Ahmet Uzumcu, the agency's director-general.

Uzmucu called the evidence "incontrovertible" and said the investigation was continuing.

Also Wednesday, multiple Israeli defense officials told the Associated Press that Assad still has up to three tons of chemical weapons. A senior military official told AP Israeli military intelligence estimates that Assad has "between one and three tons" of chemical weapons. AP said the officials spoke on condition of anonymity under military briefing rules. The assessment was confirmed by two other defense officials, AP said. *The Jerusalem Post* published a similar report.

The *Post*, citing a defense official, also said the regime used the chemical weapons out of frustration after failing to make meaningful advances on the ground despite support from Russia, Iran and Hezbollah.



### Editorial : French Political Roulette

April 19, 2017 7:17 p.m. ET 17

#### COMMENTS

Europe continues its rousing election year on Sunday with a first round of the French presidential contest that will decide if the center can hold or a blood-and-soil nationalist will square off against a throwback socialist. What could go wrong?

For months the smart money thought the first round would set up a final match pitting Marine Le Pen of the right-wing National Front against a reform-minded centrist. That could still happen if the other leading finisher is François Fillon, the nominee of the center-right Republicans who touts a free-

market platform; or center-left, independent Emmanuel Macron, who doesn't go as far as Mr. Fillon but still promises to reform labor and tax laws. Either would be favored against Ms. Le Pen in a runoff.

But suddenly the two reformers might be surpassed by far-left independent Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who is telling the French they can grow richer by working less and spend more by earning less. He'd cut the work week to 32 hours from 35, cut the retirement age to 60 from 66, prevent companies that have laid off workers from paying dividends, and ignore European Union limits on fiscal deficits. On foreign policy he is anti-American, anti-NATO and pro-Vladimir Putin, and he has written a book subtitled

"The German Poison," which should make for pleasant summits in Berlin.

Ms. Le Pen is hoping to vindicate her long-running effort to transform her father's National Front into a respectable party. Her views on Europe, America, Russia and the state role in the French economy are distinguishable from Mr. Mélenchon's only by nuances.

The National Front's toxic history of anti-Semitism and its hostility to minorities and immigrants has traditionally put a ceiling on Ms. Le Pen's vote, especially on the left. But that might not hold if Mr. Mélenchon doesn't make it to the final round and his supporters must choose between Ms. Le Pen and one of the centrists.

Mr. Fillon's agenda comes closest to what France needs to revive its stagnant economy, notwithstanding his affinity for Mr. Putin's Russia. He promises to balance the budget within five years, cut €100 billion (\$106.72 billion) in spending, slash the corporate-tax rate to 25% from nearly 35%, end the 35-hour work week and liberalize labor laws to encourage hiring. All of this is a hard sell in France at any time, but Mr. Fillon's credibility has been compromised by news that he put family members on the public payroll.

Mr. Macron's reforms don't go as far as Mr. Fillon's, but he'd also cut the corporate-tax rate to 25%, reform the work week and reduce labor-related taxes for entrepreneurs. But

the 39-year-old has never held elected office and failed to sell this program to the National Assembly when current Socialist President François Hollande made him economy minister.

All four major candidates are polling at around 20%, but Mr. Mélenchon has momentum and the highest personal

favorability. A Le Pen-Mélenchon finale would be a political shock to markets and perhaps to the future of the EU and eurozone. The best result would be for one or both centrists to make it through, but the fact that both could lose to the radicals is an indictment of the main political parties.

Mr. Hollande's Socialists have made France the sickest of Europe's large economies, with growth of merely 1.1% in 2016, a jobless rate above 10% for most of the past five years, and youth unemployment at nearly 25%. His predecessor Nicolas Sarkozy and the Republicans talked a good reform game but never delivered. Add the threats of Islamist terror and mass Syrian migration,

and the stage is set for candidates who appeal to nativism or a cost-free welfare state. Let's hope a French majority steps back from the political brink.

Appeared in the Apr. 20, 2017, print edition.



## Editorial : Please Be Careful, France

The Editors

Four candidates stand a realistic chance of making it past the first round of Sunday's presidential election in France. If voters aren't careful, however, they may end up with no choice at all.

That's because two of the candidates -- National Front leader Marine Le Pen and left-wing firebrand Jean-Luc Mélenchon -- propose platforms so extreme that their destabilizing effect on the French economy, and on Europe, would be hard to overstate.

Le Pen wants to pull France out of the euro, close the borders to immigrants and

enact a program of "economic patriotism" that includes a hefty tax on foreign products and workers. Mélenchon wants a retirement age of 60, a 32-hour workweek and an effective ceiling on salaries. Oh, and he also proposes that France resign from NATO. Both have found new ways to appeal to voters, especially dissatisfied ones, partly through astute social media campaigns.

Voters deserve better than a choice between these two. Even if a mainstream party wins June's parliamentary election, a President Le Pen or a President Mélenchon would have far-reaching implications for the global order, given France's importance to the EU and the near-

total control over foreign policy vested in the French president.

The other two candidates are self-styled outsiders with more centrist policies. Emmanuel Macron, the presumed front-runner and former economy minister under Socialist President François Hollande, left government to set up his own party. He offers something for everyone but is generally pro-business and socially progressive. François Fillon, the surprise choice of France's center-right Republican Party, favors market reforms and less state intervention. But with his candidacy hobbled by an investigation into his use of state funds to hire family

members, he hasn't had much of a chance to talk about his program.

France's two-stage voting process has generally served as a moderating influence. In the first round, the saying goes, people vote with their heart; in the second, they vote with their head. It's a tradition they may want to reconsider this year. Whatever happens Sunday, French voters need to be sure they have a real choice in the second round on May 7.

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## Ogier : The sorry spectacle of the French presidential election

Richard Ogier

A far-left candidate's meteoric rise has given a surrealist hue to the already remarkable French presidential campaign. Heading toward the Sunday election, firebrand radical Jean-Luc Mélenchon is among four top candidates polling within a margin of just 4 percentage points.

The outcome is too close to call. But it's possible that at least one extremist will reach the May 7 runoff. That both finalists will be populists — one from the radical left and one from the radical right — cannot be ruled out.

Avuncular, loquacious, with a touch of the *litterateur* about him, Mélenchon, 65, is in fact a soak-rich revolutionary who champions Russian President Vladimir Putin and whose political hero is Hugo Chavez, the late Venezuelan leader who ruined his oil-rich South American country — inflation is running at more than 1000% in Venezuela today).

That in a field of 11 candidates, Mélenchon — who wants a top marginal tax rate of 100% — has a following at all, together with far-right National Front candidate Marine Le Pen, shows the farcically low level — the surrealism — of current French political debate.

This is the first time in half a century that one of the two major French parties is not certain to make the second round of a presidential election. It's also unprecedented that a first-term president has decided not to run for reelection — a clear admission of failure by President François Hollande.

Of the top four candidates, centrist independent Emmanuel Macron is at 22%, according to an Ipsos poll (down 3 percentage points in the last three weeks); Le Pen is also at 22% (and trending slightly downward), while Mélenchon, barely into double figures a month ago, is now at 20%, having just overtaken the scandal-riven establishment conservative, François Fillon, at 19%.

Another opinion poll, by Elabe, may explain the sorry spectacle. After a television debate, viewers were asked which candidate best reflected their preoccupations: Mélenchon came in at the top, with 26% of the respondents connecting with him; Le Pen, 14%, and Philippe Poutou, a Trotskyist outlier, third at 12%.

That 52% of the French said they felt closest to one or another of these anti-establishment candidates shows the extent of what one analyst called the French electorate's "monumental anger."

For more than 30 years neither the French left nor the right has managed to reverse the nation's economic decline, marked by de-industrialization, a rigid labor market, unemployment stuck at around 10% and exploding public spending. The last time the national budget was balanced it was 1974.

Britain and the U.S., countries with close to full employment, chose Brexit and Donald Trump; high-growth Netherlands blocked the ambitions of far-right populist Geert Wilders. Now France's weak economy, squeezed wages and high debt and deficits may solidify its voters' embrace of populists who variously reject the European Union, banks, big business, the European Central Bank, a market economy, profits, liberalized trade and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Further complicating the mix is the possibility that Fillon may yet rise — precisely because he is at least well-placed to block the populists. France has generally been moving to the right and Fillon, a former prime minister, is viewed as strong on law and order, which resonates given that France remains in a Parliament-declared state of emergency, after 230 deaths and more than 800 injured since 2015 in terrorist attacks.

The big trouble with Fillon, however, is that he presented himself as the presidential-probity candidate and then trashed his own moral example. After media allegations that he paid family members a million euros for work as no-show assistants, he pledged to stand aside if charged over the affair — until he was, in fact, charged over the affair. That his candidacy is at all viable seems incredible, but the threat of the populists is doubtless one reason. Another is probably that, as corruption watchdog Transparency International has pointed out, 1 in 6 French parliamentarians employ family members.

Fillon is another admirer of Putin, so if he rather than Macron should make it to the final vote against one of the populists, one wonders who Putin's hackers will be looking to help. If two populists win, though, there will be a political earthquake in France, with major ramifications for Europe and beyond.

Journalist Richard Ogier was a press attaché at the Australian Embassy in Paris.

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## Gobry : What France Needs Is Le Abenomics

Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry

Voters in France's presidential election are being asked to choose between supply-side economic reform, as offered by candidates like centrist Emmanuel Macron and center-right François Fillon, and demand-side reform, as promoted by the National Front's Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Melenchon.

The reality is that France needs both at the same time -- one without the other won't work. In other words, what France needs is le Abenomics.

It's unusual to see comparisons of France and Japan, yet the countries' macroeconomic pictures share some common features. The drags on growth are broadly similar: large public debts, an aging population, deflationary pressures, a two-tiered labor market, an over-regulated service sector, a tradition of industrial policy and a revolving door between the upper echelons of business and government. Growth has been disappointing in both countries despite world-class infrastructure, a highly skilled workforce world-beating firms and cultural prestige.

Like France, Japan in recent years was torn between those advising

supply-side reforms, and those advocating demand-side reforms. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe essentially decided to slice the Gordian knot by saying "doing both."

Since then, Abenomics has proved largely successful. Headline gross domestic product growth has been slow, given that Japan's population is shrinking, but per-capita real growth has been relatively strong given the slowdown of China, according to the World Bank. Unemployment has dropped to levels not seen since the mid-1990s -- 2.8 percent and this amidst efforts to increase women's labor force participation rate. Japan is also showing strong credit growth. And all this has been accompanied by an ambitious program of structural reform, including new rules on corporate governance. Abenomics has its critics, but Japan, it must be said, is doing better than many expected given its challenges.

The case that France too suffers from both demand-side and supply-side constraints is strong. On the demand side, there is a consensus among macroeconomists not employed by the European Central Bank or the German Ministry of Finance that the euro zone's monetary policies have depressed

aggregate demand, worsening the impact of the currency crisis and of austerity policies, as the Mercatus Center's David Beckworth has convincingly argued. While government spending increased under Socialist President François Hollande, so did taxes, particularly on capital gains and upper-middle-class households. According to the OFCE, an economic policy research institute of Sciences Po University, tax increases under François Hollande shaved 0.8 points off growth every year between 2012 and 2017. One of the key indicators of a demand problem is that the proceeds of corporate tax cuts under Hollande went to increased profit margins and dividends rather than investment or hiring.

On the supply side, France is infamous for its red tape, ranking a measly 29 in the World Bank's ease of doing business index, below countries such as Malaysia and Portugal, and a striking 72 in the Heritage Foundation's index of economic freedom, below Romania and Peru.

So France needs both a jolt in aggregate demand and structural reform. But it needs both at the same time, as the author Nicolas Goetzmann argued in his 2013 book

"Pulling Europe out of the Slump." Under conditions of deflation and mass unemployment, it's hard to see how regulatory reform alone would help much. For example, one of the major barriers to hiring is labor regulation; but it is also very high payroll taxes. Removing the regulations without the other barriers to hiring will certainly lead to layoffs; it is not certain if it will lead to the hiring that makes up for it. Meanwhile, without structural reform, injecting money into the economy could provide a momentary spurt, but would not lead to a self-sustaining cycle of growth.

The new French president should take advantage of historically low interest rates to invest in infrastructure and cut taxes across the board, particularly on labor. It should encourage small business lending as a way to increase the flow of money in the economy. The government should also embark on an ambitious agenda of labor market reform and opening up industries, such as retail, pharmacies and the legal profession, that currently have high regulatory barriers to entry. One kind of reform without the other will fail. The problem is that none of France's presidential candidates propose doing both.

## Bershidsky : Meet France's Optical Illusion of a Revolutionary

Leonid Bershidsky

On Tuesday, French presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon made a speech in seven cities at the same time -- in six of them, the media report, via hologram. The technology Melenchon actually uses is the perfect metaphor for his candidacy, whose success is the latest sensation of this wild campaign.

Star Wars-style 3-D holograms exist; in 2015, Korean researchers demonstrated an impressive early implementation, though the image flickered constantly and was tiny. Last year, Microsoft showed off a far better version, which required multiple cameras and massive processing power. Melenchon, however, uses nothing of the kind. The technology, provided by a 15-person startup called Adrenaline Studio, under license from London-based firm Musion, only requires one camera and no sophisticated computer equipment.

It's basically a technique introduced into theaters in 1860 by Professor John Henry Pepper and engineer

Henry Dircks and known as Pepper's Ghost. A high-quality two-dimensional image is projected onto the floor and then reflected by a transparent surface placed at a 45-degree angle, creating the illusion of a three-dimensional stage presence. Pepper and Dircks did it with glass, which was cumbersome, tended to break and created imperfect "ghosts." And they only could project the image of an actor who was present at the theater.

Musion uses modern materials and streaming video; that's basically the degree of technological innovation. The effect is visually stunning, and celebrities ranging from Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the U.K.'s Prince Charles and the singer Mariah Carey have used it -- but, despite Musion's, and Adrenaline Studio's, frequent use of the term "holographic," the images are not true holograms.

Nor is Melenchon himself for real, despite his increased chances of getting into the May runoff round of the election with any of three other candidates -- centrist Emmanuel Macron, Republican party candidate François Fillon and the populist outsider Marine Le Pen.

A 65-year-old political veteran who wants to establish the retirement age at 60, he joined the Socialist Party in 1976, backed centrist President François Mitterrand, served in the senate and as a government minister, and only left in 2008 to seek his fortune in an alliance with the Communist Party. It's fashionable these days for establishment figures to don outsider disguises. But Melenchon is a pro: At rallies, his quips are impeccably timed, he dresses in the light-colored clothes the Pepper's Ghost technology requires, and he moves strictly within the limited space that allows his "holographic" image to be transmitted to other cities.

Melenchon's program, too, is a product of clever design -- both as practiced by web designers and of the political variety. Unlike his less-successful rival, Socialist Party candidate Benoit Hamon, Melenchon doesn't try out any of the potentially big new leftist ideas such as a basic income or a robot tax. Like the leftist parties of Germany, he's made the protection of tenants against landlords a mainstay of his program. The rest of it is filled with old-time socialist clichés such as a

prohibitive tax rate for incomes above 400,000 euros (\$429,000) a year, billed as a "salary ceiling," attacks against "speculative" banks and inherited wealth, promises of job guarantees, a 32-hour workweek and a 100 billion euro spending spree to achieve full employment. He's not overtly anti-European Union, but he wants an EU without German-dictated financial strictures such as requirements to pay back debts or keep down deficits. He's also a pacifist who's against military unions, in particular NATO and its support of "U.S. military adventures."

This tired mix, which Melenchon presents with the élan of a chef who has produced a somewhat personalized version of French onion soup, will never be tasted by the French public. President François Hollande's attempt to tax the rich doomed his presidency from the start, and if Melenchon gets elected and tries an even tougher version, he'll do no better. In any case, his proposals require broad parliamentary support, but nothing predicts a sweep for the extreme left in the June parliamentary election. The French voting public is split, but, if anything, polls show that the right

and centrist forces are going to do better.

Melenchon's program establishes him as an enemy of the "presidential monarchy" in which the president can disband parliament but it cannot fire him. (There would be no way for Melenchon to get the Communist Party's support if he hadn't proclaimed that: The Communists oppose the direct election of the president). The implementation of the same program, however, would require a presidency with the formal



## Marine Le Pen's Bait-and-Switch Foreign Policy

Marine Le Pen may well be the next president of France. Or maybe she won't. But after the twin shocks of the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom and the election of Donald Trump in the United States, it would be foolish not to at least prepare for the possibility of a Le Pen presidency. For those outside of France, preparation includes understanding what a President Le Pen foreign policy would look like. The short answer: While cloaking itself in familiar rhetoric, it would mark a sharp, and frightening, shift in France's role in the world.

Le Pen, in contrast with candidate Trump, is far from a blank slate on foreign policy. Her vision for France's role on the world stage is consistent and long-standing, and was again recently presented in a campaign speech that was even translated into English. Le Pen has engaged in the same rebranding effort for the National Front's foreign policy that has so successfully distanced her party's domestic policies from those of her predecessor and father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. In international affairs, Le Pen *père* was obsessed with the old demons of French history — disputes about the Vichy regime, the fault lines over anti-Semitism, the Cold War fight against communism, and the bitter feuds over Algeria and France's imperial past.

Le Pen *fille* studiously ignores that history of division and instead seeks to reassure voters by recasting her foreign policy in terms that French voters have long embraced. She even claims to be the ideological heir of Gen. Charles De Gaulle, the founder of the French Fifth Republic. She has sold her foreign policy as one born out of deeply ingrained French political traditions — grandeur, independence, and the identity and history of the French nation.

But filtered through the ideology of the far-right National Front, her three pillars for a French foreign policy — independence, identity, and order — yield something new and very

and informal powers of a Vladimir Putin or a Hugo Chavez. In fact, any French president elected this year is likely to be hemmed in by the lack of a parliamentary majority. Traditional parties' popularity has eroded, but the French parliament is elected over two rounds in constituencies rather than under a proportional system, and only the older parties have the machinery required to get their representatives elected throughout France.

different for France and its partners. Le Pen explicitly rejects the notion of a Western camp to which France should belong, or of a universal model that the West should impose on the rest of the world. She insists that she is the only "realist" in the presidential race — that is, she alone seeks to promote French interests as opposed to the "delusional" politically correct visions of previous governments on issues such as Turkey's bid to join the European Union, free trade, or humanitarian intervention in the Middle East. In terms similar to Trump, she advocates a foreign policy for the common man against the betrayals of an elite class that cares little for the "real" France.

In other words,

Le Pen has taken traditional French ideas about the country's place and role in the world and flipped them on their heads.

Le Pen has taken traditional French ideas about the country's place and role in the world and flipped them on their heads. She presents her ideas in rhetoric that sounds very French in its seeming adherence to classical legalism, but the details reveal a clear departure from the pro-U.N., pro-Europe, Germany-friendly position France has stuck to for decades. By selling her foreign policy in terms familiar to voters, she obscures just how radical a change it would be.

Le Pen's worldview is built around three principal pillars — all of them ideas that French voters have been comfortable with for a long time.

The first is France's independence: the idea that France not only can and should run its own foreign policy, but also that this is essential in order for France to follow the domestic policies of its choice. In Le Pen's view, France stands among the great nations of the world. She remains capable of protecting her interests, alone if necessary. France's capacity for independence rests not only on its storied history, but also on its strength on the international stage — strength built,

Melenchon quotes Victor Hugo's adage -- "We are your sons, Revolution" -- but he's a Pepper's Ghost of a revolutionary: His decades of political experience surely tell him he can't deliver on his radical platform. Yet there he is, in septuplicate, spouting fiery rhetoric. Melenchon taps into the leftist variety of the anger with the status quo that also propels Marine Le Pen on the right, but that anger needs a more genuine channel to become productive.

first and foremost, on its military, to which Le Pen wants to dedicate 3 percent of its gross domestic product, including funds for modernizing France's nuclear deterrent.

But the "independence" that Le Pen advocates is much narrower than the traditional postwar French understanding, and goes even further than the independent footing France has sought to adhere to since the end of the Cold War. Le Pen, for instance, rejects the notion that France needs the EU, NATO, Germany, or the United States to defend itself and its interests. Indeed, she believes the NATO alliance "increasingly diminishes France's strategic autonomy" and thus weakens France.

Le Pen doesn't just exclude tight alignment with allies, as every French leader since De Gaulle has — she also rules out any permanent foreign entanglement. Since the 1970s, France's vision of its independence has been artfully reconciled with NATO, the EU, and the United Nations by asserting that membership in these organizations enhances French leverage without hampering its freedom of action. But Le Pen rejects the first two institutions, and speaks only rarely and often disparagingly of the U.N. She will accept international cooperation only on the basis of strict sovereign equality and when such cooperation directly serves French interests. France thus need not accept legal obligations that limit French independence, nor does it need to participate in other powers' wars to satisfy alliance commitments or for any other reason.

The second pillar of Le Pen's foreign policy is France's identity: the idea that the country's greatest strength is its distinctive history and culture as a nation. French presidential candidates typically extol French grandeur and evoke France's glorious past to inspire their voters. So when Le Pen talks about "what France must bring to the world, because it is France, and because we are French," she speaks a

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familiar language. Le Pen's uniqueness, however, lies in her belief that French identity is under severe threat and will be salvaged by retrenchment. For her, the single-greatest threat to France is the loss of its identity. The global environment today is filled with dangers that could transform or even obliterate French identity, from migration, to free trade, to the European Union, to terrorism, to "de-nationalized elites."

Thus, Le Pen's brand of universalism — a long French tradition — is "that of differences," as she put it in her key foreign-policy speech earlier this year. Le Pen claims that she "defends a multicultural conception of the world," but within that world nations have to be "uni-cultural." In the foreign-policy arena, Le Pen's determination to defend and protect France's uniqueness implies a deep aversion to passing moral judgment on other countries. Le Pen wants to, so to speak, "enhance" the concept of human rights with "the rights of peoples" — by which she means nations. Le Pen holds that one of the most fundamental rights for a country is the right to decide how to deal with critical issues like religion, political systems, and border control. There can, in this view, be no universal approach to human rights. Human rights have to be defined — and will be limited — within national contexts, and those definitions cannot be questioned from the outside.

The third pillar is order. The history of France is one of civil wars and foreign invasions; thus, an essential and explicit role of French governments is to provide domestic order and protect against foreign threats. Since World War II, French efforts to inject order in the international realm have included establishing and joining international institutions, which French governments have traditionally seen as promoting an international order that serves as a first layer of defense against sources of internal chaos.

In Le Pen's view, however, those international institutions now threaten France by removing from the French people the right to decide how to organize their domestic life. She thus rejects the current international architecture. She insists that order depends not only on a strong national defense, but also on protecting the nation from foreign influences. Instead of the current international order, she sees France as an integral part of a new "multipolar world order" based on "dialogue" and "respect" among nations.

Accordingly, Le Pen's platform largely consists of a list of international regimes and institutions from which she wants to withdraw: NATO's integrated command, the Schengen Area, the eurozone, the EU, and various free trade agreements. She has a principled objection to multilateral groups such as the World Trade Organization and the G-20, because in her view only the people of a nation "are able to decide what is right for them."

These withdrawals do not amount to isolationism. Le Pen fully accepts that order will at times require military operations overseas as French interests can be threatened from abroad. She claims, in fact, that Africa will be her No. 1 international priority. But her desire for a multipolar world order means that she would rather cooperate abroad with allies like Russia, which respects the need to protect identity, than those such as Germany and the United States (until Trump), which demand openness. Those demands threaten both independence and identity. So unlike those in Britain who advocated leaving the European Union, Le Pen does not see a post-

EU France pursuing its interests through bilateral free trade or multilateral cooperation.

The use of the traditional French narratives of independence, identity, and order are meant, in part, to counter the National Front's long-standing credibility problem. Many in the French electorate have long believed that the party is unprepared for government or even dangerous. This updated framing allows Le Pen to speak about "what France has to bring to the world," about "the role that was hers, and the role I will give back to her."

Even though presidential elections are not won on foreign policy, her new narrative is built on concepts that resonate deeply with large segments of the French population.

Even though presidential elections are not won on foreign policy, her new narrative is built on concepts that resonate deeply with large segments of the French population. In using them, Le Pen attempts to cast herself as a credible stateswoman.

But the reality of her positions, when laid out clearly, is startling. A President Le Pen would seek to disengage France from most of its international commitments. Beyond NATO's integrated command and the EU, other international regimes such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Criminal Court would probably be added to the list. Although she has been less clear on climate change, she has criticized the Paris deal not just for being "wobbly and impractical," but also because, regardless of the effects on others, each nation has the right and can afford to decide for itself how to deal with the climate.

President Le Pen, with a sufficient parliamentary majority, would also be able to seek a more flexible alliance posture, preferring to cooperate with countries and institutions that value sovereignty over interdependence. Her positive reaction to Trump's election was based on hopes that "America would break with the absurd idea of subjugation of its allies." Her support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, in the name of the fight against terrorist groups, is consistent with this approach. The priority she gives to Africa — focused on Francophone countries and built around the principles of sovereignty and noninterference — is mostly meant to produce migration agreements that offer countries of transit and origin financial incentives to reduce migration, as detailed in her recent speech in Chad.

All three pillars of her worldview come together in her desire for closer relations with Moscow. If achieved, better relations with Russia would signal French foreign-policy independence, bring it closer with a country that also believes in the pre-eminence of identity and conservative values, and point to a desire to prioritize the fight against both terrorism and U.S.-led globalization.

Le Pen's foreign-policy ideas resonate with at least part of the electorate because they rest securely on France's national myths: the idea that France's place in the world stems from its proud history, the notion that France can make its way in the world alone, and the idea that France sits at the top table and participates in shaping the international order. These myths have been important tools for

governing France since the foundation of the Fifth Republic.

But in previous administrations, such myths have been interpreted through a more realistic and open lens. France has been an important architect of today's European and global orders. But its contribution has been based on the notion that independence doesn't preclude interdependence, a vision of French identity that can survive being bound by international commitments, and an ability to catalyze international cooperation through contributions to global order, as exemplified by France's active role in many multilateral forums.

A President Le Pen would almost surely find that myths make for good campaign posturing, but not for good government. The foreign-policy challenges France faces today defy simple answers that France can implement alone. Terrorism requires a response that masters the nexus between internal and external security. Climate change can be controlled only if key economies believe in international coordination enough to make the needed national adjustments. Russia's behavior isn't only a response to Western slights, and its strategy in Syria does not help to address the terrorist and refugee threats to Europe.

Marine Le Pen will not find answers to these problems in the romantic poetry of French national myths. She will need to forge effective international cooperation, particularly with France's traditional partners. But that doesn't mean such myths couldn't help her get elected.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Marine Le Pen's hopes of winning the French election may rest with the youth (UNE)

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*[This story has been optimized for offline reading on our apps. For a richer experience, you can find the full version of this story here. An Internet connection is required.]*

Songbirds flitted among the redbud trees. The wind tickled yellow flowers in fields of rapeseed. The medieval church clock clanged on the hour.

Otherwise all was still in this one-boulangerie town in the French countryside when Marine Le Pen strode to the lectern and, with the unwavering force of a freight train, vowed to save the country on behalf of its forgotten young.

"Our youth are in despair," the 48-year-old thundered. "I will be the voice of the voiceless."

Two-thirds of the way back in an overflow crowd, Adrien Vergnaud knew instantly that the leader of France's far-right National Front was speaking for him. The joblessness, the migrants, the terrorism. She was the only one who cared.

Without her, said the tautly muscled 25-year-old construction worker, his troubled country has "no future."

But with the backing of young voters like Vergnaud, Le Pen may become the next president of France.

As the country hurtles toward the election this spring that could alter the course of European history —

the first round is Sunday — Le Pen's once-longshot and now undeniably viable bid to lead France rests heavily on an unlikely source of support.

Populist triumphs in Britain and the United States came last year despite young voters, not because of them. Millennials — generally at ease with immigration, trade and multiculturalism — lined up against both Brexit and Donald Trump. It was older voters who sought to overturn the existing order with nationalist answers to the problems of a globalized world.

(Sarah Parnass, Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

The Washington Post's Griff Witte explains how French youth

contributed to National Front party candidate Marine Le Pen's rise in popularity. The Washington Post's Griff Witte explains how French youth contributed to National Front party candidate Marine Le Pen's rise in popularity. (Sarah Parnass, Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

*[France's National Front co-founder Jean-Marie Le Pen says the battle is already won]*

But France is a land of youthful revolts, from the 18th-century barricades to the fevered university campuses of May 1968. And with youth unemployment stuck at 25 percent, Le Pen's reactionary call to return the country to an era of lost glory by closing borders, exiting the

European Union and restoring the national currency has fired the passions of young voters craving radical change.

"We've been told our whole lives that everything is set. Free trade. Forgetting our borders. One currency for all of Europe. Nothing can change," said Gaëtan Dussaussy, the mild-mannered 23-year-old leader of the National Front's youth wing. "But young people don't like this system. This system is a failure."

The National Front's strength among millennials suggests the populist wave that's unsettled the West may be more durable than many may assume.

Far from the last gasp of closed-society older voters who are demographically destined to be outnumbered by a rising tide of cosmopolitan youth, the populist insurgency could continue to build over years and decades if enough disenchanting young voters can be lured by the promise of something new.

And across Europe, that's exactly what far-right movements are attempting. In Germany — a country where the two main parties are led by political veterans in their 60s — the anti-Muslim Alternative for Germany party is run by a fresh-faced 41-year-old. Scandinavian parliaments, meanwhile, are stocked with politicians in their 20s hailing from parties that just a decade ago were consigned to the extremist fringe.

The National Front was, until relatively recently, a fringe movement itself, seen by critics as a neo-fascist front filled with racists, anti-Semites and xenophobes and led by the convicted Holocaust denier Jean-Marie Le Pen.

To many older or middle-aged voters, the party's essential DNA remains unaltered, even as it has furiously tried to refashion its image.

"The National Front is trying to make us think they've changed," said Marie-Thérèse Fortenbach, a 50-year-old who said her half-Congolese heritage has made her a victim of the sort of discriminatory practices the party long preached. "I don't believe it."

But the young — who have only known the party since Jean-Marie Le Pen's generally more calculating and cautious daughter Marine took over in 2011 — have been easier to convince that the National Front's reputation for extremism is overblown.

The party now boasts the youngest member in both the National

Assembly and the Senate. Its student activists can be seen on posh Paris street corners, handing out fliers, and Le Pen has surrounded herself with a coterie of 20- and 30-something advisers. This month she delivered a speech in Bordeaux focused exclusively on youth issues, complete with a plea to her cheering young supporters to "go against the currents of history."

There are signs they are doing just that.

*[Can French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron deliver on his promise to remake the country?]*

If Le Pen wins, European leaders fear the disintegration of the E.U. after decades spent trying to bind the continent more closely together. And although she's down in hypothetical second-round contests, Le Pen enjoys a commanding lead among France's youngest voters in the 11-candidate first round, polls show. One survey has her winning nearly 40 percent of the vote among those 18 to 24, nearly double the total of her nearest competitor, Emmanuel Macron.

That's all the more surprising because Macron, at 39, is vying to become the youngest president in French history.

But it's consistent with recent results: The last two times voters across France went to the polls — in European elections in 2014, and in regional voting a year later — the National Front triumphed among the young.

"It's a paradox," said Rémy Oudghiri, a sociologist with Sociovision, a firm that conducts major surveys of French attitudes. "The young overall are open to cultural diversity, open to immigration. But among the youth, there's a portion that is radicalized, that believes the more we open to the outside world, the more we decline."

The difference between the two groups, Oudghiri said, is that one hasn't bothered lately to cast ballots.

"Since only the radicalized youth goes to vote, the FN wins," he said.

That dynamic could be especially pronounced this year. Polls show that support for Macron is shallow, with even those who say they back him unsure whether they will actually turn out for a candidate with no formal party affiliation and a platform that seeks to please both the left and right.

As a former economy minister and investment banker, the pro-E.U. Macron also struggles with young

voters who don't fit the profile of the successful urban cosmopolitan.

"In France, you have a lot of young people who don't live in the big cities, who didn't go to college, who left the education system," said Jérémie Patrier-Leitus, the 28-year-old leader of one of Macron's several youth factions. "You have young people who are unemployed, and it's easy to tell them that's because an immigrant took their job."

Macron has taken the opposite tack, trying to convince France's disgruntled youth that immigration is good for the country and that the E.U. is worth saving. It's a pitch, Patrier-Leitus acknowledged, that doesn't always bring crowds to their feet — or voters to the polls.

"Europe has strong opponents but very weak supporters," said Patrier-Leitus, who regularly travels between Paris and his job at a French cultural center in New York. "We didn't realize how fragile Europe really was."

If Europe's young defenders have been tough to rouse, its opponents are filled with passion.

Dussaussy, the head of the National Front's youth wing, said that when he first saw Le Pen speak at a 2011 rally, it "was like Cupid's arrow" for the then-17-year-old.

Le Pen's once-longshot and now undeniably viable bid to lead France rests heavily on an unlikely source of support: young voters. (Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

Le Pen enjoys a commanding lead among France's youngest voters in the 11-candidate first round, polls show. (Michael Robinson Chavez/The Washington Post)

The two later bonded, he said, over their desire to seal the country's borders from mass immigration — and their shared affection for cats.

"She has natural authority, but she's also very human," Dussaussy said, gushing from his desk at the party's suburban Paris headquarters.

His office is decorated with personal photos of Le Pen cuddling her cats — as well as campaign posters, including one of a cafe table overturned in a pool of blood and the phrase "More immigration means more Islamism."

*[Marine Le Pen could win the French election — but first she must win a family feud]*

After Marine Le Pen — a husky-voiced, twice-divorced Generation Xer — the party's most prominent face is that of a millennial — the

leader's niece, 27-year-old Marion Maréchal-Le Pen.

To critics, she is the unbridled id to her aunt's disciplined ego. To supporters, she is a modern-day Joan of Arc, defending a country yet again in the midst of a foreign invasion.

Having become in 2012 the youngest person ever elected to the French parliament, her unapologetically hard-line stances have earned her a certain celebrity status in right-wing circles the world over: Sarah Palin confessed a "political crush" on Maréchal-Le Pen, while Trump adviser Stephen K. Bannon anointed her a "rising star."

In an interview at her Paris office, Maréchal-Le Pen dismissed the notion that younger French voters — suffering from an unemployment rate more than twice the national average — are gravitating to the party her grandfather founded primarily because of its economic protectionism. Their motives, she insisted, were more cultural than pocketbook.

"The main concern for the youth is the question of immigration," she said. "They have the feeling that they are being deprived of their own identity. The multicultural model defended by our elite is a model that doesn't work."

The National Front's solution — a dramatic cut in immigration and an end to French participation in Europe's border-free travel area — has found some unlikely adherents.

Davy Rodriguez, 23, is deputy leader of the party's youth wing and a student at Paris's Sciences Po, one of the most prestigious universities in France.

He's also the son of immigrants. His mother is Portuguese, his father is Spanish.

Rodriguez — whose Twitter page features a tableau of soldiers charging into battle behind a tattered French tri-color — now spends his days and nights campaigning to dramatically tighten, if not close, the borders his parents crossed decades ago to begin their lives in France.

To Rodriguez, there's no contradiction between his life story and his politics: When his parents came to France, the country needed more workers. Today, he said, it doesn't, but it's being inundated nonetheless.

"We can't accept what [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel is doing to our country — to our national identity — by putting migrants all over the countryside," he said while



sitting at an outdoor cafe in St. Germain, the famously bookish quarter of Paris's Left Bank. "The E.U. is destroying Europe with mass immigration."

In fact, France has received far fewer migrants per capita in recent years than many European nations. The foreign-born share of France's overall population has risen relatively slowly, amounting to about 12 percent of the country last year — compared with 10 percent in 2000.

Economists also cast doubt on the idea that immigrants undercut the ability of the French to find work, noting that new arrivals often do the jobs that native-born workers refuse.

But the perception of an influx that is harming French workers — especially the young as they try to get their footing in an economy still badly bruised from the Great

Recession — has persisted and is a key component of the National Front's rhetoric.

At her rally in the French countryside town of La Bazouche-Gouet, Le Pen denounced the E.U. for mandating that every country do its part to resettle refugees.

"Where will we put them all?" she asked, prompting a furious round of boos from the 600-strong crowd that had gathered in the town's wooden-beam, open-air central hall.

Vergnaud, the 25-year-old construction worker, joined in lustily.

"France's problem is that it's too generous," he said after Le Pen had sent her faithful off with an emphatic rendition of "La Marseillaise," the French national anthem. "We give to the people who are coming into the country, but not to the French."

His arms swathed in elaborate tattoos, Vergnaud said he's not normally the type to attend political rallies. But he and four friends, all in their 20s, had driven a half-hour from their own small town because they see Le Pen as the last hope for a country at risk of collapse.

The problems are everywhere Vergnaud looks: The companies that are leaving. The farms that are failing. The people who are dying in mass-casualty terrorist attacks. The mosque that's gone up in his town, right next to the church.

"I live near the Muslims. They don't work. They just take what they're given by the government," he said.

But they're also taking French jobs, he argued minutes later. "I work mostly with foreigners — people from Turkey," he said.

Among the five friends, there was no doubt that Le Pen is their savior —

the only one who would bother coming to their picturesque but decaying slice of countryside, the only one willing to fight back against the immigrants who they say are jeopardizing France's future — and their own.

Today's Headlines newsletter

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The old folks may not understand. But to the young, it was all very clear.

"My grandparents are afraid of Le Pen. They say she's extreme, and that if she's elected, we might have a war," said Manon Coudray, a 23-year-old secretary. "I say maybe that's a good thing."

Cléopée Demoustier contributed to this report.

## The American Conservative : The Battle for France

By Scott McConnell • April 20, 2017

Think what you will about America's contentious identity politics; compared with France, the United States remains Mayberry, TV's symbol of small-town innocence. We may have Black Lives Matter, massive resistance to a president seeking to enforce the country's existing immigration laws, and urban riots. But in France the riots are bigger and last far longer. It has hundreds of thousands of people possessing French citizenship but evincing no discernible national loyalty. And there are few geographic barriers between itself and the sources of inundating immigration. No one can forecast with confidence the American future—whether it be a more or less successful assimilation of large streams of new immigrants or a transformed country where ethnic division is a norm underpinning every political transaction. But whatever the fate of Western civilization—whether it be a renaissance, or, as Pat Buchanan has predicted, its death—that fate will be revealed in Paris before New York or Chicago.

And that's why France is the epicenter of today's fearsome battle between Western elites bent on protecting and expanding the well-entrenched policy of mass immigration and those who see this spreading influx as an ultimate threat to the West's cultural heritage, not to mention its internal tranquility. In France it is a two-front war. One is the political front, where Marine Le Pen's National Front has moved from the fringes of politics into the mainstream. The other is the intellectual front, where a new

breed of writers, thinkers, and historians has emerged to question the national direction and to decry those who have set the country upon its current course.

Americans have always had a special affinity for France. It was critical to the American founding by way of Lafayette's mission. In the 20th century many artistic and upper-class Americans embraced Paris as the site of and model for their own cultural strivings. France's 1940 fall to Nazi Germany dealt the first real blow to American isolationism. After the 1945 victory in Europe, U.S. links to Paris, London, and Europe generally rendered postwar Atlanticism more than just a strategy: it was a civilizational commitment that helped define who we were as Americans.

Paris remains beautiful, though crime has been rising for a generation and the city has the trappings of wartime, with heavily armed soldiers visibly guarding sensitive targets—museums, schools, newspapers—against Islamist terror. The approaching elections, where the National Front will surely exceed its past vote totals, mark a tremulous new era.

Indeed, serious people have for some years been contemplating whether France is nearing the precipice of civil war. That's probably unlikely, at least in the near future, but few would be shocked if the political and communal conflicts exploded into violence not seen in decades. And that has spawned a radically changed intellectual climate. The French intelligentsia

and its cultural establishment still lean, in the main, toward the left, as they have since the end of World War II, or indeed since the divisive Dreyfus affair of the Third Republic. But today, France's most read and most discussed popular writers—novelists and political essayists—are conservatives of one stripe or another. They are not concerned, even slightly, with the issues that animate American "mainstream" think-tank conservatism—lowering taxes, cutting federal programs, or maintaining some kind of global military hegemony. Their focus is France's national culture and its survival. When they raise, as they do, the subjects embraced by American paleoconservatives and the so-called alt-right, that doesn't mean the French debate has been taken over by extremists. The authors driving the French conversation are in almost every instance prominent figures whose views would have put them in the Gaullist middle or somewhat left of center at any time in the 1960s or '70s. But France has changed, and what *National Review* in the 1990s called "the national question" has been brought to the very heart of the country's national debate.

At the moment, France's most important political intellectual on the right is probably Éric Zemmour, a former editorial writer for *Le Figaro*. A natural polemicist, he is a descendant of working-class Algerian Jews who fled to France in the 1950s. Though he demonstrates serious intellectual breadth, Zemmour's particular passion is polemical battle. He was fined under French anti-racism laws in 2011 for publicly referring to racial

discrepancies in crime rates. No one questioned the accuracy of his statistics, but discussing them in a way that was seen as contravening French anti-defamation law was an absolute no-no. Three years later, he reached a pinnacle of influence with the publication of his 500-page *Le Suicide français*, a modern national history that sold 400,000 copies within two months and became the top-selling book in France. Weeks later, when attacks by French-born Islamists on the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* and a kosher supermarket outside Paris stunned the nation (while being greeted with shocking indifference in the predominantly Muslim Paris suburbs), Zemmour's book was there to explain how France had arrived at that dismal intersection.

The literary technique of *Le Suicide français* seems made for the internet and social media. The book marches, in short vignettes, from the death of de Gaulle in 1970 through the end of Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency in 2012. Zemmour takes an illustrative event—sometimes no more than a demonstration, a film, or a pop song—and shows how it reflects national decline or actually pushed that decline onward.

One central theme is that the young bourgeois nihilists of the May 1968 street revolution prevailed. Not in politics or at least not immediately: de Gaulle's party remained in power for more than a decade after. But the cultural victory was decisive. De Gaulle as a father figure was overthrown, and so was the traditional idea of the father. As the traditional family weakened, birth rates sank. In short order, France embraced legalized abortion and no-

fault divorce; the father, when he didn't disappear altogether, began to behave like a second mother. Traces of the shift show up in pop music. The singer Michel Delpech gave his blessing to his wife leaving for another man in one popular song:

You can even make a half-brother for  
Stéphanie  
That would be marvelous for her.

Or as the comic Guy Bedos put it, "We separated by mutual agreement, especially hers."

Such shifts coincided, in symbiotic ways that few understood at the time, with the advent of mass immigration. Zemmour writes, "At the same moment the traditional French family receded, as if to compensate symbolically and demographically, the most traditional type of Maghrebine family, the most archaic, the most patriarchal, is invited to take up its role. To come to its rescue. To fill up the places it has left vacant. To replace it."

Like the immigration narrative of every advanced Western country, the story is complex. France had welcomed and assimilated immigrants from eastern and southern Europe for a century. In the 1960s, Prime Minister Georges Pompidou, encouraged by an industrial elite seeking cheaper manual labor, recruited to France each year hundreds of thousands of workers from Spain, Portugal, and North Africa. Rural Maghrebine workers were preferred; they were seen as less Frenchified than workers from Algerian towns, more docile. After worker recruitment was stopped during the recession of 1974, family reunification as a humanitarian policy was instigated, and hundreds of thousands of North African women and children joined their husbands in France. Zemmour concludes that this represented a kind of posthumous victory over de Gaulle by the partisans of Algérie Française, the blending of France and Algeria which de Gaulle had rejected—for reasons of sociology and demography as much as for peace. As he told Alain Peyrefitte in 1959, "Those who dream of integration are birdbrains, even the most brilliant of them. Try to mix oil and vinegar. Shake up the bottle. After a while, they separate again. The Arabs are Arabs, the French are French." In the same interview, de Gaulle said the Algérie Française would result in massive immigration to France, and his town Colombey-les-Deux-Églises would be turned into Colombey-les-Deux-Mosquées.

When the 1974 recession struck, French politicians discovered it was far easier to start an immigration flow than to end one. Social-service

providers were overwhelmed by the needs of the new families. When Prime Minister Raymond Barre sought to suspend family reunification, he was blocked by a French high court. When Barre finally arranged for cash payments for immigrants who voluntarily repatriated, Spanish and Portuguese workers pocketed the checks and left, while the North Africans remained. Despite the tangible difficulties of assimilating Maghrebine immigrants, France *bien pensant* and celebrity culture had by then swung behind the newcomers. French singer Pierre Perret produced a 1977 ballad, "Lily," about an immigrant girl from Somalia facing the trials of racism in Paris. In *Dupont Lajoie*, one of Isabelle Huppert's early films, a character seeming to stand in for lower-middle-class white France (the film's English title was "The Common Man") rapes and accidentally murders a young woman and then tries to frame some saintly Algerian workers for the crime. For Zemmour, the film's message to the public was, "We are all Dupont Lajoie."

By the 1980s, the temporary workers, their families, and their children were granted permanent residence, but the notion that most of them would somehow blend into the larger French community was discreetly abandoned. Zemmour traces the left's adoption of an accusatory anti-racism to a need to compensate for its inability to pursue any kind of socialist or pro-working-class economic program in a period of neoliberal capitalist ascendance.

On one cultural front, the crimes of Vichy collaboration after France's 1940 defeat became a kind of national obsession. Zemmour singles out the work of American historian Robert Paxton for transmitting a far more damning narrative of Vichy's conduct than most French had accepted before. (I note, as a former student and an admirer of Paxton, that Zemmour distinguishes Paxton's work from that of his less nuanced French epigones.) The record of Vichy's conduct is shameful, though perhaps also arguably defensible in one ambiguous respect. Most French Jews survived the war, in sharp contrast to the fate of Jews in other Nazi-occupied countries. But Vichy also collaborated with German campaigns to deport non-French Jewish refugees and carried out its own anti-Semitic policies without German prompting.

De Gaulle promoted a national narrative based on the idea that Vichy did not represent "real France," and most of his people embraced this narrative in the early postwar decades. But by the 1980s

it became fashionable for educated young Frenchmen to believe that racism and anti-Semitism were stewed into France's very essence. Remembrance of the Shoah, through trials, films, books, and journals, permeated the political culture. Zemmour argues that young Jews were especially affected, to the point of rejecting the assimilationist model that their parents previously had embraced. This produced wider political consequences, particularly on the left, where celebration of whoever or whatever was not French became a default position. When the François Mitterrand government in the late 1980s rounded up some illegal immigrants from Mali and put them on a flight back home, the left likened the policy to the trains exporting Jews to the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Among activists and celebrities organizing themselves in support of illegal immigrants, the undocumented were transmuted into France's ultimate symbol of victimhood, an "ideal Jew," in Zemmour's phrase. With sardonic irony, he concludes: "For all the French who could not, or would not, or dared not, or wished not to save Jews in 1942, History benevolently provided them with a second opportunity."

By the 1990s, it was becoming inescapably evident that the new immigration was not going to be normalized in the sense that the children of the new groups would be slowly absorbed into France. Official France acknowledged this in various ways. In 1993 it scrapped a French law, seldom enforced, requiring the first names of French newborns to come from an official registry. Soon "Pierre" and "Nicole" were replaced increasingly by random names such as "Ryan" or "Enzo," then far more frequently by "Mohammed." Rap music exploded onto the French pop scene and was much celebrated in the French media. "Nique Ta Mere" ("Fuck Your Mother") was a popular group; a song called "Nique La France" was a big hit in the early 2000s.

The first large riot in the immigrant suburbs erupted in 2005. By that time the French state had partially dissolved itself into Europe, stripping itself of many powers it might have used to turn into Frenchmen the sons and daughters from the migrant flows. Fighting the last war, Europe's technocrats had sought to submerge forever the nationalist passions which had once nearly destroyed Europe. The result was representative bodies without power (the old nation-states) and power without representation (the technocrats of Brussels). The embrace of this movement by the French political elite, who managed

to persuade the populace that getting rid of France's currency would solve all its economic problems, makes amusing reading.

In his conclusion, written on the eve of the first 2015 terror attacks, Zemmour pronounces France to be dying, even dead. But one doubts he fully believes that. He is still writing, still doing TV, still arguing for the survival of a certain Greco-Judaeo-Christian-French nation, as if the French Suicide remained far from an accomplished fact.

As Zemmour's work surged to the top of France's best-seller list, the novelist Michel Houellebecq was already there. The most renowned French novelist since Camus, this winner of the Prix Goncourt is a cultural reactionary with vaguely socialist economic leanings. One of his close friends, the left-wing economist Bernard Maris, considered Houellebecq one of France's shrewdest critics of modern capitalism.

Still, the writer is no progressive. His 1998 breakout novel, *The Elementary Particles*, presented a withering picture of post-1968 family life, where hedonistic parents pursued self-actualization and largely abandoned the raising of their own children. This had been Houellebecq's personal experience after his mother essentially left him and his brother with grandparents so she could explore exotic pursuits. Mark Lilla writes that he heard of the book from French friends who had had it pressed on them by their children; he had been surprised that this tale of adult sexual libertinism and the emotional carnage it wrought struck such a deep chord with French adolescents.

*Submission*, published on the very day of the Charlie Hebdo massacre, is governed by a similar narrative voice. Its protagonist, François, is a modestly successful Parisian academic, an expert on the 19th-century novelist Huysmans. He is seemingly incapable of love or emotional commitment or finding much pleasure in life. He finds himself in the midst of a political crisis, set seven years into the future, as France totters on the edge of civil war.

The rough plot of *Submission* has been often described: a skillful moderate Muslim politician named Ben Abbes is elected president with the support of the establishment left and business-oriented right-wing parties, which have combined against the National Front's candidate. For some French, there are unanticipated compensations to a soft Islamic regime—the prospect of polygamy for more successful men, for example. Also, implied but

never stated, French women could get a respite from the sexualized and professional treadmill of Western postmodernity—in other words, from the duties and expectations of modern feminism. François eventually converts to Islam to protect his job at the Sorbonne. Perhaps the prospect of several young wives will be a kind of compensation for this lonely man.

But much of the novel involves scene setting before the victory of Ben Abbas. As the electoral showdown begins to take form, François encounters a young right-wing professor (named Lempereur) at an academic cocktail party. Out of practice in how to talk to right-wingers, he asks “You’re what? ... Catholic? Fascist? Both?” Then the sound of distant gunfire shakes up the gathering. Leaving, the two professors walk past the Place de Clichy—seeing some fires, burnt cars, riot police in Kevlar. Nothing is reported on the news. François learns that Lempereur was in his youth involved in far right “identitarian” groups. The younger man explains that the far right is trying to stir the pot, produce provocations; the more there is open violence, the greater the National Front’s chances. He goes on to explain that the far right has been galvanized by a new group called “Indigenous Europeans,” which rails as much against “Muslim occupation” as against American companies and the new capitalists from India and China who are “buying up our heritage.” European nativists feel that “sooner or later we’ll see a civil war between the Muslims and everyone else. They conclude that ... war had better come as soon as possible.” Though the demographic rationale for sooner rather than later needs no elaboration, Lempereur adds that the question is somewhat complicated by the French military, the strongest in Europe, capable of suppressing any right-wing insurrection. The political wing of the Indigenous Europeans, he explains, wants to delay a civil war until it can gain political control of the military through systematic mass enlistment.

This fictional conversation is not far remote from speculations taking place today among some Frenchmen. Parisian friends have told me that Lempereur is modeled on a real person. His Islamist counterparts want the same thing. Gilles Kepel, France’s foremost analyst of contemporary Islam, has explained that the recent wave of terror attacks launched in France, Belgium, and Germany have a doctrinal basis in the writings of the “third-generation jihad” theorist Abu Musab al-Suri. Terrorism is intended not only to kill, but also to provoke

anti-Islamic sentiment and policies in order to turn the Muslim populations of Europe into a manpower reservoir for the jihadists. Both sides are alert to the demographic questions; everyone knows that the white France of Christian (and Jewish) background is, in relative terms, shrinking.

How quickly it is shrinking remains a critical question. The French government publishes few figures on ethnic background, ostensibly because such classifications are considered to be, variously, throwbacks to the invidious religious classifications of Vichy, or simply racist, or foreign to the spirit of a non-racial French Republic. Statistics about France’s demography thus tend to be murky, with the liberal establishment often suspected of lowballing Muslim or immigrant numbers. Nonetheless everyone knows there are parts of France that feel less and less French, and that these are growing.

Last year Michel Gurfinkel weighed conflicting estimates (between three and six million) of the number of French Muslims in the mid-1990s and contrasted them with present estimates. He concluded that the current figure is roughly six million, or 9 percent of the population, and that it is growing at a much faster rate than the French population as a whole. As early as 2010, fully 20 percent of French under 24 were described as Muslim. A more recent poll in the liberal French weekly *L’Obs* reported that more than a quarter of French youth described themselves as Muslim.

Because the government does not publish statistics about race, some curious researchers have looked at the number of newborn babies screened for markers for sickle-cell anemia, a test given if both parents are of African, North African, or Sicilian origin. The figure has risen from 25 percent in 2005 to 39 percent in 2015. In the Greater Paris region it has risen from 54 percent to 73 percent. One understands why Houellebecq’s right-wing professor says he wants the inevitable civil war to come “as soon as possible.”

Neither Houellebecq (and certainly not his far-right characters) nor Zemmour is quite at the intellectual center of French life, but Alain Finkielkraut may be. The 67-year-old Parisian writer, recently admitted into the prestigious Académie Française, has been a fixture in French literary and political debate for nearly four decades. Author of some two dozen books, a frequent participant on the intellectual sparring sessions of French TV, and for many years a professor at the École Polytechnique, he has a voice that France has listened to for many

years on moral and political questions. The child of Polish Jews who escaped the Holocaust and married in France after the war, Finkielkraut was a ‘68 generation protester and a decade later one of the so-called *nouveaux philosophes* who broke with Marxism in the era of *The Gulag Archipelago* and the Khmer Rouge genocide.

Sometimes described as a liberal in the English press, Finkielkraut projects many attitudes of early neoconservatism, when the movement was more engaged in pushing back against the falsehoods and hysterias of the New Left than it was in encouraging military interventions in the Mideast. When he cites American authors, which is not frequently, he chooses from those loosely in that orbit: Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick.

But what is striking about Finkielkraut’s views today is his recognition, which he has made a central theme of his writing, that France is unhappily going through a crisis of identity, the consequence of Muslim and other Third World immigration, and that much of the French establishment refuses to accept that there is anything of value to fight for in the traditional French identity.

He approaches these questions in his unerringly gentle style—literary, discursive, almost encircling. A discussion of the headscarf issue, a major dispute in France, commences with a detour through the memoirs of an envoy sent by the Pasha of Egypt to Paris during the Bourbon Restoration. He was astonished by how well women were treated, codified in the customs of chivalry that marked interactions between the sexes. Finkielkraut then winds his way to observing that the general flows of hatred and aggressiveness that seem to permeate the immigrant suburbs are perhaps not due entirely (as per the official narrative) to the lack of jobs or to social exclusion. Rather, he suggests, it might owe something to the exclusion of women from immigrant-dominated public spaces and the emotional wasteland that results. Finkielkraut wonders whether the violence is “a consequence of the denial of sensitivity, the rejection of courtesy towards women which these neighborhoods impose ... [the effect] which collective misogyny has on every individual.” No matter how much the liberal intelligentsia has tried to frame the 2005 suburban riots as “May ‘68 for the popular classes,” they could not quite avoid the contrasting images of ultraviolent young men who put forth no verbal demands or slogans and the highly rhetorical and sexually mixed spring of 1968.

The deep-rooted cultural divide between the immigrants and the French, Finkielkraut argues, is hardly immutable. But it demands a prodigious French effort, initiated in the schools, to wear it down. The problem is that there is no will in France, nor anywhere in Europe, to make that effort. In *L’identité malheureuse*, Finkielkraut probes Europe’s politically correct elite attitudes, especially the new passion for “diversity.” For some it clearly means that the essential identity of Europe is to be diverse, or cosmopolitan, which means it should have no identity—in other words, an identity based on a kind of denial of identity. To be true to this desired self, Europe must deny its own origins. The consequences emerge frequently—for instance in the brouhaha over a proposed Museum of History of France. Multiculturalists wanted the new structure be named the Museum of History in France, so that no extraneous appeals to strengthen national identity were transmitted. As Finkielkraut concludes, this is the first time in the history of immigration that those who are being welcomed reject the idea that those welcoming them have the right to represent the welcoming country. This has produced widespread concerns about France’s direction: “France has changed, life has changed, even change has changed ... where it was once undertaken, now it is fated, where it was once what we did or what we desired, it has become instead what happens to us.”

Finkielkraut is accused frequently of having turned into a reactionary. At the time of his election to the Académie Française, a socialist deputy charged, “If Finkielkraut was not Jewish, he’d be a spokesman for the National Front.” When he sought last year to visit Nuit Debout, a months-long leftist protest and teach-in at the Place République, protesters forcibly escorted him and his wife out. He counters with wry observations about the left: “At the moment when Marine Le Pen kills her father, the antifascists spare no measure to revive him.” This is a reference to the political establishment’s refusal to acknowledge the deep changes the party founder’s daughter has wrought in the National Front, not least by expelling her father from the party. He notes also the left’s belief that “‘the people’ are admirable when they act as a class, but despicable when they act as part of a nation.” Finkielkraut is not part of the populist right, nor does he consider civil war inevitable. He advocates reforms designed to save France, particularly in the schools. These include putting French

history, language, and culture at the center of the curriculum in the immigrant suburbs. But there isn't much chance any of this actually will be implemented.

The three men discussed above are the tip of a cultural and political iceberg. We could easily include Finkelkraut's friend Pierre Manent, author of *Situation de la France*, which lays out a blueprint for coming to terms with an Islam that was invited, without preconditions, into France. He suggests flexibility on headscarves; accommodation for separate hours for girls and boys in gym; firmness in rejection of the face-covering hijab; and absolute support for freedom of speech. At the same time, he bemoans the reality that France's adherence to the EU deprives the state of the strength and flexibility needed to facilitate a deeper assimilation. Others in this new school of French cultural identity include the historian Jacques Julliard, the famous onetime revolutionary theoretician Régis Debray, and prominent writer Pascal Bruckner—all major intellectuals, all now labeled reactionaries. Last year Eugénie Bastié observed in *Le Figaro* that Nov. 13, 2015, the date of the Bataclan massacre, marked a decisive breaking point for French intellectuals, generating a dichotomy between, on the one hand, those who thought it essential to see the world as it truly was; and, on the other hand, those who doubled down on the

cause of anti-racism because they thought it was just and because, above all, they must not "play the game" of the National Front. Some described this as a battle between "the Good and the True." This split will certainly endure after this May's presidential election, whatever the outcome. But it can't be denied that the influence of those bent on "seeing things as they truly are," represented in some form by Zemmour, Finkelkraut, and Houellebecq, among others, had grown tremendously over the past five years.

It is worth noting also that it surely isn't an accident that two of the three men discussed here are Jewish, and that a Jewish character (Francois's girlfriend Myriam) plays a pivotal role in *Submission* when she decamps, with her parents, for Israel. To be sure, neither Zemmour nor Finkelkraut spends much time writing about French Jewish "communal" issues. But Zemmour was correct in arguing that the 1980s intensification of French guilt over Vichy and the Shoah played a significant part in pushing much of France's cultural and political establishment toward a view that they had a moral obligation to reject traditional France. Some saw replacing it with new immigrants as a kind of providential opportunity. But there has emerged also a growing sense that this new France, redeemed, as it were, of all the provincial, nationalist, and petty racist sentiments that suffused both

Vichy and Gaullism, now threatens French Jews in very concrete and undeniable ways. The Jewish population of France is roughly half a million, less than 1 percent, but its weight is larger in the French intellectual and cultural worlds. And many French Jews, for very understandable reasons, have developed sensitive social antennae for perceiving the advent of societal danger. In France today this growing societal danger is undeniable. Roughly half of the country's government-acknowledged hate crimes are carried out against Jews. Islamist terrorists have struck many general French targets, including Catholic ones. But about half of their attacks have been against specifically Jewish targets: schools, museums, kosher supermarkets. Perhaps more ominous is the rise in violent crime, now part of the general background. Public schools in the Paris suburbs, once filled with Jewish children, are now nearly empty of them. According to one recent estimate, 40 percent of Jewish students go to Jewish schools, while another 35 percent attend Catholic academies; their parents don't believe French public schools are safe for their children. In recent years, France has been losing annually some 2 to 3 percent of its Jewish population to emigration to Israel. Reports proliferate of Jews leaving medium-size cities for the relatively greater safety of Paris, but in Paris one sees

synagogues and Jewish schools under military guard.

While this is just one aspect of the growing concern within French society about the seemingly intractable assimilation issues facing the country, it is a significant one. Beyond it is a host of more general popular fears and cultural anxieties focused on the France of old and what will be lost when it is gone. It is not surprising, therefore, that we are seeing in French intellectual circles a fresh appreciation for the habits, culture, virtues, and even flaws of the historical French republics. No one should be fooled into thinking that this intellectual ferment in France, centered on the protection of the country's traditional culture, is a phenomenon peculiar to this particular European nation. Just as we see echoes of Le Pen's National Front in the politics of other Western countries, including the United States, we are likely to see a growing intellectual focus on such political controversies. A powerful new debate has opened up in the nations of the West, and writers, thinkers, essayists, and polemicists of various stripes and viewpoints will be pulled into it. But France is the country to watch because it is the vanguard.

*Scott McConnell is a founding editor of The American Conservative and the author of Ex-Neon: Dispatches From the Post-9/11 Ideological Wars.*

**Bloomberg**

## The Making of Marine Le Pen

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Marine Le Pen has placed herself among the front-runners to be France's next president by ditching the anti-Semitic rhetoric that her father used to build up her party.

Yet Jean-Marie's youngest daughter spent most of her life steeped in far-right ideology as the National Front grew on the fringes of French politics in the 1970s and 1980s.

The 48-year-old candidate may have swapped her father's racism for promises to protect "patriots" from globalization, but her political identity remains entwined with the party's troubled origins.

These seven dates show how the candidate was shaped by her father's career.

### Nov. 2, 1976: Bombed

Bomb damage following an attack at the home of Jean-Marie Le Pen in November 1976.

Photographer: Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images

The night before Jimmy Carter's U.S. presidential election victory, 8-year-old Marine was at home in the Le Pen family's Paris apartment when several pounds of dynamite ripped through the building. Police said it was an attempt to assassinate her father, though the perpetrators were never caught.

Marine survived unscathed and says the experience marked the beginning of her political awareness. It also intensified her relationship with Jean-Marie.

"When I was still playing with dolls, I became aware of this terrible and incomprehensible thing for me: My father was not treated the same as others, we are not treated the same as others," she said in her 2006 autobiography, "Against the Flow."

After the attack, the family moved out of Paris to Montretout, an estate on the edge of the capital where a wealthy supporter had left Jean-Marie a 19th century red-brick

mansion in his will. Marine would live there with her father for almost four decades.

### Oct. 10, 1984: Abandoned

Left to right, Yann Le Pen, Marie-Caroline Le Pen, Jean-Marie Le Pen and Marine Le Pen pose outside Montretout, the family home in Saint-Cloud, France, in 1988.

Photographer: Francis Apesteguy

Family life for the Le Pens was unconventional by the standards of bourgeois France. The parents lived separately from their three daughters and were often away traveling, sailing, partying or campaigning.

That was just the start. When Marine was 16, her mother left with a lover and cut off contact with her daughter for 15 years.

Marine stayed on with her father at Montretout as her parents' bitter, public divorce played out across the front pages of the press — her mother even posed naked in the French edition of Playboy magazine at one point. Le Pen says the

trauma created a special bond with her sisters, who've supported her on the campaign trail.

"She became much tougher after her mother left, and became even closer to her father," said Jean-Francois Touze, a former close ally of Jean-Marie. "That personal tragedy and being bullied in school for being a Le Pen created a feeling that it was 'us against the world.' She still has that."

### Jan. 1, 1998: Political Calling

As a child, Le Pen wanted to be a cop and later trained as a lawyer. But she never really escaped her father's orbit.

Her first employer was a friend of her father's, and she mainly worked defending people in extreme-right movements. When she struck out on her own, she struggled to make headway. In 1997 she married a National Front activist. The next January, after six years as a lawyer, she quit her job and joined the party.

Three months later she won her first election, for the regional council in

Nord Pas de Calais, an impoverished region bordering Belgium. Her three children, including twins, were born in 1998 and 1999.

"She tried to strike out on her own," Renaud Dely wrote in his essay "The Real Marine Le Pen." "It was a failure. The youngest daughter never managed to break away from her father."

### May 5, 2002: Into the Spotlight

Jean-Marie Le Pen salutes supporters at his home in Saint-Cloud.

Photographer: Joel Saget/AFP via Getty Images

After Jean-Marie's surprise success in the first round of the 2002 presidential election brought millions onto the streets in protest, he was defeated by Jacques Chirac in a landslide.

That was also the night the French public discovered Marine, a 33-year-old chain smoker with long blond hair. With demonstrators labeling her father a fascist, Marine went on television to defend him, catching the public imagination with both her look and her arguments.

"That's when she emerged," said Nicolas Lebourg, a researcher on far-right politics at the University of Montpellier.

Marine's rise marked the beginning of the National Front's journey toward the mainstream of French politics.

"She understood that as long as the party was branded as racist and her father continued to deny the Holocaust there could be no future,"

Lebourg said. "On May 5, 2002, Marine Le Pen decided to change the National Front."

### May 13, 2009: Chemistry

Le Pen and Florian Philippot in 2017.

Photographer: Chesnot/Getty Images

Florian Philippot was a 27-year-old graduate of France's elite National School of Administration when he was introduced to Le Pen by a mutual friend.

Le Pen was reluctant to go to dinner with a policy wonk but afterward both described it as it a political "love at first sight." Her relationship with Philippot is entirely platonic, though both her husbands did work for the National Front. And her current partner, Louis Aliot, is vice president of the party.

"She's intellectually insecure and Philippot, who's a trained technocrat, gave her confidence and structure," said Sylvain Crepon, a professor of sociology at the University of Tours.

Philippot helped Le Pen airbrush the Front's racist image and reprogram the party to focus on "sovereignty" instead of "nationalism." That opened the door to a swath of new voters.

"He helped her put identity, not race, at the center," Crepon said.

Under Philippot's guidance, Le Pen accelerated the party's evolution from its libertarian roots toward economic patriotism. He converted her to his anti-European plans to restore the barriers to immigration and, in what became the

centerpiece of her 2017 campaign, to leave the euro.

### Aug. 20, 2015: Rupture

Le Pen appears on French television after her father called the Holocaust a "detail" of World War II.

Photographer: Martin Bureau/EPA

Marine took over the leadership of the National Front with her father's blessing in 2011 and, with Philippot at her side, pushed ahead with her plans to make the party electable. But she had one problem: Jean-Marie.

Despite the warnings from his daughter, the National Front's founder refused to temper his language, repeatedly talking about gas chambers.

The issue came to a head in an April 2015 television interview when he insisted that the Holocaust was just a "detail" of World War II. After a four-month power struggle, Marine called a meeting of the executive committee and had Jean-Marie expelled from the party he built.

"This was the most difficult moment of my life apart from giving birth," she said in a September television interview. "He forced me to go all the way."

Both say they no longer have any contact, though Jean-Marie is still helping to finance Marine's campaign.

"Politically it's a success," said Jean-Yves Camus, researcher and co-author of the book "Far-Right Politics in Europe." "But on a personal level how could we know? He's politically dead. But the ideology, the roots are still there."

### April 9, 2017: A Slip?

Two weeks before the first round, Le Pen still held a narrow lead in the polls. Though her support had dipped, her main challenge was to broaden her support ahead of the May 7 runoff.

Then history — both personal and national — reared its head again.

Asked in an interview about her manifesto statement that France should stop apologizing for itself, Le Pen denied her country was responsible for the roundup of over 13,000 Jews sent from Paris to Auschwitz in 1942. Her comments reopened the debate about France's wartime government — President Jacques Chirac had issued an apology for the action in 1995, riling some on the far right.

Who Are the French Election's Main Candidates?

Who Are the French Election Candidates?

Le Pen "showed the true face of the National Front," Emmanuel Macron, her most serious rival for the presidency, told reporters. She refused to back down.

Whether the comments were really a mistake, or a sop to her base, the episode showed that even after a 15-year makeover, her father's politics still cloud Marine's electoral hopes.

"She herself isn't racist or even anti-Semitic, but she can't help it," Lebourg said. "She always comes back to the DNA of the National Front to show she's the anti-establishment candidate."

## *the Atlantic* How Populism Took Root in France

Uri Friedman

The idea that politicians operate on a spectrum, with the right on one end and the left on the other, originated with the French Revolution, when royalists sat on the right side of the National Assembly and revolutionaries on the left. So it's only fitting that, 228 years later, France is at the forefront of a phenomenon on display in many democracies at the moment: the crumbling of left-right politics.

Of the four leading candidates in France's presidential election, the first round of which takes place on Sunday, only one hails from a traditionally dominant left- or right-wing political party. And that exception, the Republican Party's Francois Fillon, is currently embroiled in a scandal over whether he improperly funneled taxpayer

money to his family members. As some observers have noted, the French political spectrum now looks more like a circle—or, more accurately, a tangled mess of circles where the most significant differences are not between left and right, but between nationalists and internationalists, populists and pluralists, rebels and preservationists. The National Front's presidential candidate, Marine Le Pen, advocates far-right anti-immigration policies and far-left economic policies. Jean-Luc Melenchon, the candidate for the new France Unbowed movement, is way to the left of Le Pen on many issues, but not so far from her sympathy toward Vladimir Putin and hostility toward globalization and the European Union. Emmanuel Macron, the candidate for the new On the Move movement, rejects "left" or "right" labels altogether.

Le Pen and Macron are expected to advance to the second round of voting, marking the first time in six decades that the main parties of the left and right wouldn't be represented at that stage of the presidential election. It's a bit like Donald Trump creating his own America First party and competing against Michael Bloomberg, of the newly launched America for Everyone party, in the 2020 presidential election, as Republicans and Democrats watch from the sidelines.

In a new analysis of polling data, Gallup offers some compelling clues as to why left-right politics is being scrambled in France and other European countries. Gallup's study is focused on identifying the factors that fuel populism, a logic as old as politics according to which politicians claim to exclusively

represent the righteous people in a moral struggle against the corrupt elite. Populism comes in left- and right-wing forms and is often paired with other ideologies; in France, Le Pen and Melenchon could both be described as populists. And, as Gallup reports, populist parties appear to be gaining support in countries where two things are true: 1) Many people are disaffected with government and 2) Many people are discouraged about their future.

Of those surveyed by Gallup, the French are among the most likely to have little confidence in government and little hope that their life will be better in five years than it is today—with more than 40 percent of French respondents saying they feel this way. Judged by these metrics, Gallup notes, Europe in general seems more prone to populism than the United States, despite the fact

that Donald Trump is currently the most prominent example in the West of a (semi-) populist leader. In 18 of 27 European Union countries, Gallup encountered a higher percentage of disaffected and discouraged people than in the U.S.

Among EU countries with elections in 2017, France is home to the second-most disaffected and discouraged voters, behind Slovenia. (In the Dutch election in March, the populist party finished in second place.)

A 2017 poll by the communications marketing firm Edelman similarly found that France had one of the lowest levels of trust in government

of the 28 countries it surveyed; only South Africa, Poland, Brazil, and Mexico fared worse. As Richard Edelman, the head of the firm, told me when the survey was released, the "system" in countries like France is widely perceived to be failing, meaning "we don't have a sense of equality—the rich get more than others. We don't have a sense of ... opportunity. We don't have good leaders. And we ... demand change." He offered up an equation: Lack of belief in system + economic and social fears + loss of trust in institutions = potential for populism. "Populism is people ... taking authority back from institutions they

no longer have faith in," he explained.

But these inputs don't always produce populism; often they simply fragment the political landscape, dispersing votes across a range of established and upstart parties as people search for new forms of democratic representation. A disaffected and discouraged citizenry isn't just a boon for populists, who condemn the "establishment" and ease worries about the future with nostalgic appeals to past greatness. It also has consequences for left-right politics. If you lack confidence in the government in general, you're unlikely to distinguish much between

left, right, and center. If you doubt that your future is bright, you're unlikely to be satisfied with the same old ping-pong policies of the center-right and center-left.

In France in particular, a sudden surge in terrorist attacks, a deeply troubled economy, and a long struggle to assimilate immigrants, among other factors, have spread distrust and despair. The measure of the resulting disruption is this: All that's currently standing in the way of a populist revolution in France is a political veteran under investigation for embezzlement and a political independent who has never held elected office.

**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL.**

## Le Pen Rise Before French Election Fueled by Industrial Decline (online)

Matthew Dalton

April 20, 2017 5:30 a.m. ET

AMIENS, France—French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron is one of this industrial city's most famous natives. But when Whirlpool Corp. said it would shut its factory here and move production to Poland, it was one of his rivals, far-right nationalist Marine Le Pen, who grabbed the spotlight.

Ms. Le Pen excoriated the American appliance maker and pledged a 35% tax on imports from Whirlpool and other companies that shift manufacturing outside France. "We can no longer accept this massive deindustrialization," she said in a video message to workers.

With days to go before the start of France's presidential elections, Ms. Le Pen's antiestablishment and euroskeptic message is resonating with voters here and in other struggling industrial cities, where years of declining fortunes have fueled deep anger with the country's political elite and the European Union.

"We need someone to defend us workers," says Gilles Jourdain, who started at the Whirlpool factory 39 years ago. "I have never voted Le Pen, but why not?"

Public-opinion surveys show Ms. Le Pen, leader of the National Front, running neck-and-neck with Mr. Macron for the lead in a field of 11 candidates competing in Sunday's first round. The mainstream conservative, François Fillon, and far-left politician Jean-Luc Mélenchon, are close behind.

The top two finishers will face off in a second vote in May. Polls indicate that Ms. Le Pen would lose to Mr. Macron, Mr. Fillon or Mr. Mélenchon in that final round.

Whether she wins or not, the strength of Ms. Le Pen's following shows she has built a potent political force in rural and industrial areas to challenge the French establishment in the years ahead.

France's blue-collar regions are a major weak point for Mr. Macron and the country's other mainstream candidates. An April poll by survey firm Elabe found that in the election's first round, 48% of factory workers would vote for Ms. Le Pen, compared with 16% for Mr. Macron.

Around Amiens, factory jobs have been steadily draining away for years. In 2014, Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. closed up shop, idling more than 1,000 workers. Now, Whirlpool is moving on, too, to an EU country with lower wages.

Mr. Macron's response to France's economic woes has been a vocal defense of trade as well as the EU and its common market. The campaign platform of the 39-year-old former investment banker says the "causes of deindustrialization are to be found at home and not in globalization."

A former economy minister, Mr. Macron says he wants to shake up France's rigid labor market, making it easier for companies to hire and fire workers, cut corporate taxes and invest in research and development to make manufacturers more competitive.

Ms. Le Pen's National Front has argued that only ditching the euro and going back to the French franc can revive French industry. A modest devaluation of the new currency would help France regain the cost competitiveness it lost to Germany over the past decade, when Berlin's labor-market overhauls kept wages growing far more slowly than in the rest of the

eurozone, party officials have said. The move, combined with the threat of punitive import tariffs, would stem France's industrial losses to Germany and Eastern Europe, they say.

Mr. Macron—who grew up the son of doctors in Amiens before leaving at age 16 for elite schools in Paris—has been reluctant to weigh in on the looming Whirlpool plant closure. In a television interview, he said: "What will I do? I'll go in a truck and say, 'With me, it won't close?' We know that it's not true."

Mr. Macron also urged Whirlpool to find a buyer for the factory so the workers don't lose their jobs.

The candidate says he discovered his "civic conscience" in Amiens. But his plans ring hollow here and in industrial communities across France. Since the country began using the euro in 1999, industrial production has fallen 10%. In Germany, it is 32% higher.

France's industrial losses have often come from production shifting to the eastern half of the EU, where labor costs are a fraction of what they are in France. Industrial output in Poland, which is in the EU but doesn't use the euro, has more than doubled since the start of the common currency.

"Europe was a mistake, a very big mistake," says Delphine Voisin, a forklift driver who has worked at the Whirlpool plant for 27 years. Ms. Voisin said she is considering voting for Ms. Le Pen.

In her videotaped message to Whirlpool workers, Ms. Le Pen said: "We must break with this ultraliberal model that has been imposed on us by our leaders for years."

When Stéphane Demory, a wiry 47-year-old, got his permanent job at

the Goodyear plant near Amiens in 2001, he says he thought he would be employed for life. In 2014, however, the Akron, Ohio-based company shut the massive plant, saying it was too costly compared with operations in Germany and Eastern Europe.

Workers held two Goodyear executives hostage at the factory for 30 hours to negotiate bigger payouts for those losing their jobs.

For Mr. Demory, who was laid off, the episode revived bad memories. Mr. Demory's father lost his job when local manufacturing giant Saint Frères retrenched in the 1980s, throwing the economy into turmoil.

Mr. Demory's marriage fell apart as the Goodyear plant closed. After sending résumés to more than 100 employers, he is still looking for work.

He blames current French President François Hollande and Mr. Macron, his aide at the time, for not preventing the closure.

"Everyone says you have to go with the Socialist Party, you have to go with the right," Mr. Demory says. "I'd like Marine Le Pen for one time. What will it cost? Nothing. Five years."

Others in Amiens say they can't support Ms. Le Pen's tough anti-immigration message. "National Front, it's racism, pure and simple," says Didier Hérisson, a former union leader at the Goodyear plant. He says he'll vote for the far-left Mr. Mélenchon, who wants to renegotiate the terms of European Union treaties.

At the Whirlpool plant, the company, labor unions and the French authorities are trying to find a buyer for the factory, something that could

save jobs. That process is required under a law passed by the Hollande government.

Whirlpool decided to shut the plant because it has been losing money for years, a spokesman said. The company is working hard to find a

buyer for the factory, he said.

Philippe Theveniaud, a labor leader and local official, says that if a mainstream candidate like Mr. Macron is elected and nothing is done to help workers in places like Amiens, Ms. Le Pen and the

National Front will be even stronger in the next elections.

"National Front won't have 30%, but 60% next time," Mr. Theveniaud said. "People will say, 'We are tricked again. He proposes nothing new. It's the same thing.'"

## Corrections & Amplifications

Philippe Theveniaud is a labor leader. An earlier version of this article incorrectly spelled Mr. Theveniaud's first name as Phillippe. (April 20, 2017)

The  
New York  
Times

# Macron Wants to Change France. But Will Voters Elect an Unknown? (UNE)

Alissa J. Rubin

Emmanuel Macron, a French presidential candidate, at his office in Paris last week. Pierre Terdjman for The New York Times

**BAGNÈRES-DE-BIGORRE, France** — In the final days before France's presidential election on Sunday, Emmanuel Macron was tramping through the snow high in the mountains near the Spanish border for a critical campaign stop near this tiny village where his grandparents once lived.

With the race exceptionally tight, it seemed an unlikely place for any candidate. Hardly a voter was in sight. Instead, what Mr. Macron later described as a "pilgrimage," with some 20 journalists in tow, was in part intended to show his human side, to reflect his connection to a "terroir" — a definable place and personal history — that French voters could latch onto.

With no political party to speak of, and never having held elected office, Mr. Macron, 39, a onetime investment banker and former economy minister, is leading an improbable quest to become modern France's youngest president. His profile is that of an insider, but his policies are those of an outsider. If the ever-precocious Mr. Macron is to succeed, his first challenge is to sell a product still largely unfamiliar to almost everyone: himself.

That Mr. Macron is such an unknown underscores his unusual position in a French election that, to some degree, is a referendum on the future of Europe. The far-right leader Marine Le Pen threatens to take France out of the European Union. By contrast, Mr. Macron is ardently pro-Europe and has portrayed himself almost as the anti-Le Pen.

The race is truly up in the air. As much as 30 percent of the French electorate is still undecided, and four of the 11 candidates, including Mr. Macron, are polling within three or four percentage points of each other. The top two vote-getters in the election's first round will face off in a final vote on May 7.

Mr. Macron is so close to Ms. Le Pen, leader of the National Front, that it is difficult to say who is the front-runner. But Mr. Macron is buoyed by the fact that more than half of French voters support candidates other than those from the traditional, mainstream parties.

Mr. Macron has begun a new political movement, *En Marche!*, which means "Forward" or "Onward," that draws from both sides of the political spectrum. He is gambling that his postpartisan philosophy matches the national mood.

## France's Vote: The Basics

The presidential election will be held in two stages.

### • Round 1

Voters will choose from 11 candidates on **April 23**.

### • Round 2

If, as is widely expected, no one receives more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two candidates will compete in a runoff on **May 7**.

But the smartest kid in the class is not always the one who wins. Though he has already checked virtually every box required for a successful career among the French elite, Mr. Macron may actually be the kind of change agent France fears.

In a runoff — presuming both he and Ms. Le Pen get through to the final round — she would be the political placeholder, the vote to preserve or restore a nostalgic (critics say outmoded) vision of France and one that revives nationalism and fans anti-Muslim sentiments. She has expanded her movement by assailing globalization — the European Union, the loss of French jobs and an influx of migrants.

Mr. Macron is the establishment's anti-establishment candidate. He tilts at sacred cows — retirement benefits, employee protections — with an eye toward making France more business-friendly, while professing he will preserve its social safety net. Many question whether he will really be able to do both at the same time.

Despite the political risks, Mr. Macron has proudly embraced an unpopular European Union, and preached tolerance toward immigrants and Muslims never beloved in France, and even less so since the 2015 terrorist attacks.

Yet he has clearly struck a chord with many voters, despite being "an unidentified political object," as Pascal Perrineau, a political science professor at Sciences Po in Paris, described him.

"This is a man who, certainly, began his career in the Socialist Party, and he says that he is not a centrist," Mr. Perrineau said. Yet, "he is, as he says, from the right and from the left and this is an invention that our political family has not seen before."

The visit to Bagnères-de-Bigorre — almost four years to the day since Mr. Macron's grandmother died — was a chance for the candidate to further define himself. At once sincere and strategic, the excursion was designed to portray him as someone with roots in the "real" France of villages and hard-working rural people.

Mr. Macron with his wife, Brigitte Trogneux. Once his teacher and 24 years his senior, she tried initially to discourage him. They married in 2007. Pierre Terdjman for The New York Times

"The journey I made today brought to mind many memories," Mr. Macron later told a crowd of 5,000 at an evening rally nearby in Pau, a city of nearly 80,000, adding that it was where he used to reunite with his grandmother, "whom I loved so much."

"It was she and my grandfather who for years and years led me to live in Bagnères-de-Bigorre, to walk there, to run there, to learn how to bicycle, to ski, to be rooted in our country," he said.

Born and raised in Amiens, about 70 miles from Paris, Mr. Macron is the eldest of three children. Both parents are doctors. He attended a parochial school founded by Jesuits. When he was 15, he met Brigitte Trogneux, a teacher of French and drama with whom he fell in love. About 24 years his senior, she tried

initially to discourage him, but he was determined and she was eventually smitten.

In a documentary broadcast on the France 3 television network, she recalled the year he went off to finish high school in Paris at the prestigious Lycée Henri IV. "He called me all the time," she said. "We spent hours on the telephone. Little by little he conquered all my resistance in a manner that was incredible — with patience."

She ultimately divorced her first husband and the father of her three children. One of them, a daughter, is working on Mr. Macron's campaign. The student and his teacher married in 2007.

Their love affair was the kind of audacious undertaking that has defined Mr. Macron's life and career. His sheer drive, his focus and his willingness to leapfrog in a country where most success is built step by step make him more like the entrepreneurs he admires than a typical politician.

A product of top schools, including the prestigious Sciences Po and the École Nationale d'Administration, Mr. Macron won a coveted place in an elite auditing body at the Finance Ministry before leaving to join the investment bank Rothschild & Company.

Mr. Macron at a campaign rally in Pau, in southwestern France. Pierre Terdjman for The New York Times

Although he knew little about investment banking, in four years at the firm Mr. Macron was promoted from director to managing director. He earned nearly 2.9 million euros (\$3.1 million) in those years, according to the financial disclosure form from when he was economy minister.

By 2014, at 36, he was appointed minister of economy under France's current Socialist president, François Hollande, before leaving to begin his campaign. His one significant achievement was passage of what became known as the Macron Law, a hodgepodge of economic policies mostly designed to cut red tape and make markets more flexible.

Those who have worked closely with Mr. Macron, both in government and in the private sector, are almost uniformly impressed by his grasp and dedication, but some said that at times they felt misled as Mr. Macron pursued his ambitions.

Francis Vercamer, a member of the center-right Union of Democrats and Independents, remembers proposing several amendments to the Macron Law in private and said that the economy minister spoke positively about them. But when Mr. Vercamer later brought them up in debate on the legislation, Mr. Macron turned down every one, he said.

"I don't want to say it was dishonest because that's not the right term," said Mr. Vercamer, who was a vice president of the committee that examined the bill. "But for someone who comes to a private meeting and says, 'This is good,' and then comes to a public meeting and doesn't support you and doesn't give a reason, that's not worthy of a representative of the Republic."

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Stacy Meichtry and Anton Troianovski

April 19, 2017 12:43 p.m. ET

When French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel last month, the conversation turned to a question bedeviling Europe's political establishment. How could they halt the rising tide of nationalism across the Continent?

Mr. Macron, who is fighting right-wing euroskeptic Marine Le Pen for the lead in Sunday's election for France's top office, had an answer. He said the European Union needed more integration, not less.

For years, mainstream leaders, faced with a rising populist movement, relied on a strategy of containment. That involved ignoring its rhetoric, dismissing demands to dismantle the EU as a recipe for turmoil, and at times mimicking its language. The limits of that approach have been laid bare by Britain's decision to leave the EU, Ms. Le Pen's rise in France, and recently the surge of a euroskeptic French candidate on the far left, Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

With elections in France this weekend and in Germany later this year, pro-EU forces are adopting a new approach: a full-throated defense of the economic bloc and its place in their countries' future.

The idea of what Mr. Macron represents as a candidate — a novel amalgam of pro-business and pro-social welfare policies, with an optimistic outlook on France's future — often seems to inspire more than Mr. Macron himself.

At his recent rally in Pau, the crowd seemed a bit more enthusiastic before he spoke than afterward when some seemed baffled by his lofty proposals. He has been criticized as being technocratic, abstract and sometimes lacking in empathy.

Mr. Macron is the establishment's anti-establishment candidate. He threatens sacred cows — work hours, retirement benefits, employee protections, civil servants — but promises to make France both socially minded and more capitalist-friendly. Pierre Terdjman for The New York Times

An episode last year during a visit to an event in southern France, when Mr. Macron was heckled by a 21-year-old union activist in a black T-shirt, seems emblematic.

## European Establishment Tries New Election Tactic: Full Embrace of the EU (UNE)

The shift is embodied by Mr. Macron, who has defined himself in opposition to Ms. Le Pen, figuratively wrapping himself in the blue and gold-starred EU flag she would remove from government buildings.

"Our fight for fraternity will be our fight for Europe," Mr. Macron told a February rally in Lyon organized across town from where Ms. Le Pen was declaring her candidacy. "Europe! Europe!" the crowd of thousands chanted.

Where Ms. Le Pen wants to reinforce France's national borders, Mr. Macron says the solution to its terrorism fears is to bolster the frontiers of the EU. She wants a more independent defense policy for France; he wants tighter military coordination across the bloc.

And where Ms. Le Pen sees the euro as the root of France's economic woes, Mr. Macron touts the EU's single market as the key to French prosperity.

Supporters of Ms. Le Pen say Mr. Macron is playing into her hands by squaring off on the future of Europe. Ms. Le Pen has spent years spoiling for that fight.

"This is Marine Le Pen's issue. By attacking her on it, he's going to get slapped," said Raphael Ricci, a gendarme from the Champagne-region city of Reims.

The young man called out to the neatly attired former banker, saying he had "not a penny to pay for a suit like that one."

Mr. Macron responded: "The best way to pay for a suit is to work."

"I've worked since the age of 16," the man shot back, in an exchange popularly interpreted as having put Mr. Macron in his place.

Mr. Macron's policy proposals, while numerous, have been assailed as vague and hard to define politically, particularly for a country that thinks in terms of the political left and right. But to others, that is his appeal.

Jacques Attali, an economist, writer and longtime adviser to French politicians, said that many of Mr. Macron's ideas were forged working on a prestigious nonpartisan economic commission set up under the right-leaning President Nicolas Sarkozy.

"The idea behind the commission was to do something that should have been done by either the left or the right, or by both, but that had not

been done by anyone," said Mr. Attali, who served as the commission's chairman.

That embrace of bipartisanship can result in neither side trusting him.

"In a way, the left doesn't really believe in him; in a way, the right doesn't really believe in him," said Frédéric Martel, a well-known writer on politics and culture, who also hosts a popular radio program on France Culture.

Yet there are many people who do, particularly among the urban, educated and relatively young.

"He has a kind of free spirit that one can see in the choices he's made," said Amélie Castera, a longtime friend of Mr. Macron's who studied with him at the École Nationale d'Administration and now holds a senior position at AXA, the French insurance giant.

"He has this freedom that comes from his confidence in his destiny," she said.

Mr. Macron's love of the EU isn't unconditional. He says serious changes are needed if the bloc is to mount an enduring electoral defense against euroskeptics.

One of his more controversial proposals is that the strongest of the 19 countries using the euro should help shoulder fiscal burdens of the weaker ones. That stance puts him at odds with Ms. Merkel and some other pro-EU leaders, especially in northern Europe.

The election in France will be the first major test of whether a political strategy of direct confrontation with anti-EU forces works.

### Attitudes to the EU

A poll the EU conducted of its member countries in November shows the share of EU citizens with a positive image of the bloc has declined to 35% from about 50% 10 years ago, with one-quarter now viewing it negatively. The EU's image has recovered somewhat from a low point in 2011-2013.

In the poll, 37% of Germans saw the EU positively—an 8-percentage-point jump from last spring—while in France 29% saw the EU positively, a 7-percentage-point decline.

In Dutch elections last month, two parties firmly supporting European integration more than doubled their share from a 2012 vote, and anti-

Islam nativist Geert Wilders lost his bid to become prime minister.

The latest polling for the French election shows four contenders clustering near the top. Mr. Macron has vaulted ahead of candidates from France's traditional parties to pull even with Ms. Le Pen for the lead. It is difficult to pinpoint how much of his support is due to his European-unity stance and how much is primarily opposition to the far right and far left. If Mr. Macron and Ms. Le Pen make it to a decisive second round, the polls indicate he would come out ahead.

In Germany, which votes for chancellor in September, Martin Schulz, a staunchly pro-EU candidate, has energized centrist voters and knocked the wind out of the populist right. The anti-immigrant, anti-euro Alternative for Germany has fallen sharply in the polls since late January as Mr. Schulz has climbed, although the four-year-old AfD is still polling well above the 5% support it would need to enter the federal parliament for the first time.

Pro-EU candidates are increasingly looking across borders as they seek to energize their electorates. The goal is to create a groundswell of electoral support that might one day allow France and Germany to agree on steps to improve the bloc's functioning.



"Dear friends in France," Mr. Schulz said, suddenly switching to French at a recent gathering of center-left politicians. "We are sending you today, from Berlin, a sign of our unshakable solidarity. Together, we will defeat the enemies of tolerance and cooperation."

Mr. Macron has met with Mr. Schulz, the nominee of Germany's Social Democrats, as well as with Ms. Merkel, pushing the idea that the EU needs to deepen its integration so it can function more like a sovereign state.

"I cannot accept leaving the idea of sovereignty to the far-right or the far-left populists," Mr. Macron told an auditorium of German dignitaries while visiting Berlin in January. He spoke in English, drawing a barb from Ms. Le Pen, who said he should have used French.

The pro-Europe forces have their own ideological divisions to bridge, a north-south split deepened by fallout from the 2008 financial crisis, terror attacks and waves of migrants from Africa and the Middle East.

#### Achilles' heel

The north and south are at odds over how to repair what many economists regard as the Achilles' heel of the eurozone: its inability to deal with the debt burdens of weaker members such as Greece. German-imposed austerity has damaged fragile economies, many economists say, but loosening fiscal rules could put northern European taxpayers on the hook for what many of them see as the profligacy of the south.

Southern EU countries, for their part, blame the north both for imposing austerity on them and for leaving peripheral countries to fend for themselves in enforcing border controls to stem the migrant flood.

France, facing security and economic challenges, has retreated from its traditional role as a bridge

over the north-south divide. President François Hollande flouted eurozone budget-deficit rules and bucked the EU's call to deeply overhaul rigid French labor rules. His government has refused to accept large numbers of refugees.

After Islamic State's attacks in Paris on Nov. 13, 2015, Mr. Hollande proposed amending the constitution so some French nationals convicted of terrorism could be stripped of citizenship. The proposal scrambled French politics, with parts of his majority joining the opposition to block it.

Mr. Macron, who was then the economy minister, began charting a different course. He declared his "philosophical unease" with taking away citizenship, a proposal that looked to critics like borrowing from Ms. Le Pen's National Front playbook. Unhappy, too, that his proposals to loosen labor rules were shelved by Mr. Hollande, Mr. Macron founded his own movement, called *En Marche*, or *On the Move*, and quit the government.

Like Mr. Hollande, Ms. Merkel came under pressure last year to move rightward, in her case to compete with the anti-immigrant AfD following two attacks by Islamist migrants. At the time, it looked as if fending off the AfD would be her biggest task in her 2017 bid for re-election. The Social Democrats' surprise nomination of Mr. Schulz in January changed the equation.

The Social Democrats this year have added more than 16,000 new members, or nearly 4% of the total, and more than the additions in all of last year. The main reason people give for joining is to defend the EU and fight the far right, a party spokesman said.

#### Red meat

At Mr. Schulz's raucous rallies—for modern German standards—he has given those new members red meat,

assailing the AfD as well as U.S. President Donald Trump. In a speech last month, Schulz called the AfD "a disgrace to Germany" and accused Mr. Trump of "laying an ax to the roots of democracy" through his treatment of the news media.

While Ms. Merkel also supports a strong EU, Mr. Schulz makes the case with what critics say the chancellor often lacks: emotion. His rise to close to her in the polling provides a further disincentive for the chancellor to move rightward in the coming campaign, because doing so would increase her risk of losing centrist voters.

In France, Mr. Macron's camp reached out to Ms. Merkel in February to request a meeting. The French politician, just 39 years old and never having won elective office, was under pressure to show he could go toe-to-toe with world leaders, and landing an audience with the German chancellor was a boon for him. In taking the meeting, Ms. Merkel departed from her decision in France's 2012 election to meet only with then-President Nicolas Sarkozy, who was seeking re-election, and not with Mr. Hollande.

Mr. Macron needed to navigate some policy differences with her, however. He had just delivered a speech complaining that the euro unduly benefits German trade and hurts some other EU countries' trade.

The idea, often heard in southern Europe, is that Germany's exports would suffer if it still used a strong deutsche mark. Instead, its exports have benefited from sharing a weaker currency with 18 other countries.

"The dysfunctioning of the euro is good news for Germany, I have to say. You benefit from this dysfunctioning," he told a crowd at Humboldt University of Berlin. German officials counter that

economic weakness in the eurozone, the country's biggest export market, is bad for Germany, too.

#### Eurozone 'new deal'

Mr. Macron called for a "new deal" in the eurozone, anchored by a common budget that would be able to issue bonds and step in when countries experience large economic shocks.

Such proposals cross what many in the Merkel government consider a red line: forcing German taxpayers to underwrite other countries' debt. Mr. Macron skirted this issue when he met Ms. Merkel on March 16.

A Macron aide said the conversation centered on the rise of nationalist movements and the need to deepen EU cooperation, but Mr. Macron also said the common currency needed a shake-up to address economic imbalances between Germany and its poorer neighbors. A Merkel aide said the meeting was confidential.

When Ms. Merkel asked how the French election was going, according to Mr. Macron's aide, he told her he was taking a risk in campaigning as such a staunchly pro-Europe candidate.

Leaving the chancellery, Mr. Macron told reporters he and Ms. Merkel were in a celebratory mood. A day earlier, Dutch voters had handed Mr. Wilders and his anti-immigrant party a resounding defeat.

"We congratulated each other," Mr. Macron said.

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## Vanity Fair : BHL : How France Disgracefully Trumpified Its Politics

Bernard-Henri Lévy

We are just a few days away from the first round of the French presidential election where 11 candidates are running for the highest office. Former prime minister **François Fillon** represents the right. Former minister **Benoit Hamon** runs from the classical left. **Marine Le Pen**, the daughter of **Jean-Marie Le Pen**, champions the extreme right. **Jean Luc Mélenchon** champions an exotic far left. And at 39-years-old **Emmanuel Macron**, who broke with his patron and mentor, President **François Hollande**, and has subsequently

been likened to Brutus, plays the part of a centrist French J.F.K.

But by the time the voting takes place, nothing, or pretty much nothing, of importance will have been discussed during the campaign. This is the first time in the history of a French national election that moderators have dared to say to the candidates: *You have one minute to tell us your position on Trump, Putin, radical Islamic terrorism, and the poison gas attack in Syria*. It is a campaign in which more interest has been shown in endocrine disruptors and the housing tax than in the rise of

populist movements, Europe's fate, the alliance with the United States, or the battles against ISIS for Mosul and Raqqa. It is a campaign in which punchlines have replaced arguments, voters have become fans, and commentators have assumed the role of referees at a fight. This sort of presidential campaign is, by now, pretty familiar to American audiences. But for France, which has long considered itself, in Karl Marx's famous phrase, the "fatherland of politics," it represents a complete and radical change.

This is the first campaign in which what was required of a candidate was not to have a platform, but to pull off a performance. And, if you happen to be the frontrunner at the moment, to know how to *play defense*. It has been not a campaign, but a soap opera. Nothing about it has been presidential. It is our *House of Cards*, with its twists, scandals, and cliffhangers. It might have been dreamed up by a screenwriter in search of plots of diabolical intrigue.

This has indeed been an election of many firsts. For the first time, conspiracy theorists had a candidate

of their own own, a Pétainist dressed up as a Gaullist in the form of newcomer **François Asselineau**. French viewers seemed to be less bothered by this lamentable first than by the fact that Asselineau seemed to have swallowed an anthology of Chinese proverbs. It was also our first introduction to **Jean Lassalle**, yet another populist, a former shepherd, this one announcing from atop his ass on the road to Damascus—and, in his much-remarked-upon gravelly voice—his support for the Syrian dictator and the criminal **Bashar al-Assad**. And yet France focused not on the shocking fact of his support for Assad but on the voice in which the support was uttered.

This is also the first election in which a modern fascist party, the National Front, has been so close to victory and, as I write, has regained the lead in many polls. (Macron is the other leading candidate.) How can Le Pen be doing so well? Has she made her party out to be something other than what it is? Not at all. To the contrary, Marine Le Pen wears her racism, her hatred of migrants, like a badge. This week, she even embraced her ideological roots in the collaborationist wartime France of Marshall Pétain. How else are we to construe her insistence that

France played no role in the deportation of French Jews? She cannot erase the fact that, in July 1942, French police—*French* police—arrested more than 13,000 Parisian Jews, who were then deported to Hitler's extermination camps.

Ours has become a society of the spectacle, displaying the terminal nihilism that so terrified the political philosopher Leo Strauss. This is both reflected in and abetted by the triumph of the Internet and social media. And we are coming to a precipice—or rather two.

The first precipice: The reduction of politics to moralism with, as a consequence, the dawning of an era of generalized suspicion and the revival of the Law of Suspects—guilty until proven innocent. America has been through this experience before—it is almost standard in politics now, the focus on “gotcha” moments of alleged personal shortcomings rather than on the most important public issues at stake. But, again, it is relatively new in a country like France, where the strict separation between public and private sphere has always been an unwritten law.

The second precipice: In the case of Fillon, we saw the further reduction of the art of politics to the sport of hunting fox or grouse: the avid pack of beaters and pointers—that is, the avid pack of us—whose task it was, not to fight the adversary but to flush him out and run him to ground. Oh, our furtive desolation when the weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* failed to feed us our juicy Wednesday update on “Penelopegate”! Come on, admit it, France: Raise your hand if a photo of the candidate as wounded game has not given you a thrill or a tingle—or if you haven't felt let down on the days when you were deprived of your pound of human flesh.

Is there a cure? Consider for a moment Talleyrand, that most corrupt of men, but one of France's best diplomats, which is evidently not the case with Fillon, who is a friend of Putin and of Iran. But that is precisely what needed to be hunted. What a pity that, on this point as on so many others, we rubbed salt in the wrong wound and added injury to the wrong insult.

Consider Machiavelli. Consider the moment when the long faces of virtue replace the grandeur of *virtù*, the moral strength, the courage, that are the qualities required not only of

political leaders but of every citizen participating in the *res publica* and its difficult, perilous, but indispensable civic deliberations. What are the real stakes that France is facing today? How will we solve the problem of mass unemployment that has been growing and growing through the last 20 years? What can we do about the declining productivity of our industries? Our massive public debt? The flow of refugees? The process of their integration? These are the urgent deliberations we must have. And the campaign is just burying them under a mass of empty words.

At the door of the Jacobin Club in 1789, hung a sign reading, “Here we are proud to call ourselves citizens.” Citizens, yes, as distinguished from armchair moralizers; defenders of the common weal, yes, and arbiters of its dilemmas, of its constant necessary compromises, of the justice of the American strike of April 6 on the base from which, three days before, Assad's child-hunting aircraft had taken off—citizens, yes, not users of the spittoon that the public arena is becoming in a nation that invented the rights of man.

*Translated from the French by Steven B. Kennedy.*



## What you need to know about the French election (online)

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

legislative election to select the French Parliament in June — and this vote also has two rounds.

This weekend, France will begin the process of selecting its next president. Sunday's vote is one of several major elections in Western Europe this year.

To win a seat in the National Assembly, a candidate must receive at least 50 percent of the vote on June 11, with a required minimum of 25 percent registered-voter turnout. Any races not reaching those thresholds will require a June 18 runoff.

In many ways, the political trends in France are the same as those being witnessed across the continent, if not the world: the rising power of fringe groups and the weakening of major political parties. But the French system is different from most of its neighbors — and so are many of the issues it faces.

Both the presidential and legislative elections will be essential moments in the future of France.

Here's a WorldViews guide on what to expect.

### When do the French vote?

French voters may actually head to the polls *four* times this summer.

### Who are the candidates in the presidential race?

In total, 11 candidates have received approval to run in the election from the country's Constitutional Council, having met the threshold of the sponsorship of 500 elected officials.

Of this 11, five are considered serious contenders:

- *Benoit Hamon of the Socialist Party:* Hamon, 49, was chosen to lead the Socialists after the incumbent president, François Hollande, decided not to run for a second term. Hollande's decision, though unusual, wasn't a total surprise: His presidency has been marked with record unpopularity. Hamon has hoped to distinguish himself by proposing radical solutions such as a universal income, but few think that his platform stands a chance in this election.
- *Emmanuel Macron of the En Marche! movement:* In the face of what initially seemed to be a polarized political landscape, an elitely-educated former investment banker and Socialist economy minister has managed to become the voice of “radical centrism.” The 39-year-old Macron is hoping to become the youngest president in French history, and he aims to do so without the backing of a major party. He is at the top of many polls, with voters enticed by his

The first round of voting for France's next president will be Sunday. If no candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote (with 11 candidates running, a very likely possibility), there will be a runoff between the two top candidates on May 7. Whoever wins the most votes in that round will be president.

Even then, however, the voting won't be over. There will also be a

- *François Fillon of the Republicans:* The 63-year-old Fillon is the candidate for the France's largest center-right party, and he initially was deemed a front-runner. A former prime minister, Fillon had presented himself as a traditional

moderate rhetoric and plans to lower taxes and expand health care, but critics argue that his policies may fail to entice embittered voters to the polls.

- *Jean-Luc Mélenchon, founder of the Unsubmissive France movement:* The rise of a 65-year-old outspoken leftist in the polls might be one of the most surprising facets of this year's election. Mélenchon's platform shares some similarities with Le Pen — most notably, his aversion to the European Union — but he doesn't strike the same anti-immigrant tones, and his vision of abolishing France's Fifth Republic political system, in place since 1958, is uniquely radical. Mélenchon is running for his own Unsubmissive France movement and is not backed by a major party.

#### What are the big issues for voters?

There are a number of intersecting issues for French voters this year. Below are four of the biggest:

- *Economy:* France is still feeling the after-effects of the 2008 financial crisis. Unemployment hovers around 10 percent — higher than in most European Union countries — and there is considerable anger at the inefficiency of the French state.
- *Europe:* Polls have shown that less than half of the French people have a positive view of the E.U. Even if France doesn't decide to leave the E.U., like Britain, a Le Pen presidency could mean the country pulls out of the

euro — a move that could trigger a major financial crisis on the continent.

- *Immigration:* Some voters, most notably supporters of Le Pen, are motivated by the levels of immigration to France and want to impose some limits on legal immigration and free movement under the Schengen Agreement.
- *Security:* Since January 2015, more than 320 people have been killed by terrorist plots in France. Many in France hope new leadership may help deal with this problem.

#### What are the polls saying about who might win?

In France's two-round system, making sense of the polls requires a little extra thought.

Many of the polls for first-round voting give Macron and Le Pen a slight edge. However, Fillon and Mélenchon are not far behind, often close enough that a margin of error could explain them coming out on top. Of the five main contenders, only Hamon is trailing far behind at this point.

No candidate is expected to receive more than 50 percent of the first-round vote. (This isn't unusual in French presidential elections — no candidate has won that much of the vote under the current system.) That means a runoff vote will likely be held.

And while you might expect the top vote-getter in the first round will come out on top in the second, that doesn't always happen: In 1974, 1981 and 1995, the candidate who placed second in the first round became president after the runoff.

There will probably be a lot of tactical voting in the second round, especially if Le Pen makes it through. Polls suggest she would lose by a large margin against either Macron, Fillon or Mélenchon — a

somewhat similar situation to 2002, when her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, made it to the second round but then lost in a landslide to Jacques Chirac (who received 82.2 percent of the vote).

Most polls show Macron coming out on top, no matter whom he faces in the second round. However, a lot could change before the second round takes place.

#### What about the parliamentary elections?

It's important not to forget that just a few weeks after the presidential vote, the French will then vote for their parliamentary representation. Whoever wins the presidency will later have to appoint a prime minister from the winner of these elections.

The French president, while more powerful than many of his European peers, still must depend on a prime minister and Parliament to manage the country's day-to-day affairs.

For a president, the ideal situation is to have your party control the Parliament during your term, but it often doesn't work out that way. When different parties control the executive and legislative branches of government, the French call it "cohabitation," but as with all such partnerships, there can be serious friction.

This year, the situation is even more complicated. Of the top five candidates, three (Macron, Le Pen and Mélenchon) do not operate with the support of a major party. Even Fillon faces a similar risk: His Republican Party is seriously divided at the moment and he may have to face down his parliamentary colleagues on some issues. Whatever the outcome, legislative gridlock is likely.

#### So, what's the big story of the election?

Right now, that's hard to say.

Many outside France look at Le Pen's popularity and see it as the latest in a string of events — including Brexit and the election of

Donald Trump as U.S. president — that reflect an antiglobalist resurgence in the political right.

It is hard to deny that Le Pen is capturing a moment: The National Front has seen a surge in popularity since she took over the party from her father, and Le Pen has notably broadened the party's appeal to include more women and young people.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

At the same time, things aren't quite that simple.

For one thing, few are predicting a Le Pen presidency now, thanks in large part to the way that the French election system is set up.

A story that may be even more important is the fragmentation of the French political system. The two main French political parties — the Republicans and the Socialists — are struggling this year for two very different reasons. Fillon, the Republican candidate, has been seriously tarnished by corruption allegations, while the record unpopularity of Socialist president Hollande is a big factor in Hamon's slim odds.

The net result is the same: A growing lack of trust in the mainstream parties is leading voters to look for alternatives. In some cases, the alternative may be the far-right, in others the far left. Disillusionment could be the defining factor of this year's vote — a number of polls have suggested that voter turnout could hit a record low, despite the high stakes.

#### Read more:

Against all odds, a leftist soars in French election polls

France's election may determine the future of the European Union

Jean-Marie Le Pen says the battle is already won



## Marine Le Pen, French Candidate, Hardens an Already Hard Stand on Immigration (online)

Adam Nossiter

"Just watch the interlopers from the world over come and install themselves in our home," she said. "They want to transform France into a giant squat."

"But it's up to the owner to decide who can come in," Ms. Le Pen continued. "So, our first act will be to restore France's frontiers."

The words were red meat to her base of supporters and were intended to shore up her flagging poll numbers as the campaign closes. Polls once showed her at 30 percent, but instead of consolidating her lead, her support fell as doubts about her readiness to govern grew.

#### France's Vote: The Basics

The presidential election will be held in two stages.

#### • Round 1

Voters will choose from 11 candidates on **April 23**.

#### • Round 2

If, as is widely expected, no one receives more than 50 percent of

the vote, the top two candidates will compete in a runoff on **May 7**.

Two men who were thought to be also-rans — Jean Luc Mélenchon of the far left and François Fillon of the center right — have been catching up and are within three points of her.

Ms. Le Pen is still expected to emerge on Sunday as one of the two finalists in the May 7 runoff, a

breakthrough for the far right given that her father's second-place finish 15 years ago came as a huge shock.

Polls predict a heavy loss for her in the second round, however. A poll conducted for *Le Monde* and published on Tuesday said she would get only about 30 percent of Mr. Fillon's voters in the second round — not nearly enough, according to Joël Gombin, a National Front specialist at the University of Picardy Jules Verne, who said she must get more than 50 percent of former-Fillon supporters to have a shot at a final victory.

But Ms. Le Pen is not taking any chances with the first round either. Tough talk on immigrants is what her supporters want from her, and Wednesday night at the *Dôme*, an immense metal-covered indoor arena in a run-down neighborhood of Marseille set back from the port, they were not disappointed.

As she denounced her opponents on the left as "immigrationists," men in the stands shouted, coarsely, that they would cut off a certain part of their rivals' anatomy.

Police officers brandishing automatic weapons guarded the hall — two men were arrested in Marseille on Tuesday and are suspected of preparing an attack to disrupt the election — and Ms. Le Pen eagerly linked immigration to "insecurity," a favorite theme of hers.

Violent protests by leftist demonstrators have disrupted recent National Front meetings,

although ones held on Wednesday were relatively subdued.

Security was tightened outside the *Dôme* before Ms. Le Pen's election rally on Wednesday. Paul Durand/European Pressphoto Agency

Referring to those under surveillance as possible security threats, Ms. Le Pen called France a "hotbed of S-files, that immense army of the shadows who want us to live in terror."

She unleashed volleys of fearful warnings about her country's transformation — in her telling — by an immigrant wave.

"The third-world demographic push is accelerating," she warned. "There is a migratory submersion which is sweeping everything before it."

"Will we be able to live much longer as French people in France, while entire neighborhoods are being transformed?" Ms. Le Pen asked. "It is right for us not to want our country transformed into a mere corridor, a giant railway station."

Areas around Marseille and other parts of southern France have large immigrant populations from North Africa. Ms. Le Pen's words found ready takers in the stands, where supporters spoke with dismay and anger at seeing their hometowns, in their telling, made unrecognizable by the presence of immigrants.

"It is absolutely frightful. I've never seen so many burqas," said Christiane Guille, a nurse from Salon-de-Provence, referring to the head-to-foot robe worn by some

Muslim women. "Frightful. And it's getting worse and worse. It's like a cult. I know some who have converted. You see them indoctrinated, the passage from one civilization to another."

"For me, there is a huge replacement going on," Ms. Guille added, using what has become a stock phrase for people on the far right to describe what they see as France's transformation. "I cry for my Provence. I feel hatred. By what right do they take over my country?"

Ms. Le Pen vowed to her supporters that she would clamp down, expel, stamp out and restrict immigration. Paul Durand/European Pressphoto Agency

Ms. Le Pen's words on immigrants, she said, "went straight to my heart."

Odile Ferrero, 60, a retired home health worker, said her town, Aubagne, was "stuffed" with immigrants.

"It's like whiteflies. They are just everywhere, everywhere," she said. "And all the little ones, who used to come home with my daughters, they went swimming together — and now they are all wearing the veil."

"There are some who are good," she continued. "But then there are others. And now they have more rights than we do."

Ms. Le Pen has proposed a series of anti-immigration measures, constants in her campaign for months, but with some new ones in the last few days.

She promised a "moratorium" on immigration "as soon as I take

office"; an end to family reunifications — the longstanding and divisive policy of allowing into the country family members of immigrant; the expulsion of illegal immigrants, "because it is the law"; the expulsion of "S-files" who are foreigners; and cutting medical help to illegal immigrants.

All of the proposals met with roars of approval.

France had a record number of asylum-seekers last year, 85,700, and about 227,500 foreigners were granted residency permits of some sort, an increase of nearly 5 percent from the preceding year. Ms. Le Pen has spoken of drastically limiting legal immigration to around 10,000 people a year.

"There's far too much insecurity, as far as immigrants are concerned," said Francis Squeil, a cheese factory worker from Salon-de-Provence. "They are just not adapted to the French way of life. When you go to the markets, that's all you see."

As the buses carrying the National Front supporters pulled away from the *Dôme* late Wednesday, a group of Muslim women, most wearing head scarves, gathered to look, tentatively leaning forward from under an adjoining highway overpass.

"More and more are coming from the third world, taking advantage of our benefits," Ms. Le Pen had said at the rally. "It's a choice of civilization. I will be the president of those French who want to continue living in France as the French do."



## France's Far-Right Voters Are Younger Than You Think

By Nick Robins-Early

WORLDPOST

04/20/2017 05:46 am ET

**Amid widespread unemployment, young French voters are seeking radical alternatives to establishment politicians.**

France's far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen is feverishly wrapping up her campaign ahead of the country's first round of presidential elections on Sunday. There's widespread uncertainty over how the vote will pan out, as polls have tightened to put four candidates within contention.

Le Pen is currently in a tight race with independent Emmanuel Macron to win the initial round of voting, which would bring her party into a second-round run-off for the first time since 2002. Projections get

grim for Le Pen in the final vote, however, as polls show any other major candidate would beat her in a head-to-head contest.

Le Pen has been vowing to defy the polls, promising the same kind of upset that resulted in Britain voting to leave the European Union and the United States electing Donald Trump president. But while both those events were largely driven by older generations, much of Le Pen's support is coming from France's youngest voters.

Polls throughout the campaign have shown that more young voters back the National Front than any other party. An Ifop survey last month indicated that 39 percent of voters between the ages of 18 and 24 back Le Pen.

Le Pen's level of youth support is unique among populist movements across Europe. For example, only about 3 percent of Dutch voters

aged 18 to 24 cast their ballots for anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders in the Netherlands' elections last month, while he gained 13 percent of the vote overall. Results from the Brexit referendum showed around 75 percent of young voters wanted to stay in the EU. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, running for her fourth term as a staunch defender of the EU, is also significantly more popular among youth voters than any other candidate.

Young French voters appear an easy target for parties that argue the country's current system isn't working. The youth unemployment rate in France in recent years has hovered around 25 percent — more than double the national rate and far higher than the average for the EU. Many young French citizens are now willing to vote for a party that is running on a platform that claims

immigration and the EU have stolen French jobs.

French youth voters' turn away from traditionally powerful parties also reflects the wider fragmentation of the country's politics, something prevalent among all age groups in the country. The current likeliest scenario for the second round of voting is a face-off between Le Pen and Macron — either of whom would become the first president from a non-establishment party. Meanwhile, the ruling Socialists are in shambles and the once-strong Republicans are hobbled by corruption allegations.

Amid this splintering of traditional voting blocs, the National Front is attempting to frame itself as the only legitimate alternative to politics as usual. This is resonating especially well with younger voters, who are struggling with high levels of unemployment and may not have a strong memory of the decades of

openly prejudiced, anti-Semitic National Front leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine's father.

Marine Le Pen has long pursued a strategy to make the National Front a more sanitized and less overtly discriminatory party than the one her father founded. In recent years, she clashed with Jean-Marie over his anti-Semitic statements and in 2015 finally expelled him from the party entirely.

Despite the fact that Marine Le Pen still courts controversy by downplaying France's role in the Holocaust or vilifying Muslim immigrants, she has succeeded in bringing the party into the mainstream and making it palatable to young voters. A 2015 study

revealed that French youth had a better opinion of the National Front than the general population did on a wide range of issues, with one of the largest disparities being how the party would fare on jobs.

The party has put many young politicians front and center as its standard-bearers. Marion Maréchal Le Pen, Marine's niece, is the country's youngest member of parliament at 27 years old and a frequent feature at rallies.

Eric Gaillard / Reuters

French National Front political party leader Marine Le Pen (L) and politician Marion Marechal-Le Pen.

Although support for the National Front is prevalent among France's

youth, the party's effort to appeal to the demographic isn't new. The National Front has had a youth wing since the 1970s and its message does not shy away from the anti-immigration, anti-Islam rhetoric of its main party. National Front Youth director Gaëtan Dussausaye has written numerous posts on the youth wing's website complaining of the government giving handouts to migrants while ignoring native-born French.

It's still uncertain how big an effect the National Front's popularity with young voters will have. The desire for radical change among youth may make some National Front support more fickle. An Ipsos-Sopra Steria poll published last week in Le Monde showed that Communist

party leader Jean-Luc Melenchon surged in support among voters aged 18 to 24, going from 12 to 44 percent in less than a month. It's not clear based on the data Le Monde released whose supporters switched over to Melenchon, and whether Le Pen's support suffered any decline.

Youth support also doesn't always translate into votes. Weeks before France's 2012 election, a Le Monde poll put Le Pen's support among 18- to 24-year-old voters at 26 percent, but in the first round of voting the National Front gained only 18 percent of the youth vote.

France's Youth Are Turning To The Far-Right National Front

## CNBC : Meet the main candidates hoping to be the next president of France

Silvia Amaro

It's described as the most uncertain election ever in French politics. Ahead of Sunday's voting, here's a look at the main candidates hoping to win the race for the Elysee Palace. If no candidate wins a majority, the two top finishers vie in a runoff on May 7.

- **Emmanuel Macron – the investment-banker-turned-politician**

The 39-year-old could become the youngest ever president of France. If opinion polls prove to be correct, Emmanuel Macron will get enough votes Sunday to advance to the runoff.

The former investment banker served as economy minister in the last Socialist government and has promised a Nordic-style economic model for France — making spending cuts of 60 billion euros (\$64.4 billion) while also implementing a stimulus package of 50 billion euros. Macron is perhaps the most pro-European candidate in this election. The centrist politician is

running as an independent. The latest polls project he will finish first on Sunday, but only with about 25 percent of the votes.

- **Marine Le Pen – the far-right candidate who wants to take France out of the EU**

The leader of the Front National has been neck-and-neck with Macron in the past weeks. She is seen as a threat to old establishment politics, claiming she will take France out of the euro zone and out of the European Union. She has promised to cut taxes and increase social benefits, but her main pledge is to cut immigration by 80 percent. She is calling for a tax on companies hiring foreign workers.

- **Francois Fillon – the frontrunner no more**

The conservative candidate had everything in his favor to become the next president until allegations over misused public funds emerged and dented his chances. Once the frontrunner, Fillon is placing third in most poll projections ahead of

Sunday's vote, but only about 6 percentage points below Macron.

Fillon is also a strong advocate of reduced immigration and of imposing restrictions to immigrants' social benefits. In economic terms, the member of the conservative Republican Party wants to cut spending by 100 billion euros over five years and to lower taxes for companies and individuals.

Sylvain Lefevre | Getty Images

- **Jean-Luc Melenchon – the surprise of the election**

The far-left candidate wasn't a well-known figure outside France, but his recent surge in opinion polls raised eyebrows among investors and commentators. If Melenchon were to advance to the runoff, France could be faced with a final choice between the far-right and the far-left.

Pierre Gattaz, leader of France's main business lobby Medef, described such a scenario as "a catastrophe" and a choice between "economic disaster and economic chaos." Melenchon has pledged to

raise public-sector wages and take on more debt to subsidize that. When it comes to Europe, his views are similar to Le Pen's. He wants a renegotiation of European treaties and if the EU weren't to agree, he would quit the Union.

The head of La France insoumise (Unsubmissive France) is tied with Fillon in the latest polls with 19 percent.

- **Benoit Hamon - 'vote with your heart'**

Benoit Hamon, who represents President Francois Hollande's Socialist Party, has dropped in opinion polls, failing to find a space between the far-left and the centrist Macron. Hamon is pro-European, even supporting the idea of a minimum wage across Europe.

He has pledged to reduce the working hours for public sector workers and hire more teachers and medical staff. Amid the lack of support in recent polls, Hamon has asked voters to ignore political tactics and vote with their hearts.

government eavesdropping programs in 2013.

Crowds danced on a Paris plaza at what was seen as a last-chance rally for Hamon, polling a distant fifth place ahead of Sunday's vote, which will send the top two vote-getters to a decisive runoff election May 7. A defeat by Hamon could crush the party of unpopular Socialist President Francois Hollande, who chose not to seek a second term.

Le Pen, the anti-immigration and anti-EU candidate, used her final appearances to highlight a nationalist agenda in which "the



## French Presidential Hopefuls Close in on Tight Race

Elaine Ganley / AP

(PARIS) — Far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen vowed on Wednesday to end the fear of terrorism in France and stamp out the "poison" of Islamic radicals, holding her final rally in the southern port city of Marseille, where police arrested two men a day earlier on suspicion of plotting an attack around this weekend's vote.

Independent centrist candidate Emmanuel Macron, who was at the top of a recent poll, reached out to the Muslim community for solutions.

With four days until Sunday's first round of the presidential election, candidates blanketed the country ahead of the nail-biting election. Tight security was the order of the day for Le Pen and other top candidates.

The populist Le Pen, a leading candidate, called for a "national insurrection, peaceful and democratic ... to give France back to its people."

Police scuffled with ultra-left and anti-Le Pen protesters heading to her rally.

Gaspard Flamant, 26, said he feared Le Pen could win. "We saw (President Donald) Trump, we saw Brexit ... so I'm mistrustful," he said.

Le Pen has in the past expressed hope that the anti-system momentum would rub off on her. However, she has recently lost the leader's edge in polls.

Socialist candidate Benoit Hamon promised that if he won France's presidency he would give asylum to Edward Snowden, the former U.S. National Security Agency contractor who has taken refuge in Moscow since revealing details of secret U.S.

essentials" are security, illegal immigration and the French identity, which she says is being lost as Islamists try to usurp French civilization and multiply the threat of terrorism.

Ahead of his final event in the western city of Nantes, Macron met with the country's RAID intervention force accompanied by Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. He also met with the head of the main Muslim federation, saying the group is fighting on a "common front" alongside the state against Islamic extremism.

Le Pen dismissed as "folly" government statements that France, which has been subjected to multiple deadly attacks in recent years, must be prepared to live with the threat of terrorism.

"This immense army in the shadows who want us to live in fear .... is not a fatality," she



## Macron maintains slim lead as first round of French elections approaches

The Christian Science Monitor

April 19, 2017 Paris—Far-right candidate Marine Le Pen sought on Tuesday to turn the debate in the final week of France's presidential election to immigration as she tried to reverse a dip in polls.

Surveys of voting intentions have for months shown Ms. Le Pen and centrist Emmanuel Macron qualifying on Sunday for the May 7 run-off. But the National Front leader has been under pressure since the start of April as conservative Francois Fillon and far-leftist Jean-Luc Melenchon closed the gap on the favorites.

Speaking to a rally in Paris on Monday, she vowed to suspend all immigration with an immediate moratorium, shield voters from globalization and strengthen security. Those subjects won her her core backing, and she hopes it can give her boost with about 30 percent of voters still undecided.

"For several weeks, we will need to assess the situation. The reality is that immigration is massive in our country and that migration flood that we are experiencing is not a fantasy," Le Pen told RTL radio on Tuesday as she fleshed out details of the moratorium announcement.

The measure has not been part of her program, although she has



## Macron Attacked by French Rivals as He Leads in Final Polls

@JohnFollain by

More stories by John Follain

told the cheering crowd. In Marseille. She reiterated her plan to expel all foreigners in a suspect file and strip dual national suspects of their French nationality.

But, she said, her first job as president would be to pull France out of the borderless Schengen agreement and give the nation back its borders, which she called a "sieve" for the entry of terrorists who she said travel Europe like tourists.

She assailed recent governments for failing to stop attacks and warned on BFM television earlier in the day; "We are all targets — all the French."

Le Pen and Macron have jostled for the lead in opinion polls, with conservative candidate Francois Fillon third and far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon fourth. However, Le Pen has lost some ground as Fillon and Melenchon closed the gap.

put on record that she wants to limit annual immigration to just 10,000 people a year.

"I will carry out this moratorium for the exact purpose of implementing this 10,000 figure," she said.

Until now, Le Pen has struggled to get her opponents in the presidential race to debate her party's trademark tough security and immigration stance. She, by contrast, has been put on the defensive over her position on leaving the euro zone, a proposal that lacks wide support.

Two polls on Tuesday showed Mr. Fillon and Mr. Melenchon still a few percentage points away from Le Pen and Mr. Macron. She would be beaten by any of the three others in a run-off, polls have repeatedly shown.

Le Pen's stance on immigration mainly competes with that of former prime minister Fillon, who despite being plagued by a financial scandal is slowly recovering in the polls, and has also targeted far-right voters.

Fillon told Europe 1 radio on Tuesday that Le Pen's moratorium idea was nonsensical, and that while numbers should come down, the key was to impose the country's values and identity.

"Immigration must be regulated because we have an economic, social and housing situation that

A poll by the BVA firm published Wednesday evening said Macron led with a one-point advantage over Le Pen, with Fillon and Melenchon four points behind. Hamon, the Socialist, trailed in fifth.

After his meeting with Anouar Kbibech, head of the French Muslim federation CFCM, Macron issued a statement insisting on the importance of respecting France's secular traditions but saying those shouldn't be used to target Muslims. Some Muslims feel unfairly targeted by French laws banning headscarves in schools and full-face veils in public.

Le Pen has said she would extend the law banning "ostensible" religious signs to the streets of France.

The Grand Mosque of Lyon issued an appeal urging Muslims to cast ballots instead of isolating themselves, "so that all the children

of France, regardless of their skin color, their origins or their religion, are fully involved in the future of their country."

Le Pen, who wants to withdraw France from the European Union and do away with the euro currency, defended her decision to force national news network TF1 to take down the EU flag during an interview Tuesday night.

She said that "I am a candidate in the election for the French republic" and the EU is acting like France's "enemy."

France and Germany are the top two economies in the EU and an exit by France would devastate the bloc and upset financial markets.

doesn't enable us to welcome as many people who want to come here," Fillon said.

"(But) a moratorium makes no sense. What threatens us is not immigration, but the surrender of our values and our history. If we are proud of our history and defend it, then we will integrate foreigners more easily."

Security, which Le Pen links closely to immigration, was threatening to once again become a campaign issue on Tuesday after two men were arrested in Marseille, in southern France, on suspicion of planning an attack during the voting.

More than 230 people have died in militant Islamist attacks over the past two years, mostly at the hands of home-grown jihadists, often of north African descent.

However, with no major attacks on French soil since last summer, polls show that unemployment, stuck around 10 percent, and political integrity — an issue that has arisen after accusations of nepotism leveled at Fillon in particular since early this year — are bigger issues for voters.

### Sarkozy, Juppe back Fillon

Despite his recovery, Fillon is arguably in fourth place. One of Tuesday's four opinion polls put him on a lower score than

Melenchon, as several others have done in past days and weeks. Those that pit him against the far-left showman in the second round show him losing that battle by a big margin.

Former President Nicolas Sarkozy, a divisive figure whose backing may be a mixed blessing for Fillon, on Tuesday urged voters to back the man who served under him as prime minister from 2007 to 2012, and who beat him to the party nomination in November.

"He has the experience, the desire and the project that will allow France to ensure an alternative to the last five disastrous years that we have experienced, (under Socialist president Francois Hollande)" Mr. Sarkozy said in a video message posted on Facebook — a rare foray into the campaign by him.

Alain Juppe, also beaten by Fillon in the primaries but a more popular figure than Sarkozy, will be at Fillon's side on the campaign trail on Wednesday, a member of Fillon's entourage said.

Melenchon, meanwhile, was campaigning in Dijon in southeast France, with his trademark hologram image set to be transmitted to rallies in several other cities.

- Far-right Le Pen, ex-premier Fillon say Macron is weak, vague
- Latest poll shows Macron leads, up one point to 25 percent

Emmanuel Macron's rivals are training their fire on the centrist newcomer as opinion polls signal his narrow lead may be firming three days before the first round of France's presidential election.

Nationalist Marine Le Pen and Republican Francois Fillon both attacked the 39-year-old former economy minister saying his ideas are weak and vague. Support for Macron rose one point to 25 percent, while Le Pen was unchanged at 22 percent, according to a poll by Harris Interactive-France Televisions out on Thursday. Fillon slipped one point to 19 percent, level with Communist-backed Jean-Luc Melenchon. The Bloomberg Composite of first-round polls showed Macron 1.5 points ahead, on 23.9 percent.

The four leading candidates all head into the final hours of campaigning with a chance of qualifying for the run-off on May 7. Surveys show Le Pen would lose the final vote, whoever she faces.

French voters are looking for a leader who can turn their country

around after years of sub-par growth and a wave of attacks by Islamist terrorists fueled a backlash against the political establishment. Socialist President Francois Hollande opted not to seek a second term as his approval rating plumbed record lows, his party's candidate Benoit Hamon has slipped to a distant fifth and Fillon, from the other traditional party, is running as a French-style Thatcherite who will shake up the economy.

After spiking earlier in the month as Melenchon's prospects rose, French bond yields have stabilized this week. The spread on French 10-year debt over German bunds narrowed by 2 basis points on Thursday to 72 basis points.

At a rally in the southern port-city of Marseille on Wednesday evening, the National Front's Le Pen called for a national and democratic "insurrection" against the establishment and mocked Macron, saying he "feels faint" whenever he has to make a decision. Banking on her most popular issues, Le Pen has toughened her anti-immigration and security stance.

"On the fight against Islamism as on everything else, Macron is vague," Fillon told Thursday's edition of Le Figaro newspaper. "You can feel there is no determination in him to fight efficiently against this danger, which he hasn't even diagnosed."

## Security Threat

As the first round campaign draws to a close, security details protecting the candidates have been bolstered after intelligence services detected an imminent threat. Authorities arrested two men in the southern city of Marseille for planning an attack during the presidential race, Interior Minister Matthias Fekl said on Tuesday.

"Emmanuel Macron gives the impression in what he says that he doesn't defend national identity, the historic narrative, the cultural roots," said Fillon, who has been dogged by a scandal over alleged embezzlement. "As if all this was old-fashioned."

Fillon, who breakfasted with former President Nicolas Sarkozy in a would-be symbol of center-right unity, may be growing less optimistic. He canceled the election-night party he had planned for Sunday at a big congress hall venue in Paris, opting for his campaign headquarters instead, his team said.

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Macron himself, who held a rally in Nantes with Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian at his side, will see several former center-right ministers endorse him in an open letter to be

published in the press on Friday, newspaper Le Parisien reported. Macron's supporters have grown more certain to vote in the final weeks of the campaign, polls show, after earlier including more waverers than any of his rivals.

## 'Vile and Unworthy'

Running in his first ever campaign, Macron is trying to persuade voters he can keep the country safe after his rivals said he was too inexperienced. He made a point of getting his audience to applaud police officers of the anti-terrorism unit deployed at his rally on Wednesday night.

"I want to tell you how much I see the fight against terrorism as important," Macron said. "The mission of a head of state is to guarantee your security, and I am ready for that key mission."

He attacked Le Pen for her remark that if she had been in the presidential Elysee Palace, there would have been no terrorist attacks in recent years. "Vile and unworthy statements," Macron countered. "Madame Le Pen isn't worthy of leading our Republic."

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# With French Poised for Extreme Vote, Companies Plot Their Plan B

@FabioWire  
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Fabio Benedetti Valentini

- Raising cash, boosting currency hedges among steps being taken
- Le Pen, Melenchon raise concern among corporate executives

French companies are stealthily preparing for the worst amid the growing prospect that Marine Le Pen or Jean-Luc Melenchon could win the presidency on platforms of raising trade barriers and potentially exiting the euro currency bloc.

One Paris-based industrial company would consider moving its headquarters to London in the case of a Melenchon win, said its chief executive officer, who asked not to be identified. The CEO of another company, one of the biggest in the benchmark CAC-40 Index, said managers are drawing up a Plan B should Le Pen win, though he wouldn't give details. Aramis Auto, a Paris-based car broker, has made sure it can withstand a retreat by banks.

"We secured our credit lines with our banks a few weeks ago to continue financing the business," said Guillaume Paoli, the CEO of Aramis, which sells 32,000 cars a year in France with a team of about 30 multilingual buyers purchasing vehicles across the European Union. "It's difficult to do a checklist of measures to be taken" in the case of a Le Pen or Melenchon victory, he said.

Who Are the French Election's Main Candidates?

Who are the main candidates in the French election?

Source: Bloomberg

Polls have tightened before Sunday's first round of voting, making a May 7 runoff between Le Pen of the far-right National Front and the Communist-backed Melenchon a more plausible scenario than it's ever been. A victory for either one could lead to a plunge in the euro and in French government bonds, hurting banks and insurers that are big owners of sovereign debt. While big French companies that sell internationally would benefit initially from the weaker currency, the prospect of

growing protectionism or higher taxes could weigh on businesses and stock prices.

While companies generally won't talk publicly about preparations to avoid alienating customers and government officials, many are looking at ways to improve their cash positions by issuing more debt for longer terms, or increasing their hedges against currency swings, according to a person familiar with the matter.

"The economic philosophy of the two candidates is very similar; they're anti-business," said Jean-Francois Buet, chairman of FNAIM, an industry group for residential property brokers. "We don't dare think of a duel between Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Melenchon in the second round because that would be a catastrophe in terms of the economy."

The campaign has turned into a four-way race, with Le Pen and independent Emmanuel Macron running just ahead of Francois Fillon of the center-right Republicans and Melenchon, according to Bloomberg's composite poll of voting intention.

## Undecided Voters

Opinion surveys show that either of the more business-friendly candidates, Macron or Fillon, would beat Le Pen in the second round, but they also flag that as many as 40 percent of voters remain undecided.

Le Pen proposes withdrawing France from the euro and erecting trade barriers. Melenchon wants to renegotiate European treaties to give France more economic control, with conditions attached to staying in the euro. He would make it harder for companies to fire, limit executive pay and pull out of free-trade deals. He wants to raise the minimum wage and re-nationalize utility companies.

The premium that France pays over Germany to borrow for 10 years has climbed this year as markets priced in Melenchon's rise in the polls and Le Pen's persistent strength. The euro has dropped about 5.6 percent against the dollar in the past year.

"We will start total resistance; this Le Pen-Melenchon second round can't happen," Pierre Gattaz, the head of Medef, France's biggest business lobby, said on Europe 1 radio last

week. Medef will spend the remaining days before the vote explaining the dangers of the Melenchon and Le Pen programs, the group said in emailed comments.

Le Pen's program would increase public spending by 102 billion euros (\$109 billion) a year. Melenchon's measures would add more than 200 billion euros, compared with less than 20 billion euros for both Macron and Fillon, according to estimates from Institut Montaigne, a Paris-based think tank.

While France's biggest companies generate much of their earnings in

other countries, the economy relies on small businesses that have fewer or no options to adapt or move operations abroad. France has close to 4 million companies and 99 percent of them have fewer than 250 employees, according to 2013 data from Insee, the national statistics office.

### Moving Out

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Ultimately, it may be that just a few entrepreneurs or French companies move elsewhere. After Socialist

Francois Mitterrand won office and nationalized banks almost four decades ago, an expected flood of exiles turned out to be a trickle. One who did leave: Bernard Arnault, now France's richest man, moved to the U.S. in 1981 to work in property development, and returned to France in 1984 to build his luxury-goods empire.

"Some who would like to leave may, for instance, move their head office to the Netherlands, but it's a major change and can't be done in just a few weeks," said Pierre de Lauzun, the head of the French Association of Financial Markets, which represents 140 broker dealers and

securities firms. "A firm can't rapidly change its real footprint, its plants, customers and providers."

Still, a Le Pen or Melenchon win would have an immediate effect, said Paoli, the car-brokerage CEO.

"We would immediately stop investing, stop nice-to-have expenses, stop salary increases and hiring," Paoli says. "We would put ourselves in wait-and-see attitude."

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## Will Terrorism Rule The Last Stretch Of The French Election?

Romain Herreros  
The Huffington Post

Post

WORLDPOST

04/20/2017 05:46 am ET

**While the topic had been almost absent during the campaign, a failed plot in Marseille has once again put it at the center of debate.**

PARIS — Five days before the first round of the French presidential election, the threat of terrorism has returned to center stage in the campaign for the Elysee.

There has been no lack of news on the topic in Europe. Between the November 2015 attack in Paris and the July 2016 attack in Nice, as well as the recent events in London and Stockholm, terrorism has been a core issue. Yet, despite its prominence in the media and public debate, the subject had been virtually absent during the campaign so far.

Presidential candidate Francois Fillon said Tuesday at a campaign event in Lille, "There is a topic that has been left out during this campaign, even though it is

dramatically making itself known: It is terrorism."

The silence ended dramatically Tuesday when authorities announced the arrest of two young men in the port city of Marseille. Police found guns and bomb materials after arresting the men and said the duo had planned a violent attack ahead of Sunday's vote.

Philippe Laurenson / Reuters

French firefighters block the street as police conduct an investigation after two men were arrested in Marseille on April 18. Police say the men planned a "violent attack" before the election.

Terrorism was pushed to the background of the campaign amid the various scandals surrounding two of the presidential candidates, conservative Fillon and far-right leader Marine Le Pen. Both candidates share muscular national security views, but their legal challenges shifted much of the debate to the morality of politicians and how the legal cases would affect the candidates.

In fact, the candidates hadn't appeared particularly worried about security at their own campaign

events. Earlier this month, a protester managed to pelt Fillon with flour in Strasbourg, while centrist front-runner Emmanuel Macron was egged during his visit to the Salon of Agriculture. On Sunday, a member of the feminist protest group Femen rushed the stage as Le Pen spoke, even though her security service had been warned of the risk. Far-left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon has been holding large open-air rallies, even though it's difficult to ensure security at those events.

But the discovery of the Marseille plot had practical repercussions. Security has been stepped up significantly. Authorities said they are working with the four campaigns and deploying specialized services. During a recent visit by Fillon to Montpellier, snipers and elite police officers helped guard the area.

Robert Pratta / Reuters

Marine Le Pen, the French National Front candidate for president, at a rally in Marseille on April 19.

In addition to sparking practical changes, the foiled plot in Marseille also had political consequences. While Fillon said after the arrests that "democracy must not bow to the threats and intimidations of terrorists," his camp has clearly

been tempted to capitalize on the event.

Amid rumors that Fillon was the target of the plot, Lydia Guirous, a former spokeswoman for Fillon's party, tweeted: "The two suspects were planning to attack Francois Fillon. The barbarians know who is most determined to fight against Islamic totalitarianism."

On the side of the National Front, Le Pen has doubled down on her anti-immigration stance in the wake of the incident. She also hasn't shied away from insinuating she might have been under threat as well. "The fact that the two individuals were arrested in Marseille while Le Pen was holding a meeting there the next day is perhaps not a coincidence," a spokesman told Agence France-Presse.

Le Pen issued a very tough statement in reaction to these arrests. "In the last two five-year periods, Islamist fundamentalism has exponentially developed in France without any response ever being made. The result is a devastating multiplication of attacks and threats of attacks," Le Pen said in a statement Tuesday.

Will Terrorism Rule The Last Stretch Of The French Election?



## In Devastated Northern France, the French Flag Flies Again (online)

David W. Dunlap

"The Entry of the French Into Noyon: French flags carefully hidden for two-and-a-half years soon appeared everywhere." Underwood & Underwood/The New York Times Mid-Week Pictorial, April 19, 1917

*Times Insider is offering glimpses of some of the most memorable wartime illustrations that appeared in The New York Times Mid-Week Pictorial, on the 100th anniversary of each issue.*

"The Deliverance,' An Incident of the German Retreat: This picture typifies the deliverance of the cities of Northern France, for two years and a half under Prussian domination, from the iron rule of the conqueror. The children, quick to recognize their friends, are being given a ride by the men of an advance British bicycle corps." The New York Times Mid-Week Pictorial, April 19, 1917

The damage done to French cities and towns along the Western Front, as the German army staged a

strategic retreat to the virtually impregnable Hindenburg line, was the main subject of this week's Pictorial.

Noyon was among the towns retaken by Allied forces on March 18 after the Germans withdrew. Rotogravure reproductions in the Pictorial showed the French army entering Noyon — though scarcely in a cinematic scene of jubilation — as well as the damage done to Noyon, Bapaume, and Nesle.

"These photographs are the first to reach America showing the actual conditions in the French cities evacuated by the Germans in their hasty retreat to the Hindenburg line," the Pictorial said. "They give ocular evidence of the destruction wrought by the Germans."

Most stunning of all was a photo taken by Whitney Warren, one of the architects of Grand Central Terminal, who visited Arras, the scene of a prolonged and important battle. Thirteen inches tall on the printed page, it showed the 18th-



century Notre Dame Cathedral with much of its roof blown off. The structure has since been restored, as seen in this contemporary view, which roughly

corresponds to Warren's photograph.

"The Present Condition of the Cathedral at Arras: The Cathedral of

Notre Dame, while not so ancient as that at Rheims, being begun in 1755, was one of the most beautiful in France. Its destruction is beyond hope of its ever being repaired."

Whitney Warren/The New York Times Mid-Week Pictorial, April 19, 1917

**The  
New York  
Times**

## U.K. Parliament Approves Theresa May's General Election Call

Stephen Castle

LONDON — Less than 12 months after deciding to quit the European Union, Britons will vote on many of the same questions again, after lawmakers on Wednesday agreed to call an early general election, the outcome of which could shape Britain's relations with its closest neighbors for decades to come.

By an overwhelming vote of 522 to 13, British lawmakers agreed to hold elections on June 8 at the request of Prime Minister Theresa May, who hopes to strengthen her parliamentary support and gain a freer hand to negotiate Britain's withdrawal from the bloc.

The outcome of Wednesday's vote in Parliament was never in doubt, even with the requirement of a two-thirds threshold to call a snap election that, until Tuesday morning, Mrs. May and her aides had insisted would not happen.

Electioneering was already underway during the parliamentary debate, with party leaders exchanging insults, as well as highlighting some of the thorniest issues Britain faces today. Those include the clarity of Britain's break with the European Union, the stark inequality among the country's regions and the future of Scotland, where there are growing calls for a new referendum on independence.

"A general election is the best way to strengthen Britain's hand in the negotiations ahead," Mrs. May told lawmakers at the outset of a 90-minute debate.

While many critics of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union hope that an early general election will give them a chance to obstruct the process, current opinion polls suggest it will do the opposite, strengthening Mrs. May's power to force through any deal she negotiates.

Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader, in Birmingham on Tuesday. His party is languishing in opinion polls. Ben Birchall/Press Association, via Associated Press

If her Conservative Party wins a majority, Mrs. May would not be required to call another general election until 2022. That would allow for much more time to build a new relationship with the European Union and would lessen the chances of a disorderly departure from the bloc — often likened to walking off a cliff edge.

Analysts warned, however, that this did not necessarily mean that Mrs. May would seek a close relationship with the European Union after Britain has completed its departure.

"It gives more freedom of maneuver, it means that she can ignore everyone because she has a loyal party behind her," said Anand Menon, a professor of European politics and foreign affairs at King's College London, speaking of the prime minister's position if the Conservative Party were to significantly increase its number of seats in the House of Commons.

"That gives her added momentum, though I don't necessarily think that the momentum is towards the soft side of Brexit," he added, referring to a type of withdrawal that would maintain closer economic relations with the European Union.

Last month, Mrs. May formally triggered the two-year procedure for leaving the European Union, setting a March 2019 deadline for departure. The talks are expected to be difficult, and those complications were highlighted by Mrs. May as a reason for reversing numerous pledges that she would wait until 2020 to hold the next national vote.

If Britain were to stick with the next scheduled general election date, in May 2020, "the negotiations would reach their most difficult and sensitive stage just as an election was looming on the horizon," Mrs. May said. She said her Conservative Party needed a new mandate: "Five years of strong and stable leadership, to see us through the negotiations."

**Theresa May Announces Early Election**

Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain announced on Tuesday that she would call an early election, seeking to strengthen her government's mandate while it negotiates the country's withdrawal from the European Union.

By UK POOL, VIA REUTERS. Photo by Daniel Sorabji/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images. Watch in Times Video »

Even though opinion polls show that the Conservative Party is likely to perform strongly, lawmakers from the opposition parties went along with Mrs. May's call, perhaps out of fear that resisting an early election would make them look weak.

"We welcome the opportunity for an early election," the leader of the opposition Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, said, before describing Mrs. May as "a prime minister who cannot be trusted" for her about-turn on the election.

"This election is about her government's failure to rebuild the economy and living standards for the majority," Mr. Corbyn said, as he tried to shift the focus away from Britain's exit from the European Union, an issue on which his party is badly divided.

Mr. Corbyn condemned Mrs. May's reluctance to participate in a televised debate with other party leaders before the election, as has Tim Farron, the leader of another opposition party, the centrist, pro-Europe Liberal Democrats.

But Mrs. May said Mr. Corbyn would "bankrupt our economy, weaken our defenses and is simply not fit to lead."

In a separate development, Nick Clegg, a former deputy prime minister who led the Liberal Democrats to a crushing defeat in 2015, said he would seek to remain in Parliament, quashing speculation that he might withdraw from politics.

Television crews outside the Houses of Parliament on Tuesday. Peter Nicholls/Reuters

But George Osborne, the Conservative former chancellor of the Exchequer, will not run again, said The Evening Standard, the London newspaper that has hired Mr. Osborne as its new editor.

A general election adds to a period of extraordinary turbulence in British politics. Mrs. May's predecessor, David Cameron, won his unexpected, if small, majority in Parliamentary in 2015, and soon afterward Labour took a hard left turn, electing Mr. Corbyn as its leader. Then Mr. Cameron, who favored remaining in the European Union, lost his referendum bet last year, resulting in a reversal of four decades of European integration and creating extreme uncertainty over Britain's future economic ties to its closest partners.

Voters are unlikely to relish the prospect of another election and, given the volatility of politics, it is possible — though unlikely — that Mrs. May's decision could backfire. Among other things, critics argue that she risks sacrificing her image as a straight player.

In an interview with the BBC on Wednesday, Mrs. May said her opponents in Parliament had sought to "frustrate the Brexit process," but she conceded that she had suffered no defeats in the House of Commons on the issue.

Many analysts say that the prime minister simply was unable to resist taking advantage of very strong support in opinion polls for the Conservative Party.

After Mrs. May's announcement on Tuesday, the pound rose against other currencies, suggesting that the financial markets believe that Mrs. May will win a larger majority in Parliament and a smoother path to leaving the European Union.

Professor Menon noted, however, that new Conservative lawmakers might be even more opposed to the bloc than current ones. And with a strengthened position in Parliament, Mrs. May would be able to blame European Union negotiators if she did not get the deal she wanted.

**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL**

## U.K. Labour Party Backs an Election That It Might Regret

Jenny Gross

Updated April 19,

2017 1:54 p.m. ET

LONDON—Prime Minister Theresa May won formal approval from the House of Commons on Wednesday to hold an early election in June, supported by an opposition Labour

Party that could be facing one of its worst national defeats in decades.

The 522-13 vote puts the Labour Party in an uncomfortable position

as it grapples with waning support from its traditional working-class base and low approval ratings in comparison with Mrs. May's Conservatives. Pollsters and

analysts say Mrs. May, in the June 8 election, could increase her majority margin in Commons to more than 100 from a narrow 17.

But Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said he supported an early election because it gives the British people an opportunity to vote for a government that puts the national interest first. The prime minister, who took office in July after David Cameron resigned following the U.K. vote to leave the EU, said an early election would give her a stronger hand in coming negotiations with the EU on Britain's exit from the bloc.

Matthew Flinders, politics professor at the University of Sheffield, said it's difficult to understand why the Labour Party would support an early election, given they are likely to suffer a disastrous defeat. Mrs. May needed a two-thirds majority to approve her proposal.

"It's totally bizarre," Mr. Flinders said. "There is a sense that they want to be seen supporting the country in the run-up to Brexit negotiations, but it's more of a sign of the almost catastrophic position of the Labour Party at the moment and the complete lack of any clear strategy."

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Jason Douglas

April 19, 2017 10:58 a.m. ET

LONDON—A national election in June will give British voters the chance to deliver their verdict on Prime Minister Theresa May's handling of Brexit. In Scotland, it will also be a litmus test of voters' appetite for a second referendum on leaving the U.K.

Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon says she wants Scots to vote again in 2018 over independence, a sign of how last June's Brexit vote is straining the constitutional bonds that hold the U.K. together.

Ms. Sturgeon has already secured the backing of the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh to hold another vote, but the referendum needs the support of Mrs. May's government to give the result legal weight and so far, the British prime minister has resisted giving it. She says the independence question was settled in 2014 and shouldn't be revisited before Britain exits the EU, expected in early 2019.

British Parliament on Wednesday voted in favor of Mrs. May's call for a nationwide election on June 8. That election—together with local elections in Scotland on May 4—will test the enthusiasm of Scots for a

In Parliament, Desmond Swayne, a Conservative lawmaker, said he never imagined Labour lawmakers would agree to an early ballot and likened the move to turkeys voting for Christmas. "Today, those turkeys will indeed vote for that," Mr. Swayne said in Parliament ahead of the vote.

Mrs. May announced the June 8 election on Tuesday, saying that in recent days she had shifted from her previous opposition to an early ballot out of concern that a divided Parliament could hinder stability and the government's efforts to get a good deal in the negotiations.

Some British newspapers portrayed the decision as a move designed to neutralize the opposition to Brexit. The headline of the Daily Mail tabloid on Wednesday was "Crush the Saboteurs."

A YouGov poll conducted last week showed her Conservative Party with 44% approval among Britons, compared with Labour's 23%. The pro-EU Liberal Democrats received 12%, and the rest went to other parties.

With more Conservative support in Parliament, Mrs. May will be less beholden to anti-EU lawmakers in her party who favor a quick,

definitive break from the EU, regardless of whether the U.K. secures an agreement to protect its trading relationship with member countries. A stronger majority in Parliament also will narrow the chances of Britain failing to reach a deal with the EU, a scenario that economists see as the most disruptive.

The elections aren't expected to delay EU negotiations. In Brussels, a spokesman for Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, said "the real political negotiations" on Brexit will start after the June balloting.

For the Labour Party, the election will be as much a test of its decline as of Mrs. May's Brexit approach.

Political allegiances in the U.K. have fractured over the EU issue. And the Labour Party, which supported staying inside the bloc, has lost some of its traditional supporters, many of whom voted for Brexit.

Mr. Corbyn took office in 2015 after the Labour Party suffered its worst electoral defeat in nearly 30 years. His support came mainly from leftist grass-roots party members who wanted a radical alternative to the Conservative Party's center-right policies.

Many senior Labour Party figures, including former Prime Minister Tony Blair, say Mr. Corbyn's policies are too left-wing to appeal to centrist voters.

Alan Johnson, a longtime pro-EU Labour lawmaker for the northern constituency of Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle, said Tuesday he would resign ahead of the next election after thinking about what was best for the constituency and the party. His constituency voted to leave the EU.

Another Labour lawmaker, John Woodcock, said that he would be seeking re-election in his northwest England seat but wouldn't endorse Mr. Corbyn because he doesn't see him as fit for the job.

A spokesman for Mr. Corbyn didn't respond to a request for comment.

— Laurence Norman in Brussels contributed to this article.

**Write to** Jenny Gross at [jenny.gross@wsj.com](mailto:jenny.gross@wsj.com)

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## U.K. Election Raises Prospect of Another Scottish Independence Vote

second referendum on independence. Opinion polls suggest voters are wary of a rerun after the closely-fought campaign in 2014, which left battle scars on both sides that haven't fully healed.

Lawmakers in Ms. Sturgeon's Scottish National Party argue that another strong showing in June's election would strengthen their case for a fresh push for secession. But analysts say the party is unlikely to repeat its stunning success of 2015's election, when it swept 56 of 59 Scottish seats at the U.K. parliament at Westminster in London. They also say that any losses will be seized on by Mrs. May as evidence the nationalist surge that threatens Scotland's 300-year-old place in the U.K. is ebbing.

In September 2014, Scots voted against independence by 55% to 45% in a poll billed at the time by former SNP leader Alex Salmond as a "once-in-a-generation" event.

But Ms. Sturgeon argues that June's Brexit vote means another vote is now necessary. Although the U.K. as a whole opted to leave the EU, Scots overwhelmingly chose to remain, by 62% to 38%. Ms. Sturgeon says that means Scottish voters should be given the choice between leaving the EU under

whatever terms Mrs. May negotiates, or going it alone as an independent country.

Her party, which has in recent years come to dominate Scottish politics, sees the coming election as another chance to demonstrate the Scottish public supports another independence poll.

"I think if the SNP gets a clear majority of the Westminster seats, then that's a mandate for a second referendum," said George Kerevan, SNP member of Parliament for East Lothian, a district that borders Edinburgh.

Yet recent opinion polls suggest that Scots aren't convinced another referendum is a good idea, Brexit notwithstanding.

A February survey of 1,009 voters in Scotland by BMG Research found that 49% opposed a second referendum, with only around a third in favor.

On the question of independence itself, polls suggest support among Scottish voters hasn't changed much since 2014. Of eight surveys gauging support for independent conducted since January, only one gave secessionists the lead, at 47% to 46%, with the remainder undecided, according to polls

tracked by the U.K.'s NatCen Social Research, a nonpartisan social research institute.

The result is the SNP will face a more competitive political landscape when voters go to the polls June 8 than it did when it rode a post-independence referendum wave of support to an unprecedented victory in the 2015 election, analysts say.

The party's anti-independence opponents in Mrs. May's ruling Conservatives, the main opposition Labour Party and the pro-EU Liberal Democrats are already using the prospect of another referendum to try to sway voters ahead of elections to Scottish councils May 4, analysts say. Even small gains will likely reinforce Mrs. May's resolve to resist Ms. Sturgeon's demand.

"You can't keep repeating landslides," said Peter Lynch, senior lecturer in politics at the University of Stirling in Scotland. "If [the SNP] slip some seats it's going to slightly undermine their position, and Theresa May will use that."

**Write to** Jason Douglas at [jason.douglas@wsj.com](mailto:jason.douglas@wsj.com)

# INTERNATIONAL

The  
Washington  
Post

## Trump and his aides sow confusion by sending mixed signals on foreign affairs (UNE)

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

As he nears his 100th day in office, President Trump's efforts to appear decisive and unequivocal in his responses to fast-moving global crises have been undercut by confusing and conflicting messages from within his administration.

Over the past two weeks, policy pronouncements from senior Trump aides have often been at odds with one another — such as whether Syrian President Bashar al-Assad must leave power as part of a negotiated resolution to end that nation's civil war.

In other cases, formal White House written statements have conflicted with those from government agencies, even on the same day. For example, Monday brought disparate U.S. reactions — supportive from Trump, chiding from the State Department — to the Turkish referendum this week that strengthened President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's authoritarian rule.

Even when there is unanimity in the messaging — such as Trump's boast, based on Pentagon statements, that a U.S. Navy "armada" was headed toward the Korean Peninsula — the administration was forced into the embarrassing admission a few days later that the strike group was, in fact, sailing in the opposite direction.

Although every administration experiences growing pains, the recent succession of mixed signals over key national security issues has stood out, painting a picture to some of an administration that has not fully developed its policies or a broader international agenda and whose key agencies are not communicating with one another — or the White House. It is a situation that has led foreign diplomats and congressional lawmakers to express uncertainty about the administration's goals and about who is speaking on its behalf.

Former national security officials who served under both Republican and Democratic presidents emphasized that the Trump administration has been hampered by a president who has been slow to appoint hundreds of mid-level

managers at Cabinet agencies, including the Pentagon and the State Department, and who has at times expressed disdain for the traditional interagency decision-making process.

The result is that the normally meticulous care that goes into formulating and coordinating U.S. government policy positions or even simple statements is often absent. Institutional memory is lacking, these former officials said, and mistakes and contradictions easily slip through the cracks.

"Part of it reflects the fact that these departments are not staffed, and they're not operating at capacity or at speed," said Stephen J. Hadley, who served as President George W. Bush's national security adviser. "These Cabinet secretaries are kind of home alone, working with people that they really don't know. They don't have their own people in place, their policies in place, or processes in place yet."

Inside Trump's National Security Council, the agency charged with coordinating foreign policy decision-making and consistent messaging, the disarray has been palpable. Trump's first choice for his national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn, was forced out amid revelations that he had misled senior officials, including Vice President Pence, about his communications with Russian officials before Trump took office.

Beyond his difficulties with the Russia issue, Flynn was unable, in the few weeks that he presided over the NSC staff, to establish a smooth decision-making process that could rationalize the often widely disparate views of Trump's key White House advisers and new Cabinet members. His replacement, H.R. McMaster, moved quickly to consolidate power by pushing out Trump's senior strategist, Stephen K. Bannon, who had initially been awarded a seat on the NSC "principals committee."

McMaster has sought, with incomplete success, to exert more control over staffing and to establish a more disciplined process in place of what had been a largely ad hoc system. In the wake of Trump's decision to authorize missile strikes on a Syrian airfield as retribution for

the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons, McMaster said that the administration had held several NSC meetings, including with Trump aboard Air Force One and at his private Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, to develop and coordinate the military operation.

Yet those efforts were to some degree undermined when senior officials went on the Sunday political talk shows after the strikes and offered conflicting statements on Assad's future. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the administration's top goal was defeating the Islamic State, while Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said no resolution to the Syrian civil war was possible with Assad in power.

"Public diplomacy is a huge tool, presenting a united front, presenting a shared vision of how you approach global affairs — everything from the use of military force to sanctions," said Jennifer Psaki, who served as the White House communications director and as a State Department spokeswoman under President Barack Obama. "When you have officials stating conflicting viewpoints, you're sending a confusing message — not just to people in this country and to Congress, but confusing and conflicting messages to partners and allies around the world."

Trump aides disputed the suggestion the administration was speaking with more than one voice. Michael Anton, the director of strategic communications at the NSC, said there was "nothing inconsistent" about the White House's Syria policy.

"Defeating ISIS has always been the paramount goal, and nobody ever envisioned a long-term future for Assad," Anton said, using an acronym for the terrorist group. He emphasized that there is "communication at every level, every day" among policy experts and among the communication staffs at the various agencies and the White House.

Most of the public statements made by the agencies are vetted through Anton's office before they are released, he said.

But there is no permanent spokesman at either State or the Pentagon, making it difficult to keep up with the deluge of requests from reporters. Anton has three aides, while Obama's NSC had up to seven people in the same division, according to former Obama aides.

This week, the Trump White House appeared to be on a different page than the State Department in the wake of the Turkish referendum that greatly expanded Erdogan's powers. While the State Department emphasized the United States' interest in Turkey's "democratic development" and the importance of the "rule of law and a diverse and free media," the White House statement said Trump had called to congratulate Erdogan and discuss their shared goal of defeating the Islamic State.

Anton said the statements were not in conflict, citing a "tension in U.S. policy goals."

U.S. and Turkish officials said Trump and Erdogan planned to meet in person before a NATO summit scheduled for May 29-30 in Brussels.

"You want to keep a NATO ally, a partner in the strategic fight against ISIS," he said. "You also have a national interest in democracy in Turkey. ... Sometimes foreign policy requires making difficult choices and balancing interests that are in tension."

While some analysts spoke approvingly of a "good cop, bad cop" approach, none seemed sure whether that is what the administration had intended.

Outside experts said there were budding signs of maturation within the administration. They cited the decision-making process on the Syrian strikes and the glitch-free summit between Trump and Xi Jinping at Mar-a-Lago two weeks ago.

While 100 days is a traditional milestone at which the progress of a new administration is assessed, it is the wrong measure for the Trump insurgency, which promised to upend traditional ways of doing government business, Hadley said.

"There is a shakedown cruise for every administration," he said. "This

one is going to be longer and bumpier, precisely because of how they came to power. . . . The question is how it will look after the first 150 days or maybe 200."

Former officials and foreign policy analysts viewed some of the administration's policy reversals — including its renewed support for NATO and tougher tone on Russia — as the natural evolution from inexperience and lack of knowledge to confrontations with reality.

Still, events of the past week have raised concerns about consequences in a volatile world, where such missteps can be costly.

The administration's erroneous statements about the location and direction of the USS Carl Vinson — an aircraft carrier that officials said was dispatched to the Korean Peninsula last week as a show of force against North Korea's belligerence — were widely viewed as a simple "screw-up," in the words of several former officials.

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While administration officials said the goal was to reassure regional partners, South Korea expressed

concern over a possible bait and switch, and China warned against escalation.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer insisted Wednesday that the White House had said nothing incorrect, since the ship is now — more than a week after it was announced — apparently on its way toward the Korean Peninsula.

"We said it was heading there, it is heading there," he said.

To those who worked in the Obama White House, the disarray has led to a sense of vindication about their own strategy after years of being

accused by political rivals of micromanaging the agencies.

"Success of a policy in some cases resides as much in the nuance of the messaging as it does in the policy," said Bernadette Meehan, who served as the NSC spokeswoman under Obama. "You explain it, get people to buy in, rather than stoking up fears unnecessarily. It's incredibly important if you want a policy to have success to have cohesive messaging."



## Ambassador Nikki Haley: An unprecedented step on human rights

Nikki Haley

### Story highlights

- Nikki Haley: Widespread human rights violations a warning sign that breakdown in security is coming
- Syrian war just one example of how such violations can spiral into all-out war, she says

Ambassador Nikki R. Haley is the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations and a member of President Donald Trump's Cabinet. The views expressed are her own.

(CNN)Imagine you are the parent of a boy -- a teenager. Policemen come to your home in the middle of the night and take your boy away. He is held without explanation for weeks. And when he finally comes home, your boy has all the marks of having been tortured. Bruises from being beaten. Red, open wounds from being burned. Then you look at his hands and the worst is confirmed. Where his fingernails once were, there are only raw, bloody, exposed nerves. Grown men with pliers, he tells you, ripped his fingernails off in prison.

For a group of parents in Syria in 2011, this was not an exercise in imagination but a horrifying reality. Their boys were arrested and tortured for the crime of writing anti-government graffiti on the wall of a school. When the parents marched in protest to demand their children's release, security services opened fire on them. When more people came out to protest the killings, the government fired on them again.

Soon, the point of no return was reached.

"We were asking in a peaceful way to release the children but their reply was bullets," a relative of one of the boys

told a reporter

. "Now we can have no compromise with any security branches."

The Syrian war is just one example of how human rights violations can become a vicious cycle of violence and instability that quickly spirals into all-out war. What began as an act of free expression of the kind Americans take for granted has become a conflict responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of desperate refugees. Nations thousands of miles away have been impacted.

As the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, I've looked at how we can do more to respond to human rights violations before they reach the level of conflict. Traditionally, the United Nations Security Council has been considered the place where peace and security are debated, not human rights. But Tuesday, at the insistence of the United States, for the first time the Security Council took up the connection between human rights and conflict. We debated how widespread human rights violations are a warning sign - - a loud, blaring siren -- that a breakdown in peace and security is coming.

Syria is not alone. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo today, it is no coincidence that

reports

of government soldiers and armed groups committing extrajudicial executions of civilians in the Kasais region are occurring at the same time that the security situation appears to be quickly spiraling out of control.

These sorts of allegations demand answers from independent investigations. And when violations are found to occur, the United Nations cannot turn a blind eye. We must engage these violators early and often, in the statements we make and the measures we impose. Human rights violations and abuses suffered by civilians rarely have a happy ending. At best, they drive desperate people from their homes and from their countries. At worst, they radicalize them to take up arms themselves.

In other cases, human rights violations and abuses don't lead to violence down the road, they exist side-by-side with threats to peace and security. In fact, the world's most brutal regimes are also the most ruthless violators of human rights.

In the case of North Korea, human rights abuses literally finance the government's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Political prisoners work themselves to death in coal mines to finance the regime's military. Starvation, sexual violence and slave labor in the

prison camps

help supply the North Korean nuclear program.

In Burundi, the government is using human rights violations to stifle dissent. The Burundian government services use torture to crack down on protestors. This has forced hundreds of thousands of people to

flee to neighboring countries and caused massive regional disruption. A

U.N. report

detailed 17 types of torture used by the government, including driving sharpened steel rods into the legs of victims and dripping melted plastic on them.

In fact, there is hardly an issue on the agenda of the Security Council that does not in some way involve human rights. As president of the Council, I've had great support from U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres in driving home the connection between threats to human dignity and threats to peace. I'm grateful as well to my colleagues on the Security Council, who agreed to take this unprecedented step.

The next international crisis could very well come from places in which human rights are widely disregarded. Perhaps it will be in North Korea or Iran or Cuba. We don't know when the next group of desperate people will rise up or when the next gang of violent extremists will exploit human suffering to further their cause. But we know from history that it will happen. And when it does, the United Nations will be called upon to act. We are much better off acting before abuse turns to conflict.

Imagine if we had acted six years ago in Syria. If we learn nothing else from the torture of children, let it be this: Evil is an inescapable fact of life, but the violence that results from human rights violations and abuses is not inevitable. We can choose to learn from history, not doom ourselves to repeat it.

## Burns : The risks of the Trump administration hollowing out American leadership

By William J.

Burns

By William J. Burns April 19 at 7:38 PM

*William J. Burns, deputy U.S. secretary of state from 2011 to 2014, is president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.*

On the surface, much of President Trump's foreign policy seems to be reverting to the mainstream upon first contact with reality. Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's horrific use of chemical weapons produced a quick military response, applauded across partisan lines in Washington. Relations with Russia have settled to predictably adversarial depths. The administration is full of appropriately reassuring words about NATO, and the one-China policy was safely back in place for the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping. Senior national security appointments have been mostly traditionalist, with radical voices in retreat. In a Washington always impatient for sweeping judgments as a new administration wraps up its first 100 days, it is tempting to conclude that convention is ascendant.

Beneath the surface, however, lurk more troubling trend lines. Through policy incoherence and not-so-benign neglect, the Trump team risks hollowing out the ideas, initiative and institutions on which U.S. leadership and international order rest.

The idea of America has been at the heart of our success in the world for 70 years. For all our imperfections, we have embodied political and economic openness, respect for human dignity and a sense of

possibility. The power of our example has mattered more than the power of our preaching, and enlightened self-interest has driven our strategy.

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What we often saw during the Trump campaign, and still bubbling in the background of this administration, has been more "self" than "enlightened" — a nasty brew of mercantilism, unilateralism and unreconstructed nationalism, flavored by indiscipline and overpersonalization. At a moment when the international order is under severe strain, power is fragmenting and great-power rivalry has returned, the values and purpose at the core of the American idea matter more than ever. Against this backdrop, acting in defense of a critical international norm in Syria is reassuring; going mute on human rights issues in dealing with authoritarian leaders is not.

A second crucial asset has been American initiative — our willingness and ability to mobilize others to deal with shared problems. From regional challenges to wider global dilemmas such as climate change and trade, U.S. leadership has been critical to the unprecedented peace and prosperity of the post-World War II era. Of course we got a lot of things wrong, sometimes at grievous cost, most painfully in Vietnam and Iraq. And of course we need to make significant adjustments in a world in which the United States is no longer dominant but still preeminent.

But many in the new administration still seem to think much differently.

Theirs is a United States held hostage by the very international order it created. Alliances are millstones, multilateral arrangements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and NAFTA are constraints rather than opportunities, and the United Nations and other international bodies are distractions, if not irrelevant. We're Gulliver, in their view, and it's time to break the bonds of the Lilliputians.

That is more than just an attitude, and more than just a re-articulation of a recurring isolationist instinct in U.S. politics. It's already proving corrosive, by creating a trade vacuum in Asia that China is eagerly filling; threatening to squander hard-won gains in our own hemisphere and Africa; and unnerving European allies by indulging populist nationalists and encouraging more actions similar to Brexit. Others in the administration clearly understand the risks inherent in such views, but early policy inconsistency has created worries for friends and temptations for foes.

A third ingredient of American leadership is the institutions that sustain it. Trump's first budget guts institutions responsible for translating our ideas and initiative into action. By relying so heavily on hard power, Trump's budget reinforces a pattern over much of the difficult post-9/11 period in which we have often inverted the roles of force and diplomacy, underselling the virtue of diplomacy backed up by the threat of force, while relying more on lethal force as our tool of first resort, with diplomacy an under-resourced follow-up, untethered to strategy.

The issue here is not whether real reforms are needed in domestic or international agencies. They are long overdue. The State Department has too many layers and ought to be streamlined. But cuts of nearly 30 percent are not motivated by an interest in sensible change; they reflect a dismissiveness of the role of nonmilitary instruments, and a disruptive passion for neutering or dismantling existing institutions.

Likewise, draconian reductions in assistance programs are penny wise and pound foolish. Rather than helping key fragile states avoid the kinds of failures and conflicts that often drag in the U.S. military, at far greater cost, we will, through abdication, become less secure.

The frustrations that helped produce the Trump presidency are real. So is the profound fatigue about engagement with the world, after more than 15 years of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and almost a decade removed from the Great Recession. But overcompensating through general global detachment, episodic assertions of American muscle and "creative destruction" of institutions would be a dangerous illusion, not a workable strategy.

At home, we have checks and balances that cushion the domestic consequences of such illusions. The wider world lacks those brakes. Without U.S. leadership and its fundamental elements — the idea our country represents, the initiative animating alliances that set us apart from lonelier powers such as Russia and China, and the institutions that underpin our influence — the realities around us will grow more complicated and more threatening.

## Henninger : A Trump Alliance Strategy

Daniel Henninger

April 19, 2017

7:01 p.m. ET

After 59 Tomahawk missiles landed on a Syrian airfield, followed by the dropping of a 21,600-pound bomb on Islamic State's hideouts in Afghanistan, the world has begun to ask: What is Donald Trump's foreign policy? And so the search begins by pressing what Mr. Trump has done so far against various foreign-policy templates. Is he a neoconservative, a Scowcroftian realist or a babe in the woods?

We know this is a fool's errand. There will be no Trump Doctrine

anytime soon, and that's fine. The Obama Doctrine, whatever it was, left his successor a steep climb in the Middle East and Asia. It is difficult to find doctrinal solutions for issues that everyone calls "a mess." It is possible, though, to see the shape of an emerging strategy.

The place to look for that strategy is inside the minds of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster.

During his Senate confirmation hearings, Mr. Mattis said something that jumped out at the time. He called the North Atlantic Treaty Organization "the most successful

military alliance probably in modern history, maybe ever."

This was in notable contradistinction to the view of his president that NATO was obsolete. Then last week, after meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President Trump said of the alliance: "I said it was obsolete. It's no longer obsolete."

Let's set aside the obligatory sniggering over such a remark and try to see a president moving toward the outlines of a foreign policy that, for a president who likes to keep it simple, may be described with one word: allies.

NATO emerged as a formal alliance after World War II. Less formally, the U.S. struck alliances with other nations to base troops and ships, as in the Persian Gulf.

After the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, foreign-policy thinkers began to debate the proper role of the U.S. as the world's only superpower. Liberals argued that maintaining the U.S. at the apex of this alliance system was, well, obsolete. Instead the U.S. should act more like a co-equal partner with our allies, including international institutions such as the United Nations.

The idea of a flatter alliance structure, or leading from behind,

came to life with the Obama presidency. It doesn't work.

If indeed Jim Mattis and H.R. McMaster are the architects of an emerging Trump foreign policy, their most formative experiences, in Iraq, may shape that policy.

After the Iraq War began in 2003, the U.S. tried to defeat the enemy essentially with brute force. Serving in different areas of Iraq—Gen. Mattis in Anbar province and then-Col. McMaster in the city of Tal Afar—the two men realized that force alone wasn't winning. Instead, they sought, successfully, to gain buy-in from the local populations and tribal leaders. In return for that buy-in, U.S. forces provided security to their new allies.

The difficult and ultimately tragic question was, what happens after the U.S. leaves?

In strategic terms: How does the U.S. stabilize a volatile world without becoming a permanent occupying force?

Last month, Gen. McMaster brought onto the NSA staff Nadia Schadlow, who has thought a lot about that question. Her assignment is to develop the National Security Strategy Report. The title of her just-released book, "War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Combat Success Into Political Victory," summarizes its core idea:

Unlike its pullout from Iraq, the U.S. has to remain involved—engaged—in the turbulent political space that always exists between conflict and peace, a space filled with competition for influence and power. What Gens. Mattis and McMaster learned in the wake of Iraq is that if you make allies, you should keep them.

Thus, Vice President Mike Pence stood at the DMZ across from North Korea reconfirming the U.S.'s alliance with South Korea. A day later, he did the same in Japan.

Mr. Trump met in recent weeks with King Abdullah of Jordan, President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi of Egypt and, most importantly, Saudi Arabia's Deputy Crown Prince Salman. This week, Mr. Trump called to congratulate Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his referendum "victory."

These are the Middle East's "tribal leaders," or allies, whose buy-in will be necessary if the U.S. is to consolidate gains from the military strikes in Syria and Afghanistan—possibly with the partition of Syria into three tribal sectors.

Russia has separated itself by choosing instead an alliance with

Iran to create a Russo-Iranian Shiite crescent extending across the Middle East to the Mediterranean.

The Mattis-McMaster foreign policy taking shape looks like a flexible strategy born of military experience in fast, fluid circumstances—our world. It is based on both formal and mobile alliances with partners willing to use diplomatic, financial, political and, if necessary, military pressure to establish stable outcomes. The word "abandon" doesn't fit here.

Some might say that sounds like the U.S. leading alongside. With one big difference: The U.S. is in fact leading.

*Write henninger@wsj.com.*

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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

# White House Says It Didn't Mislead Allies About Timing of Carrier's Korea Heading

Ben Kesling in Washington, Gordon Lubold in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and Jonathan Cheng in Seoul

Updated April 20, 2017 12:44 a.m. ET

The Trump administration worked Wednesday to quell an international furor and calm questions over its credibility after misstating by thousands of miles the location of a U.S. aircraft carrier officials had warned could be used to strike North Korea.

The White House shrugged off any blame for its role, saying it didn't mislead U.S. allies about the destination of the USS Carl Vinson and its strike group.

"The president said we have an armada going toward the peninsula," White House press secretary Sean Spicer said. "That's a fact. It happened. It is happening, rather."

The Pentagon, meanwhile, acknowledged it could have more effectively handled information about the Vinson's location and course. "We communicated this badly," said a defense official. "We, the department, communicated this badly."

Earlier this month, military officials said they were canceling the Vinson group's planned port calls in Australia to send it north toward the Korean Peninsula as concerns grew about preparations for possible North Korean weapons tests.

The ships proceeded to Australia for planned maneuvers, and are

scheduled to reach the Koreans next week, officials said Tuesday.

But administration and Pentagon officials throughout last week described their location in markedly more ominous terms. "We have ships heading there," President Donald Trump said he told Chinese President Xi Jinping in an April 12 phone call. "We have the nuclear subs, which are far more destructive."

Across Asia, the difference between the threats and the actual location of the ships prompted widespread criticism and confusion and threatened to open a credibility gap between the U.S. and some government officials and political observers.

North Korea's state-run news service said Washington "now bluffs" as part of its approach.

In South Korea, Hong Joon-pyo, the presidential candidate from former leader Park Geun-hye's ruling party, said it was inappropriate to judge before receiving final confirmation of the Vinson's whereabouts.

But, in an interview, he said: "What [Mr. Trump] said was very important for the national security of South Korea. If that was a lie, then during Trump's term, South Korea will not trust whatever Trump says."

In China, the shifting narrative about the whereabouts of the Vinson and its strike group prompted some jibes on social media and in news outlets.

Chinese news portal Guancha.cn declared: "Media around the entire world have been duped by Trump

again!" The Global Times, a nationalistic tabloid, took that observation a step further, dubbing the incident a "scandal" that "sours Trump's authority."

Ni Lexiong, a Shanghai-based commentator on military affairs, said Mr. Trump appeared to use claims of the Vinson's deployment as a feint.

"Trump and the media jointly performed a modern-day 'Empty Fort Strategy,'" Mr. Ni wrote on his Weibo microblog, referring to a reverse-psychology ploy described in the ancient Chinese military treatise, "Thirty-Six Stratagems."

In Australia, Defense Minister Marise Payne declined to comment on any disruption to scheduled military exercises, only calling North Korea's weapons program "absolutely reckless and destabilizing."

Mr. Spicer said that comments by U.S. officials about the location of the aircraft carrier hadn't been misleading. He referred any questions about the timing of the carrier's voyage to the Pentagon.

Pressed on whether it was misleading last week to say the aircraft carrier was heading toward the Koreans when in fact it was moving in a different direction at the time, Mr. Spicer said: "We answered a question on what signal it sent. I'm not the one who commented on timing."

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis addressed the confusion on Wednesday during a trip to Saudi Arabia, saying he had been trying to

be transparent about the ship's whereabouts when he answered questions about it last week at the Pentagon.

"The bottom line is, in our efforts to always be open about what we're doing, we said that we were going to change the Vinson's schedule," Mr. Mattis told reporters Wednesday during a briefing at a hotel in Riyadh during a tour of the Middle East.

"We don't generally give out ships' schedules in advance, but I didn't want to play a game either and say we weren't changing a schedule when in fact we had," he said.

While Mr. Mattis indicated the Pentagon wouldn't normally convey to the public any ship movements, the defense official also said, "the Pentagon normally wouldn't tell the White House exactly what dates ships will be where anyway."

That probably gave the White House the impression that the ships' movement was more immediate than it was, the official said.

But, the official said, the media played a role, too. "Sloppy reporting" from national and international media contributed to the problem because some reports jumped to conclusions and didn't clarify the specific timing of the Vinson's arrival in that area, the official said.

If the U.S. aim was to confuse North Korea, that would only be effective if it was done in close consultation with allies in the region, said Patrick Cronin, senior director of the Asia-

Pacific Security program at the Center for a New American Security, said

"The U.S. needs to fashion a serious strategy, even if it's not perfect on a daily basis," he said.

He said communication with allies was made more difficult by the election season in South Korea, because the leading candidates

wouldn't have access to information about the Vinson's whereabouts.

In Japan, Prof. Narushige Michishita of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies said regardless of whether the U.S. intended to deceive or the narrative was a miscommunication, it looked bad for the White House.

"At a time of emergency, disinformation could be used as a tactic, but if the U.S. president spreads disinformation in peacetime like now, it would hurt the credibility of the U.S.," he said.

—Chun Han Wong in Beijing; Felicia Schwartz and Rebecca Ballhaus in Washington; Chieko Tsuneoka in Tokyo; and Rob Taylor

in Canberra, Australia, contributed to this article.

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## **The New York Times** South Koreans Feel Cheated After U.S. Carrier Miscue

Choe Sang-Hun

SEOUL, South

Korea — When news broke less than two weeks ago that the Trump administration was sending the aircraft carrier Carl Vinson to the Korean Peninsula, many South Koreans feared a war with North Korea. Others cheered for Washington, calling the deployment a powerful symbol of its commitment to deterring the North.

On Wednesday, after it was revealed that the carrier strike group was actually thousands of miles away and had been heading in the opposite direction, toward the Indian Ocean, South Koreans felt bewildered, cheated and manipulated by the United States, their country's most important ally.

"Trump's lie over the Carl Vinson," read a headline on the website of the newspaper JoongAng Ilbo on Wednesday. "Xi Jinping and Putin must have had a good jeer over this one."

"Like North Korea, which is often accused of displaying fake missiles during military parades, is the United States, too, now employing 'bluffing' as its North Korea policy?" the article asked.

The episode raised questions about whether major allies of the United States, like South Korea and Japan, had been informed of the carrier's whereabouts, and whether the misinformation undercut America's strategy to contain North Korea's nuclear ambitions by using empty threats.

Compounding their anger over the Carl Vinson episode, many South Koreans were also riled at Mr. Trump for his assertion in a Wall Street Journal interview last week that the Korean Peninsula "used to be a part of China." Although Korea was often invaded by China and forced to pay tributes to its giant neighbor, many Koreans say the notion that they were once Chinese subjects is egregiously insulting.

"The 50 million South Koreans, as well as many common-sensical people around the world, cannot help but feel embarrassed and

shocked," said Youn Kwan-suk, spokesman of the main opposition Democratic Party, which is leading in voter surveys before the May 9 presidential election.

American aircraft carriers regularly visit areas near the Korean Peninsula as part of annual military exercises with South Korea and Japan. But when the United States Pacific Command said on April 9 that the Carl Vinson had been ordered to leave Singapore and return to the Western Pacific, the decision was considered highly unusual, as the carrier had been in exercises off the Korean Peninsula just last month.

"We're sending an armada," President Trump said at the time.

On Wednesday, the South Korean Defense Ministry declined to comment, other than to say that the United States and South Korea do not discuss the details of their joint strategy to deter North Korean provocations.

North Korean soldiers took part in a parade on Saturday to honor the 105th anniversary of the birth of the country's founder. Wong Maye-E/Associated Press

But critics accused the ministry of fanning jitters among South Koreans before the May 9 election, in which North Korea's behavior has been a central issue — as have Seoul's close military ties to Washington.

"There is no way for South Korea not to have known that the Carl Vinson would not be in Korean waters last Saturday," said Kim Dong-yub, a former navy officer and defense analyst at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies at Kyungnam University in Seoul. "Still, they kept mum, doing nothing to ease the anxiety when security was a key election issue."

Mr. Kim added: "What they did was nothing short of trying to influence the election. The whole episode is a reminder of how fettered South Korea remains to its alliance with the United States."

Shin In-kyun, a military expert who runs the civic group Korea Defense Network, said that Mr. Trump appeared to have used the Carl Vinson as a feint aimed at preventing North Korea from conducting a nuclear test.

"It would have been very awkward for the South Korean military to come out and clarify when they knew that Trump was bluffing," Mr. Shin said. "The bluffing worked, in fact. North Korea didn't do a nuclear test last Saturday."

Coupled with Mr. Trump's order to strike a Syrian air base with dozens of missiles, and repeated warnings from his senior aides that "military options" were not off the table in dealing with North Korea, news that the Carl Vinson was rushing back to Korean waters stirred anxiety in South Korea.

The fear was that if North Korea were to conduct a nuclear or long-range missile test on Saturday to commemorate the 105th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il-sung, the North's founding president and the grandfather of Kim Jong-un, the Carl Vinson would be in Korean waters by then to launch a pre-emptive strike.

North Korea, never one to be outdone in tough talk, accused the United States of bringing war to Korea and vowed to respond with nuclear attacks on American military bases in South Korea and Japan. This week, it unveiled a video depicting its missiles engulfing an American city in flames, shown as a backdrop for the Kim Il-sung celebration.

In South Korea, all major candidates for the presidential election issued statements warning that a pre-emptive American strike would set off a full-scale war on the Korean Peninsula. They intensified their bickering over who was best suited to keep the peace on the peninsula.

Vice President Mike Pence in the demilitarized zone that separates North and South Korea on Monday. Lee Jin-Man/Associated Press

Kim Ky-baek, who runs the nationalist South Korean website Minjokcorea, expressed fear that the Carl Vinson episode would damage Mr. Trump's credibility among South Koreans.

"Trump may say this was part of his smoke-screen tactic," he said. "But the impression we get is that the Trump administration still doesn't know what it is really trying to do with North Korea, and has no clear and efficient line of communication."

When the chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga, the Japanese government spokesman, was asked about the issue at his daily news briefing on Wednesday, he declined to address the misreported itinerary directly.

"It's an operational matter for the United States military," he said.

But Hideshi Takesada, a professor at the Institute of World Studies at Takushoku University in Japan, said it was inconceivable that the Japanese military was unaware of plans for the Carl Vinson's deployment.

"When it comes to matters that concern Japan, the two militaries communicate essentially in real time," he said.

By allowing misconceptions about the strike group's location to persist, he added, the Trump administration had increased pressure on North Korea. Officials in Tokyo effectively cooperated by not speaking out.

"Whatever the case, whether it was deliberate misinformation or a miscommunication between the Pentagon and the White House, it's quite serious," said Narushige Michishita, a specialist in international security at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo. "It undermines the credibility of U.S. leadership."

The United States continues to adopt a muscular posture toward North Korea, however, with Vice President Mike Pence promising during a visit to Japan on Wednesday that Washington would give an "overwhelming and

effective" response to the use of conventional or nuclear weapons.

The Carl Vinson is now actually headed to the Korean Peninsula and is expected to arrive in the



## The twin goals behind North Korea's resolve on nuclear weapons

The Christian Science Monitor

April 19, 2017 Beijing—The Trump administration has portrayed the US missile strike on a Syrian air field earlier this month as a sign its willingness to make tough decisions.

In other words, North Korea better watch out.

But to North Korean leaders, analysts say, the attack reaffirmed a different lesson: the importance of having a credible nuclear deterrent.

"The logic is pretty simple," says Wenran Jiang, an associate professor of political science at the University of Alberta, in Canada. "The North Koreans see what happened in Syria and say, 'If we give up nuclear weapons, that's what will happen to us.'"

As a small, impoverished nation focused on its own survival, North Korea is deeply committed to holding on to its nuclear arms. To shut its program down would be to risk the regime's annihilation, but to keep it going runs the risk of triggering a devastating war that could lead to millions of casualties.

But ultimately, nuclear weapons are also a means, not just an end: the government hopes a powerful-enough nuclear deterrent will provide the security it needs to pursue economic reforms without the threat of outside interference – a trajectory not so different from China's.

So goes the strategic calculus at the center of Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions – a paradox that leaves Washington with no good options as tensions continue to rise.

### 'Storm clouds gathering'

Last week, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned of "storm clouds gathering," and criticized the United States, South Korea, and North Korea for dangerous "tit for tat" engagement, according to the Chinese state news agency Xinhua. Observers say North Korea could conduct its sixth nuclear test any day. Meanwhile, a US carrier group is on its way to waters off the coast of the Korean Peninsula.

region next week, Pentagon officials say. April 25 is another major anniversary in North Korea, the birthday of the Korean People's Army, and some analysts say the

North Korea's expanded arsenal was on full display Saturday at an annual military parade in Pyongyang, commemorating the birthday of founder Kim Il-sung. It included intercontinental ballistic missiles that could one day be capable of reaching the US mainland, and solid-fuel missiles that could be fired from land and submarines.

On Sunday, North Korea launched a ballistic missile that exploded seconds after liftoff, a high-profile failure that occurred hours before US Vice President Mike Pence arrived in South Korea.

Still, the weekend's displays of strength served as reminders of Washington's long history of unsuccessful attempts at negotiations with Pyongyang that stretch back more than two decades. North Korea launched a long-range rocket and conducted two nuclear tests last year, including its most powerful to date.

### North Korean resolve

Vice President Pence warned of an "overwhelming and effective American response" to any provocation from the North. But North Korea appears unwilling to back down. It has remained in a state of near-war since the fall of the Soviet Union, when the country lost its largest defender and became vulnerable to the US and its allies. Communist regimes around the world were crumbling, but North Korea dug itself in.

In the spirit of "juche," Kim Il-sung's philosophy of "self-reliance" that has become a kind of state-sanctioned ideology, the country established its military-first policy that continues to today. It maintained that footing even through widespread famine in the 1990s that killed hundreds of thousands. Pyongyang justifies huge investments in nuclear weapons by perpetuating a narrative of imminent threat from foreign forces.

But John Delury, an associate professor of Chinese studies at Yonsei University in Seoul, says that establishing a nuclear deterrent is only part of supreme leader Kim Jong-un's vision for his country.

North might try to celebrate with a major provocation.

In a Facebook post on Wednesday, Rear Adm. James W. Kilby, commander of the Carl Vinson

Mr. Kim's ultimate goal to ensure that North Koreans will never again have to "tighten their belts," says Professor Delury, a promise he made as soon as he took power in 2012. Nuclear deterrence provides the young leader the security he needs to more fully focus on economic development.

Kim has already carried out a series of economic reforms, including an overhaul of the agriculture sector that has led to record-level harvests and the opening of new special economic zones. In a speech last year, Kim said future economic development would focus on the mechanization of agriculture, automation of factories, and increased coal production.

"I would not say the economy is booming, but it has seen steady growth under Kim," says Andrei Lankov, a history professor at Kookmin University in Seoul who studied at a North Korean university. "He has no illusions about the command economy. He knows the only game in town is what China did 30 years ago through market reforms."

### The China Model

Few nations understand North Korea's logic better than China, which followed a similar path in the second half of the 20th century. Delury says that China's development of a nuclear weapon in the 1960s gave it a strong sense of external security, and helped spur the Chinese Communist Party to turn its attention to liberalizing the economy in the late 1970s.

With their shared history in mind, it comes as little surprise that China has been so reluctant to put more economic pressure on North Korea – and not only because it doesn't want to push the regime to the point of collapse, a worst-case scenario for Beijing.

"The bottom line is the Chinese don't think pressure is going to work," Delury says. "They well understand that this is a stubborn, prideful, independent neighbor, but that twisting their arm makes the problem worse."

The North Korean regime has effectively forced the world into an elaborate game of chicken to

carrier strike group, said its deployment "has been extended 30 days to provide a persistent presence in the waters off the Korean Peninsula."

ensure its survival. The more pressure the country faces – whether economically or militarily – the more it's pushed to develop new asymmetrical threats and accept even higher levels of risk to intimidate its rivals. Its goal is to make any potential war too costly to consider, which is why it's so keen to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the continental US.

Not even China, the North's main political ally and its economic lifeline, is immune to its provocations. The latest snub occurred last week, when Pyongyang didn't respond to a meeting request from China's top nuclear envoy, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

The diplomatic slight highlights ongoing questions about Beijing's influence over the North Korean regime, as Trump pushes China to do more to rein in its erratic neighbor.

China has spoken out against the North's weapons tests and has agreed to stiffer United Nations sanctions. In February, Beijing banned imports of North Korean coal, cutting off Pyongyang's most important export.

But as North Korea's dominant trade partner, China has also maintained robust economic ties with it. Data released last week showed that trade between the two countries grew 37.4 percent in the first three months of this year compared with the same period in 2016.

For its part, China argues that negotiations between Pyongyang and Washington are the only way to resolve the simmering crisis and avoid a conflict on its border. Such talks could require the US to make significant concessions it has so far been unwilling to accept.

"The Chinese look at North Korea and think, 'We've been there before,'" Professor Jiang says, referring to China's own path over the last half-century. "At the end of the day, they may decide its behavior isn't as out of hand as people in the West suggest."

Voice





## Is the United States Really Blowing Up North Korea's Missiles?

There's just no evidence to support the fantasy that Kim Jong Un's rockets are falling prey to a super-secret U.S. cyberprogram. By Jeffrey Lewis

April 19, 2017

The Trump administration has completed a policy review of how to manage the growing nuclear threat from North Korea. The new policy — massive pressure and engagement — is a tepid serving of leftovers from the Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and Bill Clinton administrations. I actually created a quiz of similar statements from all four administrations — and then when I looked at it a day later, I failed it.

As so often happens when reality disappoints, people turn to rumor and fantasy. And so, disappointed with the reality that Donald Trump faces the same lousy options on North Korea that hamstrung all his predecessors, the new Washington bedtime story is that the United States is secretly hacking North Korean missile launches.

The root of this particular bedtime story was a bit of reporting by David Sanger and William Broad, asserting that the Obama administration had begun, about three years ago, to launch cyberattacks against North Korea analogous to those against Iran.

While the United States is undoubtedly interested in penetrating Iranian and North Korean computer networks, and is doing a bit of mischief, that's a long way from the reality of some keyboard jockey in Utah taking command of a North Korean missile and piloting it into the drink.

First, some inconvenient facts. North Korea's missiles aren't really failing at a terrible rate. Sanger and Broad argued that soon after Obama's decision in 2014, a "large number of the North's military rockets began to explode, veer off course, disintegrate in midair and plunge into the sea."

Correlation is not causation, of course, and a simple review of North Korea's missile launches suggests that if the United States is hacking North Korean missiles, it is doing a crap job of it.

Since 2014, about three-quarters of Pyongyang's launches have succeeded. My colleague Shea

Cotton keeps a database of every North Korean missile launch. Of the 66 missiles that North Korea launched during 2014 and after, 51 have succeeded. If hacking is playing any role, it is defeating a trivial number of missiles. A .230 average isn't enough to keep you in the major leagues. And it's a lousy batting average against nuclear-armed missiles.

Moreover, we can see those 15 failures were concentrated in a few *new* systems — missiles then under development where one would expect to see failures, hacking or no hacking. There was a spike in failures after 2016, but that spike was concentrated in four new systems that had never before been tested: the Musudan (five failures); a submarine-launched ballistic missile (three failures); an unidentified intercontinental ballistic missile (two failures); and a new anti-ship missile (two failures). Overall, North Korea's Scud and Nodong missiles — the ones that it plans to use to nuke U.S. forces in South Korea and Japan — worked just ducky.

The fact is, new systems are expected to fail at a higher rate. There is, after all, a reason that "rocket science" is popular as a metaphor for tasks that are complicated and difficult. While the simple media narrative is to laugh at failed missile launches, the North Koreans learn from every flight, whether it works or not.

Experiencing and overcoming failure is a normal part of building a robust and reliable rocket program. Let me introduce you to Redstone, a missile literally nicknamed "Old Reliable." It was America's first large rocket, good enough to put Alan Shepard into space. Nine of the first 10 Redstone launches failed. It's possible, I suppose, that Wernher von Braun was an idiot. Or that Soviet spies had turned those lovely *Hidden Figures* ladies. Or maybe, just maybe, rocket science is f'ing hard.

So while we laughed every time a North Korean missile exploded at launch (2006) or dropped into the drink (April 2009 and April 2012), Pyongyang's finest were busy studying what went wrong and fixing the problems. It seemed like North Korea would never figure it out ... until it did. The last two North Korean space launches, in December 2012 and again in February 2016, were successful.

Look up and you can still see North Korea's Kwangmyongsong-2 satellite in orbit.

North Korea's missile launches aren't failing because we are hacking them; they are failing because Pyongyang is developing a wide array of new liquid- and solid-fueled ballistic missiles. Many of those systems — especially the new solid-fueled missiles — are working just fine. And North Korean engineers will either figure the others out or learn from their mistakes and move on to more promising designs.

Another troubling question is lurking in Sanger and Broad's assessment: If the United States were successfully hacking North Korea's missiles, wouldn't it also be hacking Iran's? The two countries cooperate closely in missile development, so much so that it probably isn't possible to hack one without hacking the other. And, of course, it was Iran's nuclear program that was subject to the original high-profile cyberattack — the Stuxnet virus that crippled Iranian centrifuges.

Iranian missiles aren't, however, falling out of the sky. And even Stuxnet was never more than an annoyance to the Iranians. Yes, it damaged a large number of centrifuges and slowed the Iranian enrichment program for a few months. But, ultimately, Iran was installing thousands of centrifuges and developing new generations of the devices before the program was constrained by the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

I don't mean to say that the United States isn't attempting to get inside North Korea's networks. I suspect that the United States is probably very interested in attacking the systems that control North Korea's new generation of computer-controlled machine tools, which my colleagues and I believe have reduced Pyongyang's dependence on imported components for its nuclear and missile programs. But there just isn't any reason to think cyberattacks are more than a nuisance.

The evidence suggests that the United States isn't succeeding in this regard and that, at best, such efforts would be a nuisance to the North Koreans. In fact, in the wake of Stuxnet, there were reports that a similar program against North Korea had failed. Given the extensive missile cooperation between Tehran

and Pyongyang, I would expect that they share cybersecurity tips.

So why is the idea that the United States is hacking missiles out of the sky so prevalent? It is hard to admit that political and coercive policies are not working. And it's especially hard to admit that we are approaching a point where we are going to have to accept something we have long said is unacceptable. Denial, as Sen. Al Franken used to say, ain't just a river in Egypt.

This particular crisis has been a long time in the making. But for whatever reason, it is breaking into the popular consciousness now. People feel powerless, and they expect their government to do something. They just aren't prepared to accept that this particular something is, well, nothing. So there must be some secret government agency, one that doesn't look like the post office, where people know what they are doing.

Add to that a healthy dose of partisanship. We live in a bizarre era where every issue becomes a referendum on Donald Trump. While (slightly more than) half of us are convinced he's going to get us all killed, his fans desperately want to believe that he's not just some grifter in hopelessly over his head. And so when he says North Korea isn't going to test a missile in one of his Twitter outbursts, and then a missile test fails, the Drudge Report and his troll army on Twitter attribute the stroke of luck to Cheeto Jesus. Psychologists call this the fundamental attribution error. You see this a lot in cults.

It's all a dangerous fantasy, though. The Trump administration plainly has no idea what it is doing, opting for a "new" strategy identical to the approach adopted by the Obama and Bush administrations. The unifying feature of this approach has been desperate paralysis — sorry, patiently hoping for a strategic miracle.

Hacking allows us to entertain this fantasy a bit longer. It allows us to imagine that missile failures are not growing pains of an evolving and dangerous threat but evidence of our power, wisdom, and superior technology. The idea that hacking can prevent North Korea's missiles from working allows us to avoid coming to terms with the reality that our policies are failing.



### Editorial : The 'Armada' That Wasn't There

One of the odder stories this week is the Carmen Sandiego search for a U.S. aircraft carrier that was supposedly heading toward the Korean Peninsula. The White House is chalking up the confusion to a miscommunication, but President Trump's hyperbole about deploying U.S. military force didn't help.

Earlier this month Adm. Harry Harris, head of U.S. Pacific Command, announced that the USS Carl Vinson strike group would cancel planned port visits to Australia and head north from

Singapore to the Western Pacific. President Trump told Fox News last week that he was "sending an armada" as a powerful warning to North Korea, and White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer defended the move in the briefing room.

Then the U.S. Navy released photos of the Vinson sailing through the Sunda Strait in Indonesia, and now we learn that the ships moved south to participate in joint exercises with the Australian navy. The military has since suggested the plan was always to do a short stint with the Aussies before steaming north. The USS Vinson is now hanging a U-turn and will arrive

in the Western Pacific in the coming weeks. On Wednesday Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said the U.S. is doing "exactly what we said we were going to do."

But North Korea's propaganda arm mocked the late arrival as a bluff, and a prominent South Korean politician told the Journal that if President Trump lied, then "South Korea will not trust whatever Trump says." Some are asking if perhaps the misinformation was deliberate, and sometimes in war you have to fake out the enemy. But this isn't D-Day, and allies might wonder the next time the President trumpets an arriving "armada."

The White House is directing questions to the Pentagon, which has conceded it should have communicated the timing more clearly, but then the Defense Department did nothing to correct press reports suggesting the vessels were underway. Mr. Trump broadcast a show of force to underscore the power of an American deterrent, but the lesson is that it's dangerous for Presidents to sell a military mirage.

Appeared in the Apr. 20, 2017, print edition.

## The New York Times Collins : Paging the Trump Armada

Gail Collins

Everybody was talking about the dangers. If North Korea sent up a missile, would the U.S. retaliate? Then what would happen to South Korea and Japan? People debated all the variables. The only thing that did not come up was the possibility that the American flotilla was actually no place near the neighborhood.

Yet, as Mark Landler and Eric Schmitt reported in The Times, at the moment the president was announcing his armada, the warships in question were actually going in the opposite direction, en route to a destination 3,500 miles away, where they were to take part in joint exercises with the Australian Navy.

Whoops. The official response was that the administration was sending an armada *eventually*.

"We said that it was heading there. And it was heading there, it is heading there," said press secretary Sean Spicer on Wednesday. Under this theory, the

president could have responded to North Korea's latest saber-rattling by announcing that he was going to China, since chances are he'll get there someday. Sooner or later. Especially if the Chinese can come up with a gold coach like the queen of England's.

Poor Sean Spicer. Every day a new official fantasy to defend. Tonight the president will go to bed and dream that he's actually the true heir to the principality of Liechtenstein. Tomorrow Spicer will come into the pressroom on skis and announce we're declaring war on Switzerland.

But about the missing warships. It's possible Trump was bluffing, which certainly sounds like a bad idea. After all, if this administration has a strong card in foreign policy, it's that the rest of the world thinks he's so crazy he might do anything. It seems more likely that the administration just screwed up, and some people thought the warships had been rerouted when they really weren't.

We're really not asking for a lot, but can't the president at least be clear about the direction our ships are headed? Concerned citizenry has already adapted to the idea that half the things Trump said during the campaign have now been retracted. NATO is great, the Chinese don't manipulate their currency. And the Export-Import bank is, well ....

Pop Quiz: Which best describes your feelings about the president's attitude toward the Export-Import Bank?

A) Happy when he denounced it during the campaign.

B) Glad when he said it was a good thing after all.

C) Worried when he nominated an Export-Import Bank head who seems to hate it.

D) I don't care about the Export-Import Bank! What about all those bombs?

O.K., O.K. In the end, the North Koreans did test a missile but it exploded right after launch. It is

possible this was due to a long-running American cybersabotage program. If so, Trump couldn't have mentioned it as a matter of security. Otherwise he'd certainly have been out there expressing his gratitude to the Obama administration for having done so much work on it. Hehehehe.

When it comes to Trump and foreign affairs, the big problem is that you want to be fair, but you don't want to encourage him. A lot of Americans liked the idea of responding to a chemical attack in Syria by bombing a Syrian air base. But if the president thought it was popular, wouldn't he get carried away? It's like praising a 4-year-old for coloring a picture, and the next thing you know he's got his crayons out, heading for the white sofa.

What we want to do is take the crayons away and murmur: "Good boy. Now why don't you go off and nominate some ambassadors for a change?"

And go find your boats.



## Robert Litwak : North Korea risk too high for military option

Robert S. Litwak  
Published 3:44

p.m. ET April 19, 2017 | Updated 15 hours ago

Model missiles and rockets on parade April 15, 2017, in Pyongyang, North Korea.(Photo: Wong Maye-E, AP)

North Korea's impressive parade of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles last weekend occurred as the Trump administration asserted it was not ruling out any option to address this rising threat. With echoes of Cuba in October 1962, this slow-motion missile crisis will play out not in Robert F. Kennedy's legendary *Thirteen Days*, but over the next two or three years.

North Korea crossed the nuclear threshold a decade ago when it conducted its first atomic test. The precipitant of the current crisis is that the Pyongyang regime is now on the brink of vastly expanding its small nuclear arsenal. Left on its trajectory, by 2020, North Korea could have a nuclear stockpile of 100 warheads that can be mounted on long-range ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States.

The contrast between North Korea's atomic arsenal (which could, incredibly, approach half the size of Britain's) and its paltry economy (a gross domestic product of about \$17 billion, comparable with Asheville, N.C.) is jarring. North

Korea is essentially a failed state on the verge of a nuclear breakout. And this totalitarian state is run by a dynastic cult — the Kim family.

A North Korean ability to strike the U.S. homeland would be a game changer. Vice President Pence declared in South Korea on Monday that the Obama administration's policy of "strategic patience" was over — but he did not indicate what would follow.

Strategic patience had essentially resulted in acquiescence as North Korea built up its nuclear arsenal and made substantial progress in miniaturizing warheads and acquiring an intercontinental ballistic missile capability. In response, the

United Nations and the United States have imposed still stricter sanctions on the Kim regime. But sanctions are not a strategy.

With North Korea perilously close to becoming a major nuclear power, America should pivot to serious diplomacy. Since the end of the Cold War, when the North Korean atomic challenge arose, U.S. hardliners have eschewed diplomacy toward this "rogue state" because they view it as tantamount to appeasement.

The alternative to diplomacy — the much discussed military option "on the table" — has essentially been off the table because it runs the catastrophic risk of spiraling into a

second (this time, nuclear) Korean war. No U.S. president could authorize even a "limited" strike on a missile site and discount this escalatory risk. When the United States can't bomb and won't negotiate, it is in fact acquiescing to a continued North Korean buildup. That unsatisfactory prospect reinforces the case for transactional diplomacy through coercive engagement to block North Korea's current disastrous course.

Though a full rollback of North Korea's atomic program is not a realistic goal, transactional diplomacy to freeze its capabilities at their current level might be attainable. This would make the best of a bad situation: When zero warheads is not

an option on the table, an agreement capping North Korea at 20 nuclear weapons is better than an unconstrained program that hits 100 warheads by 2020. And a freeze would preclude the additional testing that North Korea still needs to master miniaturization and reliable long-range missiles.

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

Why should diplomacy succeed this time when it has failed in the past? New conditions that change China's strategic calculus. Until now, Beijing has been lackadaisical in its enforcement of sanctions and has declared that Pyongyang was Washington's problem. But a North Korea with a large atomic arsenal and ballistic missiles capable of

striking the U.S. homeland would be a game changer. That's true not only for America but also for China, where risky consequences could include the possibility of South Korea and Japan reassessing their own non-nuclear intentions.

Transactional diplomacy would decouple the nuclear issue from regime change. It would create the conditions for success by identifying a point of near-term optimization among the parties.

A freeze would permit Pyongyang to retain a minimum deterrent and the Kim family regime. For Beijing, it would preserve a strategic buffer state and avert the adverse strategic consequences of a nuclear-armed North Korea. And for Washington, a near-term interim

agreement freezing North Korean capabilities would prevent a breakout and be characterized as the first step toward long-term denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

This analytical option should be put to the diplomatic test. Otherwise, we are left with the bad options of bombing or acquiescing.

*Robert S. Litwak is vice president for scholars and academic relations at the Wilson Center and director of International Security Studies. He is the author of Preventing North Korea's Nuclear Breakout.*

## **The New York Times**

### **Kristof : The North Korea-Trump Nightmare**

Nicholas Kristof

The upshot of a war would be that North Korea's regime would be destroyed, but the country has the world's fourth-largest army (soldiers are drafted for up to 12 years) with 21,000 artillery pieces, many of them aimed at Seoul. It also has thousands of tons of chemical weapons, and missiles that can reach Tokyo.

Gen. Gary Luck, a former commander of American forces in South Korea, estimates that a new Korean war could cause one million casualties and \$1 trillion in damage.

Kurt Campbell, a former assistant secretary of state for East Asia and now chairman of the Asia Group in Washington, warns, "I do not believe there is any plausible military action that does not bring with it a possibility of a catastrophic conflict."

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis knows all this, and he and other grown-ups in the Trump administration would resist any call for a pre-emptive strike. Concern about the North Korean response is what prevented Richard Nixon from a military strike in

1969 when the North shot down a U.S. plane, killing all 31 Americans on board. And it's what has prevented presidents since from striking North Korea as it has crossed one red line after another, from counterfeiting U.S. hundred-dollar bills to expanding its nuclear program.

Yet I'm worried because the existing policy inherited from Barack Obama is running out of time, because all U.S. and South Korean policies toward North Korea have pretty much failed over the years, and because Trump seems temperamentally inclined to fire missiles.

When Vice President Mike Pence says of North Korea, "The era of strategic patience is over," he has a point: Patience has failed. North Korea is the strangest place I've visited, but it has made progress as a military threat: When I started covering North Korea in the 1980s, it had zero nuclear weapons. It now has about 20 and is steadily churning out more.

Worse, North Korea is expected in the next few years to develop the capacity to attach a nuclear

warhead to an intercontinental missile that could devastate Los Angeles. U.S. "left of launch" cyberwarfare may slow North Korean efforts, but the threat still looms.

Last Saturday, North Korea celebrated its founder's birth with the annual parade showing off the nation's military strength. Wong Maye-E/Associated Press

If a military strike is unthinkable, and so is doing nothing, what about Trump's plan of nudging China to apply pressure to North Korea?

It's worth trying, but I don't think it'll work, either. China's relations with North Korea aren't nearly as close as Americans think. One North Korean once introduced me to another by saying, "The Chinese government doesn't like Kristof," and then beaming, making clear this was a high compliment.

President Xi Jinping of China will probably amp up the pressure somewhat, and that's useful — North Korean missiles are built using some Chinese parts — but few expect Kim Jong-un to give up his nukes. In the 1990s, North Korea continued with its nuclear

program even as a famine claimed the lives of perhaps 10 percent of the population, and it's hard to see more modest sanctions succeeding now.

"North Korea will never, ever give up its nuclear weapons," says Jieun Baek, author of a fascinating recent book, "North Korea's Hidden Revolution." Sanctions will squeeze the regime, she says, but not deter it. Instead, she urges greater measures to undermine the regime's legitimacy at home by smuggling in information about it and the world (as some activists are already doing).

The only option left, I think, is to apply relentless pressure together with China, while pushing for a deal in which North Korea would verifiably freeze its nuclear and missile programs without actually giving up its nukes, in exchange for sanctions relief. This is a lousy option, possibly unattainable, and it isn't a solution so much as a postponement of one. But all the alternatives are worse.

And if Trump tries to accelerate the process with a pre-emptive military strike? Then Heaven help us.



### **Editorial : Why North Korea may be a threat to itself**

The Christian

April 19, 2017 —As the Trump administration continues to rattle a saber at North Korea, it should take note of a new survey by two economists at South Korea's central bank. In interviews with hundreds of recent North Korean refugees, they found the United States has already invaded the country in one big way: The preferred currency among North Koreans for buying food,

goods, and services is the American dollar, not the local currency.

This is a sure sign of a thriving underground market despite the official line of a state-run economy. Some experts even estimate the informal economy now exceeds the official one. As in other countries with a high level of illegal business, there are also indications of rising corruption. Officials either take a cut of the gray economy or seek bribes to look the other way. A recent report in a South Korean newspaper

told of farmers paying \$300 to buy membership in the ruling Workers' Party in order to gain official benefits.

North Korea's regime, in other words, could be rotting from within as more of the party elite pursue self-enrichment. An increasing number of high-level members of the Workers' Party have defected. And since taking power in 2011, third-generation dictator Kim Jong-un has overseen an unusual

number of purges of top officials, including his uncle.

A black market first sprung up in socialist North Korea in the mid-1990s during a massive famine. People had to grow their own food. Many began to sell the excess in local markets. In addition, the regime devalued the country's currency in 2009, forcing people to use the dollar (as well as the Chinese yuan). Then in 2012, it made circulating foreign currency a

crime punishable by death. Yet even that law is largely ignored.

This trade in goods and services has made it difficult for Mr. Kim to pursue his economic policy. Last year he said North Korea would follow twin goals: building its

nuclear and missile program while improving economic development. But these days many North Koreans are doing business with each other rather than with the state. This weakens the regime's hold over the population.

For years, the party warned that it is an "old trick" of the US and other "imperialists" to infiltrate North Korea. Well, the infiltration is in the form of US dollars, used by the people to bypass a regime that has bungled the economy. Perhaps the

pre-Trump policy of "strategic patience" by the US toward Pyongyang needs to be revived. Just ask North Korean refugees. Many know the center cannot hold

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

7:09 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the nuclear agreement with Iran risks repeating mistakes of past U.S. policy toward North Korea, underscoring a tough Trump administration line against both countries.

Mr. Tillerson raised the prospect of new sanctions against Tehran for regional provocations and said the administration was reviewing whether to abide by the landmark nuclear deal reached in 2015.

He said the U.S. also is evaluating whether to redesignate Pyongyang as a state sponsor of terrorism.

"The Trump administration is currently conducting across the entire government a review of our Iran policy," Mr. Tillerson said. "An unchecked Iran has the potential to travel the same path as North Korea and take the world along with it."

He spoke in remarks at the State Department a day after he certified to Congress that Iran is abiding by the parameters of the nuclear

## The New York Times

Arabia — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis called on Wednesday for a political solution in Yemen between Sunni Arabs, supported by a Saudi-led coalition, and Iranian-backed Houthis, but he stopped short of publicly warning America's Sunni allies against a planned bombing campaign targeting the port city of Al Hudaydah.

Human rights officials have warned that bombing Al Hudaydah could lead to a humanitarian crisis in Yemen, and Mr. Mattis's remarks were in line with those of many officials in the region that the Saudi coalition's war against the Houthis, begun two years ago, cannot be won militarily.

American officials hinted at additional military and intelligence support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen. They said a stepped-up military campaign against the Houthi

## Tillerson Warns Iran Could End Up Like North Korea

Felicia Schwartz

April 19, 2017

accord.

It was unclear whether Mr. Tillerson's comments reflect the Trump administration's hard line on Iran or represent the beginning of a more serious policy shift. European officials have said the U.S. has signaled it will abide by the nuclear deal.

The nuclear accord, which the Obama administration considered a legacy foreign-policy achievement, has faced strong Republican opposition and Mr. Trump frequently denounced the deal on the campaign trail, calling it "the worst deal ever." The accord, negotiated between the U.S., France, U.K., Germany, Russia, China and Iran, curbs Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

Following a February missile test, the Trump administration imposed new sanctions against Iranian entities.

Any move to renegotiate or scrap the nuclear accord is likely to face pushback from European allies.

Mr. Tillerson's tough talk also comes ahead of elections in Iran in May, in which Iranian President

Hassan Rouhani is seeking re-election.

U.S. and European officials had hoped the nuclear accord would broaden cooperation with Tehran, and empower Mr. Rouhani to promote democratic change. He was elected in 2013 on a platform to end the nuclear standoff and build bridges to the West.

But Iran's provocative behavior has continued since the accord took effect, U.S. officials say. Mr. Tillerson listed several U.S. concerns with Iran on Wednesday, including its support to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Houthi rebels in Yemen. Iran denies aiding the Houthis, and has warned the U.S. that new sanctions would violate the nuclear deal.

Mr. Tillerson said the deal was "another example of buying off a power who has nuclear ambitions."

"We just don't see that that's a prudent way to be dealing with Iran, certainly not in the context of all of their other disruptive activities," he said.

The Obama administration and proponents of the nuclear deal said

it was crafted to address only the nuclear issue, not Iran's other conduct.

Mr. Tillerson drew a connection between Iran and North Korea, warning Iran could one day develop nuclear weapons, as North Korea was able to do.

The Bush administration removed Pyongyang from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism in 2008 in a bid to spur progress in international talks on North Korea's weapons program.

The Obama administration for a time considered relisting North Korea in 2014 in response to a cyberattack on Sony Pictures, which U.S. officials have blamed on North Korea.

—Jay Solomon contributed to this article.

Write to Felicia Schwartz at Felicia.Schwartz@wsj.com

Appeared in the Apr. 20, 2017, print edition as 'Tillerson Questions Iran Deal Rationale.'

## Jim Mattis, in Saudi Visit, Calls for Political Solution in Yemen

Helene Cooper

RIYADH, Saudi

Arabia — Defense Secretary Jim Mattis called on Wednesday for a political solution in Yemen between Sunni Arabs, supported by a Saudi-led coalition, and Iranian-backed Houthis, but he stopped short of publicly warning America's Sunni allies against a planned bombing campaign targeting the port city of Al Hudaydah.

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American officials hinted at additional military and intelligence support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen. They said a stepped-up military campaign against the Houthi

fighters who have taken over the capital and portions of the country may be necessary to bring the group and its ally, former President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen, to the negotiating table.

"In Yemen, our goal is to push this conflict into U.N.-brokered negotiations to make sure it is ended as soon as possible," Mr. Mattis said during a short news conference after a night and a day of meetings with King Salman of Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The defense secretary said Iranian support for the Houthis was destabilizing Yemen, and he talked up the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia. Relations are enjoying salad days in the Trump administration after years of friction between the administration of Barack Obama and the Saudi leadership, which

thought Obama officials were too friendly with Iran.

Mr. Mattis's two-day visit, the start of a weeklong tour of the region, is setting the stage for President Trump's first visit as president to the oil-rich nation. While no date has been announced, Saudi officials visiting Washington last month broached the idea of a visit with their Trump counterparts, which got a positive reception from the president and his team. "Now that we have the blessing of our leadership, it's important that we actually do something with it," Mr. Mattis said. "So what we can do here today could actually open the door possibly to bringing our president to Saudi Arabia."

Mr. Trump would certainly be more welcome than Mr. Obama, who forged a nuclear deal with Iran over the objections of Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Gulf allies, and whose administration publicly criticized the high, and growing, civilian death toll in the Saudi-led bombing campaign

in Yemen. One of the final acts of the Obama administration was to block a transfer of precision munitions to Saudi Arabia in December because of concerns about civilian casualties that administration officials attributed to poor targeting.

Mr. Trump must decide if he will resume arms sales to the Saudis and whether the Pentagon, which has aided in the war against the Houthis, will share more intelligence and provide additional targeting help and other military aid.

Yemenis recovering bodies from the rubble at a detention center hit in airstrikes by a Saudi-led coalition in Al Hudaydah, Yemen, in October. International humanitarian officials warned that the coalition's planned bombing campaign targeting the port city could deepen the country's already severe food shortages. Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

More than 10,000 people have been killed and more than three million have been displaced in Yemen, and the country is teetering on the edge of a famine. Conditions would worsen if, as widely expected, the Saudi-led coalition attacks Al Hudaydah, which is controlled by Houthis. Sunni Arab countries are seeking intelligence and reconnaissance help from the United States to flush out Houthi fighters.

Al Hudaydah, in western Yemen, has already had a number of civilian casualties from coalition airstrikes intended to wrest it from Houthi control. Saudi officials say many Houthi missiles fired over the countries' shared border came from

Iranian shipments.

Many of Yemen's food shipments also come through Al Hudaydah, and international humanitarian officials have warned that a sustained bombing of the city will deepen the country's already severe food shortages. Even if Saudi airstrikes were precise, they would probably cripple Al Hudaydah's infrastructure and stop food from getting through.

American officials acknowledged concern about the effects of a sustained bombing campaign, but they also said both sides would be more likely to compromise after one more military fight. The Houthis will not return to the bargaining table unless they are weaker militarily, and the Saudis need a face-saving

way to justify a two-year war that has damaged their image abroad as military errors have exposed weaknesses in the Saudi armed forces.

Twelve Saudi soldiers were killed on Tuesday when their Black Hawk helicopter crashed in Yemen's eastern province of Marib.

While officials say the United States is sympathetic to the Emirati view that military pressure can force the Houthis to return to the bargaining table, Middle East experts and Western diplomats in the region say that the Saudis' real aim is to force a Houthi surrender.

"The problem for the Saudis is that strikes often hurt the Saudi public image without weakening Houthi

resolve," said Jon B. Alterman, director of the Middle East program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

And even if Saudi Arabia and its Sunni Arab allies do wrest control of Al Hudaydah from the Houthis, "it seems likely that the Houthis could lose the port but keep it insecure," Mr. Alterman said.

"In that circumstance, aid to the seven million Yemenis at risk of famine will be harder to get through," he said. "I suspect any humanitarian catastrophe would be blamed on the Saudis and the Emiratis, and not the Houthis."

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Turkish Board Upholds Vote Expanding Erdogan's Powers

Margaret Coker  
April 19, 2017

1:23 p.m. ET

ANKARA—Turkey's electoral commission rejected petitions submitted by three political parties to annul the results of Sunday's constitutional referendum, closing one of the last legal options to challenge a vote marred by allegations of widespread irregularities.

In a brief statement issued at the end of business Wednesday, the Supreme Election Board said that 10 of its 11 members voted against the petitions, while one ruled in favor of an annulment.

There were no further details published.

The decision had been expected, as the head of the electoral body had already validated the results of Sunday's poll in which voters were asked to approve a constitutional amendment to centralize governing powers in the office of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and radically alter Turkey's democracy.

Since Sunday, opposition parties who backed the

"no" campaign have accused the board, known by its Turkish initials YSK, of improperly siding with the state during the process of the election.

Turkey's electoral boards are administered by judges. Three of the 11 members of the high electoral board and the chairmen of 221 lower electoral boards were purged and replaced by the state since July, in the aftermath of last summer's failed coup. Approximately one-third of all judges have been dismissed or detained by the government in the same period.

The unofficial tallies in the vote showed the pro-Erdogan "yes" campaign winning by a 51%-to-49% margin, with 1.4 million votes separating the two sides. Opposition parties believe as many as 2.5 million ballots were suspect.

The head of the country's main opposition party, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, told The Wall Street Journal on Tuesday that he had lost faith in the YSK's impartiality. His Republican People's Party was one of three that had filed for an annulment of the vote.

Mr. Kilicdaroglu and his party lawyers have said their next step is likely an appeal to Turkey's Constitutional Court, the country's highest legal body. Should that effort fail, the CHP would apply to the European Court of Human Rights, they said.

Opposition parties have documented numerous allegations of voting fraud and intimidation from around the country, and these complaints are being heard by some provincial electoral boards.

However, the opposition's major focus has been on an unusual decision during the voting day by the YSK to validate irregular ballots cast throughout the country that lacked an official seal.

Meanwhile, more opposition street protests were planned for Wednesday evening around the country.

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, speaking to reporters before the YSK decision, condemned the protests and the politicians urging these actions.

"Calling people to the streets by using various communication

channels and refusing to recognize the results is never acceptable," Mr. Yildirim said. "It is useless to [try to] cast a shadow over the referendum results instead of respecting the nation's will."

The country's legal professionals have joined in the criticism of the YSK. Metin Feyzioglu, the head of the Union of Turkish Bar Associations, said the body directly violated Law 101 of the 2010 election code, which states that unsealed ballot papers aren't valid.

On Tuesday afternoon, the YSK published its rationale for the ballot decision, saying its actions were done to insure voters wouldn't be disenfranchised. Polling stations around the country had "voluminous complaints" about not having proper ballot papers, it said.

—Yeliz Candemir in Istanbul contributed to this article.

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Appeared in the Apr. 20, 2017, print edition as 'Turkey Rejects Appeal Of Vote.'

## The Washington Post

### As Erdogan gains power in Turkey, a weakened opposition tries to stand in his way

By Kareem Fahim

ISTANBUL — In the wake of an otherwise bitter defeat, Turkey's opposition parties found a silver lining: They had denied President Recep Tayyip Erdogan the thumping victory he craved in Sunday's referendum on expanding his powers.

With nearly half of the country opposing the constitutional changes

— 51 percent voted in favor — it seemed to provide a rare opening for Turkey's perennially weak opposition to challenge Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party, or AKP, a finely tuned, election-winning machine.

There was a problem, though: There may be no one to lead such a challenge.

Key opposition leaders are viewed as too soft to confront Turkey's hard-nosed leader or too narrow in their politics to gain broad appeal. And two of the country's most dynamic opposition figures, both from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party, were thrown into jail by the government last year.

In the referendum, voters were asked to choose "yes" or "no" on a set of constitutional changes that

would change Turkey's system of government from parliamentary to presidential, a transformation that would give Erdogan vast new authority. The "yes" side won by more than 1 million votes.

Mahmut Ekinci, a retired lawyer who in past elections had voted for Turkey's main opposition party, the Republican People's Party, or CHP, said he voted for Erdogan's side

because it endowed Turkey with a “strong” leader.

CHP head Kemal Kilicdaroglu was “gentlemanly,” Ekinci said. “A leader? No.”

*[What Erdogan's narrow referendum victory means for Turkey]*

The questions about the strength and ability of the opposition are especially urgent at a time when public debate about the razor-thin victory margin is raging, as are allegations by opposition parties and international observers that the vote was marred by ballot irregularities and other violations.

Erdogan's opponents have a brief period in which to demonstrate their resolve to the electorate before he consolidates his hold on the levers of state, including the judiciary, and indelibly shapes the narrative of his referendum victory, analysts said.

The window may already be closing. On Wednesday, in a major setback for several opposition parties, the election board rejected their petitions to annul the results of the referendum over the panel's decision to accept ballots lacking an official seal.

Also Wednesday, authorities detained dozens of people who had joined in protests that followed the referendum.

## The New York Times

Torres

Protesters carrying gasoline bombs on Wednesday in Caracas, Venezuela. Meridith Kohut for The New York Times

BOGOTÁ, Colombia — Protesters demanding elections and a return to democratic rule jammed the streets of Caracas and other Venezuelan cities on Wednesday. National Guard troops and government-aligned militias beat crowds back with tear gas, rubber bullets and other weapons, and at least three people were killed, according to human rights groups and news reports.

President Nicolás Maduro defied international calls, including a plea from the American State Department, to allow peaceful assemblies and ordered his forces into the streets. Some demonstrators, wearing masks to protect themselves from tear gas, fought back with firebombs.

Wednesday's rallies, like the one here in Caracas, attracted

Erdogan and senior government officials say the vote is a settled matter. The public had spoken clearly, they say, no matter how narrow the margin of victory, and it was time to move on.

“It doesn't matter if you win 1-0 or 5-0,” Erdogan, a former semiprofessional soccer player, told CNN on Tuesday. “The ultimate goal is to win the game.”

Meanwhile, Erdogan's government received an important boost from the Trump administration after the vote. On Monday, President Trump called Erdogan and congratulated him on the referendum win. And Wednesday, Turkish and U.S. officials said Trump and Erdogan would meet before the NATO summit in Brussels next month.

*[Erdogan and Modi aren't the Trumps of the East]*

Some of the doubts about the Turkish opposition have focused on Kilicdaroglu, the courtly, soft-spoken head of the CHP. With his staid manner and background as a former bureaucrat, he was widely seen as no match for the sharp-tongued Erdogan, a savvy populist and tireless campaigner.

Even so, many supporters have credited Kilicdaroglu for the strategy that ensured the close result: making sure the CHP kept as low a profile as possible, to deny its critics a target for attacks.

The strategy was “smart” and acknowledged the party's disadvantages, said Asli Aydintasbas, an Istanbul-based fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. At the same time, she said, “it doesn't say great things about a political party that they have to keep a low profile.”

There were other missteps by the CHP, she said, including its failure to comprehensively monitor polling stations in some parts of the country, its frequently ad hoc ground strategy during the campaign and a botched statement by Kilicdaroglu about a failed coup last summer that may have cost his side votes.

And in the last two weeks of the campaign, Erdogan upended the CHP strategy by focusing on Kilicdaroglu — framing every criticism of the proposed changes as a spurious accusation by a feckless opposition leader, while criticizing Kilicdaroglu's past performance in government, leading the national social security agency.

“The subtext was, I may be an autocrat, but this guy is completely incompetent,” Aydintasbas said.

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Enis Berberoglu, a CHP lawmaker from Istanbul, called Erdogan's

focus on Kilicdaroglu “cheap” and said it had demonized the opposition leader — just one example of an unfair campaign in which the president and his allies also had associated their opponents with terrorists, he said.

Going forward, the CHP would focus on “making clear what happened during the election,” - Berberoglu said. The public would be watching “what we do in the courts, on the streets, in meetings,” he said.

Murat Yetkin, a political analyst and editor of the daily Hurriyet News, said the CHP leadership seemed to be doing everything it could on the legal front to force an investigation of the alleged voting irregularities, while also preventing a risky confrontation with pro-government forces by keeping its supporters from demonstrating in large numbers.

But perceptions will be hard to change. Days after the referendum, Kilicdaroglu had become a sensation on the Internet — but not in the way he might have hoped. On social media, Turks passed around memes depicting the CHP leader as reacting mutedly to alarming things surrounding him, including Darth Vader and the creature from the film “Alien” seen on-screen bursting through someone's chest.

## At Least 3 Die in Venezuela Protests Against Nicolás Maduro (UNE)

Nicholas Casey and Patricia

thousands of people, the latest in of a string of demonstrations against the increasingly autocratic rule of President Nicolás Maduro. Carlos Garcia Rawlins/Reuters

Still, despite the deaths in recent protests, now numbering seven, Wednesday's rallies attracted thousands of people, the latest in a string of demonstrations against the increasingly autocratic rule of Mr. Maduro. Labeled by organizers “the mother of all protests,” it showed that a sustained movement in the streets against Mr. Maduro may now be forming.

Opposition leaders called for more rallies on Thursday.

Carlos Moreno, 17, was fatally shot by a pro-government gang on Wednesday, according to witnesses and local news reports.

He was attacked after hundreds of pro-government gang members arrived and surrounded protesters, throwing tear gas canisters, Arturo Ríos, a witness, said in an interview. Mr. Ríos said the group then began to open fire.

“They shot the boy through the head,” Mr. Ríos said. “It's not fair. He could have been a friend of mine.”

Provea, a human rights group, said a second person had been killed and 400 people had been arrested. On Wednesday night, the government said that a sniper had killed a member of the National Guard in an area outside Caracas.

Protesters in Caracas holding a sign that says “Dictator Maduro.” Meridith Kohut for The New York Times

The anti-Maduro protests came after an attempt last month by Venezuela's Supreme Court, controlled by loyalists of the president, to dissolve the opposition-controlled legislature. The move touched off an outcry in the country and was internationally condemned as leaving Venezuela a dictatorship in all but name.

While Mr. Maduro ordered the court to reverse much of the ruling, the lawmakers remain essentially powerless. In the weeks since, the president tightened his grip, barring

a main opposition leader, Henrique Capriles, from holding political office for 15 years. Mr. Capriles narrowly lost to Mr. Maduro in a presidential election in 2013 and was seen as his main challenger for elections next year.

Tear gas fired by riot police officers wafted over demonstrators in Caracas. Meridith Kohut for The New York Times

Marching with protesters on Wednesday, Miguel Pizarro, an opposition legislator, outlined their demands in an interview. They included setting election dates, freeing political prisoners and allowing legislators to write laws.

“Today, we are beginning a new stage in the democratic struggle to arrive at elections,” he said. “Our first objective is to mobilize, to show that we are the majority.”

Protesters recovering after being tear gassed by security forces in Caracas. Meridith Kohut for The New York Times

While past protest movements by the opposition have often sought to topple the leftist government — one

in 2002 even briefly deposed Hugo Chávez, the president at the time — the current wave has a more modest goal: a timetable for elections, which the opposition believes it will win.

"In the past, the opposition focused on getting rid of Chavismo, which proved unrealistic," said Michael Shifter, the president of the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington-based policy group. "This time is different."

Government supporters also held a march in Caracas on Wednesday. Meredith Kohut for The New York Times

Pro-government rallies also formed, and in a defiant address on Wednesday, Mr. Maduro said he welcomed elections, vowing that leftists would trounce the opposition. "I want us to prepare ourselves so we have a total electoral victory," he said. However, he offered no date for a vote.

Instead, the government met protesters with tear gas and water cannons. Some demonstrators took

refuge in a nearby river.

The leftist movement, weakened by a failing economy and food shortages, is almost certain to lose its grip on power in a popular vote, according to polls. The country's rulers already postponed elections for governors last year.

There were also signs that the lower middle class and the poor, who benefited most from Mr. Chávez's programs and who steered clear of opposition protests in 2002 and 2014, might be willing to join the demand for elections.

Protesters in a poor area of Caracas held the Venezuelan flag upside down in a sign of protest. Meredith Kohut for The New York Times

Demonstrations in recent weeks have erupted in poor districts of Caracas, the capital, which have suffered most from shortages of food and medicine. And there were signs that many from those areas had come to the streets again on Wednesday.



## Editorial : Preserve Paris climate treaty

The Editorial Board, USA

TODAY

President Trump at the White House Easter fest on April 17, 2017. (Photo: Susan Walsh, AP)

The Paris climate agreement reached in 2015 was a remarkable example of global cooperation. Nearly 200 nations joined forces against a planet-threatening crisis, promising to curb emissions of human-generated greenhouse gases.

To be sure, the pact is imperfect. It offers only a voluntary, pledge-drive approach to reducing emissions by the world's leading carbon polluters, the United States second among them. But, barring some technological breakthrough in green energy, the accord is a vital first step toward preventing catastrophic climate change.

Now President Trump, who once famously labeled global warming a hoax, is deciding whether to keep his campaign pledge to "cancel" the

agreement, and he has a divided stable of policy advisers.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, a former ExxonMobil CEO, says the United States should stay in to keep "a seat at the table" on global climate talks. Trump's daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner are said to agree.

Aides urging withdrawal include chief strategist Steve Bannon, a minder of Trump's campaign pledges, and Scott Pruitt, the Environmental Protection Agency administrator who is brazenly skeptical of established science on climate change.

Here's hoping that the "stay" forces prevail.

Abandoning the Paris agreement could endanger the planet's future. The accord relies heavily on international peer pressure, and pulling out would offer other nations an excuse to bail or fall short on their emission-reduction commitments.

"I live in a barrio, and the people there go around begging for food," said Beatriz Bustamante, a 61-year-old from the Petare neighborhood, a poor district in which opposition support is strong. Ms. Bustamante blamed the government for rising crime, including the death of her only son, who was killed during a robbery.

Even some of the loyalists sent out by Mr. Maduro said they doubted him. "I don't understand what is going on" in this country, said DeManuel Hernández, a 24-year-old militia member.

"Some say there's an economic war, but I've also heard that the president doesn't understand how to control the economy," he said.

Not far from Mr. Hernández, a crowd had gathered in support of Mr. Maduro. But it numbered only in the few thousands, far less than in previous marches or the huge crowds of the opposition, which shut down highways and the city center.

Still, many there defended the president.

Opposition protesters in Caracas shouted "We're here because we want to be, not because we were paid to be!" at passing government supporters on a motorcycle. Meredith Kohut for The New York Times

"We came to support Nicolás Maduro and the legacy of Chávez because we can't lose the great social advances of the revolution," said Vlacmy Solorzano, 40, a member of a government food distribution group.

But even Ms. Solorzano said elections needed to be held soon.

"If we don't win, we have to accept the result," she said.

**Correction: April 19, 2017**

An earlier version of this article misstated the number of people who have died in recent protests against the Venezuelan government. It is seven, not eight.



## Horner : Quit Paris climate treaty

Christopher C. Horner 6:30 p.m.

ET April 19, 2017

President Trump (Photo: Chip Somodevilla, Getty Images)

President Trump's advisers are debating recommendations on the

Paris climate treaty. Reported arguments for staying in it appear to be no more than rationalizations to break Trump's campaign promise to leave.

Consider the line that it is not a treaty because it's not binding. This

is, respectively, untrue and irrelevant. State Department guidelines (Circular 175) establish treaty criteria, and the Paris Agreement requires Senate ratification to be valid under our Constitution. Do it legally, or get out.

the United States, the past five years have been the warmest in 122 years of record-keeping, according to new National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data.

Abandoning Paris would expose America to massive international condemnation, all for the sake of getting out of a non-binding agreement. That makes no sense.

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"pen and phone" presidents will also avoid constitutional review of unpopular commitments by just declaring them "not a treaty."

Climate catastrophe? No computer model cited by the United Nations projects a detectable temperature reduction from Paris. The ultimate aim of the agreement is instead to make the most abundant energy increasingly costly, artificially rationing its availability.

Seeking subsidies or competitive advantage for pro-environment industry under these schemes have motivated climate treaties since Enron pioneered the move in the mid-1990s (I was in the room). They seek to use government to profit at your expense.

Remaining in the agreement endangers energy prices underpinning the U.S. manufacturing renaissance Trump favors, while

also risking that activist courts will reimpose restrictions such as the EPA "war on coal" rules that Trump says he'll undo.

We hear climate policy leadership will be ceded to China. Did you hear about the mule who refused to shed his reins because he didn't want to give up his leadership position? Me neither. Withdrawing means take one lump, now, and avoid sticking us all with the bill once Trump

leaves office. Trump promised as candidate to withdraw. Breaking that vow amounts to a costly betrayal.

*Christopher C. Horner is a senior fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.*

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## ETATS-UNIS

### POLITICO 5 reasons the government might shut down

Jennifer Scholtes

The deadline to keep the federal government open is just about here, but a deal is far from done.

With just five workdays left until government funding expires, lawmakers return next week to all the same sticking points that have made full-year funding so elusive and now threaten a government shutdown.

Story Continued Below

Working down to the wire on a spending package is nothing new for the modern Congress. And the odds are against a funding lapse. But both parties see the must-pass funding bill as leverage to secure their priorities, making the situation dicey.

It's President Donald Trump's first chance to put his imprint on the federal budget, and the White House is eager to deliver on campaign-trail promises including higher defense spending and curbing illegal immigration. Still, it's unclear how hard the administration and GOP lawmakers will push. A government shutdown would begin on Trump's 100th day in office and Republicans are desperate to show they can govern after their failed push to repeal Obamacare.

Newly energized Democrats have vowed to oppose Trump's spending and policy priorities and are making demands of their own. With Democratic votes likely to be needed to pass any funding bill in the House and definitely needed in the Senate, the price of their votes may be concessions to protect Obamacare.

Appropriators from both parties have made progress in negotiations, but aides say legislation to fund the government through September is unlikely to be unveiled before the recess is up. In fact, a one-week extension to give Congress more time to work is

increasingly likely, as a slew of thorny political issues remain.

Here are the five biggest obstacles to a deal:

#### Border wall

The tallest hurdle may be Trump's request to fund a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Securing the \$1.4 billion down payment would help Trump fulfill a top campaign promise but it's facing stiff Democratic resistance. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has said adding wall funding would be "a loser" — finding few Democratic votes while even losing some Republicans.

In recent days, some administration officials have made clear that the president is not wedded to the idea of a physical wall covering every mile of the border and that some spots could be covered by technological additions like drones. But the White House is also under internal pressure to secure a win and is eyeing a harder line on the issue.

Some Republican appropriators, such as Sen. John Hoeven (R-N.D.), are suggesting a more palatable plan could be to shift some money within the Department of Homeland Security's budget toward the border. Generally beefing up border security funding might appease the president and still hold onto enough Democratic support to pass the package.

#### "Sanctuary cities"

One of the latest threats to a bipartisan accord comes directly from White House budget director Mick Mulvaney.

The former conservative GOP lawmaker has been privately urging Republicans to include a provision blocking federal grants for any city that doesn't enforce federal immigration law. To Democrats, the idea is a nonstarter. But Mulvaney

sees it as a chance to get his former House Freedom Caucus colleagues to back the bill, so GOP leaders wouldn't have to rely on Democratic votes.

The proposal — which could affect more than 300 cities nationwide — has been received coolly, even among some Republicans who fear it could backfire. Senior GOP lawmakers want to keep Mulvaney's proposal out of the legislation, knowing an attempt to strip funding from so-called sanctuary cities would spur Democrats to abandon talks and put Washington on a path to a shutdown.

#### Pentagon boost

While most Democratic lawmakers aren't completely opposed to the inclusion of extra defense spending, many are wary of the president's \$30 billion supplemental request — especially as long as the White House also seeks \$18 billion in cuts to domestic agencies for this fiscal year. That the request is included in the same package as funding for border wall construction has only further complicated prospects for the extra Pentagon cash.

Meanwhile, Republicans have struggled among themselves to reach agreement on just how much defense spending they might include and whether they should give the Pentagon time beyond the end of the fiscal year to spend that money, which would go toward extra weapons procurement, readiness and war-fighting.

#### Obamacare subsidies

The 2010 health care law is again in the middle of a funding fight, but this time, it's Democrats who are making an issue of it.

Democratic leaders declared that any spending bill must provide money for a key Obamacare subsidy program after Trump threatened to defund the cost-sharing subsidies; the president

sees the program as a way to force Democrats to the negotiating table.

Schumer told reporters this week that Democrats are "very hopeful" the payments would be included, but Republicans aren't exactly eager to pay for the health subsidies, which they have sued to block.

In the wake of last month's Obamacare repeal meltdown by the House GOP, Republicans are in no mood to further prop up the law. But key health and business lobbies, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, say GOP leaders may have no choice if they want to prevent an imminent collapse of the individual insurance marketplace. Another option is simply for the Trump administration to continue making the payments and avoid any final decision in the spending bill.

#### Coal miners' benefits

Congress was hours away from a government shutdown last fall over a disputed miners' health care program. Now, the benefits of 16,000 retired workers and federal funding are again on the line.

Democrats and some coal country Republicans have insisted on a long-term solution for the workers' health care as well as a separate pension fund, but a 10-year fix could cost about \$3 billion and is running into opposition among conservative groups like The Heritage Foundation along with House GOP budget hawks.

With coal-friendly Trump in the White House and a handful of key senators up for reelection, aides from both parties say they expect at least a temporary extension of health benefits in any final deal.

That would offer a mostly pain-free way for Trump to deliver on a key promise to his base in the absence of other White House victories in the spending package — even if it also



means Washington would be kicking the can once again.

Connor O'Brien contributed to this report.

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**POLITICO**

## Donald Trump gets his 100-day report card

By Steven Shepard

As Donald Trump nears the 100-day mark in the White House, voters are grading his performance on a partisan curve.

Republicans are inclined to give him good grades on his performance in office so far — mostly A's and B's. Democrats are tougher in their assessments — mostly D's and F's, according to a new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll.

Story Continued Below

Trump earns his highest marks on fighting terrorism, the poll shows. But when Trump reaches his 100th day in office next week — a historical marker for each new administration — his failure to shepherd a promised health care bill through Congress will be noted by voters. On health care, climate change and Trump's promises to "drain the swamp" of special interests in Washington, voters are far more critical of the new president's performance thus far.

Earlier this week, Trump described his administration's achievements in glowing terms at an event in Wisconsin.

"No administration has accomplished more in the first 90 days — that includes on military, on the border, on trade, on regulation, on law enforcement — we love our law enforcement — and on government reform," he said.

Voter perceptions of Trump's tenure don't necessarily reflect that rosy assessment. Asked to grade Trump's first three months as president overall, 16 percent give Trump an "A," and another 23 percent award Trump a "B."

But roughly as many voters give Trump poor marks. Trump gets a "D" from 13 percent of voters, and nearly a quarter, 24 percent, give him an "F."

One reason is that partisanship continues to dominate and color opinions of Trump's nascent presidency. Nearly half of self-identified Democratic voters, 48 percent, give Trump an "F" grade, and an additional 19 percent award him a "D."

Republicans and Trump voters view Trump's presidency more positively, but he isn't earning straight "A"s from his base.

"There's a persistent media narrative that President Trump can do no wrong among his base of supporters," said Morning Consult's Chief Research Officer and Co-Founder Kyle Dropp. "But this polling suggests that, at the very least, many of his voters see room for improvement. Forty-two percent of Trump voters grade his first 100 days a 'B' and another 23 percent give him a 'C' or worse."

The POLITICO/Morning Consult poll was conducted April 13-15, surveying 1,992 registered voters. The margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points.

When voters are asked to grade Trump's early performance in 10 different policy areas, Trump scores highest on fighting terrorism. A combined 49 percent of voters give Trump an "A" or "B" grade on the issue — but on each of the other policy areas, fewer than two-in-five voters give Trump an "A" or "B" grade.

On foreign relations, Trump earns an "A" from only 12 percent of voters. Another 22 percent give him a "B," 17 percent a "C," 15 percent a "D" and 26 percent an "F."

Voters are divided on Trump's early immigration policies. More than one-in-five, 21 percent, give Trump an "A" grade, and another 18 percent give Trump a "B." But three-in-10 give Trump a failing grade, and another 10 percent give him a barely-passing "D."

Trump mentioned trade as an accomplishment earlier this week, but only 13 percent give Trump an "A" on the issue. Twenty-one percent give him a "B," 20 percent a "C," 12 percent a "D" and 19 percent an "F."

Christina Animashaun/ POLITICO

On the economy — a signature Trump issue — the president gets an "A" from 17 percent of voters, with an additional 22 percent giving him a "B." Fewer voters give him poor marks than for other topics, but 21 percent still award Trump an "F." (Trump's grades on jobs are virtually identical to those for the economy.)

The harshest spot on Trump's report card is health care, likely owing to the collapse last month of the Republican effort to replace the 2010 health care law.

Only 9 percent of voters give Trump an "A" on health care — including only 20 percent of Republicans and 16 percent of Trump voters. Trump earns a "B" from 16 percent of voters, a "C" from 19 percent and a "D" from 15 percent. Nearly a third of poll respondents, 32 percent, give Trump an "F" on health care — equal to another issue on which Trump is weak, climate change.

Remember the common "Drain the swamp!" refrain at Trump rallies during the general election? The president is earning poor marks on putting the chant into practice, the poll shows. Only 10 percent give Trump an "A" on draining the swamp, and another 14 percent give him a "B."

By contrast, 27 percent of voters, including nearly half of Democrats, give Trump a failing "F" grade. But nearly a quarter of poll respondents, 24 percent, have no opinion on Trump's performance in draining the swamp.

Looking beyond Trump's report card, voters are similarly divided on the future trajectory of his presidency. While 44 percent expect Trump's performance to get better, just as many say it will get worse (30 percent) or stay about the same (16 percent).

There's more optimism about his ability to mature in office among Republicans: More than three-in-four, 76 percent, think Trump will get better. A majority of Democratic voters, 53 percent, expect Trump's performance to get worse.

Trump's current approval rating in the survey is 48 percent, with 45 percent of voters disapproving — figures that are more positive than most other public polls.

Trump isn't the only Washington actor earning poor marks from voters. Only a combined 30 percent give congressional Republicans an "A" or "B" grade, and just 27 percent give congressional Democrats those same high marks. A combined 39 percent give the Hill GOP a "D" or "F," and 38 percent give those marks to Democrats in Congress.

Voters also split evenly on an early read on the 2018 midterm elections: 40 percent would vote for the Democratic candidate in their district, and 40 percent would vote for the Republican. One-in-five voters are undecided.

*Morning Consult is a nonpartisan media and technology company that provides data-driven research and insights on politics, policy and business strategy.*

*More details on the poll and its methodology can be found in these two documents — Toplines: <http://politi.co/2oogumt> | Crosstabs: <http://politi.co/2phmzWf>*

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**The New York Times**

## Trump Adviser's Visit to Moscow Got the F.B.I.'s Attention (UNE)

Scott Shane, Mark Mazzetti and Adam Goldman

WASHINGTON — Ever since F.B.I. investigators discovered in 2013 that a Russian spy was trying to recruit an American businessman named Carter Page, the bureau maintained an occasional interest in

Mr. Page. So when he became a foreign policy adviser to the Trump campaign last year and gave a Russia-friendly speech at a prestigious Moscow institute, it soon caught the bureau's attention.

That trip last July was a catalyst for the F.B.I. investigation into connections between Russia and

President Trump's campaign, according to current and former law enforcement and intelligence officials.

It is unclear exactly what about Mr. Page's visit drew the F.B.I.'s interest: meetings he had during his three days in Moscow, intercepted communications of Russian officials

speaking about him, or something else.

After Mr. Page, 45 — a Navy veteran and businessman who had lived in Moscow for three years — stepped down from the Trump campaign in September, the F.B.I. obtained a warrant from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court

allowing the authorities to monitor his communications on the suspicion that he was a Russian agent.

From the Russia trip of the once-obscure Mr. Page grew a wide-ranging investigation, now accompanied by two congressional inquiries, that has cast a shadow over the early months of the Trump administration. At a House Intelligence Committee hearing last month, the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, took the unusual step of publicly acknowledging the investigation of Russian interference in the election, which he said included possible links between Russia and Trump associates.

Developments beyond Mr. Page's trip may have heightened the F.B.I.'s concern about Russian meddling in the campaign. Paul Manafort, then Mr. Trump's campaign manager, was already under criminal investigation in connection with payments from a pro-Russian political party in Ukraine. WikiLeaks and two websites later identified as Russian intelligence fronts had begun releasing emails obtained when Democratic Party servers were hacked.

#### **Trump to Russia-Linked Ex-Advisers: Keep Your Distance**

The Trump administration is going to great lengths to distance itself from former associates in the face of an F.B.I. investigation into whether there were connections between the Trump campaign and Russia.

By A.J. CHAVAR on March 27, 2017. Photo by Stephen Crowley/The New York Times. Watch in Times Video »

When the F.B.I. opened its investigation in late July, agents were just beginning to explore whether Mr. Trump's advisers had contacts with Russian government officials or intelligence operatives, according to the current and former American officials, who spoke about the continuing inquiry on the condition of anonymity. In the months that followed, they said, more evidence came to light, including intercepts of Russian officials discussing Mr. Page and other Trump associates.

In his talk at the New Economic School in Moscow, Mr. Page criticized American policy toward Russia in terms that echoed the position of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, declaring, "Washington and other Western capitals have impeded potential progress through their often hypocritical focus on ideas such as

democratization, inequality, corruption and regime change." His remarks accorded with Mr. Trump's positive view of the Russian president, which had prompted speculation about what Mr. Trump saw in Mr. Putin — more commonly denounced in the United States as a ruthless, anti-Western autocrat.

Mr. Page's relationship with Mr. Trump appears to have been fleeting. According to former Trump campaign officials, the two men have never met, though Mr. Page has said he attended some meetings where Mr. Trump was present.

But last spring, when Republican foreign policy experts were distancing themselves from Mr. Trump, Mr. Page served a purpose for the flailing Trump campaign. Dismissing the notion that his campaign was bereft of foreign policy expertise, the candidate read aloud a list of five people who had offered to advise him on world affairs — including "Carter Page, Ph.D."

Mr. Page was unknown in Washington foreign policy circles. But his doctorate and his Russian experience were real. He had worked as a junior investment banker for Merrill Lynch for a time, living in Moscow from 2004 to 2007.

He subsequently started his own investment firm, Global Energy Capital L.L.C., and partnered on some deals with a Russian businessman, Sergey Yatsenko. Mr. Yatsenko had been deputy chief financial officer for the Russian energy giant Gazprom, which is majority-owned by the government and has close ties to Mr. Putin.

Mr. Page's role in the Trump campaign appears to have been minimal. Papers he wrote on energy policy languished unread. Former campaign officials play down his significance almost to the vanishing point, saying Mr. Page had no ID badge, desk or email address from the campaign.

"If the Russians were attempting to collude with him, they were attempting to collude with someone who had no influence on the Trump campaign," said Roger Stone, a longtime adviser to Mr. Trump. "I think he's a self-promoter — not that there's anything wrong with that."

But for Mr. Page, temporarily wearing the title of adviser to the man who would become president appears to have been gratifying. "The half year I spent on the Trump campaign meant more to me than the five years I spent in the Navy," he said in an interview last month.

He denies that there was ever any possibility of his being recruited to spy for Russia, including his 2013 encounter with the Russian intelligence officer. "Zero risk then or ever in my life," Mr. Page said.

After The Washington Post broke the news last week of the court warrant the F.B.I. had obtained, Mr. Page went on a Trump-like media blitz, defending his bona fides and asserting that he was the victim of a smear campaign by Obama administration officials and Hillary Clinton aides.

"You talk about fake narratives," Mr. Page said on Fox News. "When you introduce false evidence in a court of law, including the FISA court," he said, referring to the court that issued the warrant targeting him, "that is illegal. So, let's see what happens."

He added, "I'm very encouraged that all of the lies that have been a drag on this administration are finally coming out into the open."

Few who have met Mr. Page during his career appear to have pegged him as a likely prospect for either suspected spy or statesman. Born in 1971 in Minnesota and raised in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., he graduated in 1993 from the Naval Academy, where he was in the selective Trident Scholar Program, but left the Navy before the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. He earned an M.B.A. at New York University and completed a doctorate a decade later at SOAS University of London.

Sam Clovis, a Tea Party activist in Iowa, with Donald J. Trump in August 2015. He suggested Mr. Page as a foreign policy adviser to Mr. Trump. Daniel Acker/Bloomberg, via Getty Images

Richard Guerin, who was in his academy class and remains in regular touch, said Mr. Page had "a complicated mind." "He's genuinely one of the smartest people I've ever met," Mr. Guerin said. "I get a bit offended when I read reports of people calling him an 'idiot.'"

Mr. Guerin also said that, ever since Mr. Page's Navy days, when he drove a black Mercedes, his friend had reveled in lavish spending that sometimes seemed to exceed his means.

Oksana Antonenko, a senior political counselor at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, who was friendly with Mr. Page in London while he earned his Ph.D., said, "I think he is a nice, decent and perhaps a bit naive guy."

While the biographical sketch Mr. Page has used highlights his work at Merrill Lynch with Gazprom and a

Russian electric power conglomerate called RAO UES, he appears not to have played a leading role in major deals. He later ran an international affairs program at Bard College in New York before founding Global Energy Capital. The private equity firm operates out of a co-working space in a Manhattan high-rise that Mr. Page has described, accurately though perhaps misleadingly, as "around the corner from Trump Tower."

American businessmen in the tight-knit expatriate community in Moscow say they did not know Mr. Page and were not familiar with his business activities in Russia. "People I deal with on my board of directors just shrug their shoulders," Alexis Rodzianko, president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Russia, said in an interview. "They've never heard of him."

In April 2013, Mr. Page was caught on an F.B.I. wiretap in an investigation of suspected Russian intelligence officers in New York. Victor Podobnyy, one of three men later charged with being unregistered agents of a foreign power, had met Mr. Page at an energy symposium and was recorded describing him as "an idiot" with dreams of lucrative deals. There is no evidence that Mr. Page knew the man was an intelligence officer.

In 2014 and 2015, in articles for an online journal, Mr. Page mixed quirky observations with praise for Russia and criticism of American policy. The war in Ukraine, he wrote, was "precipitated by U.S. meddling." And Igor Sechin, a close Putin ally and chief executive of the oil company Rosneft, Mr. Page wrote, "has done more to advance U.S.-Russian relations than any individual in or out of government from either side of the Atlantic over the past decade."

Michael McFaul, President Barack Obama's ambassador to Russia. Mr. Page's talk in Moscow prompted derision from Mr. McFaul, who wrote on Twitter, "Echo of Kremlin line on U.S." Misha Japaridze/Associated Press

In March of last year, Sam Clovis, an economics professor and Tea Party activist in Iowa, was asked by the Trump campaign to line up some foreign policy advisers. He produced the list that included Mr. Page.

After several tries, Mr. Page got the campaign's permission to speak at the New Economic School, where Mr. Obama spoke in 2009. Denis Klimentov, a spokesman for the school, said some alumni knew of Mr. Page's work at Merrill Lynch in Moscow. But his role as a Trump

adviser also played into the decision to invite him, Mr. Klimentov said in an email.

"We did not arrange any meetings for Mr. Page outside of the school, and we were not aware then if he had any further meetings or contacts," Mr. Klimentov added. "Our strong recollection is that there was simply not enough time for Mr.

Page to have any meetings outside of the school."

In recent months, Mr. Page has often seemed to revel in the attention he has drawn. In December, he gave another speech at the New Economic School, complaining that "fake news" had hurt United States-Russia relations.

His conduct has disturbed some who know him. Mr. Guerin said it was "disheartening" to hear that Mr. Page rated his time at the margins of the Trump campaign more highly than his Navy service. "I thought we were both patriotic," Mr. Guerin said. "I would like to assume that as well right now. But events are unfolding that make you question that."

Last Thursday, Mr. Page appeared on "Good Morning America" for questioning by George Stephanopoulos. He seemed feisty but upbeat, denying any impropriety and complaining about "a ton of false evidence."

"These same lies keep swirling around," Mr. Page said, "having a really negative impact on U.S.-Russian relations."

## The New York Times Trump Inaugural Drew Big Dollars From Donors With Vested Interests (UNE)

Nicholas Confessore, Nicholas Fandos and Rachel Shorey

The casino magnate and philanthropist Sheldon G. Adelson wants some big things from the Trump administration: banning the online poker sites that compete with his luxury casinos, for example, and moving the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

And while President Trump was not Mr. Adelson's first choice during the Republican primary season last year, he has been generous since: The billionaire donated \$5 million to the committee organizing Mr. Trump's inauguration festivities — the largest single contribution given to any president's inaugural committee.

Some of the country's wealthiest Republicans and its largest corporations had similar impulses. Documents released this week by Mr. Trump's inaugural organizers provide a glimpse of the big-dollar frenzy of influence-seeking and peacemaking surrounding Mr. Trump's swearing-in, which raised \$107 million, twice as much money as any other inauguration.

The stream of money is a striking contrast to the way Mr. Trump funded his campaign, chiefly with small donations and his own fortune. While some big checks for the inauguration came from longtime Trump friends and associates, much of the money came from the industries that have traditionally excelled at wielding Washington influence: telecommunications, tobacco and pharmaceutical giants, which have bankrolled presidential inaugurations for Republicans and Democrats alike. And a generous amount came from people who had been hostile to his candidacy.

If the crowds at Mr. Trump's swearing-in celebrations were relatively small, the checks paying for all the nonofficial festivities were not: Freed of many of the voluntary restrictions adopted by Mr. Trump's predecessors, 48 people or corporations gave \$1 million or

more, according to the disclosures filed with the Federal Election Commission. Besides Mr. Adelson, they included a trust controlled by the coal industry billionaire Joseph W. Craft III; the parent company of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company; and Robert Mercer, the billionaire investor and close ally of Stephen K. Bannon, a White House adviser.

The donor rolls also included a host of blue-chip American companies, like Coca-Cola, Microsoft, Intel, Google and Bank of America, which contribute significant sums regardless of the incoming president's political party.

Many of the companies and donors have major interests at stake in Washington in the coming months. At least \$10 million — about one out of every \$10 raised — came from coal, oil, and gas companies or their executives. They are the chief beneficiaries of Mr. Trump's aggressive efforts to weaken federal rules aimed at limiting pollution in streams and wetlands, cutting back on greenhouse gases and closing coal-burning power plants.

The inauguration received \$500,000 from Citgo Petroleum, a Houston-based United States affiliate of Venezuela's state oil company. The donation came in December as Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, grappled with food and medicine shortages and a cratering economy. The Trump administration has been critical of Mr. Maduro's government.

"During the campaign, he attacked over and over again precisely these kinds of huge contributions," said Fred Wertheimer, the president of the watchdog group Democracy 21 and a longtime advocate of tighter campaign finance rules. "He also said he knew from personal experience that you can buy influence with politicians by making these kinds of contributions. That didn't seem to bother him in raising ridiculous amounts of money to pay for the inauguration."

Boeing, the country's biggest exporter, made a million-dollar

contribution in January. This month, Boeing won a major victory when Mr. Trump abandoned his campaign pledge to eliminate the Export-Import Bank, which has provided billions in loan guarantees to help Boeing's overseas customers finance plane purchases.

The country's biggest cable and wireless companies, Verizon, Comcast and AT&T, donated more than \$2 million combined. In the weeks since, Mr. Trump's pick for chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Ajit Pai, has moved quickly to nullify or curtail consumer protection measures, such as "net neutrality" rules, that were established under President Obama over the industry's objections.

Central to the money-raising effort was Thomas Barrack Jr., a private equity investor who is one of Mr. Trump's closest and oldest friends. It was Mr. Barrack who hosted one of Mr. Trump's first major fundraisers at his home in Santa Monica, Calif., last May, and who spoke in Cleveland the night Mr. Trump accepted the Republican nomination. As inaugural chairman, Mr. Barrack was one of Mr. Trump's chief liaisons to those business executives who had kept him at arm's length.

Contributions to the festivities were not intended to accrue favor with the new president, Mr. Barrack said in a text message, but were made "in support of the coming together of our country and its people to commemorate the cornerstone of our American democratic process."

But the democratic process moves along more quickly for some than for others. While Mr. Trump promised during the campaign to give Medicare and Medicaid the power to negotiate prices they pay for prescription drugs, two of the biggest drugmakers, Pfizer and Amgen, gave a combined \$1.5 million in December.

Amgen's chief executive was among the industry executives who attended a February meeting with

Mr. Trump. After entering the meeting promising to do something "to get prices down," Mr. Trump exited with a more industry-friendly line, saying he would oppose "price-fixing by the biggest dog in the market, Medicare." (A White House spokesman later said Mr. Trump remained in favor of negotiating prices.)

Few industries have stood to gain as much under Mr. Trump as private prison operators, and they gave generously to his inauguration. Two of the largest such companies, the Corrections Corporation of America, now known as CoreCivic, and the GEO Group, each contributed \$250,000.

Since then, the outlook for both companies has greatly improved. In February, Attorney General Jeff Sessions rescinded an Obama-era order that would have phased out the use of such prisons by the Justice Department. And Mr. Trump directed his administration to prioritize the detention and deportation of unauthorized immigrants, proposing hundreds of millions of dollars for a vast new network of detention facilities like the ones the companies already operate for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Neither company responded to requests for comment on Wednesday.

For many Washington interests and for large donors — particularly those who had not anticipated a Trump victory or had no relationship with his insurgent campaign, or had actively opposed him — Mr. Trump's inaugural was an easy way to make inroads with the president-elect.

The Ansary family, prominent Iranian-Americans in Dallas who are longtime allies of the Bushes, gave \$2 million to Mr. Trump's inauguration. Paul Singer, the billionaire Republican investor who opposed Mr. Trump and once predicted that his policies were "close to a guarantee of a global depression," donated \$1 million on Dec. 6.

The two have mended fences recently. In February, Mr. Singer visited Mr. Trump in the Oval Office, and Mr. Trump declared afterward that “now he’s a very strong ally and I appreciate that.”

A \$900,000 donation came in December from Avenue Ventures, a California-based boutique money management firm founded by the entrepreneur Imaad Zuberi. Mr. Zuberi was a top fund-raiser for President Barack Obama and for Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign. Mr. Zuberi was also paid millions of dollars to work in Washington on behalf of the scandal-plagued government of Sri Lanka and its central bank, work he did not initially disclose to the Justice Department as required by federal law, according to a report in

Foreign Policy magazine.

Mr. Zuberi is now making inroads in Mr. Trump’s circle. After making the donation, he earned a coveted spot at the Chairman’s Global Dinner, a pre-inauguration, black-tie gathering intended to introduce the incoming president to the foreign diplomatic corps. A photo from the event shows Mr. Zuberi in conversation with Mr. Trump and other guests.

Mr. Zuberi did not return a phone call seeking comment.

Because inaugural committees face few of the regulations that limit campaign fund-raising, each administration sets its own restrictions.

George W. Bush, for example, capped gifts at \$100,000 for his first

inaugural and at \$250,000 for his second. Mr. Obama accepted gifts up to only \$50,000 in 2009, while banning all gifts from lobbyists and corporations altogether. He loosened those restrictions in 2013, accepting corporate gifts up to \$1 million and individual gifts up to \$250,000.

Mr. Trump set comparatively loose restrictions. He did not limit how much individuals could give, and his team said it would not solicit corporate donations over \$1 million

Perhaps no donors were granted greater access than the Adelson family. Mr. Trump singled out Mr. Adelson and his wife to thank them for their support during a luncheon honoring congressional Republicans on inauguration eve. The next morning, the pair sat along

the aisle just a few rows back from Mr. Trump on the inaugural platform as he took the oath of office. (Mr. Mercer and his daughter, Rebekah, sat some rows farther back.) A representative of Mr. Adelson had no comment.

Just what other perks and souvenirs their donations helped pay for will probably remain a mystery. While donations must be reported, the Federal Election Commission does not require inaugural committees to account for what they spend or how much is left in their coffers when the revelers head home.

Mr. Trump’s committee said it was still identifying charities toward which it would direct leftover money.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Even in red states, Republicans feel free to criticize Trump on his taxes and travel

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

Oklahoma may be Trump country, but that did not prevent James Lankford (R), the state’s junior senator, from criticizing President Trump this week by saying he ought to “keep his promise” to release his tax returns.

Nor did Trump’s popularity in Iowa stop Sen. Joni Ernst (R) from telling her constituents there that she is perturbed by the president’s frequent jaunts to his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Fla.

“I do wish he would spend more time in Washington, D.C. That is what we have the White House for,” Ernst said at a town hall meeting Tuesday in Wall Lake, Iowa. She said she has not spoken to Trump about “the Florida issue,” but it “has been bothering not just me, but some other members of our caucus.”

As Republican lawmakers face questions from their constituents back home, some elected leaders have been willing to break with their party’s president. Although they generally support Trump’s agenda on such priorities as a tax overhaul and health care, these Republicans are criticizing the president over his continued refusal to make public his tax returns, as past presidents have, and his costly trips to Florida.

Some of those criticizing Trump are not moderates eager to establish political independence, but rather conservatives from red states who are popular with the voters who propelled Trump into office.

The ease with which a GOP favorite such as Ernst has separated from

Trump — she has criticized his Florida travel and his defiance on taxes — underscores the weak grip the president and his political operation have on the Republican Party.

“It is hard to defend in today’s world not releasing your tax returns, and it’s hard to defend playing golf at a seven-star resort when it’s a busy time and people are anxious about problems being addressed,” said Ed Rogers, a GOP operative and lobbyist.

David Carney, a GOP strategist, said finding ways to break with Trump on issues such as tax returns and travel “is a smart strategy” — especially at a moment when Trump opponents are galvanized.

“Back in 2009 and 2010, if Democrats had not been drinking Kool-Aid, saying ‘Obama makes no mistakes,’ and actually called him out on a few things, they would have had a better chance to survive the onslaught in the midterm elections,” Carney said.

White House officials say that although they wish GOP lawmakers would be fully supportive of Trump, it matters more that they back him on policies.

“The president has been pretty clear about where he is on releasing his tax returns,” White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said. “People knew that before they voted in November, and he still won overwhelmingly. The American people are a lot more concerned about their own taxes than President Trump’s, and that’s what he’s focused on.”

Democratic leaders are connecting the two issues, however, threatening to block Trump’s efforts to overhaul the tax code unless he releases his tax returns so the public can determine whether he would personally benefit from the legislative changes.

Trump has had plenty of defenders, of course. At a town hall meeting Monday in Little Rock, one man asked Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) to demand Trump release his tax returns “so we can see what kind of connections he has to different countries.”

Cotton responded by repeating the talking points employed by White House press secretary Sean Spicer.

“As far as I’m aware, the president says he’s still under audit,” Cotton said, drawing loud boos in the crowd.

Cotton continued by noting that the president filed a personal financial disclosure as a candidate and arguing that because Trump “puts his names on buildings where he has them,” his foreign connections are well known.

Cotton’s defense drew applause from some in the audience but more jeers and shouting from others. One woman stood and shook her head as the senator finished his response.

Some Republican campaign operatives said their party’s politicians would be wise to move on from the tax returns debate, recognizing that it may be nearly impossible to persuade Trump to do something he has steadfastly refused to do.

“Anyone who thought Trump would ever release his taxes is mistaken,” said Alice Stewart, a GOP consultant. “It’s not going to happen — no way, no how. Everybody has to get used to that idea.”

Still, the list of Republican senators and House members saying Trump should release his tax returns has grown to at least a dozen.

Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) said this week on CNN that releasing his tax returns is “the right thing to do.” Several other GOP House members — including some House Freedom Caucus conservatives — have either signed a letter calling on Trump to release his returns or backed a Democratic measure to force their release.

On Tuesday in rural Rogers County, Okla., where Trump won 76 percent of the vote last November, Lankford was asked at a town hall meeting about Trump’s decision not to release his tax returns.

Today’s WorldView

What’s most important from where the world meets Washington

“He promised he would,” Lankford responded, according to the Tulsa World newspaper. “He should keep his promise.”

Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-Va.) was quick to join her colleagues, saying in a statement Wednesday that Trump “should release his taxes voluntarily like his predecessors did before him.” She went on to say, “If the investigative committees believe that they need the president’s taxes during the course of their investigations [into Russia’s role in the 2016 campaign]

then it is in their right to subpoena them.”

Trump’s frequent trips to Mar-a-Lago have also been raising concerns in the GOP. He has spent seven of the 13 weekends since he

has been president at his Florida resort, often combining golf outings and leisurely meals with official business, such as the visits of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

“I don’t like him going down to Mar-a-Lago, or wherever it is,” Rep. Steve Knight (R-Calif.) said during a Tuesday town hall meeting.

Comstock posited, “Camp David would be a better weekend retreat

and save the taxpayers money,” referring to the official presidential retreat in Maryland that is already outfitted to secure the commander in chief and his visitors.



## E. J. Dionne : No, Mr. President, you can’t do what you want

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stuff it if they claim any right to know what’s going on in the building they collectively own.

made him president? No, he says, I can do what I want.

congressional district, managed 48.1 percent of the vote, just missing the majority he needed to avoid a June 20 runoff.

Two issues are paramount in American politics. The first is whether President Trump will get away with his arrogant dismissal of the public’s right to a transparent government free of corrupting conflicts of interest. The second is whether those who would hold him to account remain focused, mobilized and determined.

President Trump on April 16 issued two tweets in which he criticized protesters who marched the day before to demand that he release his tax returns. President Trump on April 16 issued two tweets in which he criticized protesters who marched the day before to demand that he release his tax returns. (Video: Bastien Inzaurrealde/Photo: Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

And then there was Sunday’s referendum in Turkey (whose outcome the opposition says was rigged) that narrowly approved constitutional changes giving President Recep Tayyip Erdogan nearly authoritarian powers. Did Trump express concern about democracy? Nope. He called Erdogan to congratulate him. Why?

Those who rallied to Ossoff (including Republicans and independents deeply offended by Trump’s ways) must remain committed between now and June to send a clear message to the president that transcends the usual partisanship: No, you can’t just do what you want in crushing transparency and blurring all lines between your own interests and the public’s.

They are related. There are many reasons to stand against Trump, but the one that should take precedence — because it is foundational for decent governance — is his autocratic assumption that he is above the expectations that apply to us normal humans.

(Bastien Inzaurrealde/The Washington Post)

Asked about Turkey in a December 2015 interview with, of all people, Stephen K. Bannon — now his chief strategist who back then hosted a radio show on Breitbart — Trump admitted: “I have a little conflict of interest because I have a major, major building in Istanbul.” He also described Erdogan as “a strong leader” and added: “I thrive on complicated.” Should we be able to know how Trump was influenced by his “complicated” Turkish interests, including his “major, major” project? No, he says, I can do what I want.

The Trump administration announced on April 14, that it won’t voluntarily disclose the names of visitors to the White House complex, breaking from former president Barack Obama’s policy. The move comes as questions about transparency continue to mount for the new administration. (Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

Should Trump separate himself completely from his business interests, as presidents had been doing for more than four decades? His implicit message is always: No, I can do what I want.

Should he stop turning the presidency into a permanent and profitable vacation by spending one out of every five minutes at Mar-a-Lago or nearby golf courses, as The Post’s Philip Bump reported? Should we know the full cost of his gallivanting and how many of the millions of dollars involved are circulating back to his family through the charges Trump’s resorts impose on the government? No, he says, I can do what I want.

And a last question: If Hillary Clinton had done any one of the things described above, is there any doubt about what Republicans in Congress would be saying and doing? As long as all but a few honorable Republicans remain silent, GOP leaders will be mirroring their party in the muck of Trump’s norm-breaking. No, they are saying, he can do what he wants.

(Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

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Should we know why it is that, according to The Post’s Greg Miller, Trump “appears increasingly isolated within his own administration” in calling for warmer relations with Russia even as almost everyone else in his government issues “blistering critiques of Moscow”? Should he disclose details of his business ties to Russian interests and oligarchs? Should he stop resisting investigations into whether his campaign was complicit in Russia’s interference in the election that

This is why only pressure from an engaged and resolute citizenry can convince Republican politicians of the costs of being Trump enablers. Jon Ossoff, the Democratic hopeful in Tuesday’s special election in a very Republican Georgia

It’s said that Trump always skates away. Not true. Those he ripped off in his Trump University scam stuck with the fight and forced Trump to settle a lawsuit he said (in an untruth typical of his approach) he would never settle. The country’s citizens can prevail, too, if we insist on calling out a self-absorbed huckster who treats us all as easily bamboozled fools.

Should he release his income-tax returns so the public can see where conflicts might exist — including whether he will benefit from his own tax proposals? No, he says, I can do what I want.

Should he continue former president Barack Obama’s practice of making the White House visitor logs public so all can know who might be influencing his policies? No, he says, I can do what I want — including shutting down access to those logs and telling citizens to go

*Read more from E.J. Dionne’s archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.*



## Is Trump Turning Globalist? Not So Fast

Greg Ip

April 19, 2017

11:34 a.m. ET

But before anyone concludes Mr. Trump has gone globalist, a reality check is in order. Recent events show that his approach to the world has bifurcated, turning traditionally internationalist on foreign policy while remaining starkly nationalist on economics. Indeed, as Mr. Trump launched cruise missiles at Syria and rattled sabers at North Korea, he also ordered an examination of abusive foreign actions that contribute to U.S. trade deficits, expanded the categories of illegal immigrants prioritized for

deportation, tightened “buy American” requirements for federal spending and clamped down on foreign worker visas.

nuclear weapons, and his dismissal of NATO as obsolete.

In Western capitals and Washington’s punditocracy there was shock mixed with approval as President Donald Trump intervened in Syria’s civil war, reaffirmed the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and decided not to label China a currency manipulator.

This bifurcation tracks Mr. Trump’s own philosophical priorities and the evolution of the party he now leads. Republicans have long favored a muscular approach to national security founded on military alliances. As a candidate Mr. Trump defied that consensus with his praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin, suggestions that South Korea and Japan develop

“We’ve defended other nations’ borders while refusing to defend our own,” he complained in an inaugural address largely written by his most nationalist advisers, Stephen Miller and Steve Bannon.

But Mr. Trump’s mistrust of foreign entanglements is rooted less in principle than resentment at paying for them. That has left him open to persuasion by traditional foreign policy hawks such as Vice

President Mike Pence and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. Mr. Bannon has been removed from the National Security Council, now headed by the committed internationalist H.R. McMaster.

Economic issues, by contrast, are the foundation of Mr. Trump's worldview and his movement. Since the 1980s the New York businessman has believed other countries use free trade to rip off Americans. His strident attacks on illegal immigrants separated him from his rivals during the Republican primary campaign. His appointments, in part, reflect those views: Jeff Sessions, the attorney general, has spearheaded the crackdown on illegal immigration, while Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross is studying how to use existing trade tools more aggressively against imports. Messrs. Miller and Bannon accompanied Mr. Trump on a trip to Wisconsin on Tuesday, where the president railed against the North American Free Trade Agreement and Canadian restrictions on milk imports and called the World Trade Organization a "disaster" while signing an executive order stiffening "buy

American" rules and conditions for H-1B visas.

On immigration and trade, the Republican working-class base is closer to Mr. Trump than its other leaders. That base prevented Republican leaders in Congress from striking a deal legalizing undocumented immigrants. The base now also sees free trade as bad, which has sapped support for it in Congress.

In Congress, "I don't know any [Republican] members who are going to die at the stake for free trade," Lanhee Chen, policy director for Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney in 2012, said earlier this year. "The majority for free trade just isn't there anymore." In fact, getting tough on trade is one of the few subjects on which Democrats agree with Mr. Trump.

To be sure, Mr. Trump hasn't been the wrecking ball that many feared. The Mexican peso, which plunged after his election, has recouped those losses as Mr. Trump signaled he would seek relatively modest changes to Nafta. He has yet to hit any country or company with a

punitive import tariff. He didn't name China a currency manipulator.

Yet trade wars and shredded treaties were never the likeliest outcome. The point of Mr. Trump's threats was to extract concessions. On Nafta, he wants the right to hit Mexico and Canada with tariffs if imports from either surge. In declining to name China a currency manipulator Mr. Trump, besides acknowledging reality, concluded like previous presidents that withholding the designation could encourage Chinese cooperation on North Korea. Whether that calculus is wise remains to be seen, and the Treasury department hedged, promising to "continue scrutinizing China's trade and currency practices very closely."

Mr. Trump has ample tools for punishing foreign competitors including China without tearing up any existing trade agreement. His nominees as U.S. Trade Representative and commerce undersecretary, Robert Lighthizer and Gilbert Kaplan, are masters of trade law minutiae and how to deploy it against foreign companies and governments. The

administration has already signaled a greater readiness to act outside the confines of the WTO.

"If we are going to see something very different from this administration, it will be in its willingness to consider unilateral actions," says John Veroneau, who was deputy U.S. Trade Representative under George W. Bush.

More unilateral action on trade by itself doesn't spell the end of the global trading system; the world has survived bouts of protectionism before, for example under President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. But Mr. Reagan was at heart a free trader; Mr. Trump isn't. At a time when protectionism and nationalism are on the rise everywhere, the world economy can't count on the U.S. as a counterweight just because its president is willing to drop bombs on Syria and Afghanistan.

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**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL**

## Exxon Seeks U.S. Waiver to Resume Russia Oil Venture (UNE)

Jay Solomon and  
Bradley Olson

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ET

WASHINGTON— Exxon Mobil Corp. XOM -0.69% has applied to the Treasury Department for a waiver from U.S. sanctions on Russia in a bid to resume its joint venture with state oil giant PAO Rosneft, according to people familiar with the matter.

Exxon has been seeking U.S. permission to drill with Rosneft in several areas banned by sanctions and renewed a push for approval in March, shortly after its most recent chief executive, Rex Tillerson, became secretary of state on Feb. 1, according to one of these people. The company originally applied for a waiver to gain access to the Black Sea in July 2015 but its application wasn't approved, the person said.

The waiver request is likely to be closely scrutinized by members of Congress who are seeking to intensify sanctions on Russia in response to what the U.S. said was its use of cyberattacks to interfere with elections last year. Congress has also launched an investigation into whether there were ties between aides to Donald Trump and Russia's government during the presidential campaign and the political transition.

Mr. Tillerson during his time at Exxon forged a close working relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin and with Rosneft, a company that is critical to Russia's oil-reliant economy.

The State Department is among the U.S. government agencies that have a say on Exxon's waiver application, which was made to the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, according to current and former U.S. officials.

Mr. Tillerson is recusing himself from any matters involving Exxon for two years, and won't be involved with any decision made by any government agency involving Exxon during this period, a State Department spokesman said.

Before he became secretary of state, Mr. Tillerson said Exxon opposes sanctions when they aren't applied in a uniform way. He testified during his confirmation hearings that neither he nor his former company ever lobbied against U.S. sanctions on Russia.

A spokesman for the Treasury Department said it doesn't comment on waiver applications. An Exxon spokesman said the company wouldn't discuss government deliberations on sanctions.

Russia's oil resources have long been among the most sought-after prizes by U.S. and European oil

companies, and multiple U.S. presidential administrations in both parties have worked to help them enter the country. As much as 100 billion barrels of oil is believed to remain untapped in the country, but many Western companies have been stymied in their attempts to reach those reserves, often by geopolitical risks.

The sanctions affecting Rosneft ban U.S. companies from deals in the Arctic, Siberia and the Black Sea, areas that would require the sharing of cutting-edge drilling techniques. The sanctions, instituted after Russia annexed the Crimea region of Ukraine in 2014, also bar dealings with Rosneft's chief executive, Igor Sechin, saying he "has shown utter loyalty to Vladimir Putin—a key component to his current standing."

The sanctions effectively sidelined a landmark exploration deal Exxon, under Mr. Tillerson's leadership, had signed with Rosneft in 2012. The deal granted Exxon access to explore in Russia's Arctic waters, the right to drill with new technology in Siberia and the chance to explore in the deep waters of Russia's portion of the Black Sea.

Mr. Putin said Exxon and Rosneft might invest as much as \$500 billion over the life of the partnership. In 2013, the Russian leader bestowed upon Mr. Tillerson the country's

Order of Friendship in part for his role in developing the joint venture.

Exxon has reported it is exposed to losses from the Rosneft ventures of up to \$1 billion before taxes, although the company has yet to recognize them on its books given its position that sanctions could be lifted.

Exxon received a U.S. waiver in September 2014, when the sanctions were first implemented and the company was working on a well in the Russian Arctic.

Mr. Tillerson and other Exxon executives asked the Treasury Department and senior Obama administration officials to allow the company to complete the well, saying it wouldn't be safe to leave before it was finished, according to people familiar with the matter. Treasury granted an extension, and the company completed drilling in October and eventually withdrew its employees from the project.

Exxon has disclosed that in 2015 and 2016 the company received a license from the Treasury Department allowing the company to undertake "limited administrative actions" in its partnership with Rosneft, according to company documents. Such permission would put Exxon in a position to move more quickly if it gets the green light to drill, according to the person familiar with the matter.

Exxon's proposal to drill in the Black Sea has been circulated in various federal departments in recent months, several people said. Exxon is arguing that it deserves a waiver there because under its deal with Rosneft its exploration rights in the Black Sea will expire if it doesn't act, and because some of its top foreign competitors aren't similarly restricted.

It is unusual for a company to seek a waiver based purely on future business prospects, according to former U.S. officials. American companies often seek waivers from sanctions citing humanitarian, trade or operational issues, the officials said.

Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a supporter of a bill that would limit President Donald Trump's ability to waive or weaken U.S. sanctions on Russia, tweeted in response to news of Exxon's waiver request, "Are they crazy? @WSJ: 'Exxon Seeks U.S. Waiver to Resume #Russia Oil Venture.'"

Rep. Adam Schiff, the senior Democrat on the

House Intelligence Committee investigating Russia's role in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, called on the Treasury to turn down Exxon's request.

"The Treasury Department should reject any waiver from sanctions which would allow Exxon Mobil or any other company to resume business with prohibited Russian entities," Mr. Schiff said in a statement. "Until Russia abides by the Minsk accords and ends its illegal occupation of Crimea, the only changes to sanctions should be their intensification, not their dilution."

Exxon opposed how the Obama administration applied sanctions on a number of its projects, according to people familiar with the matter, in part because the European Union, which has its own sanctions, granted waivers to its competitors to continue operating. Norway's Statoil AS A has a waiver for Arctic drilling in the Barents Sea. Italy's Eni SpA is allowed to operate in the Barents and Black seas, and has been aggressively exploring in cooperation with Russia.

"Exxon is worried it could get boxed out of the Black Sea by the Italians," said a person briefed on the company's waiver application.

The Black Sea may hold 30 billion barrels of oil, according to estimates from Russia, Turkey and Romania. Exxon has drilled there off the coast of Romania and holds a license for an area in Ukrainian waters.

Although a number of the biggest Western oil companies are seeking opportunities in the Black Sea, it remains a frontier area where few deep-water wells have been drilled, meaning estimates could change as more work is done, according to industry analysts.

Under the terms of its deal with Rosneft, Exxon needs an oil discovery in the Black Sea by the end of this year to obtain a Russian government license to drill. Unless Exxon receives approval soon, there might not be enough time to safely drill an exploratory well to be able to develop any discoveries, said oil industry experts.

Exxon has continued in recent years to drill and seek to expand its access around Sakhalin Island in

Russia's Far East, an area to which sanctions don't apply.

As secretary of state, Mr. Tillerson, following through on his pledge to recuse himself from potential Exxon-related matters, stayed out of State Department deliberations on the permit for the Keystone XL project, a proposed pipeline that would carry oil from Canada into the U.S.

Due to the sanctions, other major components of the Exxon-Rosneft agreement were put on hold in 2014, shortly before Rosneft revealed that the first well the two companies drilled together in the arctic waters of the Kara Sea may hold as much as 750 million barrels of oil.

—James Marson in Moscow contributed to this article.

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**The  
New York  
Times**

## Editorial : Donald Trump Threatens to Sabotage Obamacare

The Editorial Board

Jackie Ferrentino

After Republican leaders in Congress failed to destroy the Affordable Care Act last month, President Trump tweeted that the law would "explode." Now he seems determined to deliver on that prediction through presidential sabotage.

Mr. Trump is threatening to kill a program in the A.C.A. that pays health insurers to offer plans with lower deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses to about seven million lower-income and middle-class people. The president thinks that this will get Democrats to negotiate changes to the 2010 health law. This is cruel and incredibly shortsighted. Without these subsidies, health care would be unaffordable for many Americans, including people who voted for Mr. Trump because they were frustrated by high medical costs.

These subsidies lower the cost of medical care for people who earn between 100 percent and 250

percent of the federal poverty level. For a family of four, that income is \$24,600 to \$61,500 a year. For example, the deductible on qualifying Obamacare policies for families living at the poverty line in Charlotte, N.C., would be \$1,000, compared with \$10,000 for a standard policy, according to government data. In Philadelphia a similar family would have no deductible, compared with a \$5,000 deductible for policies without subsidies. The government is expected to spend \$7 billion on subsidies in 2017, and nearly 60 percent of the 12.2 million people who bought Obamacare policies for 2017 benefit from them.

Conservatives have been trying for years to end these subsidies in an effort to destabilize the A.C.A. House Republicans filed a lawsuit in 2014 to prevent the Obama administration from making these payments to insurers without appropriations from Congress. A Federal District Court ruled in the Republicans' favor, but President Barack Obama appealed the case and the payments have continued

— so far, at least. Mr. Trump has to decide how to proceed.

It is not surprising that Mr. Trump would see the subsidies as a bargaining chip. Governing, to him, is a matter of quick-hit deals, and he shows no concern about gambling with the health of millions of people.

Even if Mr. Trump does not end the subsidies, experts say, many insurers are already skittish about the administration's animosity toward the A.C.A. They could stop selling Obamacare policies if the payments went away. Some counties in red states like Arizona, Oklahoma and Tennessee could be left with no insurers for individuals and families that do not get coverage through employers. Companies that remain would increase premiums by an average of 19 percent to make up for the loss of government money, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Many insurance companies and health experts are also worried that the government will stop enforcing the A.C.A. provision that requires people to buy coverage or pay a

penalty. That would encourage healthy people to forgo insurance, leaving companies to cover a smaller, sicker population. The administration has suggested that it might look the other way if individuals don't buy insurance.

There would be a huge political cost for disrupting the health insurance market. A recent Kaiser poll found that 61 percent of Americans say that Mr. Trump and Republicans in Congress would be responsible for any future problems with the A.C.A. Lawmakers need look no further than recent town hall meetings where voters lashed out at Republicans for trying to take health care away from 24 million people. Referring to the subsidies, Mr. Trump recently told *The Wall Street Journal*: "Obamacare is dead next month if it doesn't get that money. I haven't made my viewpoint clear yet. I don't want people to get hurt."

This isn't Mr. Trump's promised "insurance for everybody." It sounds more like a two-bit Hollywood villain promising carnage if he doesn't get his way.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Democrats turn to Sanders and his star power to rebuild the party

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

LOUISVILLE — Earlier this week, before heading downstairs to speak to nearly 3,000 Kentuckians, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) reminisced about his 2016 presidential

campaign. After he had gained steam, and his rallies had become arena-size events, he was struck by the difference between his crowds

and those at Democratic Party fundraisers.

"We'd have a rally with five or ten thousand young people out, a great

deal of energy," Sanders said between bites of a steak sandwich. "Then I'd walk into a room and there'd be a thousand people from the Democratic Party. You were in two different worlds — one full of energy, one full of idealism. And the other, full of good people — I don't mean to put them down — who are the bedrock of the Democratic Party."

At that moment, Sanders was on the second day of a week-long, cross-country speaking tour with Democratic National Committee Chairman Thomas Perez. The DNC was picking up half the bill for the 12-seat chartered plane as well as the venues, including the downtown Louisville Palace.

As Sanders spoke, Perez was a block away, meeting with party leaders who — like most Democratic leaders — had backed Hillary Clinton for president. Later that evening, they would take a stage and praise Sanders, who is not a Democrat, for reinvigorating their party. A chairman who defeated Sanders's preferred candidate to run the DNC was now touring as his opening act.

"Our values are aligned on so many of the critical issues that confront the nation and the Democratic Party," Perez said in an interview. "When people actually look at the platform of the Democratic Party — they'll say, 'We need community college!' — well, look at the platform. When they say, 'We need a \$15 minimum wage' — look at the platform."

(Bastien Inzaurrede/The Washington Post)

Democratic National Committee Chair Tom Perez and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) held a rally in Portland, Maine, April 17. Perez lashed out at President Trump and Sanders vowed to "radically transform the Democratic Party." Democratic National Committee Chair Tom Perez and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) held a rally in Portland, Maine, April 17. (Bastien Inzaurrede/The Washington Post)

The first 24 hours of the tour revealed both the strength and the seams in the strategy. It began in Portland, Maine, on Monday evening, where a crowd wrapped around the State Theatre to see the "Come Together, Fight Back" tour. Maine's Democratic Party leaders flitted through the crowds with clipboards, encouraging fans of Sanders to sign up.

*[Republicans avoid big loss by forcing runoff in Ga. House race]*

They had competition. A group of rogue "Berniecrats" had brought clipboards of their own, with

petitions encouraging the senator to run for president in 2020 as an independent. When the rally began, a mention of Perez was met with boos audible over mild applause; the loudest heckling came from a man whose T-shirt declared his support for the Green Party.

Once onstage, Perez described his Democratic Party as a vessel for activists, with a platform they could love. It was activists, he said, who stopped the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. It was activists who had passed a minimum-wage hike, which Maine's Republican governor had halted.

"In these first 100 days, the most remarkable thing is not what Donald Trump did — the most remarkable thing is what you did across the county," Perez said.

The chairman left the stage, and a disembodied announcer introduced Sanders. This time, there were no boos; over 48 minutes, Sanders mentioned Perez's DNC only once.

"Our job is to radically transform the Democratic Party into a 50-state party," Sanders said. "Our job is to create a democratic Democratic Party, a grass-roots party, where decisions are made from the bottom up."

Any Sanders supporter could crack that code. In 2016, especially after it became clear that he could not win the nomination, Sanders and his delegates waged a largely successful campaign to move the party to the left.

The platform Perez could not praise quickly enough had been altered to endorse Sanders's economic issues, as well as marijuana decriminalization and the end of a ban on federal money paying for abortion. A "unity commission," created to appease Sanders delegates who blamed "superdelegates" for skewing the primaries, had finally been impeached — and Sanders was watching to see whether it followed his advice.

Since Clinton's general election loss, there was little resistance inside the party to Sanders's politics. As the plane flew to Louisville, a Harvard-Harris poll was being released that found Sanders polling at 57 percent favorability with all voters. No politician in America was better-liked.

"Sanders is an asset to the Democrats," said Mark Penn, a former Clinton pollster and strategist, in a statement about the poll.

In Kentucky, where Clinton pipped Sanders in the primary, the senator's star power followed him to

every stop. After he finished his steak sandwich, a souvenir-seeker raced to his half-empty plate and picked up a french fry, waving it at a table of his friends like a trophy.

On a midday visit to Frankfort, where the millennial-focused news site Mic had convened a group of Kentucky voters, Sanders walked past posters from his 2016 bid that had never left the venue's windows; selfie-seekers waited more than an hour to see him.

"The reason we are on this tour is to do nothing less than try to revitalize American democracy," Sanders said.

Doing so did not mean going easy on Democrats. In Frankfort, as in Monday's speeches, Perez and Sanders suggested that Democrats had lost voters to Trump's GOP because they had stopped talking to them. Perez and Sanders took turns explaining to the Mic-assembled panel that Democrats wanted to help them all — to provide free college education, to pay coal miners' pensions, to make health care cheaper.

"I suspect that the Democratic Party here in Kentucky has not done the kind of job that it should have done in explaining [that] hundreds of thousands of people have received health care," Sanders said to a scrum of reporters after the panel.

*[Republicans avoided calamity in this month's two special elections, but a lot more peril lies ahead]*

Perez, who has criticized Democrats for the same sins, took more shots at the Trump presidency. "The cost of one trip to Mar-a-Lago would fund the White House logs database for 13 years," he said, after a windup about the Trump budget's spending cuts. On the way back to Louisville, Perez suggested that Democrats had countless opportunities to portray Trump as a phony populist; the challenge was in focusing and getting anyone to listen.

"Your life is not going to improve if your family member, who has an opioid addiction, loses his health care," Perez said. "Your life isn't going to improve if an infrastructure bill doesn't have prevailing wage requirements."

On Tuesday, as the tour continued, Perez and Sanders fell in and out of sync. Perez had spent weeks talking up Jon Ossoff, the Democrat trying to win the suburban Atlanta congressional district vacated when Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price joined the Trump administration. After a closer-than-expected April 11 defeat in a Kansas district, Perez thought

Democrats needed to "swing at everything."

Sanders was less interested in the Ossoff race. "He's not a progressive," he said. He was endorsing Democrats based on their economic populism; they could differ from progressives on social issues but not on the threat of the mega-rich to American politics. Soon, he said, the 5-to-4 majority on the Supreme Court was likely to make it legal for the wealthy to give unlimited sums to candidates, and the only way to fight back was grass-roots politicking and small donations.

"If you are running in rural Mississippi, do you hold the same criteria as if you're running in San Francisco?" he said. "I think you'd be a fool to think that's all the same."

Sanders had said this before, and each time, he had sparked anger from a center-left ready to accuse him of abandoning women or nonwhite voters. On Thursday, he was set to campaign in Omaha for Heath Mello, a Democrat running for mayor who had previously backed a bill requiring ultrasounds for women considering abortions.

The Daily 202 newsletter

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But Perez and Sanders were on the same page about candidate diversity. "I live in the people's republic of Takoma Park," Perez said. "If you demand fealty on every single issue, then it's a challenge. The Democratic Party platform acknowledges that we're pro-choice, but there are communities, like some in Kansas, where people have a different position."

By Tuesday night, the tour was starting to click. There was just one heckler in the Palace, who yelled "corporate shill" at the chairman during a quiet moment. As in Maine, there was a standing ovation when a local member of Congress, a Democrat who had backed Clinton, endorsed Sanders's call for "single-payer," Canada-style health care.

And there was a smoother stage show. Perez himself introduced Sanders, and the senator told their audience to "bring millions of people into the political process" and create "a political system not dominated by a handful of billionaires."

After 45 minutes, Perez re-emerged from backstage, following Sanders to the place where a bluegrass band called Relic was playing "This Land Is Your Land." The two of them clapped along, belting out Woody Guthrie's lyrics. From a



## The New York Times After Georgia's Close Race, Montana Democrats Demand Party's Attention (UNE)

Jonathan Martin

BOZEMAN, Mont. — Rob Quist surveyed his audience last week at an annual powwow of Montana's Native American tribes, a kaleidoscope of feathers, moccasins and beads, before turning his thoughts to a very different audience, far to the east: the national Democratic Party.

"They've been on the sidelines a little too long, and it's time for them to get in the game," said Mr. Quist, the banjo-playing Democratic nominee in a special May election to fill Montana's at-large House seat.

But, he predicted, "they're coming in."

They may have little choice. After a hard-fought campaign to fill a House seat in the Atlanta suburbs fell just short of outright victory on Tuesday, the House seat in Montana vacated by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is up next, and a groundswell of new activism on the left is demanding attention.

Democrats have now chalked up a closer-than-expected loss in a House special election in Kansas this month and a near miss in Georgia, leading logically to discussions of how hard to play going forward — not only in the June 20 runoff between their first-time candidate Jon Ossoff and the Republican Karen Handel in Georgia, but also in looming House races in Montana and South Carolina.

But grass-roots liberals are not about to let party leaders lapse back into traditional red state, blue state assumptions. Instead, the Democrats' enthusiastic base is demanding to compete on terrain that once seemed forbidding, a formula for disputes now and in 2018 about where to put the party's money and field operations.

"The party clearly has no clue how to build and nurture a movement," said Markos Mouliatsas, the founder of the liberal website Daily Kos, which has taken the lead in raising money for Democratic candidates first in Georgia, then Kansas and now Montana. "We're going to lose, so stay out' is not a winning message, ever, and it certainly doesn't work in these times, when we have a national resistance energized and looking for ways to engage."

Mr. Ossoff's taking 48.1 percent of the vote on Tuesday in the reliably Republican district in Georgia vacated by Tom Price, the health and human services secretary, means a long, expensive campaign to the runoff. Republicans are already rolling in the negative advertising to stop Mr. Ossoff's improbable rise.

And President Trump continues to prove that he cannot keep himself away from Georgia's Sixth District campaign.

But to liberal activists, those moves are only a call to arms. Hillary Clinton and the Democrats waged a campaign that was overly cautious and insufficiently populist, they say, resulting in the election of perhaps the most detested candidate in the left's modern history. Now the left wants to go for broke.

The internecine dispute over where to play could last well beyond this season of special elections and into the 2018 midterm elections. At issue is whether the campaign arm of the House Democrats and the Democratic National Committee should dedicate money and staff to campaigns that may appear to be a reach but that could still galvanize small-dollar donors and activists hungry to compete.

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont says they should, expressing regret that the party did not help its nominee in Kansas and vowing to campaign for Mr. Quist. Senior union officials have also urged party leaders to lean in to this series of special elections, which will continue in South Carolina in June and potentially in Pennsylvania should Representative Tom Marino become drug czar, according to Democratic sources briefed on the conversations who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Democratic officials make no apology for their decision to stay away from the Kansas race, where their nominee lost by less than seven percentage points in a Wichita-based district that Mr. Trump carried by 27 points in November. They say their money has been better spent helping Mr. Ossoff.

"I don't know that it makes a lot of sense to spend resources where you don't have a shot at winning," Representative Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, the third-ranking House Democrat, said. "People tend to get disappointed."

Mr. Clyburn noted that few leading Kansas Democrats said they "thought they were headed to a victory" rather than just a "closer than expected" finish.

But that is not the case in Montana, where a preference for Republican presidential candidates belies the state's enduring Democratic tradition. Its governor, Steve Bullock, is a Democrat. One of its senators, Jon Tester, is a Democrat. And now its one House seat is vacant.

"National folks should be coming in here," Governor Bullock said. "It is a winnable race."

Mr. Bullock should know. His reelection last year, by four percentage points against the Republican Greg Gianforte, was the fourth consecutive gubernatorial race that Democrats have won in Big Sky country. The state has also not sent two Republican senators to Washington at the same time since the Constitution was amended to require the popular election of senators.

Yet to the frustration of Democrats here, Mr. Quist has received no defense from national third-party groups — and he's running against Mr. Gianforte, who was just beaten statewide. Mr. Gianforte and three Washington-based conservative organizations have spent more than \$1.4 million on television and radio since February, much of it attacking Mr. Quist.

Democratic officials, contributors and activists in Montana, which Mr. Sanders carried in the presidential primary, are clearly agitated over their Washington-based party. They say the top-down leadership never misses an opportunity to play it safe.

Echoing the demands that progressives made just over a decade ago when another Republican president ignited the liberal rank-and-file, Montana Democrats express irritation that they must persuade their party to contest red-tinged seats. And in some cases, they are even borrowing the animating language from the backlash to President George W. Bush's second term.

"This is the time for the 50-state strategy. What are they waiting for?" said Julia Shaida, a 60-year-old Bozeman yoga teacher who recently moved here from New York. "The energy is here. I read

that they didn't support the Kansas candidate. That's very upsetting to me."

Standing outside Mr. Quist's new Bozeman headquarters on Saturday, a few hours after a spring snow shower and before she was to begin canvassing, Ms. Shaida made a plea: "Don't be afraid of a populist message."

The irony of that message may have been lost on a crowd heavier on Patagonia and North Face outerwear than well-worn Carhartt trousers, packed into an old labor hall still replete with Teamsters logos.

But the combination of old and new — Montana's enduring union tradition alongside its new, liberal transplants — is keeping the state competitive for Democrats.

Mr. Quist, 69, is an unmistakable product of the older Montana, quick to note the depth of his roots (third-generation Montanan) and to explain how his ancestors made their way to Cut Bank, not far from the Canadian border. In his cowboy hat, boots and black jeans, the mustachioed Mr. Quist could be mistaken for the Marlboro Man, if that icon of Western grit had spent much of the last few decades playing gigs in fraternity house basements as frontman for the Mission Mountain Wood Band.

His Republican opponent reflects the changing nature of the state, although he is more conservative than many of the new arrivals. A New Jersey native, Mr. Gianforte, 56, became a billionaire when he sold the software company he founded, RightNow Technologies, to Oracle.

Some Democrats here complain that no money has been spent focusing attention on the same issues that sank Mr. Gianforte's run for governor last year, like his lawsuit to stop access to a river near his Bozeman home. Access to public lands is a perennial hot-button issue in vast Western states, particularly in pristine Montana.

"They need to come in and rip the scab off the message that hurt Gianforte last year," said Evan Barrett, a nearly 50-year veteran of Montana Democratic politics, alluding to the ad assault Democrats unleashed over Mr. Gianforte's lawsuit. "Those wounds are still very fresh."

In his address at the headquarters opening, Mr. Quist invoked “Texas oil tycoons” funding national conservative groups who, he charged, would like to have their way with the state.

And little is being done by Democrats to prop up the Libertarian nominee on the ballot, who could siphon votes from the Republican. Usually, Democrats are not shy about such political mischief-making.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Andrews

Updated April 19, 2017 7:27 p.m. ET

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—Democrats Wednesday launched the second phase of their fight to capture a long-held Republican House seat in Georgia, but the party’s attempts to unify remain hindered by lingering internal divisions.

First-time candidate Jon Ossoff, who had raised more than \$8 million in a matter of months from Democrats across the country, garnered 48.1% of the vote in a crowded open primary Tuesday, just shy of the 50% threshold needed to capture the seat outright.

Now, he faces a June showdown with Republican Karen Handel, a former secretary of state whose 19.8% of the vote topped the field of 11 GOP candidates, in an election to fill the seat vacated by newly appointed Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price.

While Mr. Ossoff’s candidacy is drawing national attention and has been a rallying point for many grass-roots activists, he has run as a traditional Democrat without adopting the fiery tone powering the liberal resistance to President Donald Trump across the country.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, in an interview Tuesday in Louisville, Ky., said he didn’t know much about Mr. Ossoff, a 30-year-old former House staffer. Mr. Sanders said he isn’t prepared to back Democrats just because of a party label.

“If you run as a Democrat, you’re a Democrat,” he said. “Some Democrats are progressive and some Democrats are not.”

Asked if Mr. Ossoff is a progressive, Mr. Sanders, an independent who challenged Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential primary, demurred. “I don’t know,” he said.

Mr. Ossoff’s campaign didn’t respond to requests for comment.

Mr. Gianforte is leading the race, according to private surveys that both parties have conducted, although a Democratic group, House Majority PAC, was to gauge the race with a new poll this week. While Mr. Trump remains more popular here than in most states, there is ample anti-Trump energy on the left: Organizers estimated that as many as 10,000 people turned out in 20-degree weather for the January Women’s March in Helena, a gathering Mr. Bullock said

was the largest crowd ever to rally in front of the state capitol.

Becky Weed, a sheep rancher from Belgrade, Mont., said after an agriculture-focused event for Mr. Quist that her party needed to open its eyes to what such a turnout meant.

“The first thing they could start doing is listening to campaigns like this,” said Ms. Weed. (“Bad name for a farmer,” she joked.) “We got into trouble because they weren’t

really listening to people at a grass-roots level. They were trying to direct things from on high, and it’s repairable — but we got to do it fast.”

Nancy Keenan, the Montana Democratic chairwoman, said the seeds for an upset had been sown.

“Get in the game, get in the game,” she said in an interview at the state party office in Helena, “because you’re not going to take credit for it after we’ve won it.”

## Democrats Reload for Georgia Runoff, But Party Divisions Remain

Reid J. Epstein  
and Natalie

The Georgia special election is just one stop on the Democrats’ course for a comeback after losing the White House in the November election and it isn’t an easy path.

They need to take 24 seats to regain the House majority. The next contests are in Montana and South Carolina, which are also GOP strongholds.

Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez took the strength of Mr. Ossoff’s campaign as the latest signal that Democrats are making headway.

“They’ve pulled out the heavy artillery, they have Donald Trump making robocalls,” Mr. Perez said. “My main message from this is swing the bat, swing it early, swing it often and swing it with your best shot.”

Mr. Ossoff did draw more votes on Tuesday than the Democratic candidate in the 2014 midterm. About 92,300 people backed him, compared with 71,400 who voted Democratic four years ago.

Still, the runoff with Ms. Handel will be daunting, given the partisan leaning of the district and that Republican votes won’t be splintered by multiple candidates. The open primary on Tuesday featured 18 candidates, and most were Republicans.

“Republicans are united,” she told CNN Wednesday. “We know this is an important race and it is going to stay in the hands of a Republican.”

Messrs. Perez and Sanders are in the midst of a coast-to-coast tour titled “Come Together and Fight Back,” but Mr. Sanders remains just as uninterested in coming together with the Democratic Party as he did while fighting its leaders during last year’s presidential primary campaign.

Mr. Perez, who plans to stump Thursday for Mr. Ossoff, sees electing Democrats as the key to recovery.

Mr. Sanders told a Maine crowd Monday night that “our job is to radically transform the Democratic Party.” He put the onus on Mr. Perez and other party leaders to adopt his aggressive power-to-the-people worldview.

“It can’t be just symbolic, it has got to be real,” Mr. Sanders said. “It has got to be that those ideas are allowed to become the dominant theme of the Democratic Party, and that’s the choice that Democrats are going to have to make.”

For Mr. Perez, a former Obama administration Labor secretary with little national profile, the symbolism of being seen stumping with Mr. Sanders is to highlight the party’s liberal wing and his embrace of it.

“When they see Tom Perez and Bernie Sanders in the same place talking about the same issues, that goes a long way toward their understanding that, you know what, if I want to see progress in this country, I need to align with the Democrats,” Mr. Perez said during an interview while riding between events in Frankfort and Louisville on Tuesday.

Mr. Sanders’s progressive test lies largely on economic issues, not social or cultural ones.

He plans to campaign Thursday in Nebraska with Heath Mello, a former Nebraska state senator who in 2009 sponsored legislation requiring women to look at ultrasound image of their fetus before receiving an abortion.

At the time Mr. Mello called the proposal a “positive first step” toward reducing the number of abortions in Nebraska. It became law months later.

Eight years later Mr. Mello remains opposed to abortion, said Nebraska Democratic Party Chairwoman Jane Kleeb, who said abortion hasn’t been an issue in Mr. Mello’s campaign for Omaha mayor.

“Voters know he’s pro-life but we have a lot of pro-life Democrats in

our state,” Ms. Kleeb said. “It’s not the single issue people vote on anymore.”

Mr. Sanders called himself “100% pro-choice” and said that if Mr. Mello wins his May 9 election against an incumbent Republican it will energize Democrats to seek office in other conservative states.

“If this fellow wins in Nebraska, that would be a shot across the board, that in a state like Nebraska a progressive Democrat can win, that will give hope to folks in other conservative states that perhaps they can win as well,” Mr. Sanders said.

Mr. Perez said the Democratic Party platform supports abortion rights but doesn’t require its candidates to do so. “If you demand fealty on every single issue, then you know it’s a challenge,” he said.

In Kentucky, a state Mr. Sanders lost to Mrs. Clinton by less than 2,000 votes, the two wings of the Democratic Party have yet to come together, said Mary Nishimuta, a Sanders supporter during the primary who on Monday became the executive director of the Kentucky Democratic Party.

“I’m not going to sit here and sing ‘Kumbaya’ and say everybody is going to walk down a happy path together,” said Ms. Nishimuta, who hosted Messrs. Perez and Sanders Tuesday at a coffee shop she owns in Frankfort. She called the Perez-Sanders tour “a really important step to rebuild trust and rebuild the belief that the Democratic Party will fight for people.”

Even among party officials there a clear sense that last year’s elections damaged the Democratic brand among people who ought to make up the party base.

“There are a lot of people who have Democratic values who may not see themselves as a Democrat,” said Michael Blake, a New York state assemblyman who in February won a post as a DNC vice chairman.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Rove : What Does Georgia Say About 2018?

Karl Rove

April 19, 2017

6:58 p.m. ET

Here's the takeaway from Tuesday's special election in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District: Democrats and Republicans have reasons to be concerned.

Democrat sachems cleared the field for 30-year-old Jon Ossoff and showered him with millions of dollars. They hoped to clinch victory without a runoff by clearing 50% of the vote in the first round against the splintered GOP field. It didn't happen.

Mr. Ossoff won 48.1%, only 1.3 points better than Hillary Clinton did in the district last fall. Because the early in-person and absentee vote was reported first, he started the evening with 61.5%. But as the votes cast on Election Day were tallied, his numbers fell and finally settled below the 50% threshold. Mr. Ossoff now goes to a June 20 runoff.

Democrats have a decision to make. Should they keep plowing millions into this race? Or do they divert resources to the May 25 special election for a House seat in Montana—a state that actually elects Democrats? The party could also simply stockpile dollars for 2018.

Complicating the decision are Mr. Ossoff's

lackluster political skills. He tries compensating for his youth by speaking clichés slowly in a bass voice, betraying excessive ambition. It doesn't help that he lives outside the district. All this largely escaped attention as 11 Republicans—four of them credible candidates—cut each other up. But Mr. Ossoff's shortcomings will be more visible in a two-person race.

Also advancing to the runoff, with 19.8% of the vote, was Karen Handel, a former Georgia secretary of state. She has campaigned as the traditional, conservative Republican that she is. As an added advantage, she once was chairman of the Fulton County Commission, giving her chops on local issues in the state's most populous county.

A two-person runoff will magnify Mr. Ossoff's liberal views and give Ms. Handel a good shot at winning the 13% of district voters who supported former Rep. Tom Price last fall but did not vote for Donald Trump.

But Ms. Handel has a reputation as a poor fundraiser and lost primaries for governor (2010) and senator (2014). It's also unclear if the GOP will remain unified in this deep-red district. The major Republican candidates earned 92,590 votes compared with Mr. Ossoff's 92,390. Ms. Handel has little room for defections.

The quality of each side's ground game will prove critical in the runoff.

Ms. Handel's victory could depend on how many volunteers show up at her headquarters or that of the Congressional Leadership Fund, the Republicans' principal outside group in the race.

A defeat could foreshadow major Republican losses in 2018. Still, neither party's approach to this special election is sustainable or provides an obvious path to victory in the midterms.

Democrats will not be able to clear the field in each priority contest or shower candidates with Mr. Ossoff's record spending of perhaps \$10 million. There won't be enough open races in 2018 for Democrats to pick up the 24 seats they need for control of the House. They'll mostly face incumbents, who tend to win re-election, except in massive wave elections like 2006 and 2010.

Republicans relied on the Congressional Leadership Fund's attack ads to keep Mr. Ossoff under 50%. Along with the National Republican Congressional Committee, the group will fill airwaves and computer screens with spots as the runoff approaches. But not all 2018 GOP candidate can count on similar levels of support.

There are 23 Republican incumbents in House districts Mrs. Clinton won. There are 47 in districts more Democratic than Georgia's Sixth. At least 28 of these are similar to Rep. Price's former stomping grounds: suburbs with

white-collar, college-educated Republicans who are sometimes lukewarm toward Mr. Trump.

One astute operative suggested that Republican incumbents need to hold more town-hall meetings, not fewer. Let everybody vent, wear out the professional left-wing protesters, and lower the temperature. Lead voters to say, "I may not agree with everything my congressman does, but he listens, has good reasons for doing what he does, and cares." It wouldn't hurt if the GOP proves it can govern by passing a pro-growth tax cut and repealing and replacing ObamaCare.

It's impossible at this stage to know who will control the House in 2019. The first round in Georgia didn't clarify matters much.

But it's undeniable that both parties are in trouble. Since January, the Republicans' unfavorability rating is up eight points, according to the Pew Research Center. The Democrats' is up six points. Public disgust with politicians, already sky-high, is getting worse. Maybe next year's elections will be remembered as the lesser-of-two-evils midterm.

*Mr. Rove helped organize the political-action committee American Crossroads and is the author of "The Triumph of William McKinley" (Simon & Schuster, 2015).*

Appeared in the Apr. 20, 2017, print edition.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Gramm and Solon : Do You Want Reagan's Economy or Obama's?

Phil Gramm and Michael Solon

Updated April 19, 2017 7:00 p.m. ET

The best way to gauge America's capacity to reignite economic growth through tax reform is to move beyond congressional economic models and look to the empirical evidence of our historical ability to grow and prosper. America's economic exceptionalism has been the product of freedom and opportunity, secured through limited government. When government policies have strengthened or impeded these sources of American exceptionalism, they have yielded quantifiably different results.

The economic policies implemented by Presidents Reagan and Obama were the polar extremes of postwar

policies. The economic consequences of those policies defined the highs and lows of America's postwar experience. These extremes help define what might be expected if this administration and Congress are successful in reversing the Obama program and moving toward a more Reagan-type policy of tax reform and regulatory relief.

Mr. Obama implemented policies dramatically different from the postwar norm. Marginal tax rates soared; federal spending spiraled with a nearly trillion-dollar stimulus; Social Security Disability and food-stamp qualifications were eased; work requirements in welfare programs were suspended; Medicare and Medicaid were expanded and ObamaCare created. Federal debt doubled, and public and private debt held by the Federal

Reserve quadrupled. New legislation, an unprecedented number of new regulations, and a torrent of executive orders transformed the role of government in American life.

Dramatically different policies were followed by dramatically different economic results. Economic growth during the Obama years averaged an astonishingly low 1.47%, as compared with the 3.4% average throughout all the postwar booms and busts before 2009. The extraordinary economic failure of the Obama era is not found in the recession that ended six months into his presidency but in the subsequent failed recovery, where real growth in gross domestic product averaged 2.1% per year, less than half the 4.5% average during previous postwar recoveries of similar duration.

Even after Mr. Obama announced a "summer of recovery" in 2010, the Congressional Budget Office was repeatedly forced to cut GDP and federal revenue estimates—by a total of \$9 trillion and \$4.2 trillion, respectively—due to weak economic growth. Federal revenues were supposed to rise by \$650 billion over the following decade because of the Obama 2013 tax increase. They are now projected to fall by almost five times that amount because economic growth continues to falter.

GDP growth averaged 2.5% between 1974 and 1980. After taking office during a recession in 1981, Reagan cut marginal tax rates, cut nondefense and entitlement spending, and reduced the regulatory burden. Once those policies were in place, economic growth averaged 4.6% during the

remainder of his presidency and federal revenues grew at double-digit rates in four of his last six years in office.

With efforts now under way to repeal the Obama program and replicate, at least in part, the successful tax reform of the Reagan era, it seems reasonable to assume that the economic benefits from these changes would help to pull the economy out of its current low-growth rut and propel it toward its historical postwar norm. Lifting the economy from the CBO's post-Obama projection of 1.8% growth to the 3.4% postwar average would generate \$4.6 trillion of additional federal revenues over 10 years.

Even if tax reform and the repeal of the Obama program closed only half the gap between the current 1.8% GDP growth rate and the 3.4% GDP growth rate that the economy averaged for the previous 64 years, that alone would deliver \$2.3 trillion in new revenues due to higher growth over the next 10

years. This is important because together with the real reforms contained in the House tax-reform bill, this growth potential would make it possible for the House to drop the border-adjustment provision, which would supposedly raise \$1.1 trillion in revenue. This change alone would remove the biggest obstacle to passing tax reform.

Budget and economic data over the seven postwar decades prove that American exceptionalism flourishes when supported by policies that promote freedom and opportunity and disappears when they are suppressed. But the CBO's methods do not recognize that truth. No single part of the Obama program was ever scored in advance by the CBO as losing \$4.2 trillion in federal revenues, but those losses reflect the totality of the impact of his policies.

No single Reagan action was ever scored by the CBO as producing the equivalent of \$2.9 trillion in new

revenues (relative to the current GDP), but that was the overall result of his program, which increased annual economic growth by an additional 1% over his presidency. The CBO originally assumed that the 1986 tax reform would produce no economic benefits and that the 1997 Balanced Budget Act would have only a small positive effect, yet together they helped produce a quarter-century of rapid growth, surging federal revenues and a balanced budget.

Since its models are incapable of distinguishing between failed and successful economic policies, the CBO will not score the economic growth and federal revenue coming from improved economic policy. If the House drops the border-adjustment provision, the current tax-reform bill could still be considered in the context of the budget reconciliation process, which requires only 51 votes in the Senate. But under Senate rules, a tax reform passed that way would be in place for only 10 years. If the

reforms work as they have in the past, Republicans will win the 2018 elections, and then they can make the tax reform permanent.

Critics will denounce the idea that good policies have anything to do with economic growth. These are largely the same critics who have spent most of the past eight years denying that President Obama's policies had anything to do with poor economic performance. But America itself is proof that policies matter. After all, policies of freedom and opportunity are what allowed America to take the world's "huddled masses" and produce the most impressive empirical evidence the world has ever seen.

*Mr. Gramm, a former chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, is a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. Mr. Solon is a partner of US Policy Metrics.*

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## Bill O'Reilly's Fox News career comes to a swift end amid growing sexual harassment claims (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/paul.farhi>

Fox News on Wednesday ended its association with Bill O'Reilly, the combative TV host and commentator who has ruled cable-news ratings for nearly two decades and was the signature figure in the network's rise as a powerful political player.

The conservative-leaning host's downfall was swift and steep, set in motion less than three weeks ago by revelations of a string of sexual harassment complaints against him. The questions about his conduct represented yet another black eye to Fox, which had dealt with a sexual harassment scandal involving its co-founder and then-chairman Roger Ailes, just last summer.

*[The fall of Roger Ailes: He made Fox News his 'locker room']*

"After a thorough and careful review of the allegations, the company and Bill O'Reilly have agreed that Bill O'Reilly will not be returning to the Fox News Channel," 21st Century Fox, the channel's parent company, said in a statement Wednesday. The ousted host stood by his earlier denials of the allegations in a statement issued late Wednesday afternoon.

"Over the past 20 years at Fox News, I have been extremely proud to launch and lead one of the most successful news programs in history, which has consistently

informed and entertained millions of Americans and significantly contributed to building Fox into the dominant news network in television," he said. "It is tremendously disheartening that we part ways due to completely unfounded claims.

"But that is the unfortunate reality many of us in the public eye must live with today. I will always look back on my time at Fox with great pride in the unprecedented success we achieved and with my deepest gratitude to all my dedicated viewers. I wish only the best for Fox News Channel."

The host of "The O'Reilly Factor" got the news while awaiting a flight back to the U.S. from a vacation in Italy. His representatives said he was "resigned" to his demise, having monitored rapidly deteriorating negotiations over his exit over the past several days. O'Reilly wasn't directly involved in the discussions with the family of Rupert Murdoch, which controls Fox and 21st Century Fox; his attorney, Fred Newman, conducted the talks.

In the end, Newman couldn't save his client's job. People close to O'Reilly said Rupert Murdoch and his sons James and Lachlan, who head 21st Century, effectively decided O'Reilly's fate with little outside discussion. O'Reilly's contract—signed just last month—contains a clause that enables him to be dismissed under a fixed

financial formula, averting protracted negotiations.

The end for O'Reilly was set in motion by a scathing New York Times investigation in early April that revealed that he and Fox had settled five allegations of harassment brought by Fox employees over a 15-year period. The company and O'Reilly paid out \$15 million in exchange for his accusers' silence.

The Murdochs were well aware of the allegations against O'Reilly when they re-signed their star commentator to a new three-year contract that pays him around \$18 million a year. In preparing their story, reporters for the New York Times had sent Fox's executives a long list of questions, placing senior executives on alert months in advance of its publication.

But the prospect that his accusers — bound by non-disclosure agreements as a result of their settlements — wouldn't speak in anything but general terms led the company to believe it could weather the Times story.

In fact, it was a sixth accuser — a former guest on O'Reilly's program named Wendy Walsh — who may have been the key to his unraveling. Unlike the women who received settlements for their complaints, Walsh never sued or settled with O'Reilly, leaving her free to speak in public about her allegations. She did so repeatedly, putting a name,

face and voice to the allegations in media accounts.

Shortly after the Times published its story, advertisers began to flee O'Reilly's program. The boycott kept up as Walsh held press conferences and gave interviews. On Tuesday, another woman came forward, anonymously, to complain that she had been harassed with racial and sexual comment by O'Reilly in 2008.

The Murdochs ultimately concluded that O'Reilly was vulnerable to further complaints and that the continuing publicity about them would make him untenable in advertisers' eyes.

In addition to O'Reilly and Ailes, Fox has also lost popular hosts Greta Van Susteren and Megyn Kelly since the turmoil began last summer. The network, however, continued to roll in record ratings, driven in part by viewer interest in Donald Trump, a longtime friend of Ailes, Murdoch and O'Reilly and a frequent interview guest on Fox programs, including "The O'Reilly Factor."

The loss of O'Reilly, however, is of a different magnitude: "The O'Reilly Factor" has been the network's flagship show for nearly 20 years, and in many ways has embodied its conservative-oriented spirit.

*[How much turmoil can Fox News handle?]*

He still seemed to be at the peak of his popularity and prestige only three weeks ago. His 8 p.m. program, which mixes discussion segments with O'Reilly's pugnacious commentary, drew an average of 4 million viewers each night during the first three months of the year, the most ever for a cable-news program. His popularity, in turn, helped drive Fox News to record ratings and profits. O'Reilly was also the co-author of two books that were at the top of the bestseller lists in April.

O'Reilly had previously survived several controversies during his 21 years at Fox, including a lurid sexual harassment case in 2004 that was fodder for New York's tabloid newspapers. He also beat back a wave of headlines in 2015, when reporters examined his claims about his days as a young reporter and found them to be dubious. All the while, O'Reilly's audience not only stuck with him, but continued to grow.

But this time, the intense media coverage surrounding O'Reilly led to a stampede of advertisers away from O'Reilly's

program, leaving it almost without sponsorship over the past two weeks. Various organizations, including the National Organization for Women, called for O'Reilly's firing, and intermittent protests began outside Fox News's headquarters in New York. Morale among employees at the network reportedly was suffering, too.

The Murdochs also had more than just O'Reilly's TV career to consider: The O'Reilly controversy has been casting a shadow over 21st Century's \$14 billion bid to win the British government's approval to buy Sky TV, the British satellite service. Leaving O'Reilly in place would likely have been a public-relations nightmare for James and Lachlan Murdoch, the sons who head 21st Century Fox, Fox News's parent.

The Murdoch family abandoned a 2011 offer for Sky amid another scandal, the phone-hacking conspiracy perpetrated by employees of the Murdoch-owned News of the World tabloid in London. A parliamentary panel later declared Rupert and James Murdoch to be "unfit" to run a public

company — a description they hoped would not be revived by regulators with the O'Reilly matter hanging over them.

Today's Headlines newsletter

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In the wake of the Ailes scandal last summer, the Murdoch brothers vowed to clean up a workplace environment that women at Fox had described as hostile under Ailes. In one of their few public statements on the matter, they said at the time, "We continue our commitment to maintaining a work environment based on trust and respect."

But those efforts have seemed unavailing, and at times have even seemed hypocritical. Since the Ailes scandal erupted, the company has continued to employ almost all of the senior managers who were in charge when Ailes was allegedly harassing employees, including Bill Shine, currently Fox's co-president. Shine was accused of enabling Ailes's retaliatory efforts against an accuser, Fox contributor Julie Roginsky, in a sexual-harassment

lawsuit Roginsky filed earlier this month.

In the end, even an endorsement from President Trump could not save O'Reilly: In an interview with Times reporters on April 5, Trump called O'Reilly "a good person" and said he should not have settled the complaints made against him. "I don't think Bill did anything wrong," Trump said.

Fox said that Tucker Carlson, host of a discussion program now airing at 9 p.m., will take over O'Reilly's 8 p.m. time slot. "Tucker Carlson Tonight," in turn, will be replaced at 9 p.m. by Fox's 5 p.m. show, "The Five," starting on Monday. "The O'Reilly Factor" will continue for the remainder of the week, with guest hosts Dana Perino and Greg Gutfeld. Martha MacCallum and Sean Hannity will remain in their current spots at 7 p.m and 10 p.m., respectively, and the 5 p.m. hour will be occupied by a new show, hosted by Eric Bolling, starting May 1.

O'Reilly hasn't said what he intends to do next.



## Editorial : The March for Science could save lives

Opinion

Opinion A

column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages).

April 19 at 7:09 PM

WHEN EBOLA began to spread in West Africa in December 2013, it was invisible. A 2-year-old who had been playing near a bat-filled tree in southeastern Guinea died, apparently the first victim, but it took months for health workers to detect and report the spread of a disease with a high mortality. Soon it raged across Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, sickening 28,000 people and killing 11,000. Scientists have now tracked the pathways of the virus in once-unimaginable detail, providing important lessons for preventing another outbreak. This is a terrific example of science at work for society, and it shows why this weekend's March for Science is relevant.

The study of how Ebola spread was carried out with the collaboration of 93 scientists from 53 institutions in 16 countries and published in Nature under lead author Gytis Dudas of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. The team marshaled 1,610 whole genomes of the virus to discover what factors were significant in its spread. They found that only 3.6 percent of the cases spread geographically, indicating that if the mobility of relatively few people had been disrupted, the epidemic might have been braked. Also, they discovered that the virus traveled more often over short distances; faraway cities did not catch fire, as some had feared might happen. They also found that border closures helped: Once the gates shut, virus movement occurred mostly within countries rather than between them.

These findings — and also the discovery that common language, economic output and climate did not

significantly speed or slow the epidemic — underscore the promise of scientific discovery to save lives and make the world safer. Next time a virus outbreak of such ferocity begins, the lessons from fighting Ebola might prevent thousands of deaths. This would not have been possible but for the remarkable advances in recent years in charting the entire genome of a living organism, advances that are supported in part by government funding.

Opinions newsletter

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Many of those organizing and participating in the March for Science say it is a statement of belief in the power of empirical discovery, and not an anti-Trump protest. It is fine to remain nonpartisan, but that should not mean being blissfully ignorant of the realities of politics. The battles to

come in Washington over spending priorities could determine whether the United States will remain a global leader in scientific research.

President Trump's first budget, while declared dead on arrival in Congress, nonetheless starkly reflected his priorities. Along with cuts to environmental and climate science, he proposed to slash 18.3 percent, or about \$5.8 billion, from the National Institutes of Health budget for fiscal 2018. That would send a wave of disruption through biomedical research efforts across the country and around the world. This research is a pillar of American strength in innovation and pays enormous dividends in fighting and preventing disease. As the Ebola research shows, the simple reality is that robustly funding basic science will save lives. That ought to be the basis for bipartisan agreement.