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# FRANCE - EUROPE

## ISIS Terror Attack in Paris Could Put Far-Right Le Pen in Power

Christopher Dickey

on

PARIS—The scene of the crime was well chosen: the most famous boulevard in Paris, the Champs-Élysées, the prestigious address of Cartier and Louis Vuitton, the Lido nightclub, even the Disney store. On a balmy Thursday night, it was mobbed with tourists shopping and strolling. But they were not the target of the man who stepped out of a car and opened fire with an automatic weapon. He was shooting at police, and shooting to kill.

In a terrifying exchange of gunfire, one policeman lost his life, two were wounded, a passer-by was wounded, and the shooter was "neutralized," as the authorities put it. The entire area was shut down by authorities, with well-armed soldiers stationed at the top of the boulevard in front of the Arc de Triomphe, even as the lights on the Eiffel Tower twinkled in the background to mark the top of the hour. Puzzled tourists lingered outside the crime scene tape, some excitedly telling their stories on their phones' live-streaming aps.

Tragic and horrifying as the incident was, the question that looms in the days and hours ahead is how it will affect presidential elections that could change the history of France, of Europe, and of NATO, the most important of America's international alliances.

"It is going to be a big thing," says Gilles Kepel, author of *Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West,"*because the big question is how much it will boost Marine Le Pen."

The leader of the far-right National Front, who is anti-immigrant, anti-European Union, pro-Russian, anti-American, and pro-Trump, has been the leader in the polls going into the first round of the presidential elections on Sunday among a field of 11 candidates. Conventional wisdom and most polls have raised the expectation that in the run-off two weeks later her extremism would be rejected by a massive majority of the voters. But that is far from certain in the wake of a highly publicized terrorist incident.

As Kepel and others have pointed out, based on the ideological writings of jihadists such as Abu Musab al-Suri, the terrorists' goal is to create violent divisions in Europe's population, pitting Christians—"crusaders"—against Muslim immigrants and their descendants, to the point where eventually there is civil war.

In that context, from the jihadist point of view, a Le Pen victory is something devoutly to be wished. And the terrorist incident that could be the tipping point was all too easy to execute.

The attacker drove up beside one of the many police vehicles patrolling the Champs Élysées, got out and started firing with an assault rifle, according to French officials, before other police on the scene shot him dead. Typically the great tourist venues of Paris are patrolled by soldiers in full battle gear armed with FAS automatic rifles, as the result of a string of terrorist attacks. The include the *Charlie Hebdo* and kosher supermarket killings in January 2015, and a coordinated attack on the Bataclan concet hall, a sports stadium, and sidewalk cafes in November the same year, which killed 130 people. Last July, a man in Nice, on the Mediterranean Coast, used a heavy truck to kill 86 people and injure more than 400 during Bastille Day celebrations.

The gunman on the Champs Élysées Thursday night was identified by French authorities as a French citizen, 39 years old, from a suburb east of Paris, who was known to intelligence services. He reportedly had been imprisoned before for attacking police officers, but details have been closely held as searches are carried out for evidence of possible accomplices.

The so-called Islamic State claimed credit for the attack, naming the shooter as Abu Yusuf al-Beljiki, suggesting that ISIS, at least, thought he was Belgian, and heightening suspicions more than one jihadist may have been involved.

Although less widely reported than some of the other atrocities with huge death tolls, the targeting of police officers and soldiers has become a recurrent feature of jihadist attacks in France, where just a month ago a deranged 39-year-old Ziyed Ben Belgacem, drunk and on drugs, was killed after holding a gun to a female soldier's head at Orly Airport.

The attack at Orly followed an incident in February, when a machete-wielding man attacked soldiers on patrol at the Louvre before they shot him dead.

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And last July, less than a year after the terror attacks on bars and a concert hall in Paris, Larossi Abballa, who claimed allegiance to the so-called Islamic State, murdered a senior police officer and his partner, who was also with the police, in front of their 3-year-old son in Magnanville, west of Paris. Abballa the described his crime in detail on Facebook Live before armed police arrived on the scene and killed him.

While most people in France associate terrorist Amedy Coulibaly with the horrific attack on a kosher supermarket in January 2015 shortly after the *Charlie Hebdo* murders, Coulibaly's first victim was a female police officer whom he gunned down in Montrouge, south of Paris.

In 2012, in a killing spree in southern France a lone gunman named Mohammed Merah murdered three French soldiers, two of whom were Muslims, before attacking a Jewish school where three children were among his victims. Eventually Merah was cornered and killed, and for some time the incident was regarded as an isolated atrocity. But Kepel and others now cite it as the beginning of the resurgence of jihadist terrorism in France. In the 1980s and early 1990s there had been a series of assassinations and attacks backed by Iran, or carried out by Sunni radicals connected to a failed revolution in Algeria, a former French colony. After years of quiet, Kepel says, the French services had grown complacent. But that clearly is not the case anymore.

The latest shooting comes a day after police arrested two young men on suspicion of planning a terror attack.

They were detained in the southern port city of Marseille, where a subsequent search of an apartment yielded three kilos of explosives, several guns, and an ISIS flag. As with most of the other terrorists killed or apprehended in Europe in recent years, the two had been imprisoned previously. One of them, a French citizen named Clément Baur, had claimed to be a Chechen jihadist, and is believed to have radicalized his former cellmate, 29-year-old Mahiedine Merabet, who was in jail for various petty criminal offensives. Both are now in custody.

"They were aiming to commit in the very short term, in other words in the next few days, an attack on French soil," Interior Minister Matthias Fekl said Wednesday. Certainly their arsenal suggests the ferocity of their intent.

Even before the Champs-Élysées attack Thursday night, the Marseille arrests had put the country on edge and heightened fears that extremists could target the election in the final days of the campaign or during Sunday's vote.

François Fillon, the candidate for the conservative *Les Républicains* and author of *Defeating Islamic Totalitarianism*, said he would cancel the campaign events he had had been planning for Friday as a result of the shooting. The other major candidates, including Marine Le Pen, followed suit.

The Champs-Elysées remained locked down late on Thursday night and metro stations in the area were also closed. The normally vibrant thoroughfare and tourist attraction was eerily empty, save for police cars and law enforcement officials. A helicopter hovered low above the avenue.

## Daoud : The French Disconnection

Kamel Daoud

There were vast demonstrations then, and they consecrated the aesthetics of a republican front that had come together against the far right. They also created a mythology about how a citizenry could mobilize. Today's denial is a result of that fortunate traumatism.

The far right is now seen as a counterweight, but still not as a main player. It charts the terrain of political discourse, establishes what issues will be debated and gives voice to people's anxieties. But that won't go any further, or so it is said. The National Front exists to arouse fear, not to govern.

This idea also proceeds from the simplistic portrayal of the putative average French voter. The bien-pensant elites see him and her as responsible citizens well aware of what rides on their votes — the "noble savages" of current French politics.

It's a notion as wishful as Rousseau's theory. French voters may not be that noble.

Here's an example. Why else won't Ms. Le Pen become president? Because she's a woman. It's uncouth to say that, but grand political analysis is also made up of petty prejudices. France is a paradoxical country: It was a republic before its time, but it remains a monarchy after its time, in its mores, its practices and its vision of power.

It would have been easier to understand how same-sex marriage could unleash such stormy debates in a conservative monarchy like Spain. But it was in France that the law was bitterly fought over before it passed, and that it became a test of certain politicians' modernism.

Similarly, Ms. Le Pen has worked to appear electable by casting herself not as a woman who wants to improve the lot of women, but as a female politician who wants to save France. She talks mostly about immigrants, terrorism, Islamism, colonization and the euro. Not so much about the status of women.

Meanwhile, by talking about immigrants, terrorism, Islamism, colonization and the euro in the stark terms that she favors, Ms. Le Pen has little by little lifted taboos and normalized some scandalous propositions. Populists like her realize that the best tool of propaganda isn't accuracy, but the internet and the fake. Their focus isn't truth, only effects. And it works: Voters today don't read long analyses; they remember forceful assertions.

So why is it, finally, that Ms. Le Pen cannot become president? Because while the far right has changed its discourse, the mainstream elites still hold on to their old ways of seeing the world, or imagining what it is.

Their analysis of the rise of populism is out of sync. It rests on assumptions, faulty reasoning and denial. The prospect of a Le Pen presidency upsets a kind of political positivism: the view that democracy can go only from good to better, from being a necessity to being a right. Ms. Le Pen's election would run counter to the course of history, the reasoning goes, and therefore it cannot be. This is a happy ending for elites: a narrative convention, a marketable concept, a variant form of utopia — and the basis of an irrational political analysis.

## Paris Shootout Leaves Police Officer and Gunman Dead (UNE)

Alissa J. Rubin, Aurelien Breeden and Benoît Morenne

PARIS — A gunman wielding an assault rifle on Thursday night killed a police officer on the city's most iconic boulevard, the Champs-Élysées, stirring France's worst fears of a terrorist attack, which could tip voting in a hotly contested presidential election that starts on Sunday.

The gunman was shot dead by the police as he tried to flee on foot; two other police officers and a bystander were wounded. The police quickly blocked access to the crowded thoroughfare, lined with restaurants and high-end stores, as a helicopter hovered overhead.

The attack set off panic and a scramble for shelter, and officers began searching for possible accomplices after the attack.

Near midnight, President François Hollande said in an address to the nation that the attack appeared to be an act of terrorism. The Islamic State claimed responsibility in a message posted on a jihadi channel, and the Paris prosecutor said he had opened a terrorism investigation.

The attack came only days before the start of a presidential vote that could reverberate across Europe, and as the 11 candidates were having their final quasi-debate on the France 2 television network.

Analysts have been saying for weeks that an attack just before the first vote, or between the first vote and the runoff on May 7, could tip the election toward a candidate perceived as tougher on crime and terrorism. The far-right leader, Marine Le Pen, has hardened her stand against Muslim immigration in the campaign's final days, linking it to security fears, while François Fillon has pledged to eradicate Islamic terrorism.

"Emotion and solidarity for our forces of order, once again targets," Ms. Le Pen said after the shooting.

The debate format was one-on-one interviews lasting 15 minutes each, followed by an almost three-minute conclusion, and the presidential candidates quickly posted on Twitter about the attack. Those whose interviews were still being broadcast took the opportunity to speak about their security proposals.

Mr. Hollande, who spoke from the Élysée Palace, offered an emotional tribute to the police, who he said were the country's first line of defense, and endeavored to reassure a nervous public.

"It has been the case for a number of months, and we will have absolute vigilance when it comes to the elections," he said, "but everyone will understand that at this hour, my thoughts are with the family of the police who were killed and with those close to the wounded policeman."

François Molins, the Paris prosecutor, said that shortly before 9 p.m., a car pulled up to a police vehicle that was parked in front of a Marks & Spencer store. A gunman jumped out and opened fire on the vehicle, killing an officer. The gunman then tried to flee while firing at other officers but was killed by the police.

A restaurateur near the scene of the shooting, who would give only his first name, Denis, told France 24 television by phone that people had sought refuge in his restaurant.

"They were scared. They didn't know what to do, or when it would end," he said. "Some of them were in shock, others were crying."

France has been on high alert since the terrorist attacks in and around Paris in November 2015, and this presidential election will be the first to be conducted under such conditions. The authorities have been warning for months that despite the lack of any large-scale attacks, the threat has not abated.

Mr. Molins, who handles terrorism investigations nationwide, said the authorities had identified the killer, but he declined to provide the gunman's identity because police raids and the search for potential accomplices were still underway.

European counterterrorism experts said they believed that the Islamic State's claim was credible.

The speed with which the group claimed responsibility was "surprising," said Peter R. Neumann, the director of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence at King's College London. "It seems prepared and coordinated," Mr. Neumann added, noting that the Islamic State claim was in multiple languages, "like they knew this was going to happen."

On Tuesday, two men were arrested in Marseille on suspicion of having imminent plans to conduct a terrorist attack. Weapons, ammunition and the highly volatile explosive TATP, or triacetone triperoxide, was found in one of the apartments used by the two men. It is the same type of explosive used in the attack at the Bataclan concert hall in Paris in November 2015 and in the attacks in Brussels in March 2016.

The response of all the candidates was to express solidarity with the police, and Mr. Fillon, who represents the mainstream right, and Ms. Le Pen said they would not campaign on Friday, out of respect for the police officers who were killed and wounded.

Emmanuel Macron, a centrist who along with Ms. Le Pen has been leading in the polls, stepped back from the moment, saying: "This imponderable threat, this threat, will be a fact of daily life in the coming years."

President Trump, who was meeting with Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni of Italy at the White House on Thursday, responded to a question from reporters about the Paris attack. "That's a terrible thing, and it's a very, very terrible thing that's going on in the world today," he said. "But it looks like another

terrorist attack. And what can you say — it just never ends."

The French presidential candidates were not alone in using the attack to burnish their image as potential commanders in chief; the Islamic State also appeared eager to make the most of the it, preparing a statement in multiple languages and being ready to claim responsibility, said Michael S. Smith II, a terrorism analyst who specializes in the Islamic State's influence efforts and who is writing a book on its external operations.

"The timing of the attack itself is significant in that this will help to ensure the group is a centerpiece of political discourses in France," Mr. Smith said. "For prospective recruits in the West and seasoned jihadis in conflict zones alike, including the Al Qaeda members that the Islamic State has sought to draw into its ranks, this can bolster perceptions of the group as a credible enterprise that is worthy of their support."

## 3 Things to Watch in the First Round of French Presidential Elections This Weekend

Emily Tamkin

Well, *mes amis*, the first round of French elections is almost here.

It seems like just yesterday we were watching President François Hollande grapple with the reality of having to face his party's primary with an approval rating of literally four percent. But it was not yesterday. It was in November.

And, *mais oui*, much more has happened since then.

Hollande ended up not running at all and the remarkably unremarkable Benoît Hamon became the mainstream leftwing party's candidate.

**François Fillon** unexpectedly became the center-right candidate, beating out former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and expected favorite Alain Juppé; he was then still more unexpectedly haunted by and charged over allegations that he'd paid his wife and children roughly one million euros to "work" as parliamentary aides.

**Emmanuel Macron** came out of seemingly nowhere to form his own centrist En Marche (Forward) party, defend the European project, and fend off Russian disinformation. (He's the only one of the four in the mix who isn't fawning over Russian President Vladimir Putin.)

**Marine Le Pen**, of the far-right National Front, has actively courted Putin. But she's also sought to rebrand and soften her party's image, all while promising to hold a referendum to take France out of the European Union, saying she would shred the French constitution to refuse education to the children of undocumented immigrants, and denying the French state's role in the Holocaust.

And then, just this month, far-left **Jean-Luc Mélenchon**, who eschews traditional media in favor of his own YouTube channel and speaks favorably of Cuba and Venezuela, surged in the polls.

But that, *cheris*, is in the past, and now we must look to the future that is this Sunday.

Here are three things to watch as the French take to the polls from Paris to Provence.

**Turnout:** The first and biggest thing to watch will be voter participation, for two main reasons. First, a relatively low turnout rate — which, for French elections, means less than 70-80 percent — means that even with less traditional candidates, French voters are dissatisfied, Pierre Vimont of Carnegie Europe told Foreign Policy. Second, low turnout will probably benefit Le Pen and Fillon, as their likely voters are more likely to turn out for them than Macron or Mélenchon's are for them (or than anyone is for Hamon), according to EUROPEUM's Martin Michelot. The Brexit referendum, after all, sneaked through in part thanks to dismal turnout in key parts of London.

**Who makes the next round with what:** Only two candidates will make it to the second round, to be held May 7. Right now, the four leading candidates — Fillon, Le Pen, Macron, and Mélenchon — are neck and neck. If the first and second place holders emerge a healthy distance ahead of the runners up, a contentious, clear-cut competition can be expected to take place in the two weeks that follow. But if the third and fourth place finishers come in close, then their voters will have a major role to play in the runoff, perhaps as spoilers.

**Whether the undecideds decide:** There are still somewhere between 20 and 25 percent of voters who have apparently yet to make up their minds. That means that, just days before or on the day of the vote, one of the candidates could take a deciding lead. Which candidate has that good *chance* is one to watch this Sunday.

## One dead, two wounded as Paris police come under fire on Champs-Elysees (UNE)

By James McAuley and William Branigin

PARIS — A gunman opened fire on French police Thursday on Paris's best-known boulevard, killing one officer and wounding two others before being fatally shot himself in an incident that raised the specter of renewed terrorism just three days before voters go to the polls to elect a new president.

The Islamic State, through its affiliated Amaq News Agency, quickly asserted responsibility for the attack, which sent panicked pedestrians fleeing into side streets and prompted police to seal off the renowned Champs-Elysees, close metro stations and order tourists back into their hotels. The terrorist organization said the attack was carried out by a Belgian national it identified only as Abu Yusuf al-Baljiki, a pseudonym.

There was no immediate confirmation that the Islamic State was behind the shooting. French officials declined to attach a motive to the attack, although they said police were deliberately targeted and that they were opening a terrorism investigation.

The incident occurred three days before France holds the first round of a hotly contested presidential election, with candidates from across the political spectrum vying to succeed François Hollande as president. Hollande scheduled an emergency meeting late Thursday to discuss the attack.

François Fillon, one of the presidential candidates, said in a statement that the election campaign should be suspended. "We must show our solidarity with the police and the French population, which is increasingly worried," he said. "The fight against Islamist totalitarianism must be the top priority."

Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right National Front party, wasted no time in using the attack as the latest evidence in her call for France to intensify its fight against "Islamist terrorism."

By contrast, Emmanuel Macron, the popular independent candidate vying for the presidency, was quick to argue against any fearmongering.

"We must not yield to fear today," he said Thursday. "This is what our assailants are waiting for, and it's their trap."

Ahead of the first round of the vote on Sunday, Macron is leading Le Pen in the latest polls, but by only a small margin. After Thursday's attack, both Fillon and Le Pen announced that they would cancel events planned for Friday, the last official day of campaigning.

There was no immediate information on the identities of the attacker or the policemen who were shot.

According to Christophe Crépin, a spokesman for the UNSA Police Union, the gunman opened fire on the police with an AK-47 assault rifle, targeting officers who were near a Marks and Spencer store on the corner of the busy avenue.

Police ordered people away from the area, and at least three metro stations were closed, the Interior Ministry said.

A European security official told The Washington Post that the dead attacker was known to French intelligence, having previously come to authorities' attention because of radical Islamist links.

One French official said investigators recovered an ID card on the shooter and were awaiting the results of fingerprints.

François Molins, the Paris prosecutor who spoke at an impromptu news conference late Thursday, confirmed that "the

identity of the attacker is known" and said that "investigations are underway with searches to find out whether he benefited from collaborators."

Police were searching the home of the suspect, in Seine-et-Marne outside Paris.

The French Interior Ministry said one police officer was killed on the spot and two others were "seriously wounded" when the gunman opened fire on a police car. The ministry said security forces gunned down the attacker as he tried to flee on foot.

A spokeswoman for the Paris police, Johanna Primevert, said the gunman attacked police guarding an area near the Franklin Roosevelt metro station at 8:50 p.m. Thursday Paris time at the center of the heavily traveled Champs-Elysees.

She said the attacker appeared to act alone, but other officials said it was too soon to tell whether he might have had an accomplice.

The Reuters news agency reported that police issued an arrest warrant for a second suspect who they said had arrived in France by train from Belgium.

Interior Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henry Brandet told France's BFM television that the gunman got out of a car that pulled up beside a police vehicle and opened fire on the police officers.

*[45 years of terrorist attacks in Europe, visualized]*

"It's too early to say what's behind this, but clearly police were the target," he said. "We don't know yet what his motivations were." There were conflicting reports about whether another person was in the gunman's car.

In Washington, President Trump said during a news conference with the visiting Italian prime minister that the Paris shooting "looks like another terrorist attack," and he offered condolences to France.

"Again it's happening, it seems," Trump said. "I just saw it as I was walking in. . . . That's a very, very terrible thing that's going on in the world today. But it looks like another terrorist attack. And what can you say? It just never ends. We have to be strong and we have to be vigilant, and I've been saying it for a long time."

The country has been hit by a deadly wave of terrorist violence in the past two years that has claimed the lives of at least 230 people and injured hundreds of others.

Thursday's shooting — on the most famous boulevard in the French capital, always crowded with tourists and commuters — came just two days after authorities arrested two men in the southern city of Marseille on suspicion of plotting what Paris prosecutors described as an "imminent" and "violent" assault. Police discovered an Islamic State flag and three kilograms (6.6 pounds) of explosives in one suspect's home.

The Islamic State has asserted responsibility for previous attacks in France, including a coordinated November 2015 terrorist assault on multiple targets in Paris that left 130 people dead and more than 360 wounded.

After that attack and others in the past two years — many perpetrated by Islamic State militants or those claiming to be inspired by the extremist group — terrorism and national security have become crucial issues in the most contentious election France has seen in decades.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

*[Growing anti-Muslim rhetoric permeates French presidential election campaign]*

Le Pen, the far-right presidential candidate, has campaigned heavily on an anti-immigrant platform and what she has couched as the need to defend France from "Islamist globalization." In the final days of the campaign, she said she would halt immigration altogether if elected president.

The shooting occurred in the middle of a televised campaign event, when each of the 11 current candidates was given 15 minutes to sell voters on their respective platforms.

Branigin reported from Washington. Souad Mekhennet in Frankfurt, Germany, contributed to this report.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Editorial : The Attack in France

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Three days ahead of the first round of France's presidential election, terrorism has intervened. A gunman with an automatic rifle jumped from a car on the Champs-Élysée Thursday evening and poured bullets into a police car, killing one officer. Islamic State has claimed responsibility.

This event puts extraordinary pressure on a French electorate already trying to sort through difficult decisions about its vote on Sunday.

Conventional political wisdom would hold that the assault will benefit far-right candidate Marine Le Pen because last-minute events of this magnitude can influence voter sentiment, and Ms. Le Pen is running hard on the idea that France is under assault from Arab immigrants. In recent debates she has proposed that France suspend all legal immigration into the country.

The shooting may well tip sentiment in Ms. Le Pen's direction, but at least two of her three opponents—conservative François Fillon and center-left Emmanuel Macron — have run on strong antiterror platforms. They have also run hard on the widespread sense of economic torpor among the French people. As we saw in the U.K.'s Brexit vote and the U.S. election last year, the sense of dimming economic opportunity is a potent political force. Polls indicate that is French voters' number one concern.

Whatever the immediate effect of Thursday's shooting in the heart of Paris, there is no avoiding the blunt reality at the heart of France's momentous election, which is the general sense among the population that the nation's elites—in politics and the French media—have become disconnected from the realities of the nation's problems. It will be a pity if one shooting tips Sunday's results, but it would not be a surprise.

FP Foreign Policy

## France's Election Is Trump vs. Merkel vs. Modi vs. Corbyn

James Traub

On Saturday, scientists and their supporters will leave the sanitized comfort of their labs and academic environs to march in Washington and more than 400 other cities and 100 countries around the world. It all started with a tweeted picture of a child holding a pro-science sign at the Jan. 22 March for Women, followed by health educator Caroline Weinberg's tweet, "Hell hath no fury like a scientist silenced," and swiftly grew into the largest protest since the women's event.

It's a very big, twofold gamble on their part. First, reckoning that the typically apolitical and highly government-dependent scientific community will break with their tradition of political silence in large-enough numbers to create a serious presence, rather than a pathetic disappointment. And second, wagering that the vision of tens of thousands of angry nerds and geeks will have the desired positive impact on policymakers and the public at large. That's a tough one. While *The Big Bang Theory* may have enjoyed top TV ratings for the past decade, average Americans are leery of real-life Leonards and Sheldons and their discoveries.

Most of the leading scientific institutions in the United States are backing both propositions and urging their members to hit the streets on Saturday. From the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences (AAAS, the publisher of *Science*) to the editorial board of *Nature* and the New York Academy of Sciences and its counterparts across the country, the admonishment is clear: Get out and march!

The 157,000-strong American Chemical Society has asked its members to conduct marches that will constitute "a nonpartisan celebration of science," and a long list of professional societies echoed that sentiment. The *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* is backing the march, saying, "The truth needs an advocate." The London-based *Nature Cell Biology*, a journal noted for controversies regarding the relative contributions of various cell receptors to triggered enzyme activity, told its readers that it's time for scientists to "become political," citing the potentially devastating double impact of Brexit's limits on freedom of movement affecting immigrations for scientists and President Donald Trump's anti-science stances. A similarly staid American publication, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, called upon universities to back the protest as a form of mass education, telling the world about the wonders of science.

"Scientists have to be reminded that the response to a challenge to science is not to retreat to the microscope, to the laboratory, to the

ivory tower," Rush Holt, CEO of the AAAS, said recently. "This requires vigorous defense." The annual February meeting of the AAAS found session after session overcome by anger and angst as researchers and science educators tried to comprehend how America in 2017 had seemingly become as anti-science as Trofim Lysenko's Soviet supporters in the Kremlin in the 1930s to 1950s. Those Soviets blindly followed the idiotic agronomist Lysenko's pseudo-biological claims to purge and execute thousands of scientists across the USSR for the sin of believing in Charles Darwin, evolution, Gregor Mendel, and genetics.

Some protesting scientists might argue that sentiments today are even as inane as the Vatican trial of Galileo Galilei that on June 22, 1633, denounced the great astronomer for insisting that Earth orbits the sun, decreeing, "The proposition that the Sun is the center of the world and does not move from its place is absurd and false philosophically and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to Holy Scripture. The proposition that the Earth is not the center of the world and immovable but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is equally absurd and false philosophically and theologically considered at least erroneous in faith."

The deleterious effects were generational. Soviet leaders Josef Stalin and Nikita Khrushchev imposed Lysenko's crackpot theories for nearly four decades, sending to gulag slaughterhouses two generations of biologists. In 1997, I found physicians and scientists all over the former USSR unable to accept the most basic concepts of evolution and genetics, even allowing patients to die of hospital-acquired infections rather than concede that bacteria *evolve* under the natural selection pressure of inappropriate antibiotic use, making it impossible to treat infected post-op surgical patients. Similarly, the Vatican won in 1633, forcing the 70-year-old, nearly blind Galileo to recant his telescope observations of solar activity and planetary movement. Thankfully, science was the victor in the long run.

Yes, Earth is round and it orbits the sun.

Yes, your feet stay on the ground unless you use a lot of energy to leap, because of gravity.

Yes, the lettuce on your salad plate came from plants that grew in soil by converting carbon dioxide and sunlight into their roots, stalks, and leaves, expiring oxygen. It's called photosynthesis, a process the planet's first bacterial life forms employed, drifting on the surface of the seas some 3.5 billion years ago, creating the oxygen-rich atmosphere you are now breathing.

Yes, creatures evolve under stress and genetic selection pressure, and that rate of evolution generally depends on the life form's reproductive rate. Those that reproduce, like viruses, over a few minutes' time may genetically evolve in a matter of days; those that reproduce every 20 or 30 years (such as *Homo sapiens*) may take hundreds of centuries to evolve in significant ways.

There will be many issues driving scientists to march on Saturday, from their pocketbooks to the sheer joy of solving nature's puzzles unhindered. Having taken my undergraduate training in biology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, done graduate work in immunology at the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford University, and postgraduate study at the Harvard School of Public Health, I am steeped in the firmament of the hypothesis-driven, reductionist view of life and its trillions of curiosities. But when I march it won't be the scientific method that drives me, but a few key characters and episodes in my life.

I will march thinking of a man who sat next to me some 30 years ago on a domestic flight, reading the latest edition of the *American Spectator*, published by the John Birch Society. When I told the businessman that I made a living writing about science, he proclaimed the entire endeavor of research an illegitimate recipient of taxpayers' money, insisting that the only good science was done in service of corporate earnings. I asked, "But haven't you ever looked at a butterfly and wondered why it was brightly colored, or wandered through an orchard of blooming cherry blossoms and gasped at their glory, asking why and how such spectacular pinkness occurred?" No, the man said emphatically, adding that the questions were "stupid." And so I will march thinking of how astonished I was at the very idea of a human without a sense of wonder, recalling the eerie omen of bottom-line thinking about the utility of science that lay inherent in his attitude — one it seems our president is sympathetic to.

I wish when I had that unnerving conversation 30 years ago I had more facts on hand about the profitability of taxpayer-funded science. One U.S. agency alone — the National Institutes of Health (NIH) — issued 365,380 grants to scientists from 1980 to 2007, 9 percent of which resulted in patented discoveries and an additional 31 percent linked to patent applications. Among grants given for disease research, an astounding 35 percent led to patents. Not every patent translates into millions of dollars' worth of profits, but a 35 percent patent rate in the research-and-development section of a technology or pharmaceutical corporation would be considered spectacular.

I will march thinking of a Soviet-trained immunologist I met in Irkutsk in the 1990s who insisted his people would never recover from the Cold War and build a decent democracy because Russians were, he said, "genetically inferior remnants" of Slavic humanity — the best having been systematically exterminated by tsarist pogroms of Jews and the Stalinist genocide of intellectuals and dissidents. That tsarist and Soviet slaughter had transpired was undeniable, but such baseless claims of genetic inferiority, coming from a powerful scientist, were shocking.

I will march recalling getting off a train in Surat, India, in 1994 amid an outbreak of *Yersinia pestis*, the bacterium that causes plague, to discover that the elite classes had abandoned the diamond-cutting city, along with all but five physicians, leaving pharmacies and clinics shuttered, with just one public hospital carrying the full outbreak burden. The poorer populace was abandoned to their fates out of mass terror over a microbe easily treated and prophylactically blocked with the world's cheapest, mildest antibiotics.

From the first recognition of AIDS in 1981, I followed the expanding HIV pandemic all over the world, watching even more egregious nonscientific thinking and bigotry drive governments on every continent to institute policies against the human sufferers of the disease, rather than fund serious public health measures and basic research attacking the virus itself. When I march I'll be thinking of the 18 million people who are kept alive each day by science and its discovery of effective anti-HIV drugs.

I'll also be marching with heroes in my heart. Jonas Salk, a scientist who discovered the first polio vaccine and a generous and delightful human being. I'll also be thinking of another polio-fighting hero I had the honor of meeting recently — Pakistani rock star Salman Ahmad, who inspires parents to vaccinate their children despite Taliban assassinations of more than 150 immunization workers.

I'll be thinking of Dave Keeling, who in 1953 had the crazy idea that carbon dioxide levels were rising all over the planet due to the surge in automobile use and pushed for funds to create a remote, high-altitude measuring station to capture CO2. In March 1958, Keeling launched his measuring station atop Hawaii's Mauna Loa volcano, recording a CO2 concentration of 313 parts per million (ppm). He tested and logged what is now the Keeling Curve, and the monitoring continues all over the world. On April 15, Mauna Loa CO2 topped 409 ppm. When plotted over an 800,000-year span, the past 70 years clearly represent the most dramatic surge in carbon dioxide in planetary history.

No matter how severely governments, including the Trump administration and GOP-led Congress, slash science budgets and deny research findings, empirical reality eventually wins. History proves that hypothesis.

Lysenko claimed there was no "evolution" in a Darwinian or Mendelian sense, but "adaptation." He allegedly proved this by growing a plant in a refrigerated environment, claiming that after a few growth cycles the plant adapted to the snowlike conditions and thrived. With the same ridiculous logic, the Ukrainian-born nutcase assured Stalin that Siberia's vast tundra could support wheat production; as the grain plants adapt to the cold climes, they would provide rich harvests for the proletariat. Instead, of course, massive famines greeted the Soviets, so severe that incidents of wholesale starvation and cannibalism were recorded throughout the mid-20th century. Thanks to Peter Pringle's terrific *The Murder of Nikolai Vavilov,* I will be thinking of the Russian geneticist who dared to denounce Lysenko as "the biggest fraud in biology" and paid for doing so with his life, starving to death in the still-notoriously brutal Saratov prison in 1943.

Our world is awash with dangerously stupid ideas, in rejection of evidence and serious science. Crackpots reign on the internet, of course. But worse, the very concept of expertise is under attack, Tom Nichols argues, risking that "eventually both democracy and expertise will be fatally corrupted, because neither democratic leaders nor their expert advisers want to tangle with an ignorant electorate."

Ignorance is bad, but willful censorship of science is far more sinister. In his flurry of executive orders in January, Trump issued one forbidding researchers at the

Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture to communicate their findings and evidence of climate change to the public. Over subsequent weeks, government websites for agencies as diverse as the EPA and NASA have been cleansed of data and news about pollution, climate change, and a variety of other scientific issues.

Many marchers will have been galvanized by EPA Secretary Scott Pruitt's comments. Asked how significant human factors, such as burning fossil fuels, were as causes of climate change, Pruitt opined, "I think that measuring with precision human activity on the climate is something very challenging to do, and there's tremendous disagreement about the degree of impact, so no, I would not agree that it's a primary contributor to the global warming that we see," prompting an immediate flurry of protests from top climate scientists.

For some protesters on Saturday it will be the White House's immigration policies that brought them to the streets, limiting the free movement of graduate students, scientists, and physicians into the United States. Some will raise their voices in anger that Trump is the first president since World War II to deliberately forgo appointing a White House science advisor heading the Office of Science and Technology Policy. Surely some of the marchers will share my outrage over the rising anti-vaccine movement in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States, emboldened by Trump's appointment of vaccine skeptic Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to head a panel into the safety versus "uselessness" of child immunization. A few might have a fire in their bellies over the Republican-led congressional eight-month blockade of funding for Zika research and development, forcing both the NIH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to rob other disease programs in order to find resources to fight the new virus.

I have been disappointed by the decisions of prominent, financially comfortable senior scientists who doubt the dignity and utility of protest and decline to march. Perhaps comforted by their multiyear NIH funding or grants from private philanthropies, such as the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, these senior lab bosses can't see it in their interests to rock boats and voice protest. But their junior scientists — undergraduates, graduate students, postdocs, and untenured faculty — give voice to very different sentiments. Even before Trump called for a $6 billion, 18 percent slash of the NIH budget — the single-largest reduction in biomedical science since the NIH's creation in 1948 — the future was grim for young researchers.

In recent years, on average, a quarter of NIH research grants have met with approval, but only 17 percent have received funds. Funding rates were even lower for African-American and Latino applicants. And for all categories of race and gender, the worst odds of gaining funding were for scientists under 45 years old. The average age for the first grant as an independent researcher rose from 38 in 1980 to 45 in 2013, and less than 3 percent of scientists under 36 were able to obtain principal investigator grants to run their own labs. More private and government money underwrites research run by scientists over 65 than by those under 40.

As the White House and Congress take their budget knives to government science funding at the CDC, NIH, EPA, and other agencies, we risk destroying the future of American scientific discovery, letting the laboratories of today gray into tomorrow, locking talented immigrants out of the country and denying support to two generations of junior researchers. If the odds of a 21st-century Albert Einstein or Marie Curie obtaining funding for his or her own laboratory before reaching the age of 36 were only 3 percent before Trump, what will they be by this time next year — zero?

So as a graying baby boomer, I shall march for the millennials who delight in analyzing DNA sequences, dream of studying cosmic rays from the space station, spend their summers measuring melting Arctic icebergs, test batteries of drugs in search of one that can pulverize HIV, climb inside dark caves to figure out what is killing the world's bats, make antibodies that attack cancer cells, and study communication among elephants. On Saturday, I march for science, for Jonas Salk, Salman Ahmad, Dave Keeling, Nikolai Vavilov, and for the entire generation of millennial scientists.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

# Le Pen Rise Before French Election Fueled by Industrial Decline

Matthew Dalton

Updated April 20, 2017 12:57 p.m. ET

AMIENS, France—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," said 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," said 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."

Stéphane Demory, a wiry 47-year-old, says he thought he would be employed for life after he got his permanent job at the Goodyear plant near Amiens in 2001. 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 said. "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," said Didier Hérisson, a former union leader at the Goodyear plant. He says he will 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 posting losses 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, said 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 WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## French Business Leaders Urge Voters to Reject Euroskeptic Candidates

Nick Kostov

April 20, 2017 3:02 p.m. ET

PARIS—French business leaders have taken the rare step of publicly urging voters in Sunday's first round of presidential elections to reject euroskeptic candidates from the ends of the political spectrum, saying they would seriously damage the national economy.

Polls show a close four-way race between two mainstream politicians—centrist Emmanuel Macron and conservative François Fillon —plus nationalist leader Marine Le Pen and leftist firebrand Jean Luc Mélenchon.

Ms. Le Pen has pledged to pull France from the European Union and the euro. Mr. Mélenchon has said that if the EU won't renegotiate France's relationship with the bloc he would seek a referendum on whether to leave.

"For us there are really only two candidates," said Olivier Duha, founder of customer service firm WebHelp, referring to Mr. Macron and Mr. Fillon. "We have to block the extremists."

Earlier this week, more than 200 French business leaders urged voters to forsake political extremes when they cast their ballots—or abstain from voting altogether.

In an op-ed piece in the daily newspaper Le Monde, the business leaders said a vote for "the extremists"—a thinly veiled reference to Mr. Mélenchon of the far-left and Ms. Le Pen—would set in motion an economic meltdown that would see interest rates explode, the costs of imports soar and foreign investors flee France.

Compounding the alarm of France's business establishment, Mr. Melenchon has called for higher wages and a shorter workweek, while Ms. Le Pen, an economic nationalist, wants to impose a special tax on foreign workers.

Pierre Gattaz, the head of Medef, France's biggest business lobby, said he was "very alarmed" by the economic programs proposed by Ms. Le Pen and Mr. Mélenchon.

"Le Pen wants to leave of the euro with all the consequences that we know: devaluation. inflation, a decline in purchasing power," he said. "And with Mélenchon the less said the better."

The public warnings reflect the panic that has spread through business circles here. Traditionally, French companies and business leaders have refrained from taking an open position on political candidates to avoid a public backlash.

"A vote in France is much like your medical records or your bank account," said Publicis CEO Maurice Lévy. "You don't publicize it."

In a runoff between Mr. Mélenchon and Ms. Le Pen, the sort of feverish trading that hit markets during the eurozone's sovereign-debt crisis—including extreme volatility in the euro and a selloff in the bonds of weaker members—would erupt, some analysts predict.

Jean-Luc Petithuguenin, chief executive of the recycling firm Paprec, sent a letter to his 4,500 employees urging them against voting for Ms. Le Pen.

"We can choose to quit the euro but we have to explain the risks," he told France Inter radio station. "For my company we're going to inherit EUR150 million ($160.7 million) of debt with zero extra assets."

While the French business establishment is almost uniformly aghast at a possible vote for either the far left or the far right, most analysts still expect a mainstream candidate to make it through to the second round and eventually secure the presidency.

According to the latest public opinion poll by BVA, Mr. Macron stands at 24% and Ms. Le Pen is on 23%. Mr. Fillon and Mr. Mélenchon are tied on 19%.

Mr. Lévy at Publicis hinted that people would pack their bags and move to another country if either the far right or the far left eventually won the race to the Élysée Palace.

"What I've been told is that if Le Pen and Melenchon get through then the big winner would be Air France , " he said.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Terror Strikes Champs-Élysées Days Before French Vote

Nick Kostov, Matthew Dalton and Joshua Robinson

Updated April 20, 2017 7:59 p.m. ET

PARIS—A gunman opened fire on the Champs-Élysées on Thursday, killing a police officer and wounding two others in an assault authorities said was likely a terror attack, just days before France's presidential elections begin.

French officials said the assault began at 8:50 p.m., when a car pulled alongside a police patrol and the gunman jumped out wielding an automatic rifle. Police returned fire, killing the gunman, who was identified by an official as Karim Cheurfi, a French national.

A spokeswoman for antiterrorism prosecutors in Paris said they had opened an investigation into the assault. French President François Hollande said authorities were convinced it was a terror attack and expressed "great sadness" over the police officer's death.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the suspected terror attack, said SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors the extremist group's communications. "We can't exclude whether there's one or several accomplices," Pierre-Henry Brandet, the Interior Ministry spokesman said.

The attack sent immediate ripples across the political landscape as the closely fought election was entering its final stretch. France 2, the state TV channel, briefly interrupted a live broadcast in which the 11 presidential candidates were outlining their platforms to broadcast footage showing the Champs-Élysées in lockdown.

"This threat will remain part of daily life for the coming years," centrist Emmanuel Macron said on the live broadcast as details of the assault began to trickle out. "The first duty, the first mission of the president is to protect."

The timing and location of the assault, in the shadow of the Arc de Triomphe, was likely to shift the focus of a campaign that has been largely centered on economic issues. A string of attacks—including the Nov. 13, 2015, assault by Islamic State militants that killed 130 in Paris and the truck attack in Nice that killed 86 people on Bastille Day last July—has put France on edge. The government has declared and renewed a state of emergency, but the crackdown hasn't stopped the drumbeat of periodic attacks.

François Fillon, a conservative who has focused his campaign on countering what he calls "Islamist totalitarianism," sought to draw contrast with Mr. Macron moments later, saying: "We can't keep living in this fear, this terror that weighs on the future of the country."

The shooting unleashed pandemonium along the celebrated shopping thoroughfare as police sealed off the area and police helicopters hovered above, probing the area with searchlights. One foreign tourist was hit by shrapnel, Prosecutor François Molins said.

France's national police urged Parisians to avoid the surrounding neighborhood, saying an "intervention" was under way.

"Avoid the area and abide by police orders," French police said in a statement.

Police in tactical gear carrying automatic rifles took up positions along the cobblestoned boulevard. Police cleared the area's shops, ordering people to evacuate buildings with their hands in the air.

One shopper who was inside a Toyota showroom at the time of the assault said he heard the shots pierce the air "like firecrackers."

"Everyone started running," said Rob McKenzie, who was dining inside a pizzeria on the Champs-Élysées when he heard the gunfire. People came pouring into the restaurant seeking cover, said Mr. McKenzie, an Australian in Paris on a business trip.

Police said they were poring over the vehicle used by the assailant to determine whether it contained any explosives.

On Tuesday, authorities detained two men in Marseille on suspicion of plotting an imminent terror attack. Prosecutors said the two men pledged allegiance to Islamic State in a video.

In Washington, U.S. President Donald Trump offered his condolences to the city of Paris.

"What can you say? It just never ends," he said. "We have to be strong and we have to be vigilant."

## Is anyone mightier than Le Pen?

The Christian Science Monitor

April 20, 2017 Metz, France —When Marine Le Pen was a child growing up in Paris, her friends never slept over – their parents wouldn't allow it. And no matter how hard the blond, blue-eyed girl studied at school, her teachers often mocked her, hardly concealing their disdain. Her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, was so reviled in French mainstream society that someone set off a bomb in the stairwell outside their apartment four years after he founded the fringe far-right National Front (FN) political party in 1972.

Ms. Le Pen describes in her autobiography, "A Contre Flots," or "Against the Current," a childhood that was full of insults, suffering, and injustice – all simply because of her family name.

She cannot say the same of her adulthood.

The girl who grew up in the harsh shadow of her provocative, nationalist father has risen to become one of the most popular politicians in France – and one of the most important opposition leaders in the world. Now, as the campaign for the French presidency reaches its denouement – with Le Pen having a distant but not inconceivable chance of winning – she has pushed the FN closer to the Élysée Palace than her father ever did and is expanding her influence over French and European politics.

The party leader, who is both anti-immigrant and anti-European Union, inspires an almost cultlike following. She now garners support among large swaths of the population, including a growing number of mainstream voters who once rejected her. Many of them carry photos of her in their wallets.

At rallies, supporters chant her name in trancelike reverence. "Marine! Marine! Marine!" came the cry at a recent campaign stop in Metz in France's Grand Est, a former mining region that's reeling economically.

Le Pen, tall and confident, walked onto the stage cutting a striking figure. She was dressed modestly, as is her style, in a dark blue blouse cut out at the shoulders that was at once feminine and authoritative. The arena was filled with those who want out of the EU, who want immigrants out of France, who want the ruling elite out of office. And if they are separated by disparate, and sometimes irreconcilable desires – some eschew her left-wing protectionist trade policies but love her right-wing crusade to stop foreigners from coming in – they seem united in a longing for the grandeur of a France they can barely grasp anymore.

In voices thick with nostalgia, these voters – and the candidate they would elevate – may well decide the future of Europe. The EU, the postwar bloc that France helped to found, probably couldn't survive if the country withdraws from the organization, which is what Le Pen wants to have happen.

The following that she has amassed both reflects and reinforces the nationalist revival sweeping across Europe and around much of the world. The populist rebellions in so many countries that shun globalism, open borders, and multiculturalism may be the most dominant political trend of the 21st century – and perhaps no one embodies the mood of the movements better than Le Pen.

She is not just Donald Trump with a more natural hairdo and a French accent. Her political roots date back to her teenage years, her rise has been methodical, and she is peaking in popularity at the most important moment for Europe in a half-century – one that may decide whether the EU survives or splits apart.

"This is the cleavage of 21st-century democracies," says Pascal Perrineau, an expert on populist movements at Sciences Po in Paris. "It's not a cleavage between the right and left anymore, or between conservatives and progressives. It's a new kind of split between open societies and closed societies."

**The region of undulating hills** around Metz is sometimes called the "Country of Three Borders" because it is where France, Germany, and Luxembourg meet. If anyplace can call itself the heart of Europe, it is here. As FN supporters entered the arena for Le Pen's rally on a rainy Saturday, the mayor of Metz, Dominique Gros, was hosting a mini ceremony just a few blocks away celebrating Franco-German friendship week.

Mr. Gros's father fought in the French Resistance against the Germans. His grandfather died in the epic Battle of Verdun in World War I. His great-great-grandfather fought in the Franco-Prussian War. Gros himself was born in 1943, in the middle of World War II. "I learned when I was little that Germany was our enemy," he says. "But we have succeeded in overcoming our ancestral hate ... and we must fight against this disastrous trend that risks pitting one against the other like in older times."

Gros is, in other words, a strong advocate of an integrated Europe. But if this region is a story of overcoming animosity through shared interests, it's also one of globalization and deindustrialization. It is the disappearance of jobs, and the loss of dignity as a result, that have turned many Metz voters toward Le Pen.

At the candidate's rally, Camille Ajac says she supports a "Europe of nations" but not the EU, which she calls "a Europe of interdependence." "We absolutely want to get our sovereignty back," she says.

Jean Schweitzer, a baby boomer, says he simply wants to give a new party a chance "since neither the right nor left has gotten us anywhere, and meanwhile France just gets worse." Antoine Dupont talks angrily about his grandmother's financial woes. At age 82, she's been reduced to knitting stuffed animals to supplement her pension. He complains, too, that younger people are being forced to leave the country to find higher-paying jobs.

They all believe France's future depends on the politician whom they describe as frank, simple, and honest – someone who could be a charismatic next-door neighbor.

Members of the European Parliament in Brussels vote on whether to lift the EU parliamentary immunity of French far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, a sharp critic of the European Union, after she came under investigation for tweeting pictures of Islamic State violence.

Le Pen promises to hold a referendum on EU membership – what is called a "Frexit" vote – if she becomes president. At a rally in Lille, France, in March marking the 60th anniversary of the EU, she said

flatly that “the European Union will die,” adding, “the time has come to defeat globalists.” She has called for the reintroduction of a new French currency, though she’s softened her tone in response to polls showing the vast majority of French want to keep the euro.

Advocates of European unity believe France’s departure from the EU would be catastrophic. “The EU can survive without the [United Kingdom]. It wasn’t there in the first place. It’s always been sort of half in and half out,” says Douglas Webber, professor of political science at INSEAD, a business school outside Paris. “But if France is no longer there, then basically you are missing not just a foot, you are missing an arm, and a leg, and a good part of the torso. This would be a political ... revolution of the highest magnitude on the Richter scale.”

Le Pen’s stance on national identity – preventing more foreigners from coming in and diluting what it means to be French – resonates as much as any issue with her followers. It’s also what makes her sound the most like her father. She wants to reimpose immigration controls at the border. She promises to prevent companies from relocating abroad for cheaper labor.

While detractors criticize her for stirring up hate, pointing often to a statement she made in 2010 comparing Muslims praying in the streets with the Nazi occupation of France, she has tapped into a deep anxiety about radical Islam in France. It has been fed by major terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice that together killed more than 230 people. At the same time, 1.3 million refugees and asylum-seekers, mostly Muslim, have entered Europe in the throes of upheaval in the Middle East, which the far-right easily conflates with terrorism.

“Let’s give France back to France,” says Le Pen at the Metz rally.

As her followers chant “On est chez nous,” or “We are in our house,” she adds: “What I want is not to close the borders. It is simply to have them – and control them.”

Marine Le Pen (2nd from r.) and other members of right-wing European parties speak to the media during a conference in Koblenz, Germany.

Caption

**For all her hard-line stances** on immigration and the EU, it would be incorrect to classify Le Pen as simply far-right. She has, for instance, adopted a protectionist trade agenda that is increasingly attracting some former socialist and even communist voters.

On two other litmus-test issues, gay marriage and abortion, she has toned down her message or remained largely silent. The social conservative branch of the FN seems to be appeased by the voice of Le Pen’s niece, rising star Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, who is a devout Roman Catholic and opposed to both. Yet the views of Le Pen herself, born in the pivotal year of 1968 amid student protests to what one family biographer calls a “bourgeois bohemian” mother, remain ambiguous. Her top adviser, Florian Philippot, is gay.

“Certainly in the ’70s the FN was from the extreme right, but today all the parties that shake European political life, that are creating the surprises ... they are more complex than just a single party from the extreme right,” says Mr. Perrineau.

In recent years, Le Pen has also tried to scrub the FN of its darker associations. She has kicked out members who publicly spew the kind of vitriol that was characteristic of her father and attempted to change the party’s image of being a party of racist old men.

The real inflection point came in 2015. Her father repeated a comment that over the years has refused to fade from memory. Jean-Marie stood by his assertion, first made in 1987, that the gas chambers of the Holocaust were a mere “detail” in history. Marine banished him from the party and publicly severed their relationship. Many observers have wondered whether the rupture was genuine, or just a brilliant moment of rebranding. Those close to her say it was painful and has been permanent and shows how politics always comes first with the Le Pens.

“You don’t break with your father in public on TV and have it not be difficult. It’s incomprehensible,” says Bertrand Dutheil de la Rochère, one of her advisers. “But her father was impossible, just going from provocation to provocation. The FN and Marine don’t need provocation.”

Her campaign posters now bear just her first name, not her last, with the words: “In the name of the people.” The logo, now a blue rose, used to be a flame.

French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen (c.) and his daughter Marine Le Pen arrive at a ceremony in Paris in 2010. She broke off ties with her polemical father in 2015.

How much the FN has revamped its image will be tested in the coming elections. Recent polls have Le Pen and 39-year-old centrist Emmanuel Macron, a former investment banker and minister in the ruling Socialist administration, as the front-runners in the first round of balloting on April 23. Mr. Macron, who broke from the embattled Socialists last year, is running under his own party, En Marche!, or On the Move.

It’s a wildly unpredictable race. Underdogs won the primaries of the two mainstream parties, the Republicans and the Socialists. Neither one is likely to make it past the first round of voting April 23 to the runoff on May 7. That means it will come down to the pro-EU, pro-free trade Macron against the antiglobalization, anti-immigrant Le Pen.

Polls for now give a significant edge to Macron in the second round, but in an era when Mr. Trump and “Brexit” triumphed, no one is predicting an unequivocal defeat for Le Pen.

“Macron speaks to the France that is doing well,” says Perrineau. “Marine Le Pen speaks to the France that is not doing well.”

**The steeliness that has helped** Le Pen rise to the pinnacle of French politics may be rooted in that cold night in November 1976 when a 44-pound bomb went off in the family’s Paris apartment building. The explosion damaged 12 dwellings and sent a baby flying out a fifth-floor window. Amazingly, no one was hurt in the incident – including the child, who landed in a tree along with his mattress. To this day, no one knows who planted the bomb. But Le Pen, who was 8 at the time, has written that she emerged from the incident “no longer a little girl like everyone else.”

The youngest of three sisters, Le Pen and her family moved to the wealthy, western suburb of Saint-Cloud to a mansion called Montretout. Today it is tucked within a gated community and carries an air of serenity.

But Olivier Beaumont, a French journalist who wrote the book “In the Hell of Montretout,” compares it to the house in Alfred Hitchcock’s “Psycho,” a place that bore witness to unconventional tragedy, forming Le Pen’s tough character and ability to rise in politics as an unloved outsider. “Her whole story is one of rupture, departures, doors slamming,” he says.

The constant antipathy directed at her father hung over the family. Ultimately her mother, Pierrette, left – moving out one day when Le Pen was 16. The distraught teen waited for her mother at the entrance of her high school every day for several weeks, certain she would come home. Instead her mother moved to the United States with a lover, leaking explosive commentary about her ex-husband. At one point, she posed for Playboy magazine. The humiliation was too much for young Marine: She didn’t talk to her mother again for 15 years.

Le Pen’s entree into politics came at age 15, when her father let her miss school for a week and join him on the campaign trail. Jean-Lin Lacapelle, one of her old friends and an FN official today, says no one at the time saw in her a French president. She didn’t want the life of a politician.

Instead it was Marine’s older sister Marie-Caroline who was expected to take up that mantle, before she and her father had a falling-out and broke ties. Marine, in the meantime, became a lawyer and handled the party’s legal affairs.

In 2002, Jean-Marie made it to the second round of the presidential elections to face Jacques Chirac, stunning the nation. Marine went on air to talk about it. She was in her early 30s, all smiles and optimism.

“The day after, at the headquarters of the Front National in Saint-Cloud, all of the press arrived asking, ‘Where is Marine Le Pen? Where is Marine Le Pen?’ ” says Mr. Lacapelle. “It was incredible.”

He says that’s when he knew she would take the party to the top.

**Though older and more polished now,** Le Pen still has a blunt, charismatic style that appeals to French youth. The FN is the most popular party in France among people ages 18 to 24, drawing roughly a third of the social media-savvy demographic.

Part of her allure is rooted in the plight of young people in the world’s sixth-largest economy, nearly a quarter of whom are unemployed. On the eve of Le Pen’s rally in Metz, 20-something supporters from across the country came together in the city’s party headquarters to discuss their plans for the following day. It had more the feel of an awkward school dance than a strategy session – they had put out bowls of potato chips and bottles of soda.

Emilien Noé, a former Socialist who coordinates the youth movement in the region, says young people are drawn to the FN’s promise to restore French glory, something they’ve never known. “A lot of young people are living abroad instead of in France, and this is sad for a country like ours,” he says.

While many Millennials are attracted to Le Pen because they see her as a rebel – one poster in the FN’s national headquarters trumpets “The rebel wave” – the candidate herself doesn’t act like the icon of a rebellion. In campaign imagery she

is more likely to be photographed feeding cows and cuddling kittens.

When she reveals pieces of her personal life, it's often in the context of a mother of three children in their late teens. Friends say the twice-divorced politician is a workaholic. But when she does relax, one of her outlets is karaoke. Her choices reveal her era: With her raspy voice, she likes to belt out the songs of Dalida, the Egyptian-born Italian diva who was a global phenomenon from the 1960s into the '80s.

Le Pen has made inroads with other voters, too, including women. She doesn't carry the feminist mantle. That she would be the first female president of her country is hardly a factor the way it was with Hillary Clinton.

But she has positioned herself as a defender of women against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. She wants the Islamic veil banned, as well as the burkini, saying neither belong in modern French society.

"We believe that a woman in a veil seems not to be free," says Marie-Hélène de Lacoste Lareymondie, a regional counselor for the FN in the Grand Est.

She says women recognize themselves in Le Pen, a divorced single mother. "She is a feminist, of course," says Ms. Lacoste Lareymondie. "But she represents all kinds of women – mothers, lawyers, working women, political women. It's complete."

Not everyone buys it. Critics say her feminism is barely disguised discrimination against Muslims. At some public rallies, protesters denounce her as a "fake feminist."

**Le pen's mother had two** nicknames for Marine growing up: "Miss bonne humeur," or "Miss good mood," because of her resolutely joyful and optimistic nature, she writes in "Against the Current." The other was "Miss Trompe la morte," or "Miss Daredevil," because of a fearlessness she showed as a child, whether on a bicycle or skis.

It's the intrepidness that seems to rally her base.

In the FN's newest campaign video, Le Pen is facing the sea as an emotionally charged soundtrack pounds in the background. It feels like the trailer for a film. In a voice-over, she proclaims her love of France, the "age-old nation that does not submit." She promises to stand up against the "sufferings of" and "insults to" the country. The video ends with her behind the wheel of a boat, a clear metaphor for one of her main campaign slogans, to steer the country toward what will "put France in order."

The unsubtle subtext is that Paris needs the kind of strong leadership that has been missing under President François Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy before him. The French have always sought a "strongman" in their presidents, a monarchical instinct that turns them toward authority, especially in times of crisis.

"This is the country that produced Napoleon, the country that produced Charles de Gaulle," says Perrineau.

But he sees protest as the stronger current pushing Le Pen toward the doors of the Élysée. He references French intellectual Pierre Rosanvallon, who said it's no longer a time of elections in Western society. It is the time of "dis-elections."

In the end, many French voters, says Perrineau, "just want to vote in the bogeyman." ρ

The New York Times

## A Guide to the Vote (and How It Relates to 'Brexit' and Trump)

Aurelien Breeden

The elections are across France and in its overseas territories; there are 45.7 million registered voters. The vast majority of voting is by paper ballot, counted by hand: There is no electronic voting and very few voting machines. Campaign spending is limited, and equal media exposure is enforced.

**Who is running?**

Only a few of the candidates are considered serious contenders:

■ François Fillon, a conservative from the center-right Republican party.

■ Benoît Hamon, of the mainstream left-wing Socialist Party, who has dropped to single digits in the polls.

■ Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Front.

■ Emmanuel Macron, an independent centrist.

■ Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a hard-left candidate who created the France Unbowed movement.

Of the candidates, Ms. Le Pen has arguably drawn the most attention from journalists, because of her hard-line stance on immigration, her grim warning that a declining France is losing its identity and her party's record with Jews and Muslims, among other communities.

Personal integrity and political corruption have become major issues: Mr. Fillon is enmeshed in an embezzlement scandal, and Ms. Le Pen has faced questions about her use of her position as a member of the European Parliament. These controversies have given lesser-known candidates the opportunity to jab and mock their counterparts during live debates.

Mr. Macron and Ms. Le Pen are slightly ahead, but the four front-runners are neck-and-neck in the latest polls, creating uncertainty about who will make it to the runoff. Up to a third of possible voters, according to the latest polls, are still undecided.

**Why does France matter?**

A nation of 67 million, France is the world's sixth-largest economy, one of five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and a nuclear power. It is one of the oldest allies of the United States, having helped secure American independence from Britain. It is the world's most visited country. Since the French Revolution, the nation has often been seen as a beacon of democratic ideals.

French foreign policy could change significantly if one of the candidates who favor friendlier ties with Russia or weakening the European Union is elected.

**How have international events influenced the election?**

■ Britain's decision to leave the European Union has spurred talk of a similar move in France, sometimes called a "Frexit." Two of the main candidates, Mr. Mélenchon and Ms. Le Pen, want, for very different reasons, to renegotiate France's place in the bloc. Should negotiations fail, both have said that they would organize referendums on a departure from the bloc or from the euro currency zone.

■ The election of President Trump gave a boost to the candidacy of Ms. Le Pen: It suggested that such an upset was possible in France, and the National Front hopes to ride a similar wave of discontent about immigration and globalization. But some of Mr. Trump's actions, like the one to launch airstrikes in Syria, have led Ms. Le Pen to distance herself from him.

■ Questions have also been raised about whether Russia is trying to influence the results.

**When will we know the results?**

The French news media cannot publish results before the last polling stations close at 8 p.m. Because the four front-runners are polling so closely, the winners might not become clear until later. Official results will be available on the website of the French Interior Ministry.

**What happens next?**

A televised debate between the two finalists is scheduled for May 3, four days before the runoff on May 7. The winner of the runoff will take office by May 14.

The New York Times

## A Small French Town Infused With Us-vs.-Them Politics

Amanda Taub

The first is the growth of tensions over group identity that has created a receptive audience for the National Front's brand of us-vs.-them populism.

The second is the economic change brought about by globalization and technological progress, which is taking jobs away from France's cities and towns and chipping away at the regional identities that have long been a foundation of French culture and pride. As people see a prized way of life vanishing, they become newly receptive to the National Front's protectionist promises.

Though the specifics of these forces are unique to France, the underlying dynamics are more broadly relevant and may help to explain a mystery that has puzzled many: why far-right populism is gaining ground in many seemingly stable and wealthy liberal democracies.

**A Past Conflict Resonates**

The center of life in Fréjus is a small cobblestone square surrounded by historic buildings, like the town's cathedral. Its 1,500-year-old baptismal font is the source of great local pride. Mr. Rachline's office is next door in city hall.

But to understand politics here, it is better to drive a few minutes away,

to the Mediterranean. There, on a small patch of grass, stands a stone monument that looks like a gravestone.

“A tribute to all those who died so that France could live in Algeria,” its carved inscription says.

Gilles Longo, Mr. Rachline’s deputy, said the mayor erected the monument to honor the town’s Pieds-Noirs, former French settlers who fled Algeria when it won independence in 1962, and its Harkis, Algerians who fought alongside the French.

But Fréjus — little more than a day’s boat ride from Algiers — is also home to many families who fought for independence. To them, French Algeria was a brutal colonial regime that treated Algerians as second-class citizens. The monument gave a new life to that divide in town, reviving long-dormant conflict.

“At the market, Pieds-Noirs were getting in fights with Algerians,” said Insaf Rezagui, 22, the secretary of the local chapter of France’s main center-left party. “It was a big cycle of violence and hatred that came back.”

I was struck by how often people in Fréjus brought up Algeria to explain their views today. Ms. Rezagui, for example, sees her career in politics as continuing her grandparents’ anticolonialist fight in Algeria.

Terrence Peterson, a professor at Florida International University who is writing a book about the French military’s history in Algeria, compared the symbolic value of Algeria in France with the Confederate flag in the United States. Just as the Confederate flag has a double meaning — a symbol of racism to many, but a symbol of a treasured past to others — Algeria stands for French racist oppression, but also a lost society seen as expanding French Republican virtues to the edge of the Sahara.

“At its base it’s really a conflict about ‘what is France, and who is French?’” he said. “It’s an important nexus of memory and identity. So whatever you want to say about France’s relationship to its minority populations, Algeria often allows you to make that argument.”

**Group Identity, Group Hostility**

The monument in Fréjus in some ways captures the National Front’s political strategy in miniature. The party’s political ideas take advantage of the same kinds of divides over group identity and history that the monument has ignited in town.

Marine Le Pen, the party’s leader, often describes Muslim immigrants as aliens whose beliefs are incompatible with French values, and whose mere presence threatens French culture and safety. The party promotes a particular kind of French identity, one it says is based on French values as well as French citizenship, but which is implicitly white and Christian.

And it fosters a sense of a divided, threatened group identity — a French “us,” distinct from the immigrant “them.”

These ideas tap into a universally potent psychological force. Research shows that group identity, like the National Front’s version of “Frenchness,” can alone provoke anger and hostility toward outsiders.

In a famous 1954 study known as the Robbers Cave experiment, researchers took two groups of fifth-grade boys camping. In the first week the groups were kept separate and not told of each other’s existence. They participated in activities aimed at getting them to identify with their group. Then, in the second week, the campers discovered that there was another group of boys in the park.

Remarkably, that was all it took to spark conflict. Before they even met, the boys began to call members of the other group “outsiders” and “intruders.” Merely being part of one group and aware of another was enough to create hostility.

Later research has found that “symbolic” threats, like perceived differences in values or beliefs, will arouse even greater enmity between groups. Studies have shown, for instance, that people are more likely to be antagonistic to immigrants if they perceive them as threatening the country’s values than if they view them as direct competition for jobs or other resources.

**‘It’s Like a Depression’**

The National Front’s politics take advantage of these natural human tendencies. But the party also has tapped into a sense of social dislocation, even despair, because of changes brought by globalization and technological progress. This phenomenon, too, can be seen in Fréjus.

Walk a few minutes from the cathedral and you will arrive in a small shop that offers manicures and a colorful selection of beauty products. Behind the counter, I met Helene Beaumurs, an elegantly coifed brunette whose glowing complexion was a testament to her wares. She grew quiet when I asked about the National Front’s rise here.

She was not sure whether she would support Ms. Le Pen, she said. But she had lost faith so completely in France’s mainstream politicians that anything — even a party long considered taboo — seemed like an improvement.

Today she sees a way of life she cherishes eroding. She knows farmers who are struggling, working seven days a week but barely getting by. In the center of town, stores are closing as they struggle to compete with large supermarkets, she said, gesturing at the vacant storefronts on the narrow, winding street.

“I think there are many people in France who want to know why they get up in the morning, and if working still has the value they were taught as children,” she said, “or if it’s just pulling the cart.”

She was particularly concerned about the lack of opportunities for the next generation. Youth unemployment in France is over 23 percent, more than double the country’s overall rate.

“Those that studied, that have families that can help them — they are leaving.”

“I’ve never known France to be in this current condition before, never,” she added. “It’s like a depression.”

Christophe Tellier, an independent plumber who is a National Front supporter, said he was struggling under high taxes. “It almost makes you want to close down the business,” he said, adding: “You see immigrants who’ve never worked in France, and they are given money. Sometimes more than our retired people.”

**‘The Mosque Should Never Have Seen the Light of Day’**

Studies have found that when people feel that a group they identify with is losing success or esteem, they cling more closely to it, and are more likely to be defensive or punitive toward outsiders.

The feelings Ms. Beaumurs and Mr. Tellier described, in other words, can also explain why people turn to us-vs.-them politics. And in France the “them” is found in the country’s mosques.

The Fréjus mosque is a gleaming white building with carved wooden doors, in a poor neighborhood on the edge of town. Mr. Rachline campaigned on a promise to hold a referendum about whether the mosque should be allowed to stand. There has been no referendum, but his administration has been locked in a series of bitter legal battles over the legality of the mosque.

“The mosque should never have seen the light of day because the building permit should never have been issued,” Mr. Longo, Mr. Rachline’s deputy, said.

Ms. Rezagui said the mosque controversy led to Mr. Rachline’s election. “We had a campaign of hatred, of rejection of the ‘other,’” she said.

Around the corner from the mosque, a religious Muslim who gave his name only as Mohammed de Fréjus — French for “Mohammed of Fréjus” — was working in a food truck.

The small truck’s culinary output was in keeping with France’s reputation as a gastronomic heaven. For each meal he made flatbread to order from a batch of homemade dough, roasting it to perfection in a pizza oven mounted on one wall. The kofte meatballs, he announced, were made according to his own recipe.

Although he was once proud to be French, he said, today he feels abandoned by the country he had lived in since birth.

“I want to leave,” he said, “To move to England is my dream. They’re open.”

The New York Times

# Marine Le Pen Leads Far-Right Fight to Make France ‘More French’

Adam Nossiter

“Just watch the interlopers from all over the world 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.

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 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 winning the presidency.

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 on Wednesday night at the Dôme, a metal-covered 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 those held on Wednesday were relatively subdued.

Referring to those under surveillance as possible security threats — a day before a man with an assault rifle fatally shot a police officer in Paris — 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'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 immigrants; 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 Scueil, 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 National Front supporters pulled away from the Dôme, 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."

Bloomberg

## Le Pen Victory Worries Some Investors a Lot More Than Others

Jens Nordvig

The first round of the French elections takes center stage this weekend and investors around the world will be watching closely. The key concern is whether the far-right and euroskeptic candidate Marine Le Pen -- who has promised to renegotiate France's relationship with the European Union and call a "Frexit" referendum within six months -- will become the next president.

A victory by Le Pen is not altogether improbable. She is running neck-and-neck with Emmanuel Macron, an independent, and the current four-way race opens up several possibilities about who she may face in a second round. While her polling gap versus Macron is very large in the second round, and seems hard to close in just two weeks, Le Pen could have a better shot versus some opponents such as Francois Fillon of the center-right Republicans and the Communist-backed Jean-Luc Melenchon.

But not all investors are equally worried about the outcome. Bond investors are seemingly very concerned about the risk of a Le Pen victory and the tail risk that France exits the EU and adopts a new currency; equity investors are showing more relaxed attitudes.

The simplest way to spot the tension in the fixed-income market is to look at the difference in yields between French and German 10-year bonds, which has widened from 30 basis points in early November to around 70 basis points currently. The spread has clearly correlated with the performance of extremist candidates and is now at the highest since the European debt crisis.

We have also seen this concern expressed in money flow data. Japanese investors sold $15 billion of French bonds in February, the largest monthly sale on record as political risks emerged in earnest, according to the last available data.

Moreover, pricing of short-dated German bunds, which now have yields much lower than even European money market rates, suggests that redenomination risk is playing a role in investor behavior (although the scarcity of the securities is also a factor). The spread between older French credit-default swap contracts and newer contracts tell a similar story.

Equity investors seem more relaxed. The CAC 40 Index of French stocks trading close to multi-month highs and investor surveys point to "overweight" positions among institutional investors in European equity markets. U.S. buying of European stocks through exchange-traded funds has seen some of the strongest flows since 2015 of late. Although the nominal amounts are not huge, at around $2 billion in recent weeks, they should be viewed as a proxy for broader flows happening outside the ETF space.

Even during the periods of elevated tension caused by French election polling and the rise of far-right and far-left candidates in mid-February and early April, it was hard to see any material weakness in European equity indexes outside some pressure in bank stocks.

So, what is going on? There are at least three narratives to explain the relative resilience of equities.

First, equity investors learned in 2016 not to panic in the face of political risk. That was the lesson both from the experience around the U.K. Brexit vote and Donald Trump's election victory in the United States. Some equity investors have even concluded that populism may a bullish force.

Second, equity investors are supposed to be risk-tolerant. After all, owning stocks is about getting paid a risk premium for providing long-term capital. In contrast, conservative fixed-income investors are looking for risk-free returns, and

many developed-market bond managers can't tolerate tail risk, even if it is remote. This could be a key factor behind the seeming divergence between fixed-income and equities in relation to European political risk.

Third, we observed during the euro crisis that equity markets can be very sensitive to systemic tension. European funding market stresses repeatedly drove equities sharply lower from 2010 through 2012.

But the tension around the French election has been muted. While French government bonds have sold off, there has been little evidence of stress in money markets, perhaps because of the European Central Bank's more liberal attitude towards liquidity provision compared with the pre-long-term refinancing operation, or LTRO, days.

Regardless of the specific reasons, the recent discrepancy between fixed-income and equity market behavior creates an interesting potential asymmetry as the election unfolds. (The four leading candidates all head into the final hours of campaigning with a chance of qualifying for a run-off on May 7.)

In the market negative scenario, meaning either a Le Pen or Melenchon winning, we could see significant adverse equity market moves, as investors will have to price in bigger risk premiums. This assumes that the "populism is bullish" argument is not going to dominate in the case of France. That's likely to be the case eventually as political instability in the very core of the euro zone should create systemic tension in the entire currency bloc, especially if it becomes clear that a Frexit referendum will actually take place. As such, fixed-income markets will hardly be immune in such a scenario.

In the market positive scenario, meaning either a Fillon or Macron win, fixed-income and currency markets may produce bigger relative moves, as that is where the greatest caution has been reflected up to now. This may already be happening to a small degree, as bond and currency markets seem to detect a bit of improvement in polling for centrist candidates in the final stretch.

For investors, it's always dangerous to think about things too one-dimensionally, and French election risk is not the only factor at play in markets. The recent drop in global interest rates is a major influence as optimism wanes that Trump's economic agenda will really push growth higher.

The key observation is this: Different investors have different levels of risk tolerance, and the divergence in asset performance we are observing in the runup to the French election seems to be a strong reflection of that idea. In the worst-case scenario for markets, which is a win by Le Pen, we're bound to see bearish moves across a wide range of assets. In a more positive scenario, the moves may be more pronounced in the assets that have embedded the most concern, and that is fixed-income and currencies.

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## Who Will Win French Election? It Could Be the Banks

Paul J. Davies

April 20, 2017 6:54 a.m. ET

French banks have been tainted by their customers: Investors worry they might make extreme political choices in the first round of the country's presidential election this weekend.

Still, the greater probability seems to be that at least one of the two candidates left in the race come Monday morning will be more mainstream. And that should see bank shares bounce.

The far-right Marine Le Pen and far-left Jean-Luc Mélenchon are candidates that could crash the French economy or crack the European Union. If both get to round two, investors will head for the hills. So long as just one of them gets through, most likely Ms. Le Pen, the relief should be palpable.

Shares of French banking giants BNP Paribas and Société Générale have endured a rough ride since early February when the candidacy of traditional conservative François Fillon was hobbled by a nepotism scandal that seemed to strengthen Ms. Le Pen.

A boost to her anti-euro rhetoric hit the banks' stocks and pushed French government bond yields higher. The banks recovered some ground as Emmanuel Macron, a centrist former economy minister, emerged as a good alternative, but weakened again recently due to Mr. Mélenchon's rise up the polls.

The far-left and far-right candidates don't just threaten extreme policies such as superhigh tax rates for the rich or pulling France out of the euro. Both candidates would also likely make it harder for French banks to become more efficient by cutting branches and staff.

International investors are wary of European banks because of the big political risk in this contest, that France causes a breakup of the EU. Many won't feel safe to return until May 8 when the French result is final.

European investors who are shy of France may be over-favoring the healthiest banks in places such as Spain because of hopes that higher interest rates are on the way. These banks sell variable-rate mortgages that are priced using short-term interest rates. They can earn more income more quickly when rates rise than French or German rivals, who make mostly fixed-rate loans.

However, the hopes of European investors and the fears of international ones are probably both overdone. So long as France doesn't go into next week with an extremist head-to-head, the valuation gap between BNP Paribas and a bank such as Spain's Banco Santander should quickly start to close again.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Treasury Yields Climb as Focus Turns to French Election

Sam Goldfarb

Updated April 20, 2017 3:50 p.m. ET

U.S. government bonds pulled back Thursday, retreating for the second day in a row after an extended rally had pushed the yield on the 10-year note to a five-month low.

The yield on the benchmark 10-year note settled at 2.239%, compared with 2.202% Wednesday and 2.177% Tuesday, its lowest close since Nov. 10. Yields rise as bond prices fall.

Analysts attributed the price declines to a few different factors, including heavy debt issuance in Europe and better poll numbers for the centrist French presidential candidate Emmanuel Macron ahead of Sunday's first-round vote, which will determine the two candidates who make it to the election's final round on May 7.

Uncertainty around the French election has been one reason why Treasury yields have declined recently, as investors have sold French bonds and migrated to the safety of German and U.S. government debt.

A month ago, investors were fairly confident that French voters would elect Mr. Macron as president, but that assumption has been challenged more recently by a surge in support for the far-left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon. The contest is now considered a close four-way race that also features the far-right Marine Le Pen and conservative François Fillon.

For many investors, the worst-case scenario would be a second round contest pitting Ms. Le Pen against Mr. Mélenchon as both candidates have discussed the possibility of France leaving the European Union, an outcome that could threaten the eurozone and destabilize financial markets.

Though polls suggest both Mr. Macron and Mr. Fillon would defeat Ms. Le Pen in a second round, they point to a possible victory for Mr. Mélenchon if he faces off against Mr. Fillon.

"I think what we're looking at largely here today is just a waiting game," said John Canavan, market analyst at Stone and McCarthy Research Associates in Princeton, N.J.

If Mr. Macron emerges the clear winner in the first round, "a relief trade" would likely drive Treasury yields higher but could be short-lived as investors move on to other issues, he added.

Along with the French election, investors have grown concerned lately about escalating tensions between the U.S. and North Korea and less optimistic that President Donald Trump will be able to pass fiscal stimulus measures that could provide a boost to growth and inflation. Recent U.S. economic data have also been mixed, making investors more skeptical that the Fed will raise interest rates again before the end of the second quarter.

Higher interest rates and inflation both diminish the value of outstanding government bonds.

Treasury yields ticked higher in the afternoon after Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the administration was “pretty close” to releasing a plan to overhaul the tax code. But they quickly fell back to previous levels as bond investors maintained a wait-and-see approach to the administration’s proposals.

## Editorial : How to Break Europe’s Financial ‘Doom Loop’

The Editors

The euro-zone economy is looking a lot healthier. After years of stagnation, growth has finally picked up and unemployment is falling. Fears of a paralyzing bout of deflation have receded as well. Yet there’s a risk of relapse -- and Europe’s banking “doom loop” is the reason.

Close links between government finances and the banking system were a main cause of the collapse of Spain, Ireland and Greece, and policy-makers have done too little to break the connection. In a report published this week, the International Monetary Fund rightly draws attention to the danger: So long as this linkage persists, Europe will continue to pose a threat to financial stability worldwide.

There are two sides to the linkage between governments and lenders. When investors believe that a government will bail out a weak bank, troubles in the financial system can cause sovereign bond yields to spike. Conversely, when lenders hold too much government debt, doubts over a country’s fiscal health can spill over to the banks.

To be fair, the euro zone has taken some steps to cut this link. The European Commission has put in place new rules forcing bond investors to take losses before governments can bail out a bank. Regulators have also forced lenders to raise more capital, reducing the risk of new rescues.

Yet these efforts have not gone far enough. Italy is exploiting a technicality in the rules to save three banks while sparing senior bondholders, showing that the era of bailouts isn’t over. Meanwhile, lenders in fiscally weak countries continue to pile into government debt.

The euro zone should be more forceful in breaking this connection. What’s needed is a grand bargain between more vulnerable countries such as Italy and stronger economies such as Germany.

The former should accept that there must be limits on how much sovereign debt European banks can hold, even though this process must be gradual to minimize instability. In addition, the existing rules on bank bailouts need to be more strictly enforced, so that it’s harder to rescue banks that don’t pose a systemic threat. At the same time, Germany’s government should understand that weaker member states can’t resolve their banking troubles without help. The European Stability Mechanism, the euro zone’s rescue fund, intervenes mainly by lending to governments -- burdening them with more debt. The ESM should be able to intervene directly instead.

These measures will be politically difficult for all parties, but they’re necessary to strengthen the euro zone ahead of the next crisis.

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## Editorial : There’s a lot riding on Britain’s snap elections

BRITISH PRIME Minister Theresa May’s decision to hold early elections in June, reversing what had been a firm public position, surely reflects her recognition that Britain’s exit from the European Union will be far more complicated and painful than voters were promised when they supported it in a referendum last year.

The “leave” campaign promised that migration from the other 27 E.U. countries would be curtailed and the jurisdiction of E.U. bureaucrats and the European Court of Justice abolished, without damage to an economy that is heavily dependent on free trade with Europe. In fact, as Ms. May has begun to acknowledge, regaining control of Britain’s borders will mean a costly exit from the common market. In addition, Brussels could hand Britain a bill for tens of billions of dollars in residual payments, and a new trade deal could take years to negotiate.

By 2020, when the election would have been held under the usual schedule, Britons are likely to be suffering the heavy costs of a decision that so far has not had much practical impact. A vote now could extend the term of Ms. May and the Conservatives to 2022, giving them more time to manage the fallout. More importantly, it is likely to substantially increase the government’s small, 17-seat majority in the 650-member House of Commons, thanks to the abysmal state of the opposition Labour Party.

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Unfortunately, the election will strand many of the 48 percent of voters who opposed and, according to opinion polls, still oppose Brexit. Under far-left leader Jeremy Corbyn, Labour is weakly ambivalent on the issue. The small Liberal Democratic Party has taken a firm stand against leaving the union, but while it is expected to gain seats, for now it is polling at around 10 percent and appears unlikely to stop a Conservative landslide.

For Ms. May, who replaced David Cameron nine months ago and has not yet won her own election, the most important question may be not the size of her margin over Labour, but the composition of the new Conservative parliamentary group. To succeed in negotiations with E.U. leaders she will need the flexibility to overrule party hard-liners who will oppose any concession on borders and regulation; that would be difficult in the current Parliament. A more moderate majority will be essential to deals preserving British access to the European market in key areas, such as finance and auto manufacturing, without which the economy could be severely damaged.

For now, Ms. May remains carefully vague about the terms of an exit agreement. Apart from saying in a January speech that control over migration and escape from the European Court of Justice were priorities, and a departure from the single market and customs union a consequence, the prime minister has been unclear on a range of issues, such as whether Britain will consent to pay the huge exit bill that some E.U. officials say it will owe. No doubt she will be pressed during the campaign to tell her supporters more clearly what they are voting for; but for the same reasons she decided to call an election, Ms. May will likely demur.

## What’s Making Britons Grumpy? Voting, Voting, Then Voting Again (UNE)

Wiktor Szary and Jenny Gross

April 20, 2017 4:09 p.m. ET

LONDON—Earlier this week, after U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May called a snap national election for June, a reporter for the British Broadcasting Corp. thrust a microphone in front of a woman on a Bristol street and asked her what she thought.

“You’re joking. Not another one!” the interviewee said. “Oh, for God’s sake, I can’t, honestly. I can’t stand this.”

As her exasperation struck a chord, the video of the woman identified as 75-year-old “Brenda from Bristol” became an online sensation in the U.K., where the hashtag #BrendaforPM spread across Twitter .

In the birthplace of parliamentary democracy, where voting is a celebrated political right and civic ritual, the seemingly endless political campaigning is getting wearisome. This will be the U.K.’s third nationwide poll in just over two years. For some parts of the country, there have been more.

There was a parliamentary election in May 2015 and the Brexit referendum in 2016. Scots voted on Scottish independence, the people of Northern Ireland chose a new assembly and Londoners elected a mayor. There have also been assorted local and legislative polls.

That’s turning Britain’s general stoicism—“mustn’t grumble” is an unofficial national slogan—into a flood of complaining.

“I don’t mind a bit of politics normally. But oh my Lord, this time

I'm not excited at all," declared Breda Harman, a 76-year-old retiree in south London. She said she would do her duty and "trudge down" to her local polling station—"Good thing it's only 200 meters away"—in June.

"I can't believe she'd just spring that on us, after she said we wouldn't have another vote until 2020," said Mrs. Harman, referring to Prime Minister May. "If she wants another one, fine, but I'm voting Labour this time."

Mrs. May, who leads the governing Conservative Party, wants the election to strengthen her political hand before talks start on Britain's withdrawal from the European Union.

For the civil servants and volunteers who must rally for yet another vote, the prospect is daunting. Officials need to ready more than 41,000 polling stations in schools, village halls, community centers and even pubs.

Jocelyn McCarley, the assistant chief electoral officer in Northern Ireland, said as soon as Mrs. May made the surprise announcement, her team jumped into action.

She and her colleagues are scrambling to organize voting equipment, lay the groundwork for setting up voting booths and map out staff schedules. Roughly 600 people have already phoned the election hotline with questions about the vote.

"Things have become very frantic, basically," she said over the phone from her office in Belfast. "It's hard to keep all the balls in the air at once."

British lawmakers in 2011 passed the Fixed-Term Parliament Act, which established set, five-year terms for governments, a measure partly aimed at preventing prime ministers from timing elections when they are most advantageous for incumbents.

Under that law, the next general election was set to be held in 2020. To move the vote up, Mrs. May relied on a provision that allows for an earlier election if there is support from two-thirds of the members of the House of Commons.

Since 1945, British Parliaments have lasted an average of just under four years. The mid-1970s saw a run of elections similar to today's, with two general elections in a single year in 1974, followed by a referendum in 1975 on whether the U.K. should remain in the European Economic Community, a forerunner of today's EU. More than 67% voted to stay.

Pete Wishart, a Scottish National Party lawmaker in the U.K. Parliament, said he understands voter frustration. Scotland has had four elections in a year—which he said is the most since 1974. "The electorate has every right to feel tired and wonder when it's all going to end," he said.

Mr. Wishart conceded he feels the fatigue himself. "I need to give myself a bit of a rouse and get ready to get back on the streets again," he said. "I'm trying to give myself a good shake."

Edward Mulcahy, 53, said he has enjoyed voting in the four elections held in his London district since 2015. "It's really not that hard to go down to a station and put an X on a piece of paper," he said.

The more crucial issue is the growing need for more longevity in government, he said. A longtime Labour supporter, Mr. Mulcahy said he is "seriously considering" voting Conservative in hopes the party will get a strong enough mandate to govern for a full five-year term.

Edward Fieldhouse, professor of social and political science at the University of Manchester, said that while Britons complain about politics, it is "a bit of a myth" that they are bored with it. "For voters it's not really about how often elections come along, but about what is at stake," he said.

The main problem with the new vote, he said, is that "it feels like a foregone conclusion," with opinion polls suggesting that Mrs. May's Conservatives will win by a landslide.

John Curtice, a professor at the University of Strathclyde and an expert on electoral surveys, says he is preparing—rather joylessly—for his academic life to become upended yet again.

"I was already thinking about local elections, and that's quite enough, thank you very much," Mr. Curtice said. "I'm with Brenda in Bristol. I think Brenda in Bristol got it spot on."

Appeared in the Apr. 21, 2017, print edition as 'What Makes Britons Grumpy? Voting, Voting and Voting Again.'

The New York Times

## Editorial : Strengthening Britain's Hand on Brexit

There is an undeniable dollop of hypocrisy in Prime Minister Theresa May's call for a snap election on June 8 after insisting all along that she would not do something so "self-serving." But in this case Mrs. May made the right call.

The election cannot change the outcome of last year's referendum in which British voters shocked the world by voting to leave the European Union. She is stuck with that. But what she will need is the backing of the British people for the extraordinarily difficult negotiations with the union to determine how, at what pace and at what cost to the British economy the separation is to be achieved. It's also best for the European Union to know who it's dealing with as it grapples with major challenges to its own future.

Mrs. May claimed she changed her mind on an election "only recently and reluctantly" because opposition parties and the House of Lords were weakening her negotiating stance. The real reason is more prosaic: The Labour Party under the far-left Jeremy Corbyn is a mess, and unless something startling happens in the next seven weeks, Mrs. May's Conservatives will greatly expand their majority in Parliament. Elections will also give the prime minister, who took power last July without a national vote, a personal mandate.

Most important, a strong showing should give Mrs. May the flexibility and authority she will need once the enormously complex and fraught negotiations get going — after France and Germany hold their own national elections, the former this weekend and the latter in September. The European Union will resist making major concessions to Britain for fear of encouraging other members to exit, so Mrs. May will be under considerable pressure to make compromises that hard-core advocates of Brexit will strongly resist.

At that point, Mrs. May's polling numbers are likely to sink, especially if she opts for a phased withdrawal at the cost of continuing to allow the free movement of Europeans into Britain for some time. That is a feature of union membership that Brexiteers especially loathe. Similarly, Britons still harboring hopes that Brexit can be avoided are likely to see them dashed once Mrs. May secures a firm mandate from voters.

All these passions are certain to peak as the March 2019 deadline for the Britain-European Union divorce approaches, so by pushing the next scheduled general election from 2020 to 2022 Mrs. May also gives herself a needed political buffer.

That, at least, is the picture at this juncture. There have been too many electoral surprises and misleading polls — including the polls predicting Brexit would be rejected in last year's referendum — to take anything for granted. The election could re-energize Scottish nationalists, and after calling her own election, Mrs. May will have a hard time arguing that another Scottish referendum would be ill timed.

Whether Britain is wise or not to leave the European Union, the die is cast, and what is important now is to ensure a divorce that is the least disruptive and destructive to both sides. For that, Mrs. May is right to ask the British once again for their judgment.

Bloomberg

## Giugliano : Portugal Is a Keynesian Mirage

Ferdinando Giugliano

Throughout the euro-zone crisis, the European Commission has been accused of imposing unnecessary austerity on countries in distress. Economists, particularly from the left, argued that tax hikes and spending cuts were self-defeating, as lower growth only makes budget targets harder to achieve.

The supporters of this view felt vindicated last week, when Portugal posted the best budget figures since becoming a democracy in 1974. Despite raising pensions and public-sector wages, the left-wing coalition government led by Prime Minister Antonio Costa announced a government deficit just below 2.1 per cent of gross domestic product. The European Union had set Portugal a target of 2.5 per cent.

Keynesians shouldn't celebrate too soon, however. The Portuguese fiscal miracle also reflected deep cuts in capital spending, to make up for a shortfall in tax receipts. So yes,

the government boosted transfers and lowered the budget deficit -- but at the cost of forgoing productive investment for the future.

According to data from the Portuguese Public Finance Council, Lisbon cut public investment by 28.9 percent last year. Only 2.9 billion euros were spent on roads, hospitals, and suchlike. This is equivalent to a meager 1.6 percent of GDP, the lowest since at least 1995, and less than a third of the pre-crisis peak of 2010.

This collapse shouldn't be blamed entirely on Portugal's government. Funding from the EU for capital investment halved from 1 billion euros to 503 million euros. Yet the government did little to counter this decline. Instead, it oversaw an increase of 1.4 percent in current spending, as the total public-sector payroll climbed by 2.8 percent and transfers increased by 1.1 percent.

Overall, Portugal's improving fortunes offer a heartening example for countries such as Greece that are struggling to leave behind years of crisis. But the Lisbon approach doesn't amount to an alternative, left-wing model for sustainable growth. Portugal's government is redistributing the fruits of this recovery, but failing to plant the seeds for a new crop.

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# INTERNATIONAL

The Washington Post

## Ignatius : A young prince is reimagining Saudi Arabia. Can he make his vision come true?

Two years into his campaign as change agent in this conservative oil kingdom, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman appears to be gaining the confidence and political clout to push his agenda of economic and social reform.

The young prince outlined his plans in a nearly 90-minute conversation Tuesday night at his office here. Aides said it was his first lengthy on-the-record interview in months. He offered detailed explanations about foreign policy, plans to privatize oil giant Saudi Aramco, strategy for investment in domestic industry, and liberalization of the entertainment sector, despite opposition from some religious conservatives.

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Mohammed bin Salman said that the crucial requirement for reform is public willingness to change a traditional society. "The most concerning thing is if the Saudi people are not convinced. If the Saudi people are convinced, the sky is the limit," he said, speaking through an interpreter.

Change seems increasingly desired in this young, restless country. A recent Saudi poll found that 85 percent of the public, if forced to choose, would support the government rather than religious authorities on policy matters, said Abdullah al-Hokail, the head of the government's public opinion center. He added that 77 percent of those surveyed supported the government's "Vision 2030" reform plan, and that 82 percent favored music performances at public gatherings attended by men and women. Though these aren't independently verified numbers, they do indicate the direction of popular feeling, which Saudis say is matched by anecdotal evidence.

"MBS," as the deputy crown prince is known, said that he was "very optimistic" about President Trump. He described Trump as "a president who will bring America back to the right track" after Barack Obama, whom Saudi officials mistrusted. "Trump has not yet completed 100 days, and he has restored all the alliances of the U.S. with its conventional allies."

A sign of the kingdom's embrace of the Trump administration was the visit here this week by U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. While the Obama administration had criticized the Saudi war in Yemen, Mattis discussed the possibility of additional U.S. support if the Houthi insurgents there don't agree to a U.N.-brokered settlement. (I traveled to Saudi Arabia as part of the press corps accompanying Mattis.)

Mohammed bin Salman has been courting Russia, as well as the United States, and he offered an intriguing explanation of Saudi Arabia's goal in this diplomacy. "The main objective is not to have Russia place all its cards in the region behind Iran," he said. To convince Russia that Riyadh is a better bet than Tehran, the Saudis have been "coordinating our oil policies recently" with Moscow, he said, which "could be the most important economic deal for Russia in modern times."

There's less apparent political tension than a year ago, when many analysts saw a rivalry between Mohammed bin Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, who is officially next in line for the throne but is less prominent than his cousin. Whatever the succession proves to be, the deputy crown prince appears to be firmly in control of Saudi military strategy, foreign policy and economic planning. He has gathered a team of technocrats who are much younger and more activist than the kingdom's past leadership.

Reform plans appear to be moving ahead slowly but steadily. Mohammed bin Salman said that the budget deficit had been cut; non-oil revenue increased 46 percent from 2014 to 2016 and is forecast to grow another 12 percent this year. Unemployment and housing remain problems, he said, and improvement in those areas isn't likely until between 2019 and 2021.

The biggest economic change is the plan to privatize about 5 percent of Saudi Aramco, which Mohammed bin Salman said will take place next year. This public offering would probably raise hundreds of billions of dollars and be the largest such sale in financial history. The exact size of the offering will depend on financial-market demand and the availability of good options for investing the proceeds, he told me. The rationale for selling a share of the kingdom's oil treasure is to raise money to diversify the economy away from reliance on energy. One priority is mining, which would tap an estimated $1.3 trillion in potential mineral wealth.

The Saudi official listed other investment targets: creating a domestic arms industry, reducing the $60 billion to $80 billion the kingdom spends annually to buy weapons abroad; producing automobiles in Saudi Arabia to replace the roughly $14 billion the government spends annually for imported vehicles; and creating domestic entertainment and tourism industries to capture some of the $22 billion that Saudis spend traveling overseas each year.

The entertainment industry is a proxy for the larger puzzle of how to unlock the Saudi economy. Changes have begun. A Japanese orchestra that included women performed here this month, before a mixed audience of men and women. A Comic Con took place in Jeddah recently, with young men and women dressing up as characters from the TV show "Supernatural" and other favorites. Comedy clubs feature sketch comedians (but no female stand-up comics, yet).

These options are a modest revolution for a Saudi Arabia where the main entertainment venues, until recently, were restaurants and shopping malls. The modern world, in all its raucousness, is coming, for better or worse. King Fahd International Stadium in Riyadh hosted a Monster Jam last month with souped-up trucks. There are plans for a Six Flags theme park south of Riyadh.

Maya al-Athel, one of the dozens of young people hatching plans at the Saudi General Entertainment Authority, said in an interview that she'd like to bring a Museum of Ice Cream, like one she found in New York, to the kingdom.

"We want to change the culture," said Ahmed al-Khatib, a former investment banker who's chairman of the entertainment authority. His target is to create six public entertainment options every weekend for Saudis. But the larger goal, he said, is "spreading happiness" in what has sometimes been a somber country.

The instigator of this attempt to reimagine the kingdom is the 31-year-old deputy crown prince. With his brash demeanor, he's the opposite of the traditional Bedouin reserve of past Saudi leaders. Unlike so many Saudi princes, he wasn't educated in the West, which may have preserved the raw

combative energy that is part of his appeal for young Saudis.

The trick for Mohammed bin Salman is to maintain the alliance with the United States, without seeming to be America's puppet. "We have been influenced by you in the U.S. a lot," he said. "Not because anybody exerted pressure on us — if anyone puts pressure on us, we go the other way. But if you put a movie in the cinema and I watch it, I will be influenced." Without this cultural nudge, he said, "we would have ended up like North Korea." With the United States as a continuing ally, "undoubtedly, we're going to merge more with the world."

Mohammed bin Salman is careful when he talks about religious issues. So far, he has treated the religious authorities as allies against radicalism rather than cultural adversaries. He argues that extreme religious conservatism in Saudi Arabia is a relatively recent phenomenon, born in reaction to the 1979 Iranian revolution and the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by Sunni radicals later that year.

"I'm young. Seventy percent of our citizens are young," he said. "We don't want to waste our lives in this whirlpool that we were in the past 30 years. We want to end this epoch now. We want, as the Saudi people, to enjoy the coming days, and concentrate on developing our society and developing ourselves as individuals and families, while retaining our religion and customs. We will not continue to be in the post-'79 era," he concluded. "That age is over."

The Washington Post

## Freed Egyptian American prisoner returns home following Trump intervention (UNE)

https://www.facebook.com/PhilipRuckerWP

An Egyptian American charity worker who was imprisoned in Cairo for three years and became the global face of Egypt's brutal crackdown on civil society returned home to the United States late Thursday after the Trump administration quietly negotiated her release.

President Trump and his aides worked for several weeks with Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sissi to secure the freedom of Aya Hijazi, 30, a U.S. citizen, as well as her husband, Mohamed Hassanein, who is Egyptian, and four other humanitarian workers. Trump dispatched a U.S. government aircraft to Cairo to bring Hijazi and her family to Washington.

Hijazi, who grew up in Falls Church, Va., and graduated from George Mason University, was working in Cairo with the Belady Foundation, which she and her husband established as a haven and rehabilitation center for street children in Cairo.

The couple and their co-workers had been incarcerated since May 1, 2014, on child abuse and trafficking charges that were widely dismissed by human rights workers and U.S. officials as false. Virtually no evidence was ever presented against them, and for nearly three years they were held as hearings were inexplicably postponed and trial dates canceled. Human rights groups alleged that they were abused in detention.

The Obama administration unsuccessfully pressed Sissi's government for their release. It was not until Trump moved to reset U.S. relations with Egypt by embracing Sissi at the White House on April 3 — he publicly hailed the autocrat's leadership as "fantastic" and offered the U.S. government's "strong backing" — that Egypt's posture changed. Last Sunday, a court in Cairo dropped all charges against Hijazi and the others.

U.S. President Donald Trump expresses his support for Egyptian President al-Sisi telling him during a meeting in the Oval Office, "you have a great friend and an ally in the United States and in me." President Trump: U.S. 'very much behind' Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sissi (Reuters)

(Reuters)

What the White House plans to celebrate as vindication of its early diplomacy comes at the end of a week in which the administration has combated charges of foreign policy confusion. Although the president received wide praise for his decision to punish Syria for its presumed chemical weapons attack with a barrage of cruise missiles, the administration has been criticized for contradictions over policy toward Syria and Turkey, and misstatements on the U.S. response to North Korea's weapons activity.

A senior administration official said that no quid pro quo had been offered for Hijazi's release but that there had been "assurance from the highest levels [of Sissi's government] that whatever the verdict was, Egypt would use presidential authority to send her home." The official said the U.S. side interpreted that to mean that a guilty verdict and sentencing would be followed by a pardon from Sissi, but they were pleasantly surprised.

The dropping of charges set in motion the release of Hijazi and Hassanein from custody and their journey to the United States, which was personally overseen by Trump and detailed Thursday by the senior administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the national security sensitivities of the case.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and deputy national security adviser Dina Powell, who were already planning to visit Egypt this week, met with Sissi on a range of topics. Meanwhile, Trump also sent his military aide, Air Force Maj. Wes Spurlock, to escort Hijazi and her family on the plane home to Washington.

Hijazi and Hassanein reunited with the Hijazi family in Cairo this week, and as Mattis traveled on to Israel, Powell, who was born in Egypt and has helped smooth relations between the two countries, stayed behind to accompany the group, the senior administration official said.

The travelers touched down at Joint Base Andrews about 10 p.m. Thursday. Hijazi and her brother, Basel, are scheduled to visit the White House on Friday to meet with Trump and his daughter, Ivanka, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who had followed Hijazi's plight, the senior administration official said.

"It's been a roller coaster of emotions the past couple of days," Basel Hijazi said in a telephone interview Thursday from aboard the plane. "We're crying with relief to have them out."

He added: "We're very grateful that President Trump personally engaged with the issue. Working closely with the Trump administration was very important for my family at this critical time. It let us be reunited as a family. We're so grateful."

Since Sissi came to power in a 2013 coup, his authoritarian government has presided over a lurching economy, with massive debt, high unemployment and allegations of corruption. A $12 billion loan last year from the International Monetary Fund and strict austerity measures have led to slow improvements, but Egypt still needs major outside investment and favorable financing.

During his U.S. visit, Sissi met with the heads of the IMF and the World Bank, along with the chief executives of Lockheed Martin and General Electric. Sissi has sought billions of dollars in financing from the U.S. Export-Import Bank for massive infrastructure investments.

During his campaign, Trump suggested that the United States could "do well without" the Ex-Im Bank. But last week, he reversed himself by nominating former Republican lawmakers Scott Garrett and Spencer Bachus to vacant positions on the bank's board.

The senior Trump administration official said the agreement for Hijazi's release was the product of Trump's "discreet diplomacy" — meaning the president's efforts to cultivate warm relations with strongmen such as Sissi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, in part by avoiding public pronouncements on human rights that might alienate the foreign governments.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), who said he recently advocated for Hijazi's release in his own talks with Sissi and was briefed on the latest negotiations, said Trump "handled it the way things like this should be handled."

"The United States can sometimes lead with things, and do it publicly, [in ways] that are offensive to people and likely not get the kind of result that we'd like, whereas working it quietly and making it a priority, but doing so in a way that is not a public embarrassment to the other party, that's the way they worked this," Corker said in an interview Thursday.

Former Obama administration officials, who were at times criticized for not making a more public case out of Hijazi's imprisonment, expressed skepticism that Sissi got nothing from Trump in exchange for Hijazi's freedom.

"The robust praise and support the president has given to Sissi, which stands in some contrast to what we did, had to have some price, and maybe this is it," said Antony J. Blinken, who worked on the Hijazi case as deputy secretary of state. "At least it's a positive development in which everyone can take some satisfaction."

At the same time, Blinken warned, such support could "have the opposite effect of simply reinforcing

[Sissi's] crackdown at home, in a way I think someday is going to rebound against him, and probably rebound against us. . . . You can try to repress your problems away, but at some point, they will explode."

During Sissi's visit to Washington, Trump made no public mention of Hijazi's imprisonment. Nor did he appear to pressure the Egyptian leader on his record of human rights abuses.

But the senior administration official said Trump had been following Hijazi's case.

"I want her to come home," Trump told his top aides and deputized them to work directly with the Egyptian government to secure her release, according to the senior administration official. Officials at the State Department and at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo helped facilitate Hijazi's departure from Egypt, while attorney Wade McMullen and other leaders from Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, a nonprofit advocacy organization, also worked to free her.

Today's WorldView

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Kerry Kennedy, the group's president, said in a statement that her team had worked with the administration, and "we are deeply grateful to President Trump for his personal engagement in resolving Aya's case."

Sissi, a former army chief who led the coup that overthrew Egypt's elected president, had been barred from the White House by the Obama administration for human rights abuses. Sissi's post-coup crackdown has been particularly severe against civil society groups, especially those receiving money from abroad. They are frequently denounced by the government and pro-government media as trying to destabilize the country. Thousands of people remain imprisoned.

While President Barack Obama was uneasy with the elected government of Mohamed Morsi, whose political organization was tied to the Muslim Brotherhood, his administration rejected Sissi's charges of terrorism ties. After the coup, Obama withheld aid from Egypt — for decades, the second- largest recipient of U.S. military assistance, after Israel, at more than $1 billion a year.

During his presidential campaign, Trump expressed admiration for authoritarian leaders he felt were tough on terrorism and derided what he called Obama's "weak" leadership.

This month, as Sissi smiled beside him in the Oval Office, Trump said warmly: "We agree on so many things. I just want to let everybody know, in case there was any doubt, that we are very much behind President al-Sissi."

The Washington Post

## Trump says he does not see expanded role for U.S. in Libya beyond ISIS fight

https://www.facebook.com/abbydphillip

President Trump on Thursday reaffirmed his criticism of the Iran nuclear deal and pledged not to expand the United States' role in Libya beyond fighting the Islamic State.

At a time when several of the president's stances on foreign affairs appear to be shifting, the dual comments represent a fidelity with some of the national security positions Trump staked out during the campaign, many of which were aimed at projecting military strength through a buildup of the armed forces while promising a more limited U.S. role in foreign conflicts.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Trump bluntly declared that he saw "no role" for the United States in stabilizing Libya, except in fighting the Islamic State.

"I do not see a role in Libya," Trump said, just seconds after Gentiloni said his country hoped to see more U.S. engagement there. "I think the United States has right now enough roles. We're in a role everywhere. So I do not see that."

"I do see a role in getting rid of ISIS. We're being very effective in that regard," he added.

(The Washington Post)

"I do not see a role in Libya. I think the United States has enough roles," President Trump said at a news conference with Italian Prime Minister Gentiloni on April 20. "We're in a role everywhere." "I do not see a role in Libya. I think the United States has enough roles," President Trump said on April 20. "We're in a role everywhere." (The Washington Post)

For Italy, political instability and violence in Libya have led to a crisis of migrants seeking refuge on its shores, many of them dying on the perilous journey across the Mediterranean. Gentiloni on Thursday urged the United States to further help find a political solution in Libya.

"A divided country and in conflict would make civility worse," he said of Libya. "The U.S. role in this is very critical."

Trump also sharply denounced the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and promised to address it further in the "not-too-distant future."

"It was a terrible agreement. It shouldn't have been signed," Trump said. "They are not living up to the spirit of the agreement. I can tell you that."

The comments underscored one part of Trump's position on the deal during the campaign, but he notably did not reiterate his promise to rip it up immediately, a tacit acknowledgment that the administration does not yet have an alternative to the deal in place.

The meeting between Trump and Gentiloni comes weeks before Trump is set to travel to Europe on his first foreign trip as president. He will make a stop at the summit of leaders of the Group of Seven, which will be held in Sicily.

Gentiloni is one of several world leaders and close U.S. allies seeking to quickly establish a relationship with Trump and perhaps influence his young presidency.

Like Trump, Gentiloni is new to his job, having taken power in December after former prime minister Matteo Renzi resigned after constitutional changes he backed failed in a referendum. While Renzi had a close relationship with President Barack Obama — and openly backed Democrat Hillary Clinton's candidacy — Gentiloni and Trump come to their relationship without much baggage, potentially opening the door for warm relations.

In recent weeks, Trump has shifted on his strident criticism of NATO and said last week in a meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg that the alliance was "no longer obsolete."

"The administration's views of the European Union and the European project are a work in progress," said Charles Kupchan, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a former director for European affairs at the National Security Council under Obama.

Trump continues to pressure NATO members to contribute at least the agreed-upon 2 percent of gross domestic product to their own defense, but on Thursday he delivered a more muted warning to Italy.

"As we reaffirm our support for historic institutions, we must also reaffirm the requirement that everyone must pay their full and fair share for the cost of defense," Trump said.

Italy, which has long been allied with the United States in military action in the Middle East and elsewhere, maintains that its contribution to NATO goes beyond its financial obligation and encompasses Italian military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and in the fight against the Islamic State. Italy does not yet devote 2 percent of its GDP to defense spending, but Gentiloni emphasized that Italy's contribution is increasing.

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"We know that this will be a gradual process. . . . It has already begun," Gentiloni said.

During the campaign, Trump also voiced support for the Brexit campaign that resulted in Britain leaving the European Union. And in January, he declared that Brexit "is going to end up being a great thing."

After meeting with Gentiloni on Thursday, Trump appeared to affirm the United States' commitment to Europe.

"A strong Europe is very, very important to me as president of the United States," Trump said. "And it's also, in my opinion — in my very strong opinion, important for the United States.

"We want to see it. We will help it be strong, and it's very much to everybody's advantage," he added.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Trump Joins Criticism of Iran; Questions U.S. Role in Libya

Felicia Schwartz and Rebecca Ballhaus

April 20, 2017 9:42 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump, adding to strong criticism of the Iran nuclear deal voiced by his administration, said on Thursday that Tehran is "not living up to the spirit of the agreement."

His comments, in a joint press conference with Italy's Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, added to signals from Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and others that the Trump administration could back away from the landmark deal reached in 2015 between six world powers and Iran.

"We're analyzing it very, very carefully and we'll have something to say about it in the not-too-distant future," Mr. Trump said. "Iran has not lived up to the spirit of the agreement and they have to do that."

The Trump administration certified to Congress earlier this week that Iran is abiding by the accord, but senior officials have said they are reviewing whether to stick with the deal.

Mr. Trump's comments come a day after Mr. Tillerson made a rare public appearance to list U.S. complaints against Iran, complaining about its destabilizing activities in the Middle East, and faulted the agreement for focusing only on the nuclear issue.

Next week, Tom Shannon, the undersecretary of state for political affairs, will attend a meeting in Vienna with Iran and the other world powers who were party to the accord in what will be the first session with Trump administration representation.

Mr. Trump on Thursday also questioned another key U.S. policy position in the Middle East—its role in Libya. The Obama administration had carried out strikes against Islamic State and backed the Government of National Accord, which stemmed from a 2015 U.N.-brokered deal. The internationally recognized Government of National Accord has struggled to assert itself since then.

"I do not see a role in Libya," Mr. Trump said Thursday. "I do see a role in getting rid of ISIS."

It wasn't immediately clear whether Mr. Trump was signaling a shift in the U.S. position on Libya.

On Wednesday, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley called for a "Libyan-led dialogue" backed by the U.N. to resolve continued fighting between warring factions. She called for all parties in Libya to abide by the 2015 U.N.-backed agreement and urged the Government of National Accord, or GNA, to "deliver for the country's people."

While the U.S. and other countries back the GNA, Russia in recent months has thrown its support behind a rival political organization led by Gen. Khalifa Haftar. The move has sparked growing concern at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Washington has largely kept its distance from Gen. Haftar, who has had links to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and was part of an effort to oust Moammar Gadhafi in the late 1980s.

European countries have lobbied Russia to use its influence with Gen. Haftar, who has received support from Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, to get him to reconcile with the U.N.-backed Government of National Accord.

The New York Times

## No U.S. Military Role in Libya, Trump Says, Rejecting Italy's Pleas

Glenn Thrush

President Trump said on Thursday that he would not give the American military a direct role in helping stabilize war-ravaged Libya, rejecting years of pleading by Italy for more assistance in stemming African migrant traffic into Europe.

Mr. Trump's comments came during a White House news conference with Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni of Italy, who implored the United States to step up its "critical" involvement in Libya, a former Italian colony.

"We need a stable and unified Libya," Mr. Gentiloni, who has been in office since November, said, discussing a conflict that has sent thousands of asylum seekers across the Mediterranean to Italy and other European countries. "A divided country, and in conflict, would make civility worse."

In his scripted opening remarks, Mr. Trump thanked Italy's leaders "for your leadership on seeking stabilization in Libya, and for your crucial efforts to deny ISIS a foothold in the Mediterranean," adding, "You fought hard." Ansar al-Shariah, an affiliate of ISIS — the Islamic State extremist group, based in Syria and Iraq — has been operating in Libya since 2012.

But the president — who was not wearing an earpiece that would have allowed him to understand Mr. Gentiloni's challenge, issued in Italian — quickly contradicted his guest.

"I do not see a role in Libya," Trump said. "I think the United States has, right now, enough roles. We're in a role everywhere."

Mr. Trump did not, however, rule out involvement in the effort to root out Islamic militants in Libya and other countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

"I do see a role in getting rid of ISIS. We're being very effective in that regard," he said. "We are effectively ridding the world of ISIS. I see that as a primary role, and that's what we're going to do, whether it's in Iraq or in Libya or anywhere else. And that role will come to an end at a certain point."

The conflict in Libya — which began with the killing of the country's longtime dictator, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, in 2011 — has divided the desert nation into warring regions, with Islamic State-linked fighters dominating the western part of the country.

In 2016, President Barack Obama said that not preparing for the chaos that was certain to follow the United States' military intervention in Libya was probably the worst mistake of his presidency.

The meeting on Thursday was Mr. Trump's first with Mr. Gentiloni, and took place a month before the president's planned visit to Sicily for a Group of 7 summit meeting, a gathering of the world's seven most developed economies.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Among Arabs, Diverging Views on Turkey's Erdogan

Nour Malas

Updated April 20, 2017 3:06 p.m. ET

ISTANBUL—Syrian merchant Bassel Fouad was once active in the opposition to his country's president, Bashar al-Assad, and sees him as a tyrant who destroyed Syria with his iron-fisted authoritarian rule.

Mr. Fouad, who now lives in southern Turkey, said he doesn't understand intensified concerns in his host nation over the growing power of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the wake of Sunday's constitutional referendum. He called Mr. Erdogan "a reformer who led his country forward."

His view reflects a paradox on Turkey among its Arab neighbors: Even as Mr. Erdogan's moves have raised concerns over the direction of Turkey's democracy, some still see him as a fair and strong Muslim leader in a region largely ruled by dynasties and resurgent autocrats.

The results of the referendum, in which Turks voted by a slim margin to concentrate more power in the presidency, were met with supportive nods in corners of the Arab world, though the vote was marred by allegations of irregularities.

Some of the nods came from citizens of countries led by monarchs, stagnant governments or repressive regimes—a sign of how deeply split the Middle East is over ideas of reform and Islamist rule, and how relative and fluid those notions can be.

"As long as the changes came through the ballot boxes, why all this fear?" said Mohammad Diab, a Syrian refugee in northern Germany. Mr. Diab said he believed the Turkish president "will lead an Islamic awakening in Turkey and the region."

Barakat Alshamrani, who was visiting Istanbul from Saudi Arabia, said he realized Turkey was divided over Mr. Erdogan and whether to grant the president more power, but he shrugged off the debate.

"What we know is that he is a good, fair, popular Muslim leader," said Mr. Alshamrani.

"What matters for me is that the country is stable and prosperous in its economy, in tourism, as an

Islamic nation," he said. "Everything else, the politics, is a domestic issue for the Turkish people."

Saudi Arabia's King Salman congratulated Mr. Erdogan on the referendum victory, even though Turkey has supported affiliates of the Muslim Brotherhood, an organization Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies oppose.

To be sure, there is some objection to Mr. Erdogan's moves. Among secular Arabs who once saw the Turkish leader as a moderating force, or those fearful of the growing clout of Islamists at home, Turkey now looks like an example of how the ballot box can help Islamists consolidate power in divided societies.

Antigovernment Syrians revere the Turkish president because he vociferously supported their rebellion, and many say they feel indebted to Turkey for hosting about three million Syrian refugees, more than any other country.

But Mr. Erdogan has for the past decade held special stature for many Arabs as the type of leader they wished for their own countries: a pious Muslim who modernized his nation and embraced democracy, on his own terms.

Arabs across countries and religious persuasions admired his strong positions against regional foe Israel and liked the way he appeared to stand up to the West.

Mr. Erdogan rode this wave of popularity into the early years of the Arab Spring earlier this decade, supporting protesters and rebels in Syria, Egypt, and Libya, even while his political rivals at home accused him of moving Turkey toward autocracy.

"Up until recently, you still will hear Syrian, Egyptian, Tunisian Islamists talking about a Turkish model and pointing to Turkey as a positive case to be inspired about," said Shadi Hamid, author of a book on political Islam and a scholar at the Brookings Institution. He said it wasn't yet clear whether those views are changing in the wake of the Turkish referendum.

As Turkey waded deep into the region's crises, including the Syrian civil war and the struggle against Islamic State, views of Mr. Erdogan in the Middle East splintered along the polarized lines of those conflicts.

In Egypt, whose president gained power in a military coup against an elected Muslim Brotherhood leader, state media covered Turkey's referendum critically. Reports criticized Mr. Erdogan's inability to win more expansive support for the constitutional changes put to a vote.

Brotherhood supporters, meanwhile, turned a blind eye as Mr. Erdogan purged thousands of his rivals or perceived enemies from civil service, academia, and the press after a failed coup against him last summer, even though in Egypt supporters of the Brotherhood had faced a similar crackdown, said Timothy Kaldas, communications director for Munathara, an Arab civil society group based in Tunis and Washington.

"They're silent when there's a crackdown on the press, even as they would criticize that at home," he said.

—Nour Alakraa in Berlin contributed to this article.

## It's Time for Erdogan to Admit He's Not a Democrat

Nick Danforth

One day after Turkey's presidential referendum, with allegations of fraud mounting and the opposition still contesting the results, U.S. President Donald Trump called to congratulate Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his victory and discuss the campaign against the Islamic State. In one sense, this was nothing new. Washington has often put strategic interests ahead of democratic ideals and cultivated plenty of authoritarian allies; indeed, at various points over the past half-century, Turkey has been one of them. But Washington's relationship with post-referendum Turkey promises something new and potentially trickier: an undemocratic ally completely committed to its own democratic rhetoric.

It's not that Erdogan and his party never had grounds to call themselves democrats. In past years, they consistently won free and fair elections while confronting a number of undemocratic opponents: the military, the secular bureaucracy, and most recently, it seems, the Gulen movement. But Erdogan has built this history into a much more grandiose narrative, one in which his success finally marks modern Turkey's revolutionary transformation into a full democracy. Now, after the world watched a sustained and systematic crackdown on dissent in the lead-up to Sunday's vote, Erdogan insists that Turkey just held the "most democratic election … ever seen in any Western country." Why, Turkey's prime minister asked, did the world see Turkey's referendum as any less legitimate than the Brexit vote?

This sort of delusional rhetoric will make smooth U.S.-Turkish relations impossible. Ironically, by insisting so fervently that he's a democrat, Erdogan precludes the conventional hypocrisy that has worked so well for Washington in the past.

When it comes to many of the considerably worse authoritarian regimes the United States works with, there is, for all the hypocrisy and euphemism, a general sense that everyone is on the same page. Some, like Jordan and Saudi Arabia, are proudly monarchical. Others, like Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's Egypt, hold elections and pay some limited lip service to democratic norms but do not rely heavily on this rhetoric for their domestic or international legitimacy. And in countries that, unlike Turkey, have no sustained democratic history to speak of, expectations are correspondingly lower. The result is that bilateral relations can be carried out with a degree of cynical candor, couched in a shared vocabulary of order, stability, and mutual interests.

Meanwhile, the regimes most committed to defending their democratic credentials in the face of all evidence have historically been revolutionary or left-wing ones rather than U.S. allies. When it came to Venezuela under Hugo Chávez or the not-so-democratic German Democratic Republic, Washington was contesting their ideological claims rather than accommodating them.

So why will this matter for the United States and Turkey, especially if Trump and Erdogan seem eager to get along? The problem is that when the United States and Turkey inevitably butt heads over policy differences, as they often have in the past, a fundamental disagreement over the legitimacy of Turkey's democracy, and divergent perceptions of basic political realities, will make these disputes that much more explosive and harder to resolve.

The more Turkish leaders talk about their democracy, the more Western observers will, too.

The more Turkish leaders talk about their democracy, the more Western observers will, too. And this focus on democracy, rather than security or stability, will ensure a steady stream of criticism from the U.S. media and Congress. That will oblige Erdogan, fragile as his own domestic legitimacy is, to maintain his own steady criticism of the West. Such mutually escalating rhetoric could eventually provoke a breakdown in relations that neither side fully intends.

This dynamic already began to take a toll well before the referendum. With the Western media increasingly vocal in criticizing Erdogan's democratic credentials, Erdogan, by necessity, has become increasingly vocal in his own efforts to discredit the West. Explaining to supporters why the world's established democracies refuse to accept Turkey among their ranks requires a consistent diet of anti-Western rhetoric. Thus Erdogan and his propagandists have regularly charged the West with hypocrisy and promoted a host of conspiracy theories in which Western powers are trying to bring Turkey down through sinister means. Explaining why European observers condemned the referendum, for example, Erdogan said on CNN that "the Western world played certain games with Turkey, and the games failed. Now they're having difficulty digesting it."

When protestors came out on the streets to contest the referendum results, the Turkish government again saw foreign provocation.

When protestors came out on the streets to contest the referendum results, the Turkish government again saw foreign provocation. Western leaders can certainly tolerate a degree of inflammatory rhetoric between friends. But when you call enough Europeans Nazis, or accuse enough prominent Americans of trying to kill you, bilateral relations reach a level of awkwardness that has strategic implications.

In particular, Turkey's July 2016 coup attempt created a rift in perceptions that continues to poison U.S.-Turkish relations. While Turks saw the widespread post-coup purges as necessary to preserve the country's democratic government, many foreign observers saw it instead as a dangerous step toward dictatorship. On top of this, the West's refusal to accept Erdogan's claims that the coup had been single-handedly organized and carried out by the movement loyal to the cleric Fethullah Gulen, currently residing in the United States, created deep anger and suspicion in Ankara. The Turkish government's fervent commitment to its own narrative has proved an added obstacle to effective public relations: Several months ago, a group of U.S. journalists invited to Ankara on a government-organized press trip ended up writing a series of articles that focused not on telling Turkey's

story but instead on the surreal experience and bizarre propaganda they encountered there. Now, the issue of Gulen's extradition has escalated from a legal matter that could be resolved through established channels into a serious source of bilateral tension. With Turkey promoting its own version of summary justice against Gulenists as a necessary defense of democracy, Ankara will see Washington's ongoing inability to extradite Gulen as proof of U.S. hostility rather than the inevitable result of due process and an independent judiciary.

Frustration over issues like these may also make the United States more dismissive even when Ankara raises legitimate concerns. Turkish public opinion has been understandably furious over U.S. cooperation with Syrian Kurdish fighters whose partners are setting off car bombs in Istanbul and Ankara. But Turkish efforts to convey this anger to Washington have been lost and discredited amid increasingly implausible explanations for why arresting Kurdish politicians and pro-peace academics is all perfectly legitimate. When Turkey's diplomatic and media spokespeople are forced to peddle falsehoods about the state of their democracy, they can't effectively call out America's callous disregard for Turkey's own terrorism threat.

Making this disconnect worse, though, is Washington's willingness to humor Erdogan's democratic rhetoric to avoid addressing Turkish concerns in Syria. Trump's congratulatory call to Erdogan might buy a little more Turkish acquiescence on this front as Washington pushes ahead toward the Syrian city of Raqqa with the Kurds. But now that the U.S. government has cynically endorsed Erdogan's democratic credentials in the hope of foreign-policy cooperation, any subsequent criticism, from the government or even the U.S. press, will be seen as a bargaining tactic rather than potentially sincere. And if Washington does in fact choose to use this criticism instrumentally, suddenly remembering the importance of democracy following a future political spat, Ankara's narrative about the West will be reaffirmed.

Ankara's narrative is also bolstered by Western criticism that conflates Islam with authoritarianism and secularism with democracy. The fact that, for example, Trump's CIA director, Mike Pompeo, seemed to cheer last summer's attempted coup as a U.S. congressman when he thought it was a purely anti-Islamist affair does not bode well for the administration's ability to offer convincing criticism of Erdogan's undemocratic behavior. Just as, during the Cold War, left-wing dictators sought self-justification in Washington's hypocritical support for their right-wing counterparts, Turkey will make similar use of U.S. support for secular dictators like Sisi.

The Turkish government may indeed find other sources of legitimacy in Washington and at home. It's far from certain that Erdogan, facing a long-predicted economic crisis and an ongoing Kurdish insurgency, will actually be able to bring Turkey stability. If he fails to achieve even the autocratic stability of which dictators love to boast, all bets are off. If he succeeds though, perhaps in time the United States and Turkey can revert to the established authoritarian-allies script. Turkey has also been trying to present itself, not unsuccessfully, as a potential ally if the United States moves toward a regional confrontation with Iran. And, paradoxically, if Turkey becomes more authoritarian and Erdogan, as a result, has even less to worry about from domestic political opinion, he may become less invested in his own democratic rhetoric as well.

Until then, though, U.S.-Turkish relations will be beset by their own particular source of stress. Erdogan, as should be abundantly clear by now, is not inclined to be anyone's "son of a bitch," and most certainly not Washington's.

The Washington Post

## Zakaria : Trump's bluster and bravado on North Korea will only make the U.S. look weak

Every American administration takes a while to settle into a basic approach to the world. President Trump's team has had a rockier start than most, with many important positions in every key agency still unfilled. More worrying, the administration's basic foreign policy is coming into view, and it is not a reassuring sight — bellicose rhetoric, hollow threats, contradictory voices and little coordination with allies. The approach is being tested on the most difficult foreign policy problem of all: North Korea.

There is a pattern to Trump's approach so far. It begins with bravado, the repeated use of rhetoric that is not backed up by much. The president constantly insists that if China doesn't help deal with North Korea, the United States will. Really? How? A military strike is close to impossible. South Korea would vehemently oppose any such move, as it would face the brunt of North Korea's retaliation; Seoul is only about 35 miles from the border. Japan would also oppose a strike, and, of course, any military action would enrage China. Plus, a bombing campaign would be ineffective because North Korea's nuclear sites are scattered, buried deep and, in some cases, underwater.

Trump has not been alone in his bravado. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson announced that the United States' historical policy of "strategic patience" with North Korea had ended, and that the United States has a new policy. The danger of this kind of rhetoric is that it is becoming readily apparent that Washington does not in fact have a new policy. And if it does, Washington's key allies, especially the South Koreans, are terrified by it. With the administration's bluster, its mistake with the USS Carl Vinson and Trump's repetition of Beijing's line that Korea was once a part of China, South Korea has become deeply uneasy.



Tough talk is supplemented by aggressive military reflexes. Whether that means using bigger bombs in the Middle East or sending ships — eventually — into East Asian waters, these tactics can be useful if there is a strategy behind them. So far, however, they look more like tactics in search of a strategy, the flexing of military might in the hope that this will impress the adversary. But all the shock and awe in Iraq did not help when there was a faulty plan to secure the peace. More bombs in Syria will not answer the question of how to defeat the Islamic State without abetting President Bashar al-Assad. Threatening North Korea without the ability to carry out that threat only makes Washington look weak.

The United States has had roughly the same strategy toward North Korea for decades. It is a policy of sanctions, threats, intimidation, pressure and isolation. And it has not worked. Even the brief effort at cooperation during the Clinton years was halfhearted, with Washington failing to fulfill some of its promises to North Korea. In any event, the rapprochement was quickly reversed by the George W. Bush administration. The results have been clear. North Korea has continued to build its nuclear program and engage in provocative tests. As isolation and sanctions have increased in recent years, Pyongyang has only become more confrontational.

In a recent essay in Foreign Affairs, John Delury wonders whether it is time to try another approach. "If the United States really hopes to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula, it should stop looking for ways to stifle North Korea's economy and undermine Kim Jong Un's regime and start finding ways to make Pyongyang feel more secure. This might sound counterintuitive, given North Korea's nuclear ambitions and human rights record. But consider this: North Korea will start focusing on its prosperity instead of its self-preservation only once it no longer has to worry about its own destruction. And North Korea will consider surrendering its nuclear deterrent only once it feels secure and prosperous and is economically integrated into Northeast Asia."

We tend to view North Korea as an utterly weird country run by a loony dictator with bad hair. And there's evidence to support this characterization. But it is also a regime that wants to survive. I recall many similar arguments made about Iran before the nuclear deal, that it was a fanatical country run by mad mullahs. We were told they could never be negotiated with, would never accept a deal, would never disconnect their centrifuges and would violate any agreement within weeks. So far, all these predictions have proved wrong. It might be worth trying a new policy with North Korea. It might not work. But the old one certainly hasn't.

## Krauthammer: With North Korea, we do have cards to play

The crisis with North Korea may appear trumped up. It's not.

Given that Pyongyang has had nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles for more than a decade , why the panic now? Because North Korea is headed for a nuclear breakout. The regime has openly declared that it is racing to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile that can reach the United States — and thus destroy an American city at a Kim Jong Un push of a button.

The North Koreans are not bluffing. They've made significant progress with solid-fuel rockets, which are more quickly deployable and thus more easily hidden and less subject to detection and preemption.

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At the same time, Pyongyang has been steadily adding to its supply of nuclear weapons. Today it has an estimated 10 to 16. By 2020, it could very well have a hundred. (For context: The British are thought to have about 200.)

Hence the crisis. We simply cannot concede to Kim Jong Un the capacity to annihilate American cities.

Some will argue for deterrence. If it held off the Russians and the Chinese for all these years, why not the North Koreans? First, because deterrence, even with a rational adversary like the old Soviet Union, is never a sure thing. We came pretty close to nuclear war in October 1962.

And second, because North Korea's regime is bizarre in the extreme, a hermit kingdom run by a weird, utterly ruthless and highly erratic god-king. You can't count on Caligula. The regime is savage and cultlike; its people, robotic. Karen Elliott House once noted that while Saddam Hussein's Iraq was a prison, North Korea was an ant colony.

Ant colonies do not have good checks and balances.

If not deterrence, then prevention. But how? The best hope is for China to exercise its influence and induce North Korea to give up its programs.

For years, the Chinese made gestures, but never did anything remotely decisive. They have their reasons. It's not just that they fear a massive influx of refugees if the Kim regime disintegrates. It's also that Pyongyang is a perpetual thorn in the side of the Americans, whereas regime collapse brings South Korea (and thus America) right up to the Yalu River.

So why would the Chinese do our bidding now?

For a variety of reasons.

● They don't mind tension but they don't want war. And the risk of war is rising. They know that the ICBM threat is totally unacceptable to the Americans. And that the current administration appears particularly committed to enforcing this undeclared red line.

● Chinese interests are being significantly damaged by the erection of regional missile defenses to counteract North Korea's nukes. South Korea is racing to install a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-missile system. Japan may follow . THAAD's mission is to track and shoot down incoming rockets from North Korea but, like any missile shield, it necessarily reduces the power and penetration of the Chinese nuclear arsenal.

● For China to do nothing risks the return of the American tactical nukes in South Korea, withdrawn in 1991.

● If the crisis deepens, the possibility arises of South Korea and, more importantly, Japan going nuclear themselves. The latter is the ultimate Chinese nightmare.

These are major cards America can play. Our objective should be clear. At a minimum, a testing freeze. At the maximum, regime change.

Because Beijing has such a strong interest in the current regime, we could sweeten the latter offer by abjuring Korean reunification. This would not be Germany, where the communist state was absorbed into the West. We would accept an independent, but Finlandized, North Korea.

During the Cold War, Finland was, by agreement, independent but always pro-Russian in foreign policy. Here we would guarantee that a new North Korea would be independent but always oriented toward China. For example, the new regime would forswear ever joining any hostile alliance.

There are deals to be made. They may have to be underpinned by demonstrations of American resolve. A preemptive attack on North Korea's nuclear facilities and missile sites would be too dangerous, as it would almost surely precipitate an invasion of South Korea with untold millions of casualties. We might, however, try to shoot down a North Korean missile in mid-flight to demonstrate both our capacity to defend ourselves and the futility of a North Korean missile force that can be neutralized technologically.

The Korea crisis is real and growing. But we are not helpless. We have choices. We have assets. It's time to deploy them.

*Read more from Charles Krauthammer's archive, follow him on Twitter or subscribe to his updates on Facebook.*

## Trump's North Korea Standoff Rattles Allies and Adversaries

While the EU's foreign-policy chief tries to defuse tensions in Northeast Asia, the Trump administration is lighting fires.

- By Robbie Gramer, Paul McLeary

European Union foreign-policy chief Federica Mogherini warned in China Thursday that the current war of words between the United States and North Korea creates "geopolitical unpredictability" not only in Asia but around the globe. But as U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un face off, it's not clear that either sees this as a sign they should back down.

Speaking at Tsinghua University as part of a three-day trip, Mogherini said she had brought up her concerns with Chinese officials in Beijing. She added that the EU and China have a common responsibility to "avoid a military escalation in the Korean Peninsula, to push for North Korea to abide by its international obligations and re-engage with the international community, and work together for a denuclearized Korean Peninsula."

While Mogherini attempted to soothe tensions, Washington was quite literally trying to meet the problem head-on. On Monday, Vice President Mike Pence was photographed at the demilitarized zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea, staring icily into the closed-off North because, as he said later, "I thought it was important that people on the other side of the DMZ see our resolve in my face."

Pence reiterated prior administration warnings that the era of "strategic patience" with North Korea was over, as it stubbornly pursues its nuclear and missile programs that threaten the region.

"North Korea would do well not to test [Trump's] resolve — or the strength of the armed forces of the United States in this region," Pence said in a press conference later that day with acting South Korean President Hwang Kyo-ahn. "All options are on the table" to confront the Hermit Kingdom, Pence added.

Mogherini's and Pence's statements showcased the growing rift between the EU and the United States over a spate of foreign-policy issues since Trump assumed office. In the wake of North Korea's continued missile tests — including an unsuccessful launch Sunday — the Trump administration's unpredictability and incendiary rhetoric meant to pressure Pyongyang have instead rattled allies in Asia and Europe.

The White House and Defense Department came under fire for misleading allies on the whereabouts of a naval strike group it said it was deploying to the Korean coast earlier this month. While Trump boasted about the U.S. "armada" stalking Korean seas, the USS *Carl Vinson* aircraft carrier strike group was actually more than 3,000 miles away, conducting exercises with the Australian navy.

"What [President Donald Trump] said was very important for the national security of South Korea," South Korean presidential candidate Hong Joon-pyo said in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* Wednesday. "If that was a lie, then during Trump's term, South Korea will not trust whatever Trump says."

Trump compounded the gaffe when he tripped over a particularly sensitive cultural landmine, telling the *Journal* that South Korea had once been part of China. That sparked outrage among South Koreans and prompted an official response from the Foreign Ministry.

"It's a clear fact acknowledged by the international community that, for thousands of years of history, Korea has never been part of China," South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman Cho June-hyuck said Thursday.

While the Trump administration blunders into diplomatic controversies of its own making, former U.S. government officials tried to put North Korea's nuclear ambitions in perspective.

The regime in Pyongyang is "ruthless and reckless, but they're not crazy," said William Perry, a former defense secretary under President Bill Clinton.

Perry, who also served as Clinton's special envoy to North Korea, said three generations of family rule by the Kim dynasty in Pyongyang have shared one unifying philosophy: "Keeping the regime in power."

Kim Jong Un is unlikely to do anything that would jeopardize the dynasty. In particular, Perry said, Kim and his coterie realize that a nuclear exchange with the United States would at the very least obliterate his capital city and a good chunk of his military capability.

Perry told reporters on a conference call that he believes the North would be more likely to respond with conventional weapons against its southern neighbor if a preemptive strike were taken against its nuclear or missile facilities. Seoul sits just 35 miles from the North Korean border, where thousands of artillery pieces are dug into hard granite hills, ready to rain tens of thousands of shells on the capital within minutes.

That threat gives Pyongyang free rein for bombast. This week, the *Rodong Sinmun*, the official newspaper of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party, warned that Pyongyang could launch a "super-mighty preemptive strike" against "U.S. imperialists' invasion forces" and reduce Washington and its allies "to ashes."

China has become exasperated with North Korea, following a series of provocative missile tests and the assassination in February of Kim Jong Nam, the North Korean leader's exiled half-brother, allegedly ordered by the regime. China appears to be complying more fully with U.N. sanctions on trade with Pyongyang and recently agreed to stop importing North Korean coal, a source of hard earnings for the Hermit Kingdom.

Beijing's "level of frustration and ire directed at North Korea is unprecedented," said Bruce Bennett, an expert on Asian security with the Rand Corp. in a press call Thursday.

But that doesn't translate into an appetite for regime change or into taking steps that could precipitate it, Bennett said. "There's a reluctance to push back hard — they're afraid of what the consequences might be."

North Korea's latest provocation was the attempted launch of a still unidentified missile that blew up almost immediately after launch. But experts warn that with each failure, North Korea inches closer to a viable missile program and with it the capability to lob nukes at U.S. and allied territory. Since 2014, about three-quarters of Pyongyang's missile launches (51 of 66) have succeeded, as nuclear nonproliferation expert Jeffrey Lewis noted. As tests continue, missile development continues apace, and North Korea bulks up its nuclear arsenal in the future, the threat — and the difficulty of dealing with it — will only grow.

North Korea could have as many as 100 nuclear weapons by 2025, said Michael Mazarr, another Asia security expert with Rand. "A North Korea of the mid-2020s is going to be a very different challenge than the one it is today," he said.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Editorial : Teeing Up Trump Tariffs

Financial markets have been discounting the risks from President Trump's trade policy, but maybe that's premature. This week's actions on "Buy American" and steel aren't immediately dangerous, but they do make protectionist blunders more likely.

Visiting Wisconsin on Tuesday, Mr. Trump ordered a review of federal procurement to buy only U.S. products. He made this sound like a grand new policy, but U.S. law dating to the New Deal already gives preference to domestic businesses bidding for federal contracts. Federally funded transportation projects must use U.S.-made iron and steel.

Mr. Trump's order requires federal agencies to evaluate exceptions to these Buy American policies, presumably with a goal of reducing those exceptions. But agencies make those exceptions when domestic inputs are unavailable or their cost is "unreasonable," which often occurs on large projects.

Take steel, a Trump preoccupation. One reason for exceptions is that domestic manufacturers have limited capability to produce steel of certain strengths, thickness and flexibility. Most higher-strength steels used in thin-walled pipelines are made overseas. Retrofitting plants to produce a type of steel for one or two projects could delay construction and increase the cost. More U.S. workers would have to be retrained, which may not be practical in the short-term. So contractors often have no choice but to import foreign substitutes.

The American Petroleum Institute chronicled some of these supply challenges in its response to Mr. Trump's earlier executive order on domestic sourcing for pipelines. On one pipeline project, only five domestic companies were capable of making a particular grade of steel, but none could produce the required quantity, accommodate the pipe diameters and meet the customer's delivery schedule. Only one U.S. pipe mill bid on another project, and its bid was double that of two international suppliers. It also couldn't meet technical and safety requirements.

Thanks to the North America Free Trade Agreement, Canadian and U.S. companies can integrate their supply chains. Many steel makers operate subsidiaries in both countries. American raw exports—e.g., iron ore from the Rust Belt and coal from Appalachia—made up 85% of Canadian steel inputs last year, and some were re-imported. Many U.S. pipe mills use Canadian steel slab and coil made from American scrap metal.

Mr. Trump says Nafta is "a disaster," but the reality is that cross-border economic integration improves efficiency and reduces costs for federal contractors and taxpayers. It also supports jobs in U.S. manufacturing, coal and steel.

Federal officials can also issue Buy America waivers if they determine the rules are "inconsistent with the public interest" or violate U.S. trade obligations. A Trump spokesperson Monday accused federal officials of overusing their waiver authority and said foreign governments don't reciprocate.

But most U.S. trade agreements allow favoritism in domestic procurement for certain industries like defense. Some U.S. states are even allowed to impose preferences for their own home-grown industries (Pennsylvania for steel). The trouble is that blacklisting foreign contractors makes it harder to convince countries, especially in emerging markets, to open up their procurement to U.S. companies.

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More potentially dangerous is Mr. Trump's memo, issued Thursday, teeing up tariffs on steel imports. The President ordered Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to investigate "whether steel imports threaten to impair the national security." The point of this language is to make it possible for Mr. Trump to invoke Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

The White House press office explained the gambit: "If the report concludes that steel imports threaten to impair the national security, and the President concurs, he may take several actions, including tariffs, to eliminate the negative effects of steel imports on the national security of the United States."

This sounds as if Mr. Trump has made up his mind and merely wants Mr. Ross to find an excuse to satisfy the language of Section 232. U.S. steel users had better rush their orders because tariffs look like a sure thing. And the main effect will be to raise the U.S. price of steel, foreign or domestic, as U.S. steel makers exploit the tariffs to pad their bottom lines.

That's precisely what happened when George W. Bush imposed steel tariffs in 2002. Economists Joseph Francois and Laura Baughman found that more American workers lost their jobs from higher steel prices than the total employed by the entire U.S. steel industry. A quarter of those lost jobs were in metal manufacturing, machinery and transportation equipment and parts. Some of the biggest losses were in Trump country: 10,553 in Ohio, 9,829 in Michigan and 8,400 in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Trump is moving ahead smartly on deregulation, but his tax and health reforms are stalled in Congress. He may figure that tariffs are political substitutes, but they're an anti-growth tax on U.S. consumers and steel users. They'll cost more jobs than they'll save.

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## Trump Targets Steel Trade, but China Will Be Tough to Contain (UNE)

Keith Bradsher

China denies that it sells excess steel to other markets below the cost of making it, a move called dumping. But China does concede that it has too many steel factories making too much steel.

The trick is trimming that excess capacity, which is proving to be neither easy nor cheap. Steel making represents a reliable source of high-wage jobs in a country where economic growth has slowed compared with previous years. Steel also remains a key material for China's manufacturing sector, the world's largest.

"Steel is the food for China's industry," said Wang Guoqing, the research director at the Lange Steel Information Research Center, a Chinese industry group in Beijing. "It is in a key position for China's development and infrastructure."

The steel industry in the United States employs about 140,000 people, or less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the American work force. China's steel makers, by contrast, employed 4.7 million workers in 2014, the last official figure released, or 0.6 percent of China's labor force then. Nearly 60 years after Mao's drive to make China a steel giant contributed to a famine that killed millions of people, the country now makes as much steel as the rest of the world put together.

China's quarterly steel exports have largely surged since the financial crisis. But exports have dipped lately as China's own steel use has increased.

Today, China's steel sector represents the sort of bloated, wasteful industry that people both inside and outside the country say is holding back economic development. China in early 2016 committed to closing steel mills representing 100 million to 150 million tons of capacity over five years, or roughly a tenth of its capacity then. China closed 65 million tons of capacity last year and plans to close another 50 million tons this year, according to a speech in early March by Premier Li Keqiang.

Yet production remains stubbornly high, and new mills have continued to open. China's steel mills produced a record quantity of steel last month. China hasn't released more recent data on total steel capacity.

For now, China's steel exports are shrinking, though it isn't clear how long that will continue. China's appetite for steel has improved in recent months as government lending and spending and a revival in its property industry lift the economy and encourage consumption. But the government has said it wants to rein in lending, concerned that the economy may be too reliant on ever-rising debt.

Mr. Trump's advisers are using steel as part of a broader push against China's excess factories. They are singling out steel while blaming Chinese industrial policies for overcapacity in other sectors, like aluminum and solar panels.

"To me the objective is to make it uneconomic, to make it expensive, to do something that has inefficiency in the market," said Robert Lighthizer, Mr. Trump's nominee to become United States trade representative, at his Senate confirmation hearing.

China calls that effort shortsighted, saying it has made itself an indispensable provider of high-quality steel to the world at a time when many American steel mills are aging. Advocates of a more confrontational American trade policy fail to understand this, said Li Xinchuang, the dean of the China Metallurgical Industry Planning and Research Institute, a government agency.

"I have explained this time and time again, but they won't listen," he said. "It's like playing the lute to a cow."

The Hangzhou steel plant, and the city that it is named after, represent China's effort to shift its economy away from industries like steel. The city of at least 4 million urban residents is the hometown of Alibaba, the Chinese e-commerce giant, and also contains the headquarters of Geely, the Chinese automaker that bought Volvo from Ford in 2010.

The former factory looks a little like a postapocalyptic scene on a Hollywood movie set: cavernous warehouses moldered on a damp spring day, windowless and doorless. Conveyor belts and other steel equipment that might have scrap metal value had already been removed, leaving barren concrete tubes and walls. A long row of black hopper cars rusted on a railroad siding.

Migrant construction laborers camped in the evening in a dilapidated, three-story concrete building, resting after a long day of tearing apart old buildings as the next step in clearing the site. Tall grass, leafy bushes and even small trees had begun growing vigorously in open areas of the factory, sometimes pushing their way up through cracks in concrete plazas.

"It looks beautiful," said Le Rong, a 42-year-old migrant worker involved in dismantling the complex. "I even told my wife and kids about it."

A Hangzhou Iron and Steel spokesman declined to discuss what the company would do with the site, saying it had not yet been decided but that the company would find an "innovative" use for the land. Former steel mill sites in other prosperous Chinese cities like Hangzhou have often been redeveloped as real estate projects.

## Trump Roars Again on Trade, Reviewing Steel and Chiding Canada (UNE)

Mark Landler

"He's manically focused on these trade issues," said Stephen K. Bannon, the president's chief strategist.

The flurry of activity amounts to a comeback by nationalists like Mr. Bannon, who views trade as crucial to Mr. Trump's populist appeal but whose star has dimmed after clashes with globalist-minded aides like Jared Kushner, Mr. Trump's son-in-law, and Gary D. Cohn, the former Goldman Sachs banker and lifelong Democrat who is head of the National Economic Council.

The outcome of the debate between nationalists and globalists remains far from settled. Last week the globalists appeared to be winning when the administration decided not to formally designate China a currency manipulator, despite Mr. Trump's vow to do so during the campaign. Mr. Trump also offered President Xi Jinping of China other concessions on his trade agenda in return for China's help in curbing North Korea's nuclear program.

But the nationalists scored an early victory when Mr. Trump fulfilled one major trade promise only three days after taking office. He pulled the United States out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the 12-nation trade pact negotiated by President Barack Obama, declaring that the era of multinational trade deals was over.

After that, the president's "bark quieted down," said Gary Clyde Hufbauer, a senior fellow and trade expert at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "Now the volume of the bark is going back up."

"But these are still barks," he added. "So far, no bites."

Mr. Trump's steel investigation is much broader than dozens of anti-dumping cases against China and other exporters filed by the Obama administration and its predecessors. It invokes a somewhat novel principle of using national security as the criterion for whether the imports are damaging the United States. The narrow argument is that a depleted American steel industry would be unable to produce enough steel to supply the military. More broadly, White House officials say an economically vibrant country is better able to defend itself.

It is unclear what steps Mr. Trump will take once the investigation is completed — within 270 days but probably sooner. The most obvious would be to impose tariffs on steel imports. Mr. Hufbauer said the United States could also use the results as leverage to persuade countries to accept voluntary export restraint agreements, such as those in the 1980s.

"We are groping here to see whether the facts warrant a comprehensive solution to deal with a very wide range of products from a very wide range of countries," Wilbur L. Ross, the secretary of commerce, told reporters on Thursday. Mr. Ross's department will run the investigation.

While the directive does not single out any country, the Chinese are clearly in the cross hairs. China accounts for only 2 percent of direct steel exports to the United States, but its excess capacity drives down steel prices worldwide. Surplus Chinese steel, shipped to other countries, ends up in the United States in other manufactured products. Mr. Ross noted that steel imports from China had continued to rise, despite the government's pledge to cut back its overcapacity.

Still, the White House's competing aims with China were on display as it rolled out the order.

When Mr. Trump was asked whether the investigation would affect his efforts to obtain Chinese cooperation on North Korea, he replied: "This has nothing to do with China. This has to do with worldwide, what's happening. The dumping problem is a worldwide problem."

Critics of the administration questioned its invocation of national security. Most of America's largest steel suppliers are friendly countries, like Canada, South Korea and Germany. Analysts also noted that the value of steel imports declined 26 percent from 2015 to 2016, though the White House noted that imports rose 20 percent between February 2016 and February 2017.

"The U.S. has long criticized trading partners for abusively invoking national security as an excuse for trade protectionist actions, most recently China for its new cybersecurity law," said Daniel M. Price, a trade adviser to President George W. Bush who is now at Rock Creek Global Advisors. "The administration's action may render it subject to the same charge."

Mr. Trump seemed unconcerned about that. Flanked by chief executives from American steel companies, he said the dumping of steel into the American market posed a threat not only to the economy but also to the military, which depends on steel for tanks, ships and planes.

"This is not an area where we can afford to be dependent on other countries," Mr. Trump said. "We have a product where we actually need foreign countries to be nice to us in order to fight for our people. And that's not going to happen any longer, believe me."

In Asia, Mr. Pence brought a similarly blunt message, warning Japan and South Korea that the administration would seek new bilateral trade deals with them. Mr. Ross, a billionaire known for his hard-line trade views and investments in failing steel companies, joined Mr. Pence in Tokyo. The Japanese were sufficiently worried that they sought to exclude him from some of the higher-level meetings, an official said.

With Mr. Trump scheduled to attend a meeting of the Group of 7 countries in Sicily next month — his first foreign trip as president — some administration officials predicted that Mr. Cohn and Mr. Kushner would try again to moderate his language on trade.

But if Mr. Trump's performance Thursday was any indication, he remains as seized by the subject as he was on the campaign trail. In two weeks, he noted, the White House will present its ideas for renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"Nafta, whether it's Mexico or Canada, is a disaster for our country," he said. "It's a disaster, it's a trading disaster."

Mr. Trump's disparagement of Nafta led to his unexpected sideswipe of Canada. The president had a cordial meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and Mr. Trudeau even took his daughter, Ivanka, to a Broadway show. None of that spared the Canadians from the president's anger over how they protect their dairy industry — an issue that flared up after 75 dairy farmers in Wisconsin lost their main milk buyer because of a trade dispute with Canada.

"I was in Wisconsin the other day," Mr. Trump said. "What they've done to our farm workers is a disgrace. It's a disgrace."

The New York Times

## Bold, Unpredictable Foreign Policy Lifts Trump, but Has Risks

Glenn Thrush and Mark Landler

The biggest risk, critics say, is that Mr. Trump will talk himself into a war. Only slightly less dangerously, he could weaken the nation's standing by backing off from a threat to use force.

"In Beijing, Moscow, Tehran, they are recalibrating their strategies — you can't deny it — because they don't have any idea of how Trump will respond," said Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the highest-ranking Democrat on the intelligence committee.

"That might be great in the short term," he added, "but it's not really a long-term strategy for asserting leadership in a world desperate for American leadership." Mr. Warner, who criticized Mr. Obama for his failure to act more strongly in Syria, said: "China, Russia and Iran have real, long-term strategies. Why don't we have one, too?"

Mr. Trump did not time the strike against Syria to impress Mr. Xi, according to White House officials. But he clearly recognized that disclosing the news during their dinner in Palm Beach, Fla., had a dramatic flair that would establish his toughness and unpredictability, while also pressuring Beijing to tame North Korea, its misbehaving client state.

The president's defenders say those qualities will help restore America's place in the world. "He's far more in keeping with 70 years of postwar American leadership than Obama was," said Senator Tom Cotton, an Arkansas Republican and staunch Trump ally.

But Mr. Trump's show of strength in the Middle East was undercut in his response to North Korea by one of his administration's all-too-common errors. After Mr. Trump warned that "we're sending an armada" to the waters off the Korean Peninsula, the Carl Vinson, the aircraft carrier that leads the strike group, was photographed sailing through Indonesia, thousands of miles away.

"Your words have to match your actions," said Senator Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat and former Army Ranger who is the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. "If it's just bluffing, well, that's dangerous. If it's because the president was not informed and a mistake because he had bad information, that's problematic, too."

In South Korea, feelings were raw, with newspaper headlines branding the episode "Trump's lie over the Carl Vinson" and politicians warning that they might never again be able to trust the president's word.

Mr. Trump has pivoted to foreign affairs after a succession of humbling domestic policy defeats — discovering, as his predecessors did, that presidents can operate with more latitude in matters of war and peace than on tax policy or health care legislation.

In a series of taunts, Twitter messages and hawkish pronouncements by surrogates like Vice President Mike Pence, Mr. Trump has overturned Theodore Roosevelt's dictum to "speak softly and carry a big stick." But his bombastic statements have often been paired with policy reversals, on matters like NATO, which he once wanted to mothball and now supports, or Russia, which he once saw as a potential ally and now views with suspicion.

Though Mr. Trump's words can be harsh and intemperate, his actions have proved less so. As a result, diplomats say, leaders are not yet able to draw firm conclusions about his foreign policy.

"There is the impression that President Trump is moving away from his campaign statements and pivoting back to the Republican mainstream on major foreign and security issues," said Peter Wittig, the German ambassador to the United States. "But people in Europe aren't connecting the dots and saying, 'This is the new Trump doctrine.'"

Foreign-policy theorists sometimes compare Mr. Trump's erratic approach to that of President Richard M. Nixon, who pursued what he called the "madman theory" of statecraft. By behaving vaguely unhinged — obsessed with Communism, his finger poised unsteadily on the nuclear button — Nixon hoped to force North Vietnam into negotiations to end the Vietnam War.

"It was aimed at both our allies and adversaries, and it appears to have worked, to some degree," said Eric S. Edelman, a former under secretary of defense for policy during George W. Bush's administration who now teaches at Johns Hopkins University.

But Mr. Edelman drew some critical distinctions between the two presidents. Nixon's "madman" act generally masked a calculated strategy, which is not yet evident in Mr. Trump's approach. Nixon's national-security team was better coordinated than Mr. Trump's, at least so far. And even in Nixon's case, the madman strategy worked better later in his presidency, when he and his aides were more seasoned.

Mr. Trump won praise for his missile strike on Syria, even from those who have criticized his approach to other crises. Though the president moved swiftly — and by all accounts, emotionally — after a deadly chemical weapons attack by Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, the attack was measured, well planned and followed by an aggressive White House effort to establish Russia's complicity with the Assad government.

"That missile strike certainly had to get Putin's attention, and it did show we were determined to enforce international norms on chemical weapons," said Antony J. Blinken, who was deputy secretary of state and deputy national security adviser in the Obama administration. "Equally important was the effort to tie Russia to the use of chemical weapons."

Mr. Blinken has more reservations about how Mr. Trump has

approached North Korea. While in the White House, Mr. Blinken helped coordinate a two-pronged pressure campaign against the North Korean government. The first part involved leaning on China to use its vast leverage over Pyongyang. The second involved persuading other countries that do business with North Korea to refuse entry to its guest workers; expel its diplomats, who are engaged in illicit activities; and deny landing rights to its state airline.

Mr. Trump has opted for a noisier, more direct approach, threatening North Korea with military action if it does not curb its provocations. But behind the hard-line rhetoric, the president is actually pursuing a strategy not unlike that of his predecessor: tightening the economic vise on Pyongyang in the hopes of forcing it to make concessions.

The trouble with Mr. Trump's approach, Mr. Blinken said, is the gap between his words and his actions. "You risk others miscalculating on the basis of bravado," he said. "We always thought it was better to talk softly but clearly, and to carry a big stick."

The New York Times

## Trump Unleashes the Generals. They Don't Always See the Big Picture.

Eric Schmitt and Helene Cooper

American officials said Thursday that General Nicholson had not requested permission from Mr. Trump, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis or Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, before dropping the giant bomb, a GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast, or MOAB.

And it does not appear the White House was aware of the location of the carrier group when the press secretary, Sean Spicer, or the national security adviser, Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, made their public comments about it. White House officials said both men were relying on talking points supplied by the Pentagon.

General Nicholson already had the necessary authority to bomb the tunnel complex and had it during the Obama administration as well, American officials said.

But current and former Defense Department officials said that if President Barack Obama were still in office, General Nicholson would probably have checked with his bosses before calling in the country's most powerful non-nuclear bomb, because the Obama White House had made clear to the Pentagon that the president wanted to be consulted on major strike decisions.

"Nicholson should have been a little more aware that using that weapon for the first time would be a big story," Mr. Scher said.

Mr. Trump has made clear that he does not want to be consulted on every strike, and that he wants commanders in the field to have more authority to move swiftly against foes.

The timing of the episodes, at the beginning of the Trump administration, most likely played a part, one Obama administration official noted.

"Once the previous administration's political appointees have departed, the balance of power in the Pentagon always shifts away from the civilians and toward the uniformed officers," said Andrew Exum, a former Army Ranger and top Pentagon Middle East policy official.

"That's not necessarily dangerous, but until you get the new administration's team in place, you miss the policy oversight that can sometimes help field commanders — who are appropriately focused on operations — think through the political and strategic ramifications of their actions."

The bomb was dropped at an already fraught time for American security, with a narrative that had begun to take hold of an untethered Pentagon, freed from Obama-era restrictions.

Only days earlier, the United States had fired dozens of missiles at the airfield in Syria from which President Bashar al-Assad had launched a chemical weapons attack. (Mr. Trump authorized that strike.)

And the country was bracing for a possible showdown with Pyongyang as the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, was expected to launch another missile test amid incorrect talk from Mr. Trump that an American "armada" was headed toward the Korean Peninsula.

In that atmosphere, the announcement on April 13 that the United States had just dropped the MOAB was itself a dramatic development and was interpreted by many news organizations and national security experts as evidence that the Trump administration was sending Mr. Kim, or Mr. Assad, a message.

That was not so — an American commander in Afghanistan had simply taken it upon himself to use a particularly large bomb on a cave complex in the remote province of Nangarhar.

"Commanders always want more freedom to act within their own judgment," said Adm. James A. Winnefeld, a retired vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Sometimes those same commanders may not sense which of their decisions will bleed over into the strategic level."

Asked Thursday whether General Nicholson had discussed the bombing with him beforehand and considered the larger strategic message he was sending, Mr. Mattis said, "We take into account the strategic effect of everything we do."

In Tel Aviv, speaking with reporters who have been traveling with him throughout the Middle East this week, Mr. Mattis said that over all, he had been kept informed on the war effort in Afghanistan. But, he added, "You have to delegate."

He did not criticize General Nicholson publicly. But one Defense Department official, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said that Mr. Mattis had questioned the purpose of the strike afterward.

In fact, the Pentagon still has not assessed how much damage was done by the bombing, a routine step after major strikes in Syria and Iraq. Afghan officials initially said that they believed only 36 Islamic State fighters had been killed, but they have since revised that number to just under 100. Afghan forces are still battling Islamic State fighters in the area.

Asked why no damage assessment had been done, Mr. Mattis said, "Frankly, digging into tunnels to count dead bodies is not a good use of our troops' time."

For the wayward Carl Vinson, the confusion began on April 9 when the public affairs office of the Navy's Third Fleet issued a news release saying that Admiral Harris had ordered the Carl Vinson, a Nimitz-class nuclear-powered carrier, and its strike force — two destroyers and one cruiser — to leave Singapore and "sail north" to the Western Pacific.

As is customary, the Navy did not say exactly where the carrier force was headed, when it would get there or its precise mission.

Navy officials said the main reason for issuing the release was to alert the families of thousands of sailors that Admiral Harris had also canceled a port call for the ships in Fremantle, Australia, where many relatives were planning to meet their loved ones.

Admiral Harris feared that images of sailors on shore leave would be unseemly at a time when North Korea was firing missiles, Navy officials said.

But the news release omitted any mention of a secretive naval exercise with Australia that Admiral Harris never meant to suggest he was canceling, Navy officials said.

Thus, once the Carl Vinson left Singapore on April 8, it actually sailed south, toward the Indian Ocean, the opposite direction Admiral Harris had said it was going.

At that point, some Pentagon officials said on Thursday, it would have been embarrassing and possibly damaging to American interests to publicly correct the narrative and send mixed messages to the North Koreans. But some former officials disagreed.

"Words matter, and there will be a cost to U.S. credibility in Asia for this mistake," said Brian McKeon, the Pentagon's top policy official at the end of the Obama administration. "Given the stakes, senior officials should have taken greater care to understand the facts, and to correct the record once they learned them."

USA TODAY

## Editorial : Preserve Paris climate treaty

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.

Reneging on such a far-reaching and historic pact would also damage America's credibility and erode diplomatic relations with countries that take their environmental promises far more seriously. Nations that have, or are planning, taxes on carbon emissions could slap retaliatory tariffs on goods imported from America.

"I can't think of an issue, except perhaps NATO, where if the U.S. simply walks away, it would have such a major negative impact on how we are seen," R. Nicholas Burns, undersecretary of State in the George W. Bush administration, told *The New York Times*.

As if to underscore the grave nature of pulling out of the agreement, even major energy corporations such as ExxonMobil, BP and Royal Dutch Shell oppose such a step.

Scientific evidence continues to mount that human-caused climate disruption is a here-and-now problem, not some distant threat. In 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.

## Brooks : The Crisis of Western Civ

David Brooks

It's amazing what far-reaching effects this has had. It is as if a prevailing wind, which powered all the ships at sea, had suddenly ceased to blow. Now various scattered enemies of those Western values have emerged, and there is apparently nobody to defend them.

The first consequence has been the rise of the illiberals, authoritarians who not only don't believe in the democratic values of the Western civilization narrative, but don't even pretend to believe in them, as former dictators did.

Over the past few years especially, we have entered the age of strong men. We are leaving the age of Obama, Cameron and Merkel and entering the age of Putin, Erdogan, el-Sisi, Xi Jinping, Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump.

The events last week in Turkey were just another part of the trend. Recep Tayyip Erdogan dismantles democratic institutions and replaces them with majoritarian dictatorship. Turkey seems to have lost its desire to join the European idea, which no longer has magnetism and allure. Turkey seems to have lost its aspiration to join the community of democracies because that's no longer the inevitable future.

More and more governments, including the Trump administration, begin to look like premodern mafia states, run by family-based commercial clans. Meanwhile, institutionalized, party-based authoritarian regimes, like in China or Russia, are turning into premodern cults of personality/Maximum Leader regimes, which are far more unstable and dangerous.

Then there has been the collapse of the center. For decades, center-left and center-right parties clustered around similar versions of democratic capitalism that Western civilization seemed to point to. But many of those centrist parties, like the British and Dutch Labour Parties, are in near collapse. Fringe parties rise.

In France, the hard-right Marine Le Pen and the hard-left Jean-Luc Mélenchon could be the final two candidates in the presidential runoff. Le Pen has antiliberal views about national purity. Mélenchon is a supposedly democratic politician who models himself on Hugo Chávez.

If those two end up in the finals, then the European Union and NATO, the two great liberal institutions of modern Europe, will go into immediate crisis.

Finally, there has been the collapse of liberal values at home. On American campuses, fragile thugs who call themselves students shout down and abuse speakers on a weekly basis. To read Heather MacDonald's account of being pilloried at Claremont McKenna College is to enter a world of chilling intolerance.

In America, the basic fabric of civic self-government seems to be eroding following the loss of faith in democratic ideals. According to a study published in The Journal of Democracy, the share of young Americans who say it is absolutely important to live in a democratic country has dropped from 91 percent in the 1930s to 57 percent today.

While running for office, Donald Trump violated every norm of statesmanship built up over these many centuries, and it turned out many people didn't notice or didn't care.

The faith in the West collapsed from within. It's amazing how slow people have been to rise to defend it.

There have been a few lonely voices. Andrew Michta laments the loss of Western confidence in an essay in The American Interest. Edward Luce offers a response in his forthcoming book "The Retreat of Western Liberalism." But liberalism has been docile in defense of itself.

These days, the whole idea of Western civ is assumed to be reactionary and oppressive. All I can say is, if you think that was reactionary and oppressive, wait until you get a load of the world that comes after it.

# ETATS-UNIS

## Editorial : Trump slams door on visitor logs

As a citizen who pays the president's salary, you might have some crazy notion that you have a right to know who meets with him and his aides at the White House.

Well, apparently not while Donald Trump lives there.

The Trump administration is cutting off public access to White House visitor logs, which had been partially open for more than six years under President Obama. Those logs revealed the names of many of those who came to the complex, along with whom they visited and for what event.

President Obama was the first president to give the public a glimpse into the comings and goings at the White House, though he did so only after the administration was sued by public interest groups seeking visitor records. Officials settled the case in 2009, agreeing to release records "voluntarily."

That gave the White House wide latitude over what was — and was not — revealed and avoided a court ruling that might have gone against the government. Some names were left out, detracting from the value of the logs to historians and reporters.

Even so, it certainly beat revealing nothing, as Trump intends to do.

The president has managed to achieve a new low in transparency, even trying to conceal how often he plays golf and with whom he plays. More important, Trump is the only president in four decades to refuse to release tax information, a failure that makes Trump *less* transparent than President Nixon, who, during a 1973 tax controversy, released returns going back to 1969, his first year in office.

Trump's excuse for shielding his taxes, that he's under IRS audit, is as bogus as his communication director's excuse — "grave national security risks" — for shutting down the White House website that provided access to visitor logs.

Trump could release the logs, while making exceptions for national security, as his predecessor did. The public's right to know who visits the president and his staff, especially large campaign donors and lobbyists for special interests, outweighs any individual's personal interest in privacy. If you don't want your identity known, don't visit the White House. Try Skype. Or the telephone.

Presidents have long had a penchant for secrecy, engaging in a tug of war with reporters and public interest groups seeking to place more information in public view. It's time for Congress to pass a law making clear that White House visitor records are public. While they're at it, members of Congress should make their visitors subject to public scrutiny, too.

By breaking with the few examples of White House openness that exist — refusing to reveal tax returns and putting the White House visitor logs back under wraps — Trump is defining transparency downward and moving the presidency further back into the shadows.

How can you drain the swamp if unidentified swamp creatures are allowed to slither unnoticed into the White House?

## POLITICO White House demands disrupt shutdown negotiations

By T.R. Goldman

The Trump administration's hard line is straining bipartisan talks to fund the government.

Congressional leaders' efforts to hatch a massive spending deal have been thrown off course by the Trump administration's 11th-hour intervention, leaving the bipartisan bill teetering on the brink of collapse just a week before a government shutdown deadline.

The hard line taken by White House officials, particularly Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, has strained an emerging deal between House and Senate leaders that would skirt hot-button issues that could shut down the government. In particular, administration officials' hopes of giving President Donald Trump a win during his first 100 days, such as border wall funding or a crackdown on sanctuary cities, have complicated what had been a relatively smooth, bicameral, bipartisan negotiation, according to staffers in both parties.

Story Continued Below

But Democrats are taking an aggressive stance, too, flatly insisting that Trump or Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan make a commitment to funding Obamacare's cost-sharing subsidies as a precondition to voting for any bill to fund the government through September. Democrats have also talked tough on ruling out funding for a wall or a provision restricting billions in federal grants from cities that don't enforce federal immigration laws.

"Negotiations are slow-going," said a Republican aide familiar with the bargaining. "There is a deal to be had — a good one with wins for both parties, but I think with a new minority leader and a new president, anything can happen. … If we don't get much progress by this weekend, bad news."

Republican leaders are desperate to avoid a shutdown after April 28, and Trump himself said on Thursday, "We wanna keep the government open." But productive talks among McConnell, Ryan, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi stalled over the last 24 hours after administration officials signaled they would dig in over wall funding.

Legislative text detailing the agreement that some lawmakers expected to be released late this week is now not expected until next week — if ever. To avoid a shutdown, Congress could also pass a one-week extension to give negotiators more time.

Congressional leaders "could have struck a deal" on a larger package, said a Senate Democratic aide. The White House's involvement means hopes for a bipartisan agreement are "just getting murkier."

Republicans are mulling a fallback plan that would keep the government operating at current funding levels through September, known as a continuing resolution, aides said. That bill would likely contain some new money for fighting terror, a priority of both parties.

However, some Republicans doubt a long-term patch can pass the House. And both parties want to avoid a stopgap spending bill that would amount to a major disappointment for both parties and do little to change Washington's reputation for gridlock, even with a new president.

Some hope rose on Thursday when Mulvaney signaled openness to allowing Obamacare's subsidies to continue flowing to Americans of low income for one to two years on Thursday at a forum hosted by the Institute of International Finance, intriguing some Republicans.

But House Democratic leadership told the White House they want a permanent fix included in the spending bill that would ensure Obamacare subsidies are deemed mandatory government spending, rather than subject to the yearly whims of Congress, a source familiar with the conversation said.

And just as he appeared open to cutting a deal, Mulvaney also told The Associated Press that "elections have consequences" and Trump must receive funding for the planned border wall in the spending bill.

"There are a lot of people on the Hill, especially in the Democratic Party, who don't like the wall, but they lost the election," Mulvaney told the AP.

Republican said privately it would be helpful for Mulvaney and the White House to concede that the Democrats are not going to fund the wall and move on. But there is a combative element to the divided Trump White House that believes otherwise.

"There are people in the West Wing who want the shutdown fight because they think that's how you get things done. And there is another faction in the White House that knows that's a bad idea," said a senior House Republican aide.

Still, many Democrats are open to giving Trump some concessions to receive funding on their domestic priorities as part of a deal, which would likely mean more money for defense spending and some money for border security — but not a border wall. Ryan and McConnell will need significant support from Democrats for any bill, given the Senate's 60-vote threshold and opposition to spending bills among hard-line conservatives in the House.

"Democrats have essentially accepted they'll have to swallow some kind of defense [and] border funding and are OK with that as long as it's not to build a stupid wall," said a House Democratic source. Trump has pushed for an immediate $1.4 billion for the wall.

House Democrats held a conference call on Thursday where leaders took a dim view of the state of play. Rep. Nita Lowey of New York, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, said the White House is acting "erratic" and has been a significant roadblock.

Some Republicans are currently opposed to a one-week stopgap, reasoning that the April 28 deadline will drive an agreement. Others, however, believe it's inevitable that they'll need more time. Lowey and House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland both said Democrats shouldn't agree to any kind of extension unless a handshake deal on the overall funding bill is reached.

For now, Republicans are confident that the government will not shut down, reasoning that Democrats will shoulder some blame if they vote down whatever proposal is before Congress next week and funding lapses. And some are still holding out hope that the skirmishes over the two-week congressional recess will be forgotten during crunch time next week.

"Despite the constant 'shutdown' talk … the [negotiations] are ongoing and productive," said Don Stewart, a spokesman for McConnell.

*Sarah Ferris contributed to this story.*

## White House Officials, Craving Progress, Push Revised Health Bill (UNE)

Matt Flegenheimer and Reed Abelson

“I believe that when we first go back, that’s going to be the thing we’ll address immediately and have to get done by Friday,” said Representative Dan Donovan, Republican of New York.

The president himself has not laid down a hard deadline on the health care bill. “We have a good chance of getting it soon,” Mr. Trump said in a news conference Thursday. “I’d like to say next week, but it will be — I believe we will get it. And whether it’s next week or shortly thereafter.”

Republican leaders and the White House have been searching for a health care agreement that could placate enough moderates and hard-line conservatives to win passage in the House.

The latest version of the proposal, published Thursday morning by Politico, would maintain popular benefits in President Barack Obama’s signature domestic achievement, like guaranteed coverage for emergency services and maternity care. It would also preserve the health law’s ban on insurers rejecting customers with pre-existing medical conditions.

But under this Affordable Care Act replacement, states could seek waivers from many of those mandates if they demonstrate that premiums would be lowered, the number of insured people would increase, or “the public interest of the state” would be advanced.

States could request an exemption from the rule intended to ensure that people with pre-existing conditions could not be charged prohibitive premiums — but only if those states establish a high-risk insurance pool.

“The plan gets better and better and better, and it’s gotten really, really good, and a lot of people are liking it a lot,” Mr. Trump said. Asked if a health bill could pass as Congress tries to avert a government shutdown, the president said, “I think we’ll get both.”

The complications that remain in the bill are likely to be far too difficult to finesse at the same time the House and Senate press to pass a giant spending bill. Tussles over the spending deadline — including possible debates over top administration priorities like a border wall and money for immigration enforcement officers — are expected to consume the Capitol.

And Democrats — whose votes will be needed to keep the government open — will have their own demands, most importantly billions of dollars to lower out-of-pocket spending for low-income Americans purchasing health coverage on the Affordable Care Act’s online marketplaces.

Senior Republicans appear unconvinced that a revised health care bill would ensure passage in the House. Mr. Donovan, an opponent of the original Republican health care bill, said the proposed amendment “really doesn’t address the concerns that I had.”

Representative Charlie Dent, Republican of Pennsylvania and a leader of the moderate House Tuesday Group, said it “does nothing to change my views.” He lamented any focus “on an arbitrary 100-day deadline.”

The changes — proposed by Representative Tom MacArthur, Republican of New Jersey and co-chairman of the Tuesday Group — come as Republicans face anger from supporters over their failure to act on longstanding campaign pledges, as well as from defenders of the Affordable Care Act.

“We’re in the midst of negotiating sort of finishing touches,” Speaker Paul D. Ryan said this week in London while leading a congressional delegation.

He added: “It’s difficult to do. We’re very close.”

But the legislation’s future is unclear. For now, the proposal exists only in vague talking points. West Wing advisers to Mr. Trump are decidedly mixed in their views of how aggressively to raise expectations. The aide feeling perhaps the most pressure, according to people close to the discussions, is the chief of staff, Reince Priebus, who was blamed internally for the botched vote count around the first repeal effort and is closest to Mr. Ryan within Mr. Trump’s circle.

The initial bill’s failure has left lawmakers wary of artificial deadlines. And even a triumph in the House would not guarantee final passage, given the skepticism of several Republicans in the Senate.

“We want to make sure we replace it with something that will stand the test of time,” Senator Bob Corker, Republican of Tennessee, said in a brief interview Thursday after speaking at a Rotary Club meeting in Crossville, Tenn. “Now we’re taking our time. We realize that this is real — that it’s going to affect people in a real way.”

The House bill’s inability to garner enough support last month to be brought for a floor vote was an embarrassing setback for Mr. Trump, Mr. Ryan and the Republican conference.

This month, Vice President Mike Pence and other Trump administration officials sought a new agreement with the conservative House Freedom Caucus, whose opposition helped fell the first bill. The measure, which gained little traction, earned a nickname on Capitol Hill: Zombie Trumpcare.

Regardless of the bill’s fate, lawmakers are approaching a critical moment on health care. Insurers and business groups are pressing hard for Republicans and Mr. Trump to maintain health insurance subsidies ahead of insurers’ decisions in the coming weeks on whether to keep offerings on the Affordable Care Act’s marketplaces and how much to charge for them.

Without those “cost-sharing reductions,” insurers warn that they will have to sharply raise the prices of their plans on the state marketplaces or leave the markets altogether.

About seven million people now qualify for the subsidies, which reduce the amount someone has to pay in deductibles and co-payments when they buy a plan. At stake is roughly $10 billion in payments expected to be made to the insurers next year. Some House Republicans oppose how the Obama administration funded them, and they won a court case potentially blocking the funding that is now on appeal. The next court date is May 22.

This week, insurance executives met with Medicare officials to plead their case. They left that meeting with Seema Verma, the new Medicare head, with no promises. Mr. Trump has publicly toyed with the idea of withholding the subsidies as a way to force Democrats to negotiate over the House proposal, and Ms. Verma told the insurers they should look to Congress to appropriate the money.

State insurance regulators with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners sent a letter to Congress on Wednesday, pleading, “Your action is critical to the viability and stability of the individual health insurance markets in a significant number of states across the country.”

Insurers must begin the process of filing rates in the coming weeks, and many are looking at various scenarios, said David M. Dillon, a fellow at the Society of Actuaries, who has been working with state regulators and insurers about how to price plans in the marketplace. Insurers say their rates could rise as much as 30 percent, high enough to destabilize the markets.

Insurers remained largely silent on the proposed amendment, which seemed to revive a discussion of how to handle the sickest and most costly individuals by allowing states to set up high-risk pools. The insurers have previously indicated that they would be open to ideas that helped pay for people with very expensive conditions.

Separating off these individuals causes the cost of coverage for everyone else to go down, making it a potentially popular idea, said Stephen Zuckerman, a co-director of the Health Policy Center at the Urban Institute. But these pools have traditionally been poorly funded, leaving many people with potentially expensive pre-existing medical conditions without affordable coverage, if they can buy a plan at all.

“Why would these high-risk pools work better now than they have historically?” Mr. Zuckerman asked.

## Robinson : The GOP’s latest health-care plan is comically bad

House Republicans are apparently ready for yet another attempt to snatch health insurance away from constituents who need it. Someone should remind Speaker Paul Ryan of a saying often attributed to his legendary

predecessor Sam Rayburn: “There’s no education in the second kick of the mule.”

Having failed miserably to win passage of an abomination of a bill — the American Health Care Act — Ryan (R-Wis.) and his minions are back with something even worse. A draft framework being circulated this week would pretend to keep the parts of Obamacare that people like, but allow states to take these benefits away. We see what you’re doing, folks.

This is getting silly. What part of “forget it” do Republicans not understand?

Opinions newsletter

Thought-provoking opinions and commentary, in your inbox daily.

I realize there is great pressure to follow through on the GOP promise to “repeal and replace” the Affordable Care Act. And I realize that President Trump, nearing the 100-day mark, sorely needs a legislative victory to tweet about. King Pyrrhus needed a win, too, but that didn’t work out too well for him.

Republicans don’t talk much about the practical reason for moving urgently on health care, which is to set the stage for tax reform: They want to take money now used to subsidize health care for low-income Americans and give it to the wealthy in the form of big tax cuts. Again, we can see you.

Calling Obamacare a "crisis," House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said that Republicans are "in the midst of negotiating finishing touches" on their new health-care plan on April 19. Calling Obamacare a "crisis," House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said the GOP is "in the midst of negotiating finishing touches" on their new health-care plan. (Reuters)

(Reuters)

I’m sure the crowds at GOP town halls will be understanding. Just be sure to check attendees at the door for tar and feathers.

The new proposal — brokered by Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-N.J.), of the moderate Tuesday Group, and Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), of the far-right Freedom Caucus — is like a parody, as if life-or-death access to health care were fodder for a “Saturday Night Live” sketch.

Nominally, the MacArthur amendment would retain the Essential Health Benefits standard imposed by the ACA, which requires insurance policies to cover eventualities such as hospitalization, maternity and emergency care — basically, all the things you’d ever need health insurance for.

The amendment would also appear to maintain the ACA’s guarantees that anyone could buy health insurance, including those with preexisting conditions, and that parents could keep adult children on their policies until age 26. That all looks fine — but it’s an illusion.

After specifying that these popular provisions will stay, the amendment then gives states the right to snatch them away. States would be able to obtain waivers exempting them from the Essential Health Benefits standards. They would also be able to obtain waivers from the preexisting conditions requirement by creating a “high-risk pool” to provide coverage for those who are unwell.

There would no longer be a prohibition, however, against charging “high-risk” individuals more — so much more, in fact, that they would potentially be priced out of the market. We would go back to the pre-ACA situation in which serious illness could mean losing a home or filing for bankruptcy.

This may satisfy GOP ideological imperatives — Ayn Rand would be so proud — but it is atrocious policy, even if you put aside considerations such as compassion and community.

We live at a time of enormous economic dislocation. The manufacturing sector has shrunk dramatically, and now retail may be starting down the same path; long-lost jobs in industries such as coal mining are not coming back, no matter what Trump says. Workers need to be able to move to where jobs are being created — which means that health insurance should ideally be portable. But Republicans are heading in the other direction by trying to set up a system with radically different health-insurance rules in different states. In today’s world, how does that make sense?

Unchanged from last month’s failed bill are provisions that would strip massive amounts of money out of Medicaid, by far the nation’s biggest source of payment for nursing-home care. So Republicans might not want to show their faces anywhere near retirement communities.

The Affordable Care Act changed the way most people in this country think about health care. It did not, however, change the thinking of many House Republicans, who continue to believe individuals should be held financially liable for a genetic predisposition toward diabetes or a random cellular mutation that leads to cancer.

Another abject failure to repeal the ACA would be a terrible political outcome for Republicans. But far worse, looking ahead to the 2018 midterms, would be for Trump to sign this latest monstrosity into law.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Trump, GOP Race to Avoid Government Shutdown as They Juggle Health-Care Revamp

Louise Radnofsky, Siobhan Hughes and Kristina Peterson

Updated April 20, 2017 11:04 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—The White House has thrust a new set of proposals into talks to avoid shutdown of the government next week, while also seeking to revive a health-care overhaul that had collapsed last month.

With less than a week to pass legislation funding the government for the rest of the fiscal year, negotiations are beginning to take shape. Democrats are demanding that the legislation include money for insurance companies, without which fragile insurance markets could implode, while the White House in return wants additional money for defense, the border wall and border enforcement.

Failure to extend the funding would trigger a partial government shutdown on April 29, the 100th day of Donald Trump’s presidency.

Republican leaders will need Democratic votes in the Senate, and likely in the House, to pass a spending bill, giving the minority party unusual leverage in negotiations. Discussions now hinge on Democratic demands that the government continue payments that help support Affordable Care Act insurance plans. The money, known as “cost-sharing” payments, helps insurers lower costs for low-income consumers.

On Thursday, White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said the administration was proposing, in return, increased defense spending, money to expand a border wall and funding to hire more immigration officers. Mr. Mulvaney said the White House was willing to give Democrats a commitment to continue payments to health insurers, provided that the Democrats agree to some White House conditions.

“We want more money for defense, we want to build a border wall, and we want more money for immigration enforcement, law enforcement,” Mr. Mulvaney said Thursday at an Institute of International Finance conference. “We’re willing to have that discussion if they want to have it.”

The White House request put a set of controversial elements into the negotiations.

Democrats have said that money for a wall on the Mexican border or for increased immigration enforcement were nonstarters. The White House framed the request as reasonable in exchange for acceding to Democratic demands that the Trump administration continue “cost-sharing” payments.

“Everything had been moving smoothly until the administration moved in with a heavy hand,” said Matt House, a spokesman for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.), who is a principal negotiator. “Not only are Democrats opposed to the wall, there is significant Republican opposition as well.”

Mr. Trump said Thursday that he was eager to push ahead with the health-care measure, in hopes of reversing what has been seen as one of his most prominent failures. He said a deal among Republicans could come together as soon as next week, though there was no clear sign from GOP lawmakers that divisions that sank the bill last month had been bridged.

Mr. Trump, at a joint news conference with Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, said he was committed to passing new funding for the federal government and suggested that his ambitions for reviving the health bill could slip as a result.

“I believe we will get it, and whether it’s next week or shortly thereafter,’’ Mr. Trump said of the health bill. “As far as keeping the government open, I think we want to keep the government open, don’t you agree?”

The number of moving parts in the spending negotiations put Republicans on a bumpy path just

as Mr. Trump heads toward his 100th day in office. The milestone creates pressure for Mr. Trump to show he is able to rack up legislative wins, but also coincides with the potential for a government shutdown at a time when Republicans control all the levers of power.

Congressional Republicans are hoping to stave off that worst-case scenario, which would reflect on their abilities to run the government, and are searching for a way forward that minimizes tensions.

“The broad consensus is we need to avoid a government shutdown—we’re sent here to keep the government open,” said Rep. Luke Messer of Indiana, a member of House GOP leadership. “This in a lot of ways for the new Republican governing coalition is our first opportunity to show we can govern.”

The “cost-sharing” payments to insurers are the subject of litigation initiated in 2014 by the Republican-led House of Representatives against the government. The House argues that the then-Obama administration was making the payments without authorization, a position that has been backed by a federal judge.

The Trump administration hasn’t blocked the payments to date, but in an interview with The Wall Street Journal last week, Mr. Trump raised the prospect of doing so in the future.

An abrupt withdrawal of the payments would pose an immediate threat to the already-fragile insurance markets, potentially triggering the collapse of health plans midyear. Health plans have said that uncertainty over the payments’ future is also a factor as they mull whether to sell coverage in 2018, a decision which they have only a few more weeks to finalize.

A centrist GOP lawmaker, Rep. Tom MacArthur of New Jersey, had reignited the simmering debate over Republicans’ health-care ambitions Thursday with a proposal seeking to unite at-odds conservative and centrist lawmakers after GOP leaders were forced to pull a health-care bill from the floor at the 11th hour last month because it lacked enough Republican votes to pass.

Mr. MacArthur’s proposal would allow states to waive some insurance requirements established by the 2010 health law, popularly known as Obamacare, if the states could argue that it would enable them to lower the cost of premiums or insure more people. States could relax requirements that set which benefits health plans must cover, as well as allow insurers to charge higher premiums to people with riskier medical records.

He said he had been discussing his idea with Vice President Mike Pence, White House chief of staff Reince Priebus and other top administration officials, and that legislative text of his measure would be available by week’s end.

“This is just my effort to try to bridge this divide and I think it’s getting some traction,” Mr. MacArthur said in an interview Thursday. “We’ll gain some [votes], we may lose a few, but I think on balance it gets us over the threshold and allows the bill to move forward,” he said.

But GOP leadership aides said that with lawmakers scattered around the country as the two-week congressional recess draws to a close, it was impossible to tell whether the MacArthur proposal moved them any closer to drawing the 216 House votes needed to pass the legislation.

Aides to lawmakers in the Tuesday Group, a faction of centrist House Republicans that includes Mr. MacArthur, said Thursday that Mr. MacArthur’s proposal didn’t reflect a consensus of the group.

“I have very serious concerns,” about the amendment, said Rep. Charlie Dent (R., Pa.), a co-chairman of the group, who is opposed to the bill. “This amendment does nothing to change my position on the bill.”

One White House official said Thursday that party leaders would call a roll quickly when they were confident they had the votes, but that there was no fixed date in mind. Another White House official also said little had changed, and that there was no timetable for a vote ahead.

The Washington Post

## White House turns up heat on Congress to revise the Affordable Care Act

https://www.facebook.com/kelsey.snell.3

(The Washington Post)

President Trump praised the new Republican health-care plan on April 20, saying, "The plan gets better and better and better." He said he hopes the plan will come out "soon." President Trump praised the new Republican health-care plan on April 20, saying, "The plan gets better and better and better." (The Washington Post)

President Trump is pushing Congress toward another dramatic showdown over the Affordable Care Act, despite big outstanding obstacles to a beleaguered revision plan and a high-stakes deadline next week to keep the government running.

The fresh pressure from the White House to pass a revision was met with skepticism by some Capitol Hill Republicans and their aides, who were recently humiliated when their bill failed to reach the House floor for a vote and who worry now that little has changed to suggest a new revision would fare any better.

The effort reflects Trump’s sense of urgency to score a victory on Obamacare replacement and move on to other legislative objectives, notably tax restructuring. Passing an Affordable Care Act revision would also allow the president to show progress toward a major campaign promise as he completes his first 100 days in office.

“The plan gets better and better and better, and it’s gotten really good, and a lot of people are liking it a lot,” Trump said at a news conference Thursday. “We have a good chance of getting it soon. I’d like to say next week, but we will get it.”

Congressional Republicans also worry that they must attract Democratic support to fund the government past the month’s end — a step they must take by midnight April 28 to avoid a shutdown. That could become difficult if Democrats grow alienated by the effort to alter former president Barack Obama’s key domestic policy achievement, which some White House officials said they hope will come up for a vote as early as Wednesday.

(Reuters)

Calling Obamacare a "crisis," House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said that Republicans are "in the midst of negotiating finishing touches" on their new health-care plan on April 19. Calling Obamacare a "crisis," House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said the GOP is "in the midst of negotiating finishing touches" on their new health-care plan. (Reuters)

Several congressional GOP aides, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk openly about the ongoing negotiations, said they worry that the rushed process threatens to create another embarrassing public failure over health care. The schedule would also make it nearly impossible for lawmakers to finish their work in time for official scorekeepers to provide a clear estimate of how much the legislation would cost or how it would affect coverage numbers.

House GOP aides in Washington worked furiously to scale back expectations for a quick vote on the legislation, citing the fact that lawmakers have not been fully briefed on the discussions. There was no deadline for finishing the legislation as of Thursday evening, and GOP leaders have not committed to plans for a Wednesday vote, according to one House GOP leadership aide.

The fresh hopes for resuscitating the American Health Care Act are pegged to an amendment being offered by Rep. Tom MacArthur (R-N.J.) that aims to attract enough conservatives and moderates that the measure can pass in the House. White House officials said language would be circulated among members in the next few days, and the modifications will be discussed Saturday in a conference-wide call as Republicans prepare to return to Washington next week.

The MacArthur amendment would allow states to obtain permission from the federal government to write their own list of essential health benefits and allow insurers to charge people with preexisting conditions higher premiums, as long as they also make a high-risk pool available to those patients — a change conservatives have demanded.

As a concession to moderates, the amendment would also add back federal requirements for essential health benefits, which the measure’s current version instead leaves up to states.

House leadership and committees are taking a secondary role in the negotiations, which are being largely carried out by MacArthur, head of the moderate Tuesday Group, and Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), chairman of the conservative House Freedom Caucus. Members from both groups had balked at voting for the bill last month, forcing leaders to pull it from the floor at the last minute.

Meadows was silent Thursday on whether he supports the proposed changes.

Apart from the publicly embarrassing struggle to reach consensus on an Affordable Care Act revision, some Republicans are also uncomfortable with refocusing on health care just as they are trying to build goodwill with Democrats to pass a stopgap budget plan to keep the government open past April 28.

Republican leaders have already admitted that they are unable to craft a spending bill that can appease the far-right flank of the GOP, and they have turned to Democrats to deliver votes instead. Democrats have so far been willing to work with Republicans to avoid a government shutdown, but any effort to schedule a vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act could destroy those talks and threaten a government shutdown that Republicans have vowed to avoid.

"There isn't going to be a warm, fuzzy feeling," House Democratic Caucus Chairman Joseph Crowley (D-N.Y.) said of the impact a health-care repeal effort would have on spending talks.

Congress has five days next week to pass a spending bill, a tight timeline under the most generous of circumstance that would be nearly impossible to meet if House leaders also try to force a vote on the repeal legislation. Several Republican and Democratic aides said there is a chance that both parties could agree to pass a very short-lived spending bill — one that kept the government open one week, for instance — to give negotiators time to carefully complete a broader spending agreement. But Democrats are already warning that they could walk away if GOP leaders push for repeal.

"It doesn't really bode well in terms of negotiating with us that they're going to try to push off the vote on the [spending bill] to accommodate them on a bill we think is disastrous," Crowley said.

Asked whether a health-care bill or funding the government should be Congress's top priority next week, Trump said Thursday that he believes both could get done.

"I think we want to keep the government open, don't you agree?" Trump said. "So I think we'll get both."

Trump's position on a health-care overhaul appears to have shifted in the weeks since the House GOP's proposal, called the American Health Care Act, failed last month. Then, the president indicated that he was ready to move on to his next priorities, notably tax reform.

Now, Trump is bringing a new urgency to the task of delivering one of his central campaign promises. Additionally, with the 100-day mark of his presidency approaching, he and his senior aides are eager to show a concrete legislative achievement.

Trump would like to show progress on health care by Day 100 of his administration but is not overly concerned about the exact day a bill might pass the House, said a senior administration official, who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. The official acknowledged that House passage of a bill next week is ambitious and said prospects will be clearer once more members have had an opportunity to review the legislative language.

The confirmation of Neil M. Gorsuch to the Supreme Court — after Republican senators used a rule change to muscle the nomination through — remains Trump's sole major accomplishment on Capitol Hill as the 100-day mark nears.

His ambitious legislative agenda has been stalled by divisions within the White House and among Republicans in Congress, despite their control of both chambers.

As a candidate for president, Trump promised that he would work with Congress to pass legislation that would dramatically cut taxes, spur $1 trillion in infrastructure investments, significantly expand school choice and make it easier to afford child care. And he promised he would get started on all that — and six other pieces of legislation — in his first 100 days, according to a "Contract with the American Voter" released shortly before Election Day.

The only one of those 10 legislative items introduced to this point is the House health-care bill, which Trump embraced.

While the Gorsuch confirmation buoyed conservatives both on and off Capitol Hill — providing a taste of victory — the manner in which it was rammed through further poisoned Trump's relationships with Democrats, whose support he'll need on many of his other initiatives.

Meanwhile, White House Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney said Thursday that the White House would be open to funding some Democratic priorities — potentially including paying insurance subsidies as part of the Affordable Care Act — if Democrats would agree separately to fund parts of the White House's agenda in upcoming budget talks.

Mulvaney's comments suggested that the White House could try to use the Obamacare subsidy payments as leverage to extract funding to create a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"This is the first real test of whether the Democrats, specifically in the Senate, are interested in negotiating, interested in compromising," Mulvaney said.

Meadows and MacArthur are gauging their members' support for the proposed changes, according to aides and lobbyists. Moderate Republicans worry about depriving consumers of certain health-care benefits, and some conservatives say they think the GOP plan leaves too much of the Democrats' health-care law in place.

Yet some moderates said Thursday that they view the MacArthur amendment as more of a concession to conservatives, as it would allow states to opt out of some of the Affordable Care Act's insurance regulations they view as crucial.

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"I don't think the Tuesday Group has discussed, approved or has prior buy-in," said one senior aide to a moderate Republican House member. "I don't see how this gets either the Freedom Caucus or the Tuesday Group."

The Washington Post

## Justice Dept. debating charges against WikiLeaks members in revelations of diplomatic, CIA materials (UNE)

https://www.facebook.com/ellennakashimapost/

Federal prosecutors are weighing whether to bring criminal charges against members of the WikiLeaks organization, taking a second look at a 2010 leak of diplomatic cables and military documents and investigating whether the group bears criminal responsibility for the more recent revelation of sensitive CIA cyber-tools, according to people familiar with the case.

The Justice Department under President Barack Obama decided not to charge WikiLeaks for revealing some of the government's most sensitive secrets — concluding that doing so would be akin to prosecuting a news organization for publishing classified information. Justice Department leadership under President Trump, though, has indicated to prosecutors that it is open to taking another look at the case, which the Obama administration did not formally close.

It is not clear whether prosecutors are also looking at WikiLeaks' role last year in publishing emails from the Democratic National Committee and the account of Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John D. Podesta, which U.S. officials have said were hacked by the Russian government. Officials have said individuals "one step" removed from the Kremlin passed the stolen messages to WikiLeaks as part of a broader Russian plot to influence the 2016 presidential election.

*[Julian Assange: WikiLeaks has the same mission as The Post and the Times]*

Prosecutors in recent weeks have been drafting a memo that contemplates charges against members of the WikiLeaks organization, possibly including conspiracy, theft of government property or violating the Espionage Act, officials said. The memo, though, is not complete, and any charges against members of WikiLeaks, including founder Julian Assange, would need approval from the highest levels of the Justice Department.

(Reuters)

CIA Director Mike Pompeo on April 13 said the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks is a "non-state, hostile intelligence service" that receives support from Russia. CIA Director Mike Pompeo on April 13 said the anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks is a "non-state, hostile intelligence service" that receives support from Russia. (Reuters)

Barry J. Pollack, an attorney for Assange, said Justice Department officials had not discussed with him or Assange the status of any investigation, despite his requests that they do so. He said there was "no legitimate basis for the Department of Justice to treat

WikiLeaks differently than it treats other journalists."

"The fact of the matter is — however frustrating it might be to whoever looks bad when information is published — WikiLeaks is a publisher, and they are publishing truthful information that is in the public's interest," Pollack said. "Democracy thrives because there are independent journalists reporting on what it is that the government is doing."

Pollack noted that the Obama administration was "no shrinking violet when it came to pursuing reporters and journalists," a reference to the Obama Justice Department's repeated attempts to prosecute leakers. Pollack said he hoped "this administration will be more respectful, not less respectful, of the First Amendment than the prior administration was."

Prosecutors are trying to determine the extent to which WikiLeaks encouraged or directed sources to engage in illegal activity.

In March, WikiLeaks published thousands of files revealing secret cyber-tools used by the CIA to convert cellphones, televisions and other ordinary devices into implements of espionage. The FBI has made significant progress in the investigation of the leak, narrowing the list of possible suspects, officials said. The officials did not describe WikiLeaks' exact role in the case beyond publishing the tools.

Prosecutors are also reexamining the leaks from Chelsea Manning, the Army soldier who was convicted in 2013 of revealing sensitive diplomatic cables. Manning chatted with Assange about a technique to crack a password so Manning could log on to a computer anonymously, and that conversation, which came up during Manning's court-martial, could be used as evidence that WikiLeaks went beyond the role of publisher or journalist.

But journalists routinely employ methods — or tell sources to employ methods — that will help them avoid being identified. Justice Department officials in the previous administration believed that prosecuting Assange or other members of WikiLeaks could open the door to prosecuting news organizations and journalists who published classified information, and so they opted instead to target people, such as Manning, who had clearances to access such information and gave it to reporters.

"Any prosecution that's based solely on publishing stolen classified information is going to be very difficult because of the First Amendment problem," said Michael Vatis, a former Justice Department official who oversaw cybercrime investigations and is now a partner at Steptoe & Johnson.

Vatis said Assange's "exact words would matter a lot." Just expressing a desire to obtain classified information would not be enough to bring charges, he said.

"I think their only realistic hope is some conspiracy charge based on WikiLeaks' involvement in the actual hacking, not just publishing the results of the hacking," Vatis said. "So if they were somehow planning with the hacker to do the hack or planning, in this case, with the contractor to steal the information so that WikiLeaks could publish it, then I think they'd have a much stronger chance of successfully prosecuting them."

The FBI and the Justice Department declined to comment for this article.

A prosecution of WikiLeaks members would probably draw fierce opposition from open-government and free-press organizations that see the group as practicing journalism, even if its brand is unconventional.

Trump has had a fluid relationship with WikiLeaks, depending largely on how the group's actions benefited or harmed him. On the campaign trail, when WikiLeaks released Podesta's hacked emails, Trump told a crowd in Pennsylvania, "I love WikiLeaks!" But when it came to the release of the CIA tools, he did not seem so pleased.

"In one case, you're talking about highly classified information," Trump said at a news conference earlier this year. "In the other case, you're talking about John Podesta saying bad things about the boss."

*[After loving WikiLeaks as a candidate, Trump decides he doesn't like leaks as president]*

CIA Director Mike Pompeo said during an appearance at the Center for Strategic and International Studies this month that it was "time to call out WikiLeaks for what it really is: a non-state, hostile intelligence service often abetted by state actors, like Russia," and he criticized prior administrations as having been "squeamish" about going after publishers of state secrets.

"They have pretended that America's First Amendment freedoms shield them from justice. They may have believed that, but they are wrong," said Pompeo, who had touted WikiLeaks' material on the DNC when he was a congressman.

In a sign of the Justice Department's seriousness in pursuing charges, the U.S. attorney's office in the Eastern District of Virginia recently added a veteran prosecutor, Assistant U.S. Attorney James Trump, to the case, officials familiar with the matter said. James Trump, who is also assigned to the case against Edward Snowden, won criminal convictions in 2015 against former CIA officer Jeffrey Sterling, who was charged with leaking classified information to journalist James Risen. Prosecutors in that case initially sought to compel Risen to reveal his source before they ultimately backed down.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Tracy Doherty-McCormick, who examined the case under the Obama administration, also has been working on the matter in recent weeks, officials said.

In a recent Washington Post op-ed piece, Assange said that his group's motive was "identical to that claimed by the New York Times and The Post — to publish newsworthy content."

"The media has a long history of speaking truth to power with purloined or leaked material — Jack Anderson's reporting on the CIA's enlistment of the Mafia to kill Fidel Castro; the Providence Journal-Bulletin's release of President Richard Nixon's stolen tax returns; the New York Times' publication of the stolen 'Pentagon Papers'; and The Post's tenacious reporting of Watergate leaks, to name a few," Assange wrote. "I hope historians place WikiLeaks' publications in this pantheon. Yet there are widespread calls to prosecute me."

He said in a later podcast interview with the Intercept that he believed Justice Department rules barred a prosecution of him. "If they follow those rules, if they follow the First Amendment, they shouldn't be pursuing a prosecution," he said.

Checkpoint newsletter

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Prosecutors would also face practical hurdles in reviving the case involving Manning. Years have passed, and witnesses' memories are likely to have faded. Prosecutors also fear that Manning might not be a cooperative witness and that defense attorneys might raise questions about her credibility, officials familiar with the case said.

Manning had been sentenced to 35 years in prison, but Obama commuted her prison term in the waning days of his administration.

Asked Thursday about his concern about leaks and whether it was a priority for the Justice Department to arrest Assange, Attorney General Jeff Sessions said, "We are going to step up our effort and already are stepping up our efforts on all leaks." He added, "Whenever a case can be made, we will seek to put some people in jail."

Rachel Weiner contributed to this report.

The New York Times

## Editorial : Fearmongering at Homeland Security

The United States is as vulnerable to an attack today as it was the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. Information in the press about national security is misleading or flat-out wrong, offering a false sense of security. The men and women of the Department of Homeland Security perform heroic work day and night for a largely ungrateful nation. If members of Congress are unhappy with the Trump administration's crackdown on illegal immigration, they should pass new laws or "shut up."

Those were the main takeaways from Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly's first extensive remarks about how he intends to lead a vast bureaucracy on the front lines of immigration enforcement, passenger screening and cybersecurity.

"Make no mistake," he said Tuesday during a speech at George Washington University. "We are in fact a nation under attack."

Of course it is necessary to take seriously threats from extremist groups and criminals, and take measures against them. But they do not justify Mr. Kelly's incendiary message to his work force. The tone he sets can only encourage abusive behavior among his officers further down the chain of command against immigrants, and also lead to the curtailment of Americans' civil liberties and privacy.

Mr. Kelly said that Americans have grown complacent because their government has done such a good

job of keeping them safe. The reality, he warned, is quite different: “We are under attack from terrorism both within and outside of our borders. These men and women are without conscience, and they operate without rules. They despise the United States, because we are a nation of rights, of laws and of freedoms. They have a single mission, and that is our destruction.”

That apocalyptic talk turns the Islamophobia and immigrant scapegoating that turbocharged the Trump campaign into marching orders for federal law enforcement agents and bureaucrats. It ignores that the United States has spent billions of dollars over the past 15 years greatly enhancing its intelligence collection capabilities and that it has put in place far more stringent mechanisms to screen visa applicants and visitors.

Disregarding these gains, Mr. Kelly and other top administration officials stand to make the country less safe with talk of a war on unauthorized immigrants, which is driving segments of immigrant communities underground, making them fearful of any encounters with law enforcement. The bashing of Muslims, meanwhile, is music to the ears of extremist, violent organizations that have used the notion that America is at war with Islam as a recruiting tool.

Mr. Kelly’s prepared remarks also telegraphed more drastic measures to come. He said a new restriction on carrying laptops and tablets onto some flights from Muslim-majority countries “will likely expand,” citing, vaguely, “the sophisticated threats aviation faces.” America’s cyberdefenses can no longer rely on “muskets,” but instead need “heavy artillery.”

Mr. Kelly dismissed critics who have lamented his stated willingness to separate immigrant mothers and children caught entering the country, claiming that this unfathomably cruel threat would be, and indeed already has been, a useful disincentive for would-be migrants.

Among the more jarring parts of Mr. Kelly’s speech was his message to lawmakers. Citing the low morale of employees he described as “political pawns” in the nation’s contentious immigration debate, Mr. Kelly said members of Congress should have “the courage and the skill to change those laws,” or “shut up and support the men and women on the front lines” of immigration enforcement.

Mr. Kelly’s choice of words reflects the dismal state of public discourse in American politics. That brusqueness encourages lawmakers to respond in kind, which can only make policy making more fraught and partisan. But even more alarming is his unrestrained fearmongering. If Americans take his discourse at face value, they will be living in a paranoid society willing to trade fundamental freedoms and principles for a sense of security.