

# Revue de presse américaine

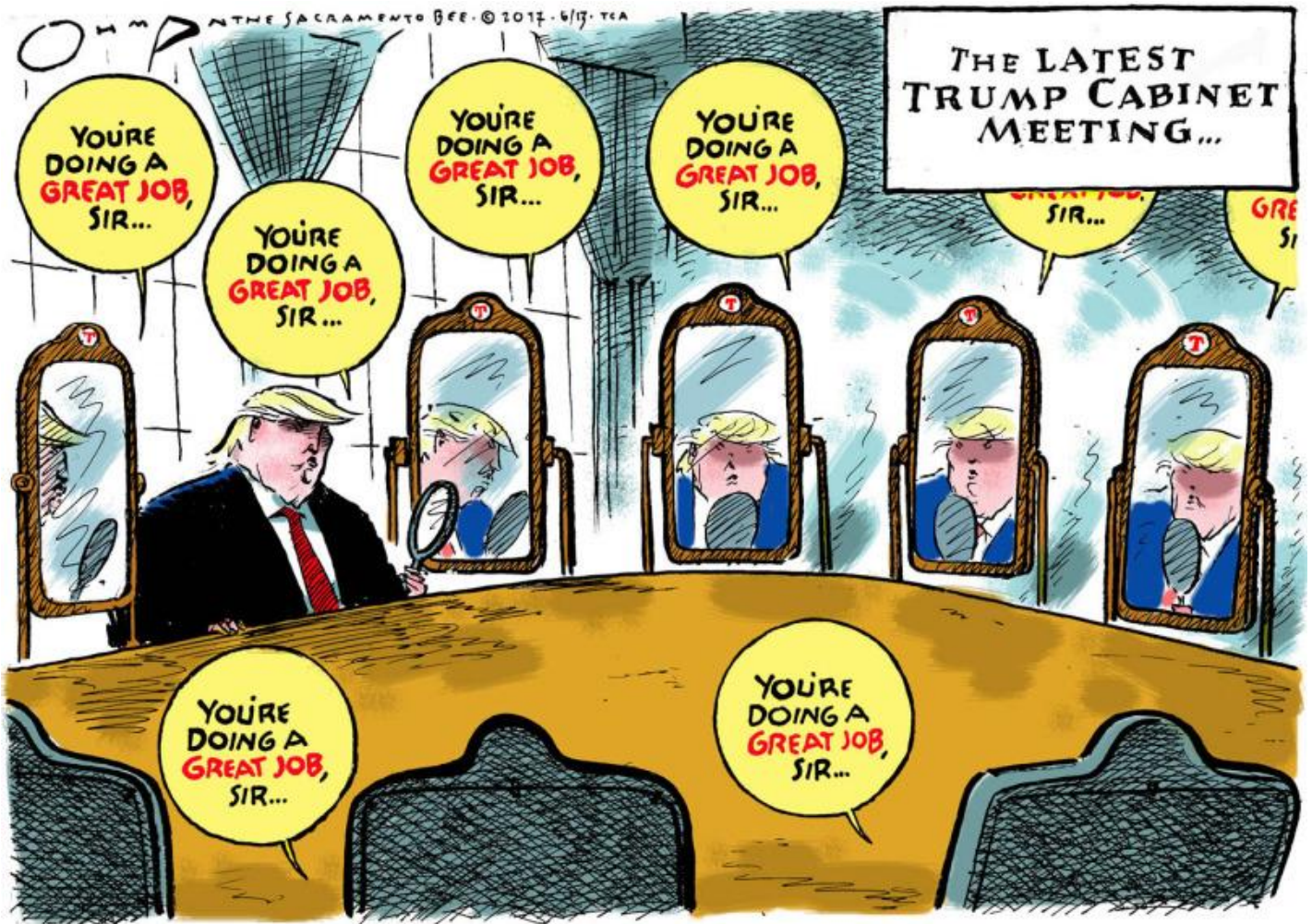
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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

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# FRANCE – EUROPE

**Bloomberg**

## Editorial : Macron's Mandate for Change

by The Editors  
More stories by

The Editors

4-5 minutes

Vive la révolution.

Photographer: Sylvain Lefevre/Getty Images

So the presidential election was no fluke: The voters of France have put Emmanuel Macron's new République En Marche (Republic on the Move) party on course for a big parliamentary majority. If this is confirmed in the June 18 runoff, Macron will control not just foreign policy but domestic policy as well.

The Meteoric Rise of France's New President

The Meteoric Rise of France's New President

His task in reforming the French economy, as he's promised to do, certainly won't be easy. What's

remarkable is that he might now conceivably succeed.

Not long ago, Macron was a little-known minister in the administration of former President Francois Hollande. Today he's president, slayer of political opponents, and leader of a mighty parliamentary force. His allies are projected to win as many as 455 of the 577 seats in the lower house. (One problem: The largest meeting room in the National Assembly can only accommodate 350.)

The mainstream parties of the left and center-right, which ran the country for decades, weren't beaten so much as crushed. The Socialist presidential candidate, Benoit Hamon, was eliminated in the first round of voting; his party's hope now is to clear the 15-seat minimum to be recognized as a parliamentary group. The Republicans are expected to have between 70 and 110 seats.



## Trump Weighs Vetoing France's African Anti-Terrorism Plan

France presses for a swift vote on a U.N. resolution endorsing an African force, betting Washington will back down.

The United States and France are hurtling toward a potential dust-up, as the Trump administration weighs vetoing a French Security Council resolution empowering an African counterterrorism force, according to U.S. officials and U.N.-based diplomats.

The dispute hinges on the question of who will help fund the force of 5,000 African soldiers and police in the Sahel, a semi-arid plain that stretches from Senegal to Sudan, and whether French military planners have devised a workable strategy. France spearheaded the effort to assemble the five-nation African anti-terrorism force, known as the G-5, but the countries taking part are looking to the United States, its allies, and the United Nations to share the burden of funding and supporting the cross-border operations.

The negotiations have emerged as a test of will between newly elected French President Emmanuel

Macron, who traveled to Mali days after being sworn in to underscore France's commitment to battling Islamic terrorists, and President Donald Trump, who is looking to scale back U.S. funding for multilateral operations. A breach over the Sahel force could place new strains on U.S. relations with France and other governments just weeks after Trump announced plans to withdraw from the Paris climate pact.

The United States, backed by Britain, supports in principle the French and African commitment to take the fight to terrorists. But it has objected to blessing the operation with a U.N. seal of approval, saying the troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger already have legal authority to conduct missions.

"It is not legally necessary for the council to authorize this force," said a U.S. official, who added that the administration's concerns went beyond the financial costs. "The recent history of using Security Council resolutions to apply the U.N. imprimatur to hastily crafted mandates without proper on-the-

ground oversight and accountability is not glowing."

Even so, Macron's path to reform will be hard. His support isn't as overwhelming as it looks. The election turnout was only 49 percent, the lowest in the history of the Fifth Republic. Just 15 percent of the country's registered voters cast ballots for Macron's candidates. And his plans will face plenty of militant opposition on the streets, even if not in parliament.

His flagship labor-market reforms aim to cut costs and encourage businesses to hire. They're essential if France is to restore a satisfactory pace of economic growth and get unemployment down. Macron met leaders of organized labor to talk

about this immediately after he was elected president. So far, the unions have been subdued. It would be another historic first if they stayed that way.

Clear thinking from leading voices in business, economics, politics, foreign affairs, culture, and more.

Share the View

One of Macron's first moves was to introduce a "moralization" law banning members of parliament, local officials and senior civil servants from employing family members, and requiring them to declare personal interests and produce receipts for their expenses. That was smart. It's one measure his supporters and most of the country can get behind. The rest of his domestic program is bound to prove contentious.

Nonetheless, voters have given him the means. He's been granted an astonishing opportunity. He ought to seize it.

A second U.S. official said American diplomats in New York are still trying to persuade the French to back down, but Paris appears intent on "ramming it through and ignoring all of our objections."

The official noted that the United States is weighing whether to use its veto power if the French do not amend their initiative to address those concerns. But France is betting that the United States will blink if it faces a counterterrorism resolution with broad Security Council support.

For the past four years, France has led international counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel, seeking to fill a security vacuum in the region that followed the collapse of Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi's government in 2011. The United States has generally supported that endeavor, providing financial, political, and intelligence support to the French counterterrorism effort in the region.

But Washington has long had reservations about the capacity of the region's African armies to

prosecute an effective war on terror. In 2012, France proposed assembling an army of 15 African countries to confront Mali's terrorists, an idea that Susan Rice, then-U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, dismissed as "crap."

For France, the initiative offers a model for helping local forces take on terrorists, particularly at a time when the United States and the United Nations are looking to African states to resolve their own security problems.

It is only logical, French diplomats have argued, that the U.N. Security Council, which has approved hundreds of millions of dollars in support for a U.S.-African anti-terrorism force in Somalia, should also support this African-backed mission in Mali.

French officials maintain that their plan, which has been endorsed by the African Union and U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, enjoys widespread backing in the 15-nation council, including African states and China.

A draft resolution obtained by Foreign Policy would authorize a force of 5,000 soldiers and police to



"take all necessary measures" to combat terrorist groups. Drug dealers and human traffickers who fund terrorists could also be targeted by the force. The French draft also urges the African force to coordinate its operations, and share intelligence, with U.N. peacekeepers in Mali, as well as a French anti-terrorism force.

In a bid to address U.S. concerns that the mandate was too vague, France amended a provision that would have authorized the force to eradicate unspecified terrorist groups and organized crime outfits. A revised version empowers the force to fight U.N.-designated terrorists and associated criminals.

"We have a very strong and large support among the members of the Security Council on this resolution," François Delattre, France's U.N. ambassador, told reporters Tuesday. "This is completely consistent with the dynamics at the U.N. to support

African forces in Africa. It's a top priority for the African Union and for this region as a whole, and there cannot be any doubt that there is a real threat to international peace and security here."

The French need two things from the U.N., according to Arthur Boutellis, the director of the International Peace Institute's Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations — more funding for a project they are "already propping up" and an "exit strategy down the road" for thousands of French troops in the region.

"If I were the Americans, or any of the other countries who are being asked to pay, I would ask what kind of difference is that kind of force going to make," Boutellis told FP.

It remains unclear whether U.S. resistance to the French initiative is being shaped by American misgivings about the strategy or "whether it is shaped purely by the

money," said Richard Atwood, the New York director of the International Crisis Group.

Atwood said the French properly recognize the need to strengthen border security in a region flush with jihadist and organized criminal groups. But he cautioned that the French were seeking an overly broad mandate without having a clear enough "definition of the enemy." In a place like Mali, he noted, it can be difficult to separate the terrorists, smugglers, and "armed groups on the right side of the line."

Since the fall of Qaddafi, the Sahel has emerged as a haven for terrorists and a transit point for arms dealers, drug traffickers, and human smugglers.

One U.N.-based official said Washington's reticence is driven in part by "stinginess" but also by a sense that "they are being dragged into something that is not properly

cooked. Paris will need to do a lot more work on D.C."

Richard Gowan, a U.N. expert at the European Council on Foreign Relations, recalled that the United States resisted earlier French calls for U.N. support for an African anti-terrorism force to battle the Nigeria-based terrorist organization Boko Haram.

Gowan said the United States has long had a "creeping suspicion" that any U.N. proposal to authorize a new African force will be followed by a request for money to fund it. But, he added, "my guess is that this is more about long-standing U.S. concerns about the viability of African missions than a Trump administration snub to Paris."

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Douglas

4-6 minutes

Updated June 13, 2017 6:32 p.m. ET

PARIS—French President Emmanuel Macron said the door remains open for the U.K. to stay in the European Union, reflecting uncertainties over coming exit negotiations as politically weakened U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May tries to plot a course out of the bloc.

Mr. Macron made his comments standing alongside Mrs. May after the two dined together in Paris on Tuesday. The dinner brought Mrs. May face to face with a politically emboldened defender of the EU just days after losing her parliamentary majority in elections.

Mrs. May's bruising setback has blurred the U.K.'s strategy for Brexit negotiations that are due to start in less than a week. With weakened support, she could struggle to deliver her campaign promise of hard-nosed negotiations to get a clean break with the EU.

## Emmanuel Macron Tells Theresa May EU's 'Door Remains Open' to U.K.

William Horobin and Jason Douglas

"The door obviously remains open so long as the Brexit talks aren't concluded," Mr. Macron said.

Mr. Macron said he respects the British vote to exit and said once the negotiations start it would be harder to make a U-turn.

Mrs. May said she would stick to the timetable for beginning the Brexit talks. The U.K. government will strive to keep a "deep and special partnership" with the EU, especially on matters of trade, she said.

The meeting was the first test of Mrs. May's stature on the European stage after her Conservative Party lost its parliamentary majority in a U.K. election she called with the aim of strengthening her mandate to negotiate Brexit.

The stumble at the polls was widely blamed on a botched campaign by Mrs. May and a successful showing by Jeremy Corbyn, the veteran left-wing leader of the main opposition Labour Party. Mr. Corbyn's pledges to nationalize railways and pay for college tuition struck a chord with voters weary of years of government belt-tightening, especially the young. Conservatives' plans to overhaul elder care fell flat.

The rebuke from voters has cast doubt on Mrs. May's ability to stay in office or govern effectively. Earlier

Tuesday, she met with lawmakers from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party to forge a loose alliance, giving her government the extra votes it needs to retain power.

A big question mark now hangs over the U.K.'s Brexit strategy. Mrs. May had advocated a clean break with the bloc, but some in her party are pushing for a softer approach that puts economic security first.

"There is a unity of purpose among people in the United Kingdom. It is a unity of purpose, having voted to leave the EU, that the government gets on with that," Mrs. May said.

Mr. Macron is a tough interlocutor for Mrs. May on European matters. The 39-year-old won France's presidential election in May by campaigning as an outspoken defender of a stronger Europe. His rival in the second-round runoff, National Front leader Marine Le Pen, trumpeted the U.K. vote to leave the EU as a success story and called for France to do the same.

"My wish is that we don't use up energy talking about modalities of Brexit, but that in the eurozone and the EU we can continue talking about necessary projects to go further," Mr. Macron said.

The French leader notched up a second victory over Ms. Le Pen on

Sunday as his party won the first round of the legislative election by a large margin, setting it up to win as many as 455 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, according to polling firms. The National Front is expected to win five seats at most, the same polls show.

In his presidential campaign, Mr. Macron made pledges that are anathema to Mrs. May. He wants to strengthen the eurozone—to which the U.K. doesn't belong—with a dedicated parliament, a finance minister and a budget. Mr. Macron also said he would increase cooperation with Germany to create a European defense headquarters.

The two leaders on Tuesday also discussed security and how to deepen cooperation on antiterrorism in Europe as well as between their two countries. After the dinner, Mrs. May and Mr. Macron attended a soccer match between England and France to pay homage to the victims of recent terror attacks in Manchester and London.

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Appeared in the June 14, 2017, print edition as 'Door Still Open to U.K., Macron Tells Prime Minister.'



## Lady Brexit meets Monsieur Europe: May, Macron hold talks

ABC News  
5-6 minutes

She wants to escape the European Union, he wants to embolden it. British Prime Minister Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron held talks Tuesday from

opposite sides of the Brexit front line and agreed that negotiations for Britain's divorce from the European bloc will start next week as planned.

They also reached common ground on fighting a shared enemy: terrorism. Standing side by side in the garden of the Elysee Palace after a working dinner, the two

leaders announced plans to pursue an initiative to require tech companies to better police online extremism and hold them legally liable if they fail to do so.

"We are united in our total condemnation of terrorism and our commitment to stamp out this evil," May said.

May arrived in Paris with her leadership hobbled by a catastrophic election last week just as Britain heads into tough talks on leaving the EU.

While May struggles to hold onto power, Macron is on the ascendency, with his year-old party set to win a huge majority in parliamentary elections Sunday. That should fortify Macron's standing in Europe as he tries to push the remaining EU nations to stand tough in Brexit negotiations, and to unite even more closely as Britain departs.

Seeking to allay European concerns after her election setback, May reaffirmed Tuesday that "the timetable for Brexit negotiations remains on course and will begin next week."

British officials had previously suggested they wouldn't be able to

formally start Brexit negotiations as scheduled.

Macron called for the negotiations to "start as soon as possible," but also added that the door remains open for the U.K. to remain in the European Union. From a European point of view, he said, as long as the negotiations are not over, there is still a possibility to change the course of events.

Still, he acknowledged, "the decision (to exit the EU) has been taken by the sovereign British people. I do respect that."

The talks Tuesday also focused heavily on deepening counterterrorism cooperation, especially reducing extremist propaganda circulated online. Britain and France face similar challenges in fighting home-grown Islamic extremism and share similar scars from deadly attacks that rocked London, Manchester, Paris and Nice.

May said major internet companies have failed to live up to prior commitments to do more to prevent extremists from finding a "safe space" online. Macron urged other European countries, especially Germany, to join the effort to fight Islamic extremist propaganda on the web.

After the Islamic State group recruited hundreds of French fighters largely through online propaganda, France introduced legislation ordering French providers to block certain content, but acknowledges any such effort must reach well beyond its borders. Tech-savvy Macron has lobbied for tougher European rules, but details of his plans remain unclear.

Britain already has tough measures, including a law known informally as the Snooper's Charter, which gives authorities the powers to look at the internet browsing records of everyone in the country. Among other things, the law requires telecommunications companies to keep records of all users' web activity for a year, creating data bases of personal information that the firms worry could be vulnerable to leaks and hackers.

After their talks, May and Macron headed to the Stade de France stadium north of Paris to watch a France-England exhibition soccer match honoring victims of the recent attacks in Manchester and London. In an emotional show of support, players from both teams walked onto the field to sounds of the Oasis song "Don't Look Back in Anger" played by the French Republican Guard. Then Macron and May

joined French and British fans in singing the British national anthem "God Save the Queen," followed by a minute of silence.

Two big screens at the stadium projected the red-and-white Cross of St. George and giant flags from both countries were rolled out onto the field.

Three attackers mowed down pedestrians on London Bridge and then stabbed people in nearby Borough Market on June 3. Eight people were killed and dozens more injured. On May 22, a man detonated a bomb as crowds were leaving an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, killing 22 people.

France's players were touched by the overwhelming show of support they received from England fans when they played an exhibition match at Wembley Stadium on Nov. 17, 2015— just four days after attacks hit a Paris stadium, cafes and a rock concert, killing 130 people. England fans that night sang along with the French national anthem.

Katz reported from London. Associated Press writer Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.



## UK could stay in EU despite Brexit vote, Macron says

2 minutes

Britain could potentially remain part of the European Union, French president Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Speaking alongside U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May in Paris, Macron said that the door remains open for the U.K. to remain in the EU, despite last year's Brexit vote.

"The door obviously remains open so long as the Brexit talks aren't concluded," Macron said.

### UK ELECTION: THERESA MAY TO ASK QUEEN TO FORM GOVERNMENT DESPITE LOSING MAJORITY

Macron said that once negotiations commence it will be hard to turn back.

The comments follow the June 8 U.K. election in which May's Conservative Party lost its

parliamentary majority. May had called for the election with the goal of strengthening her position to negotiate Brexit.

But May said the plan to begin Brexit talks – scheduled to start on June 19 according to The Guardian – will remain as is. The U.K. government will aim to maintain a "deep and special partnership" with the EU, especially on issues like trade, May stated.

"There is a unity of purpose among people in the United Kingdom. It is a

unity of purpose, having voted to leave the EU, that the government gets on with that," May said.

Macron, who won France's presidential election in May, has been a strong advocate for a unified Europe. "My wish is that we don't use up energy talking about modalities of Brexit, but that in the eurozone and the EU we can continue talking about necessary projects to go further," he said.

## Forbes : French Fintech Under Macron's Presidency One Month On

Madhvi Mavadiya

Photo Credit: Shutterstock

Many expected that when Emmanuel Macron was voted in as French president, there would be significant change in the fintech industry. Coming from a financial background, Macron was certainly the best presidential candidate for the expansion and development of the financial technology sector. I spoke with Managing Partner of French private equity firm and investor in European SMEs Idivest Partners, Benoist Grossman, about how Paris tech is reacting since the

election and in light of Brexit concerns.

Marine Le Pen's economic pledges were clearly eurosceptic and her 'intelligent protectionism' favored French firms that were in public sector contracts, as well as the pledge to bring back the franc. Grossman highlighted that it is hard to predict exactly what a Le Pen victory would have meant in the short term, but taking 'France out of the Euro, followed by a potential referendum on EU membership, the fintech industry along with the rest of the economy would have been set

for some years of uncertainty and potential risk,' Grossman said.

On the other hand, as Grossman points out, 'since Macron has publicly stated that innovation and disruption is key for France's growth potential, his intention for closer integration with Europe has been broadly welcomed by the fintech industry.' Macron seems to be pro-PSD and has invited those affected by Brexit to work in the technology sector in France, all are welcome under En Marche. The French president is also very supportive of SME growth and is interested in helping French Tech. 'For example,

him addressing the taxation of small start-ups, which often puts many people off starting their own business in France, is a specific example of his support for SMEs.

'In a way, Macron's own political movement "En Marche!" is in itself a start-up (only a year old) and he seems to understand the entrepreneurial mind-set - one that prizes dynamism and staying open. He once commented that every entrepreneur should dream of becoming a billionaire, and as a young and former businessman himself you can somewhat have faith in his pledge to strengthen

France's position as a leading source of innovation and economic power in Europe.'

Since his election, Macron has certainly been busy but it is obviously hard to make any major changes to the fintech industry, but the French president is making moves in the right direction with the appointment of Mounir Mahjoubi as Secretary of State in charge of Digital Affairs. Grossman also touches upon the long term: 'it's the hope and positive sentiment that he brings which has made the most impact across the

business and entrepreneurial community, in France but also more widely across Europe. There's lots of optimism and expectation that the next 5 years will mean rejuvenation for France.'

'We feel his presidency marks a pivotal moment in the development of fintech in France. Since he is seen as the architect of many pro-market reforms in 2016, much of the entrepreneurial community is hoping that he will build on these further. Red-tape is one of the main impediments to company growth in France, and so his desire to reduce

this and instead introduce laws that protect businesses and entrepreneurs will help encourage the growth of fintech, as well as other industries in France. For example, he has already pledged to remove the RSI (Régime Social des Indépendants) and introduce a simpler corporate tax regime, alleviating some of the challenges that business owners face today,' Grossman explained.

Macron's initiatives so far are clearly in favour of the development of fintech in France and with billions promised for innovation, the

president is returning to supporting this space, as he did with The Family in Paris, as Grossman points out. 'We're hopeful that he'll continue this support of French Tech and we're expecting that the private sector will work collaboratively alongside the government to encourage the growth of this industry and help France to develop innovative businesses with global ambitions,' Grossman said.



## French McDonald's are selling burgers with two new sides: A knife and a fork

<https://www.facebook.com/maura.judkis>

3 minutes

In America, we hold these truths to be self-evident: Pizza, burgers, french fries, hot dogs and fast-food fried chicken are meant to be eaten with our hands (a.k.a "God's Utensils"). Using a fork or knife, as many politicians have learned after unfortunate photo-ops throughout the years, is a sign of weakness, un-American-ness and unfitness for public office.

Heaven forbid you eat your pizza with a knife and fork, as New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio did in 2014, and Gov. John Kasich did last year. Even President Trump was mocked for eating his Kentucky Fried Chicken with a knife and fork on the campaign trail.

Because there's nothing more American than getting grease and salt on your bare hands, Americans may be surprised to learn that one of the country's most famous culinary exports — McDonald's — is kowtowing to local cutlery mores. In France, certain McDonald's burgers will now come with utensils,

because French people — *quelle surprise!* — eat burgers with a knife and a fork.

[I tried to eat with the McDonald's fork. It was actually kind of fun.]

This is a fact that should surprise no one — of course the French, always more sophisticated, would eat fast food with a knife and a fork. And yet, it still manages to surprise just about everyone.

Burgers have been getting more popular in France over the years, and one French market research firm found that, at 80 percent of the

145,000 restaurants they surveyed, burgers were outselling steak frites. Le Figaro reports today that McD's, as the company is colloquially called there, will offer recyclable plastic knives and forks in its 1,400 French restaurants, some of which also offer table service. Save your "Pulp Fiction" jokes about a Royale with cheese — the cutlery will only be handed out for orders of the brand's more expensive signature burgers, not the regular menu.



## U.K. Prime Minister Hosts DUP to Finalize Minority Government Deal

5-7 minutes

Updated June 13, 2017 12:42 p.m. ET

British Prime Minister Theresa May met Tuesday with the head of a small Northern Irish party as she sought to complete an agreement that would enable her to govern with a minority in Parliament but one that could be a risk to peace in Northern Ireland.

Mrs. May gambled by calling last week's snap election, but it backfired and her Conservative Party lost seats, falling short of a parliamentary majority.

She is now seeking to negotiate an agreement to win support in key votes from the mainly-Protestant Democratic Unionist Party, whose leader Arlene Foster was in London Tuesday for talks.

Mrs. Foster, in a statement from her Twitter account, said discussions were "going well" and that she hoped they would soon come to a successful conclusion.

Jenny Gross and Paul Hannon

Mrs. May will have to navigate the agreement carefully. A deal with the DUP risks complicating the fragile peace in Northern Ireland, where the British and Irish governments act as impartial mediators between the main Protestant and Catholic parties.

Mrs. May will likely have to agree to concessions in exchange for the DUP's support in no-confidence and budget votes essential to keeping a minority government in power. Typically under such agreements, support in other votes would be on a case-by-case basis.

John Major, a former Conservative British prime minister who helped pave the way for the 1998 Good Friday agreement that put an end to three decades of violent confrontation, said he is worried about the implications for peace.

"A fundamental part of that peace process is that the U.K. government needs to be impartial," he said. "That was always the intention. The danger is that, however much it tries, it will not be seen to be impartial if it is locked into a deal with one of the parties."

Mr. Major said that while he doesn't believe there is any immediate

threat of a return to violence, the peace process is "fragile," and there is a risk that creating a sense of grievance in either group will spark a return to violence.

The deal with Northern Irish lawmakers will likely have significant implications for Brexit, raising the prospect that Mrs. May will be pressured by lawmakers to pursue a closer relationship with the European Union than she had set out before the election.

The Democratic Unionists, which won 10 seats in last week's election, is a socially conservative party that supports Britain's exit from the European Union but wants to keep a "frictionless" border with the Republic of Ireland after the U.K. leaves the EU.

This aim may be incompatible with Mrs. May pre-election stance in Brexit negotiations, in which she said the U.K. wouldn't agree to staying in the EU's customs union or single market, or to the bloc's principle of guaranteeing free movement of people from EU countries.

Aside from Brexit, the DUP, a pro-British party that has strong support from working-class voters in

Northern Ireland, may also push for less severe cuts in public services.

Data released Tuesday showed consumer prices in the U.K. in May rising at the fastest annual rate for almost four years, intensifying a squeeze on households. Consumer prices have risen since last year's Brexit vote caused a sharp fall in the pound, while wage growth hasn't kept pace.

Northern Ireland has been without a government since February after Sinn Féin, the mainly-Catholic nationalist party that wants the province to leave the U.K. and join the Republic of Ireland, withdrew from a power-sharing agreement with the DUP. Talks over a new agreement resumed Monday after the election.

Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Féin, said an agreement between the DUP and the Conservatives wouldn't alter his basic lack of trust in the British government.

"The English government have never been honest with us, ever, have never been referees, have never been neutral," Mr. Adams said. "They're obliged to be so in the wording of the Good Friday and other agreements, but unless an



Irish government is keeping them to that responsibility, they will behave as they have behaved as long as I have lived.”

The agreement includes a pledge that London should exercise “rigorous impartiality.” Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny and some British officials involved in negotiating the agreement have questioned

whether such impartiality is possible when one of the parties to the constitutional dispute is part of that government.

Unionist supporters of the agreement say the “impartiality” clause is intended to rule out any discrimination against individuals based on their view of the constitutional question and not to

rule out any coalition or other agreement between political parties.

David Trimble, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize as one of the leading unionist politicians who paved the way for the agreement and the peace that followed, said he didn’t believe a Conservative-DUP deal would upend the peace process.

“The clause is essentially dealing with treating people equally,” Mr. Trimble told the British Broadcasting Corp. “I think there’s a fair amount of scaremongering going on. This is just being silly.”

**Write to** Jenny Gross at [jenny.gross@wsj.com](mailto:jenny.gross@wsj.com) and Paul Hannon at [paul.hannon@wsj.com](mailto:paul.hannon@wsj.com)

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### As Brexit Looms, Britons Seek Citizenship of Other EU Countries

Nina Adam in Frankfurt and Bertrand Benoit in Berlin

4-5 minutes

June 13, 2017 1:43 p.m. ET

The number of Britons applying for citizenship in several European Union countries has risen sharply since the U.K. voted to leave the bloc.

Figures released on Tuesday showed 2,865 British citizens had obtained German citizenship in 2016—up from 622 in 2015 and the highest number since Germany began collecting the data in 1950. The 2016 figure represented just under 3% of all British citizens living in Germany.

While the Federal Statistical Office, which published the data, doesn’t record applicants’ motivations, it said “a connection to Brexit appears obvious.”

Brexit-driven naturalizations could surge even higher this year, immigration officials say, since the already lengthy process of obtaining German nationality has become longer due to the flood of requests.

Other EU countries have also registered sharp rises in citizenship applications by Britons, though from a lower level. The Swedish Migration Agency said 1,600 Britons applied for Swedish citizenship last year, more than three times the level of 2015. So far this year, there have been 960 applications, already double the 2015 figure.

The Danish Immigration Ministry said it had received 489 applications in 2016 and 130 for January and February of this year alone, compared with just 77 for the whole of 2015.

And Ireland received 571 applications in 2016—almost eight times the 2015 level—and nearly 300 this year so far, according to the Department of Justice.

“We never thought it was necessary [to apply for German citizenship], because we felt European,” said Stephan Hale, a British businessman in Berlin. But after the June 2016 referendum on Brexit, he added, “all of a sudden this risk is appearing and you say ‘damn it, I still want to be part of this nice union.’”

A few weeks later, he and his family lodged their request and took their

citizenship tests—a German-language exam and a test of their knowledge of the country and its laws. He obtained German citizenship together with his British wife and three children last month.

The status of British expatriates scattered across the EU—and that of other EU citizens living in Britain—is one key issue to be negotiated in the two-year divorce process between the U.K. and the bloc, but many are taking no chances. A citizen of any member state is allowed to travel, live and work anywhere in the bloc.

Typically in Germany, applicants for citizenship must have lived in the country for a minimum of eight years, speak the language, be able to support themselves financially, and have no criminal convictions, among other requirements.

For decades, German law didn’t recognize multiple citizenships, forcing applicants to relinquish their former nationality upon becoming German. But reforms have watered down this requirement over the years and citizens from other EU countries can now retain their original passports, lowering the hurdle for many would-be applicants.

Some conservative allies of Chancellor Angela Merkel have called for a scrapping of these reforms and have sought a renewed ban on dual citizenship in most cases.

Germany, with its humming economy, low unemployment, generous welfare policies and stable politics, has experienced a surge in immigration in recent years. It has also accepted the majority of asylum seekers who have entered the EU in the recent past, pushing its migrant population to a record high.

Turkish migrants totaling about three million have traditionally topped the ranking of nationals seeking naturalization, but there was also a pickup in Greek applicants in 2012 after the Greek economy slumped into a deep crisis.

“We wanted to make sure that our children have the same opportunities as their friends in Germany,” said Mr. Hale, who was allowed to keep his British passport. Just over 100,000 British citizens live in Germany, according to the statistics agency.

## Bloomberg

### Bershidsky: Europe's Cherry-Pickers Run Into Trouble

@Bershidsky  
More stories by

Leonid Bershidsky

7-9 minutes

Europe

The European Union may not longer be so tolerant of blatant rule-breaking from the east.

by

14 juin 2017 à 06:53 UTC-4

A deal is a deal.

Photographer: ATTILA KISBENEDEK/AFP/Getty Images

In any union of entities with diverging interests, cherry-picking -- or, to use a beautiful German word, Rosinenpickerei -- is an issue.

The European Union is no exception, and right now, the bloc’s post-Communist members stand accused of cherry-picking from EU rules. It may cost them.

On Tuesday, the European Commission voted to start infringement proceedings against Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic not taking in refugees as the EU agreed in 2015. That is, in part, just a pretext: European countries without a Communist past suspect these nations of reneging on European liberal, democratic values, but the refugee issue provides a more convenient avenue of attack than trying to censure them for infringements on the rule of law.

The EU wants to force the three post-Communist countries to comply with a legally binding decision to

relocate 160,000 refugees. In accordance with the 2015 deal, quotas are set for individual countries and they must pledge to take a certain number of people every three months. Only the U.K., Denmark and Ireland have opt-outs.

Hungary has not taken in a single refugee under the scheme. Poland last made a pledge in December, 2015, under its previous liberal government, and it hasn’t taken anyone, either. The Czech Republic has resettled 12 refugees and hasn’t made any pledges for a year.

The three countries say the scheme shouldn’t be mandatory, though the quotas it sets for them are relatively low. Poland is supposed to relocate 6,182 people from Italy and Greece, the Czech Republic 2,691 people and Hungary 1,294 people.

Both Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and the Polish government, run by the nationalist Law & Justice Party, have openly militated against eastern Europe’s participation in any effort to help refugees, claiming security and economic concerns. Hungary and Slovakia (which makes regular pledges but takes in few refugees) have gone to the European Court of Justice to try to abolish the quotas. A preliminary ruling is expected in July, but the European Commission is so confident it will prevail that it decided not to wait and start the infringement procedure.

Formally, it can end in moderate financial penalties. But effectively, it’s a warning that the renegade nations could lose much more than that.

In Germany, Martin Schulz, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, was blunt about warning the east Europeans they can't have it both ways:

When it comes to agricultural policy, it's all 'Yes, please.' When it comes to subsidies, it's all 'Yes, please.' And when it comes to solidarity in refugee policy, it's 'No, thank you' -- that's not acceptable.

And it was poignant that the EU's Greek commissioner for migration and home affairs announced the decision with a reminder that Europe isn't just a piggy-bank for poorer countries. "Europe is also about sharing difficult moments and challenges as well as common dreams," said Dimitris Avramopoulos. The southern Europeans are right with the Germans on this, creating a united block against the eastern members.

As an opposition politician, Schulz can be bolder than Chancellor Angela Merkel when it comes to threatening the post-Communist countries. In late March, asked

whether they should be penalized for moving towards illiberal government, she explicitly refused to do so "for now" while saying they should comply with EU rules. But there is strong sentiment not just among the Social Democrats -- who are partners in Merkel's ruling coalition -- but also within the chancellor's own party that it might be time to apply financial pressure to the maverick countries.

Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are among the top five net recipients of EU funding, with a combined subsidy of 19.8 billion euro (\$22.2 billion) in 2015. Germany wants to see some of those funds linked to adherence to the rule of law, but getting a formal consensus on that, much less sanctions approved, would be difficult. The refugee matter is different. If the three countries continue to defy the EU, the European Commission will have a solid reason to propose sanctions. The European Council, which consists of national leaders, has some power over the budget, but its objections can be overruled by a

qualified majority of the European Parliament, where the East Europeans are outnumbered and solidarity is a battle cry.

So far the threats don't seem to be having much impact. Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo recently said her country can't take any refugees at all. Poland and Hungary are as committed as ever to rolling back broader liberties that the EU was founded to defend: Hungary has just passed a new law against foreign-funded non-governmental organizations that's similar to the one Russia has. Their position seemed unassailable just six months ago, with populist parties surging in Western Europe and the EU leadership, fearful of alienating any member countries. Now, however, the members of the Visegrad Group are overplaying their hand.

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The victories of Emmanuel Macron in France and Merkel's growing poll lead mean a two-speed EU is now a reality: The euro area is likely to move toward further integration, leaving the rest of Europe behind. European Parliament Antonio Tajani, an Italian, has proposed shifting the focus of the EU budget from agricultural subsidies, of which the East Europeans are major recipients, toward issues such as immigration and climate change, which are more important to the union's core members.

Eastern European Rosinenpickerei is looking increasingly like a bluff that's being called. The nationalist governments in the east can hardly retreat without losing face; but if they start losing EU funding, and if it appears the rest of Europe is leaving their countries behind, they may face major electoral problems.

**THE WALL  
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## INTERNATIONAL

### White House Hands Say Over Afghan Troop Levels to Military

Dion Nissenbaum and Gordon Lubold

4 minutes

June 13, 2017 9:35 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump has given the Pentagon unilateral authority to send thousands of new American troops to Afghanistan at its discretion, a U.S. official said Tuesday, clearing the way for the U.S. military to intensify its fight against the Taliban and Islamic State extremists in the region.

The decision to delegate control over troop decisions to the Pentagon, which is expected to be announced Wednesday, sets the stage for U.S. commanders to begin sending more forces to the country, after years of reductions made in

the hope Kabul could handle internal threats on its own.

Earlier Tuesday, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the U.S. is "not winning" the war in Afghanistan and that he was ready to take steps to address resurgent Taliban militants.

The White House decision to cede authority to Mr. Mattis is another reflection of Mr. Trump's push to give the military wide latitude around the world. The White House has already given the Pentagon more power to carry out strikes in Yemen and Somalia.

In April, Mr. Trump gave Mr. Mattis similar freedoms in Iraq and Syria when he lifted a troop cap set by his predecessor. But, unlike Iraq and Syria, the power is expected to have a bigger impact in Afghanistan, where the Pentagon could move expeditiously to send

thousands of troops back into a 16-year-old war that has claimed the lives of more than 2,300 members of the U.S. military since 2001.

The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan has been urging the Trump administration for months to send more troops to Afghanistan. But a decision to do so has met with resistance from some members of the administration, who are wary of being dragged back into a fight that could require more forces, firepower and money.

The U.S. once had 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, after then-President Barack Obama approved a military surge in 2009 at a time when the war against the Taliban appeared to be in danger of failure.

Before leaving office, Mr. Obama declared an end to major military operations and dramatically scaled back the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. There now are fewer

than 9,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, primarily to help advise and train Afghan forces, which have struggled to secure their country.

The Pentagon has been weighing plans to send between 3,000 and 5,000 troops to Afghanistan. But that decision could still take weeks, the U.S. official said.

Mr. Mattis, testifying Tuesday before the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he expected to complete a military strategy for Afghanistan by next month. That could mean a decision on troop numbers could occur simultaneously, or sometime afterward.

Islamic State militants have established a foothold in Afghanistan. Last month, a massive truck bomb killed more than 150 people in Kabul, the deadliest attack in the Afghan capital since the



Taliban were forced from power in 2001.

Over the weekend, three U.S. soldiers were

killed by an elite Afghan commando, raising new concerns about the reliability of the country's best trained fighters.

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Appeared in the June 14, 2017, print edition as 'Pentagon to Decide Afghan Force Levels.'

The Washington Post

## Trump gives Pentagon authority to set troop levels in Afghanistan (UNE)

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

4-5 minutes

President Trump has given the Pentagon new authority to decide the troop levels in Afghanistan, a U.S. official said Tuesday. The move could lead to a deployment of thousands more troops as commanders decide the way forward in the 15-year-old war.

The U.S. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk candidly, said the move is similar to the April decision that gave the Pentagon more authority to set troop levels in Iraq and Syria. The change, the Pentagon said, was so units could deploy at their proper strength to better maintain unit cohesion.

With the new authority, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis could authorize deployment of additional troops to Afghanistan, something commanders on the ground have been requesting for months. Gen. John Nicholson, the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and his direct superior, U.S. Central

Command head Gen. Joseph Votel, have both made cases for sending a "few thousand" more troops. If sent, the forces would help the fledgling Afghan military regain portions of the country that have fallen to the Taliban since U.S. forces ended their combat mission there in 2014.

The decision from the White House comes the same day Mattis told lawmakers on the Senate Armed Services Committee that "we are not winning" in Afghanistan. Mattis said the Taliban was surging throughout the country and that he planned to present lawmakers with a strategy for the United States' longest-running war by mid-July.

Incensed, the chairman of the committee, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), said Congress couldn't pass a budget without a strategy.

"We can't keep going like this," McCain said. "We know what the strategy was for the last eight years: Don't lose. That hasn't worked."

When asked what "winning looks like," Mattis replied that it would mean a long-term U.S. presence and Afghan security forces that

were capable enough to control violence at local levels.

"It's going to be an era of frequent skirmishing and it's going to require a change in our approach from the last several years if we're to get it to that position," Mattis said.

In the short term, Mattis and the chairman of the Joint Chief's of Staff, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., said additional U.S. troops sent to the country would provide more fire and air support to the Afghans. Airstrikes and artillery, they reasoned, would give the Afghan forces breathing room to build a more effective force.

In the first eight months of 2016, Afghan forces suffered 15,000 casualties, including more than 5,000 killed. Recruiting efforts have barely been able to keep the Afghan security forces from maintaining their current ranks, let alone growing to a size large and capable enough to project security in the country.

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The Taliban "had a good year last year," Mattis said.

With an air force that is in its infancy and corruption rampant in the ranks, some experts think it could take years for the Afghan forces to mature enough to lessen the U.S. role in the country.

There are about 8,400 U.S. troops in Afghanistan and about 5,000 additional NATO forces in the country. The U.S. contingent is split between conducting counterterrorism operations alongside Afghan commandos and providing assistance to the Afghan military.

More than 2,000 U.S. troops have died there since the war began in 2001. Thousands of Afghan civilians have been killed, as well. More than 3,000 Afghan civilians were killed in 2016, making it the deadliest year for civilians in the country since the U.N. mission there began tracking casualty numbers in 2009.

On Saturday, three U.S. soldiers were killed in an apparent insider attack in Afghanistan's restive east where U.S. Special Operations forces are battling the Islamic State's Afghan affiliate.

The Washington Post

## U.S.-backed forces battle ISIS around the edges of Raqqa's Old City

By Louisa Loveluck and Zakaria Zakaria

5-7 minutes

BEIRUT — As U.S.-backed forces press farther into Raqqa, the Islamic State's stronghold in Syria, human rights groups pleaded Tuesday for the safety of thousands of residents still trapped in the city.

The Syrian Democratic Forces, or SDF, have made swift progress since entering the city last week, despite a U.S. military assessment that the battle ultimately would be "long and difficult."

Residents reported heavy shelling Tuesday as the SDF fought around the edges of Raqqa's Old City. The area is fortified by 8th-century walls, a reminder that it was once the capital of the Abbasid caliphate.

Satellite images taken May 20 appear to show that the militants had erected relatively few defenses

on the road to the Old City. In an interview with Al Jazeera, an SDF fighter said his unit was attempting to clear the area of booby traps and Islamic State snipers.

*[Civilians killed in airstrikes on Islamic State-held town, monitors say]*

Human Rights Watch issued a plea to the U.S.-backed forces to do all they can to protect the tens of thousands of civilians believed to be trapped inside the city.

"The battle for Raqqa is not just about defeating ISIS but also about protecting and assisting the civilians who have suffered under ISIS rule for 3½ years," said Lama Fakh, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch, using another name for the Islamic State.

"Coalition members and local forces should demonstrate concretely that the lives and rights of the ... civilians in Raqqa are a parallel priority in the offensive," Fakh added.

Monitoring groups say coalition airstrikes have caused an unusually high rate of civilian casualties in recent months. The SDF also has killed civilians as it shelled Islamic State territory.

The Syrian Network for Human Rights monitoring group published photographs Tuesday of a young girl it identified as Naya Abo Haif, saying she had died in shelling the day before alongside her father and brother. In one image, she stood smiling shyly in a Minnie Mouse T-shirt. Another showed the child's body wrapped in a green shroud, her face half-masked by blood.

The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees is calling for help securing land routes so its staff can reach tens of thousands of displaced civilians across the surrounding province. According to the agency's figures, more than 100,000 people were on the move in the area during May alone, many of them displaced several times over.

Residents still inside Raqqa say food supplies are dwindling, while running water is available for only a few hours a day. One man described snipers across the city's rooftops, shooting at anyone who tries to flee.

In neighboring Iraq, the Islamic State is close to losing its onetime stronghold of Mosul, after a months-long battle led by U.S.-trained elite units of the Iraqi army.

The pressures on Raqqa and Mosul, cities the Islamic State once called capitals, have pushed senior leaders to the province of Deir al-Zour, a vast stretch of the oil-rich Syrian desert that sits between those areas. U.S.- and Iran-backed forces have been jostling for position ahead of an offensive to capture Deir al-Zour, hoping to further their own regional ambitions in the process.

For Iran, securing a land route across the Syria-Iraq border to its Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah, is a key motivation. The United States,

which lists Hezbollah as a terrorist organization because of its attacks on Israel, would oppose such a conduit.

For the United States, control of Deir al-Zour would be a boost to President Trump's calls to blunt Tehran's influence in the region. It also would provide U.S.-backed forces with an important bargaining

chip to use in the event of a final peace settlement for Syria.

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Although the United States has shown willingness to back its force of Arab fighters with defensive airstrikes, there are few signs that

the rebels are strong enough militarily to move northeast to Deir al-Zour.

This weekend, an assortment of Iranian-backed militias appeared to all but end U.S. hopes of reaching the Deir al-Zour town of Bukamal when they looped around a Syrian rebel force supported by U.S.

Special Operations forces in a move to cut its planned route.

A despondent U.S.-backed rebel fighter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters, said Tuesday that the situation was "not looking good."

Zakaria reported from Istanbul.



## The West Will Have to Go It Alone, Without the United States

Paul McLeary | 1 hour ago

6-7 minutes

The future of the West is in Europe's hands. Rather than affirming his commitment to Western values and institutions during his recent trip to Europe, President Donald Trump did the opposite, breaking with and alienating America's closest democratic allies. His performance was sufficiently stunning to prompt German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is not known for hyperbole, to pronounce that Europe is on its own. To cap it off, Trump announced soon after returning to Washington that the United States was withdrawing from the Paris climate agreement, setting his America against virtually the rest of the world.

Until these events, many observers (myself included) held out hope that Trump's dismissive attitude toward partnership — and Western partners in particular — was a passing phase, a product of bad advice from extremist advisers in the White House and the president's own intellectual and political immaturity. But such hope is now illusory. Trump has made it amply clear that "America First" really means "America Only," and that he fully intends to break away from the community of Western democracies forged after the close of World War II. Trump's acid rhetoric has become alarming reality.

On the horizon is not a world without the West, but a West without the United States. With Trump having

made clear that he is defecting from the Atlantic community, Merkel was right to proclaim that Europeans "must take our destiny into our own hands." The question before us is whether the EU, even as it confronts Brexit and its own populist challenges, will be up to the task of anchoring the Western world.

Europe has little choice but to look past Washington now that Trump has revealed his true colors. He confirmed that he is a businessman, not a statesman; for him, all relationships are transactional — even those with trusted allies. Germany is "very bad" because it spends less than two percent of GDP on defense and enjoys a sizable trade surplus, says Trump. Guilty as charged.

But the relationship between the United States and its European allies is about much more than who pays what. The magic of the Western world is that it left behind this zero-sum, each-for-its-own world. After too many wars, the Atlantic democracies realized that escaping bloodshed meant fashioning an international community that rested on trust, consensual rules, multilateral institutions, and open trade. As a matter of course, members of this community sacrificed short-term gain in the service of long-term solidarity. The result has been an unprecedented era of peace and prosperity.

Trump is oblivious, if not hostile, to this history. He treats Germany and other democratic allies as apartment buildings.

Trump is oblivious, if not hostile, to this history. He treats Germany and other democratic allies as

apartment buildings. If they pay their rent on time, they are in good standing. If not, watch out.

Confronted with this American president, it is up to the EU to safeguard Western values and institutions until the United States comes back to its senses. Neither Germany nor the EU as a whole are currently ready to play this role. But the Trump presidency may be enough of a shock to galvanize Europe to step up.

The EU can best ready itself to fill the leadership gap resulting from "America First" by pursuing the following measures.

First, the EU needs a more balanced decision-making structure. Germany has become too influential for its own good, fostering resentment among its EU partners. Even though Berlin will remain the EU's strongest voice, the union's inner circle needs widening and more sway. France's political comeback under Emmanuel Macron will certainly help, but especially in light of Brexit and the political mess that is the United Kingdom, Germany needs to make a habit of building consensus with Italy, Spain, and select smaller member states. If the EU is to lead the West, it needs buy-in from all its members.

Second, despite the continuing anti-EU sentiment on the populist Left and Right, the EU needs to deepen collective governance over economic issues and foreign and defense policy. The EU will not be able to lead effectively without more centralized and capable institutions. The emerging rift with the United States may provide the jolt needed to convince Europeans to further pool their sovereignty.

Third, in order to offset a U.S. retreat from multilateralism, the EU should seek to fashion more effective partnerships with other countries, including non-democracies. Whether wittingly or not, Trump is ceding U.S. influence and forcing Europe to look elsewhere to build coalitions of the willing. It speaks volumes that, over the next few years, the EU may find China a better partner than the United States when it comes to fighting climate change and liberalizing trade.

Finally, the EU should remain Atlanticist and continue to treat the United States as its wanted partner of choice — even as the transatlantic relationship becomes more transactional. After all, the Atlantic community has thrived for decades because of common interests, not just shared values and sentiments. Even if Trump is motivated primarily by short-term calculation of costs and benefits, working with Europe will more often than not look like a good deal. In this respect, Merkel should increase German defense spending and take steps to stimulate domestic demand, not only wooing Trump but also boosting much-needed growth and jobs in the Eurozone.

Europeans should also keep in mind that the Trump era is thankfully time-limited. He is woefully out of step with the political mainstream, likely making his presidency an aberration, not an indicator of things to come.

America will be back. But in the meantime, the EU will have to hold down the Western fort.



## Kremlin calls Alexei Navalny protest on Russia Day a provocation

<https://www.facebook.com/david.filipov>

6-7 minutes

MOSCOW — The Kremlin on Tuesday dismissed criticism of the tough police response

to demonstrations in Moscow and St. Petersburg a day earlier, brushing off suggestions that the protest movement led by anti-corruption crusader Alexei Navalny posed a political threat.

Navalny, who has announced his candidacy for Russia's 2018 presidential election, was jailed for

30 days Monday after calling on his followers to rally in a central Moscow street instead of an approved protest venue outside the city center. Police arrested more than 800 demonstrators after they disrupted a street fair staged to celebrate the Russia Day holiday, according to the nongovernmental police watchdog OVD-Info.

Hundreds more were detained at a rally in St. Petersburg also held without official permission.

Thousands of people turned out in more than 180 cities across Russia, according to Navalny's campaign headquarters, which would make it the most widespread protest in the

country since Vladimir Putin returned to the presidency in 2012.

*[Thousands rally against corruption in protests across Russia]*

But Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, played down the notion of any risk to the government.

Protesters in Vladivostok, Russia, rallied against corruption on June 12, which is also Russia Day, a national holiday there. Protesters turn out in Vladivostok, Russia to rally against corruption. (korotylya/twitter)

(korotylya/twitter)

"Whenever such events are held according to agreed-upon rules, as prescribed by law, they do not pose a danger to anyone," he said in remarks carried by the Interfax news agency. "Some are attended by more people and some are by less, but this is a normal process of people expressing their opinions as citizens."

The Interfax report did not include a reference to Navalny but quoted Peskov as condemning the "group of provocateurs" who interrupted the

celebration of the national holiday.

Peskov also dismissed a sharply worded statement read by White House press secretary Sean Spicer on Monday night, declaring that "detaining peaceful protesters, human rights observers and journalists is an affront to core democratic values."

Peskov countered that authorized rallies went off peacefully in dozens of Russian cities Monday and that those "who staged provocations" had been dealt with lawfully.

Pollsters say that Putin, who has enjoyed an approval rating above 80 percent for more than three years, is likely to win if he runs for a new six-year term in March, as expected. Even though he presides largely unchecked over a government and legislature led by his handpicked loyalists, most Russians do not blame the president for their problems, according to surveys conducted by the country's independent pollster, the Levada Center.

*[Vladimir Putin: Russia's grand inquisitor and fixer-in-chief]*

But many do count on Putin to solve their problems. Two days before his annual televised "direct line" with citizens, 1.3 million Russians had submitted questions, the official Tass news agency reported Tuesday.

The telethon's official website displayed some of the appeals, which beseeched Putin to address the poor state of roads, housing, construction projects, the mortgage market, education and the accountability of officials. One young man asked why so many young Russians want to emigrate. Several asked Putin to explain why the rest of the world fears Russia.

Navalny, meanwhile, promises Russians a rule-of-law state governed by honest people, contrasting that with his allegations of corruption in Putin's government. That message has yielded little support, with polls indicating that less than 10 percent of voters would choose Navalny.

And there is no guarantee Navalny will be allowed to run: He can be disqualified, thanks to a conviction in a fraud case he says was politically motivated.

National News Alerts

Major national and political news as it breaks.

*[Who is Alexei Navalny?]*

Late Monday, Navalny posted a video from the courtroom where he was sentenced. He thanked his supporters and told them, "I'm proud to be part of the movement."

Meanwhile, pro-Kremlin media blasted Navalny's decision to move his rally to central Tverskaya Street as a cynical ploy to capitalize on holiday events in the city, including a huge concert in Red Square.

"Why did the opposition do this? Only to provide pictures for Western television companies so that they could say, 'In Moscow, President Putin has opponents!'" stated a commentary in the official government newspaper, Rossiyskaya Gazeta. "The opposition, which represents one-thousandth of the population of Muscovites, tried to turn all of Tverskaya Street into a film studio and pass off the people celebrating Russia Day as their supporters."



## Editorial : How to Protest in Russia

The Editorial Board

4 minutes

Erik Carter

Let's get this out front: Aleksei Navalny, who called the protests against corruption held across Russia on Monday and was himself once again arrested, will not defeat Vladimir Putin for the Russian presidency in March 2018. Mr. Putin has a firm grip on power, continues to enjoy enormous popularity among Russians and controls Russian television. So why do these demonstrations — this one was the second in four months — arouse worldwide interest?

One reason is that they offer evidence that Mr. Putin and his cohorts, despite all their power, have been unable to cow Russians into silence. Though a large majority cherish the

stability Mr. Putin has brought or accept his claims that Russia's problems are the work of a devious West, Mr. Navalny and other critics of the government have succeeded in mobilizing the internet and social media to maintain a lively opposition in major cities. The thousands of demonstrators who were out in the streets on Monday may be only a small fraction of the population, but many were young and all went out knowing that there was a high risk of arrest. In fact, more than 700 were detained in Moscow and 300 in St. Petersburg.

Mr. Navalny has shown himself a master of mobilization. Though he has been criticized by some liberals for his history of nationalist views, he has focused his indignation in his popular blogs and calls for protests on what is arguably the most vulnerable attribute of the ruling elite: its corruption. Though somewhat tolerated in better times, the wealth accumulated by Russia's

rulers, which Mr. Navalny has documented, grates on people feeling the economy turn increasingly sour.

Mr. Navalny's latest sally was a remarkable video cataloging the purported riches of Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev, including estates, yachts and a European vineyard. Among the amenities on one of Mr. Medvedev's properties was a special shelter for ducks, which has provided demonstrators with a popular prop: large yellow toy ducks.

Mr. Navalny called the protests for Russia Day, a national holiday, when Mr. Putin would be celebrating "political stability, unity of goals and the consolidation of the country." And instead of holding the demonstration at an authorized location outside Moscow's center, he shifted it at the last moment to the central Tverskaya Street, which had been cordoned off for re-enactments of major Russian

historic events. That ensured a police crackdown on the protesters — many of whom carried Russian flags while chanting "Russia without Putin" to underscore that they are the true patriots — in the midst of holiday crowds and people in historical costumes. Mr. Navalny himself was arrested leaving his home and quickly sentenced to 30 days in jail.

State television predictably took no notice of the protests, focusing instead on Mr. Putin presiding over a Russia Day award ceremony. But pretending the protests didn't happen won't work forever.

They strike at a weakness in Mr. Putin's system of rule — pervasive corruption and lack of accountability — that is painfully familiar to most Russians in every corner of the land, and that Mr. Putin cannot facilely dismiss as the work of a hostile West.



## Trump White House Stays Quiet as Russia Flouts North Korea Sanctions

Paul McLeary | 1 hour ago

9-12 minutes

Trump administration officials and lawmakers are increasingly

concerned that Russia is stepping up trade with North Korea in defiance of international sanctions, jeopardizing a U.S. effort to pressure Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile programs.

The White House, however, has yet to call out Russia publicly for its dealings with North Korea.

Russia is filling a gap left after China began to scale back some trade with North Korea in response

to pressure from the Donald Trump administration, and has already replaced China as the top supplier of jet fuel for North Korea. Moscow also signed an agreement in March with Pyongyang to import more North Korean workers and opened



a ferry line last month out of Vladivostok that carries passengers and cargo to the deeply isolated regime.

"It's something we need to watch closely if we're serious about turning the screws economically on North Korea," one administration official told Foreign Policy.

The White House is concerned about Russia helping the North gain access to jet fuel and cash, but China remains North Korea's crucial lifeline. "It will take some doing for the Russians to back-fill all of what China supplies," the official added.

Russian support for North Korea presents a dilemma for a White House that has sought to isolate Kim Jong Un's regime and improve relations with Moscow. The Russian moves undercut attempts to inflict economic punishment on North Korea for its nuclear program and missile development, and present yet another obstacle to closer ties between Washington and Moscow.

While the Trump administration has not publicly challenged Russia's trade with North Korea, senior officials have hinted at the issue. Speaking to reporters last month, U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley praised China for enforcing the sanctions regime but noted that "other countries are trying to fill that void."

"If you are a country that is supplying or supporting North Korea, we will call you out on it," Haley said. So far, however, the White House has not publicly rebuked Moscow.

The magnitude of Russian support to North Korea remains difficult to quantify, but South Korean experts have in recent months observed a significant uptick in trade between the two nations, said Go Myong-hyun, a research fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, a Seoul-based think tank.

"If China is tightening up border trade then there's an incentive to go to the Russian side and procure what they need," Go said.

Russia has expanded its supplies of gasoline to the North, Go said, while cautioning that Moscow's support is unlikely to make up for what Beijing supplies. Trade between China and North Korea continues to dwarf the economic relationship between North Korea and Russia. China accounts for 90 percent of North Korea's foreign trade, worth roughly \$6.1 billion.

Russia's trade with Pyongyang comes to just \$84 million.

North Korea's border with China and Russia is marked by significant smuggling fueled by official corruption, Go said, making it difficult to accurately estimate trade volumes and rendering official statistics unreliable.

As Pyongyang has carried out a bevy of missile tests and threatened to strike American cities and military bases, the Trump White House has described the danger posed by North Korea's nuclear arsenal as its top foreign-policy priority. The administration has pinned its hopes on persuading China to use its leverage to force Pyongyang to drop its pursuit of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

In Congress, Moscow's trade with Pyongyang has cast doubt on the administration's repeated vows to apply "maximum pressure" on the North Korean regime. Lawmakers are pressing the administration for more information about Russia's activity in North Korea and urging more action to counter the illicit trade.

Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.), the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told Foreign Policy the Trump administration has "been strangely silent on Russia's increasing support for Pyongyang," citing reports that "Russia is picking up the slack for North Korea's economy in such areas as fuel oil, providing material directly of value to the North's nuclear and missile programs, and making sure that Pyongyang has diplomatic cover at the United Nations."

"If Moscow becomes more active on the Korean Peninsula it is hard to see how that advances our interests," Cardin said. "President Trump must be clear about Russia. Russia is not our friend or partner."

At the U.N. Security Council, Moscow has vehemently opposed sanctions against North Korea that could undercut Russian businesses, arguing for more narrowly focused measures and pushing for exceptions for Russian firms, diplomats said.

"We've seen Russia take increasingly shrill positions on North Korea that frequently go beyond where the Chinese are," said a U.N. diplomat who spoke condition of anonymity.

"Russia has taken a very hard line. If they are going to lose one ruble in trade with North Korea, more likely than not they are going to be opposing measures that would affect their trade with the North," the diplomat said.

In discussions on a U.N. sanctions resolution last year, Moscow's objections delayed approval of the measure until December, and Russian diplomats successfully carved out a provision that allows Russian coal ships to transit through the North Korean port of Rason.

Russia's stance on North Korea has further complicated the Trump administration's plans for possible diplomatic overtures to Russia. Trump entered the White House speaking of a possible rapprochement with Russia, and senior administration officials floated the possibility that the United States would lift sanctions imposed on Moscow following its seizure of Crimea and fueling a civil war in Ukraine's east.

But during the opening months of the Trump administration, the attempt to ease tensions has hit repeated roadblocks, including increasing controversy over whether Trump aides conspired with Kremlin operatives to meddle in the 2016 election. Relations took another hit when Trump authorized a missile attack on a Syrian airbase in retaliation for the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons, a move that infuriated the Russian government.

In recent weeks, National Security Council officials have examined Russian support to North Korea and consider it one of several obstacles to lifting sanctions on Moscow, said another senior administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, Washington in recent weeks targeted Russian firms doing business with North Korea. This month, the Treasury Department slapped sanctions on Ardis-Bearings LLC and its director, Igor Aleksandrovich Michurin, for its commercial dealings with a North Korean trading company alleged to be involved in Pyongyang's missile programs and the development of weapons of mass destruction.

The Treasury Department also sanctioned the Independent Petroleum Company, a Russian firm alleged to have supplied more than \$1 million in petroleum products to North Korea. In announcing the move, the Treasury Department said the company "may have been involved in circumventing North Korean sanctions."

Although the sanctions measures will have a limited effect, "those designations should be seen as a warning," said Joshua Stanton, an expert on sanctions who writes the blog One Free Korea.

While Russia exports jet fuel, trucks, and other goods to North Korea, it imports tens of thousands of North Korean workers for the timber and construction industries. Russia hosts an estimated 40,000 North Korean workers, and Moscow recently signed an agreement with Pyongyang to import additional North Korean workers. The arrangement provides a stream of cash for the Kim regime, as most of the wages for the workers are shipped straight to the North Korean state.

North Korea has used business ties in China to circumvent the punishing sanctions levied by world powers, as detailed in a report by the nonprofit research group C4ADS released Monday. Analysts who track the North Korean economy fear that as China cracks down on such firms, Pyongyang will try to replicate that relationship with Russian firms.

"North Korea understands that they are vulnerable by being completely reliant on China," said Anthony Ruggiero, a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. "You could see a scenario where North Korea wants to diversify."

And given tensions between Russia and the United States, Moscow's support of Pyongyang may be used as a point of leverage against its American foes. But Ruggiero cautioned that North Korea may struggle to use Russian banks to gain access to the global financial system and replicate its use of Chinese firms to do so. U.S. sanctions on Russia have generally led Western banks to more closely scrutinize Russian transactions.

Russia has a long history of friendly relations with North Korea dating back to the early years of the Cold War. Maintaining economic ties with North Korea offers Moscow a way of staying relevant on the international stage and keeping both China and the United States off balance, experts said.

"It's enough to show that Russia is a player out there and that China is not a monopoly power in the Far East," said William Courtney of the RAND Corporation think tank, who crafted policy on Russia during his career in the State Department.

Moscow also has concluded that if China is not willing to sever all its trade with North Korea, then Russia won't either, according to Courtney. "Russia is not going to squander all of its leverage with North Korea if China does not cut them off," he said.

## University of Virginia student Otto Warmbier, said to be in a coma, released from North Korea (UNE)

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

10-12 minutes

CINCINNATI — A plane carrying University of Virginia student Otto Warmbier, who had been detained in North Korea for 17 months and was in a coma for most of it, touched down in Cincinnati on Tuesday night.

The 22-year-old's return marks an end to the ordeal that his family has been through, not knowing what had happened to Warmbier since he was sentenced to 15 years in prison with hard labor in March of last year. But the fact that he had been kept, comatose, in North Korea for more than a year could worsen the already tense relationship between Pyongyang and Washington.

Friends and well-wishers gathered outside Cincinnati's Lunken Airport Terminal ahead of the plane's arrival at 10:20 p.m. local time, and they cheered when the plane landed.

Otto's parents, Fred and Cindy, boarded the plane and came out again a few minutes later. Then medical personnel carried Otto Warmbier, who had a shaved head and a tube in his nose, off the plane and onto a stretcher. He was then placed in an ambulance and taken to University of Cincinnati Medical Center.

Locals were waiting outside the airport fence, holding signs that read "WELCOME HOME OTTO" and "PRAYERS FOR OTTO."

Charlotte and David Simons, who said they have been friends of the family for more than 30 years, came to watch his flight come in, too. "We're just here to support Cindy and Fred and the family," Charlotte Simons said.

*[What we know about Warmbier's medical condition]*

She was feeling "sick to my stomach for them," she said, thinking of how their son should have been graduating from college this spring.

David Simons was marveling that another country could treat an American like this. "I can only feel for what the family is going through," he said, shaking his head.

After a senior State Department official flew to Pyongyang to demand Warmbier's release on

humanitarian grounds, he was flown out in a medical evacuation.

"We get to see our son Otto tonight," Fred Warmbier said in an interview Tuesday morning after his son was evacuated. "We'll be relieved to have him home and are looking forward to surrounding him with people who love him."

Warmbier's parents hadn't heard from or seen him since he was sentenced in March 2016 for attempting to steal a propaganda poster at the end of a five-day tour of North Korea.

But amid the relief, there were also new questions about what happened to him: How did a healthy young man fall into such a deep coma? The North Korean government told his parents that food poisoning was to blame. And how does the Trump administration respond?

Three other American citizens are being detained in North Korea, at a time when Kim Jong Un has been firing missiles and threatening to strike the United States. President Trump has been vowing to exert "maximum pressure" on North Korea to make it abandon its nuclear weapons program but has also dangled the prospect of talks with Kim, whom he called a "smart cookie."

Warmbier was flown out of North Korea on the same day that Dennis Rodman, the controversial former basketball star, arrived for his fifth visit to Pyongyang.

Officials involved in securing Warmbier's release told The Washington Post that it had nothing to do with Rodman's trip to Pyongyang, calling it a "bizarre coincidence" that might have been a deliberate ploy from North Korea to distract from Warmbier's condition.

"Dennis Rodman had nothing to do with the release of Mr. Warmbier," said Heather Nauert, a State Department spokeswoman, adding that the government was "thankful" that he would soon be home in his parents' arms.

She also reiterated the State Department's travel advice against going to North Korea, with which the United States has no diplomatic relations.

"Let me reiterate this: We strongly, strongly suggest that Americans do not go to North Korea," Nauert said.

*[North Korea is still holding 3 other Americans as prisoners]*

At the time of his arrest, Warmbier had been on an organized New Year's tour in North Korea, a five-day stopover on his way to Hong Kong for a study-abroad trip.

But on his final night in Pyongyang — New Year's Eve — he apparently went to a staff-only floor of his hotel and attempted to take down a large propaganda sign lauding the regime. He was charged with "hostile acts against the state."

Surrounded by North Korean guards, Warmbier delivered a highly scripted "confession" that appeared to have been written for him, and after an hour-long sham trial in March 2016, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison with hard labor.

He had not been seen in public since, and Swedish diplomats, representing U.S. interests, had been denied consular access to him. Officials involved in negotiations to free Warmbier and another American citizen being detained were told they were being treated as prisoners of war.

During a secret meeting in Oslo last month with Joseph Yun, the State Department's special representative for North Korea, high-level North Korean officials agreed that Swedish diplomats in Pyongyang would be allowed to visit the four Americans imprisoned by the North.

But in Pyongyang, the Swedes were allowed to see only one detainee, and it wasn't Warmbier.

As the Americans continued to push for the Swedish diplomats to see all four, North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations urgently requested a meeting with Yun in New York, according to Trump administration officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity about the still-secret arrangements. There, North Korean officials told Yun about Warmbier's condition.

He informed Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who consulted with the president, the officials said.

Yun was instructed to prepare to travel to Pyongyang with the intention of bringing Warmbier back to the United States. A medical team and aircraft were organized, and North Korea was informed that a delegation would travel there.

"It wasn't a situation where they asked," one official said of the U.S. representatives. The North Koreans "were informed that the airplane would land, American and medical officials would get out."

*[Worried about North Korea? Spare a thought for Otto Warmbier's family.]*

Yun was under orders, which the official said came directly from Trump, to demand to see Warmbier immediately, and, "if he was in bad shape," to demand his immediate release and evacuation on the plane's return flight to the United States.

Yun arrived in Pyongyang early Monday with two American physicians. They were immediately taken to Warmbier. Yun insisted on Warmbier's immediate release on humanitarian grounds, officials said, and the North Koreans agreed.

Tillerson called Trump at 8:35 a.m. Tuesday to inform him that Warmbier was on an airplane en route to the United States, an official said. The last instruction the president left Tillerson was: "Take care of Otto," the official said.

The Warmbier family said they were informed that North Korean officials had told American envoys that their son became ill with botulism soon after his show trial.

The North Korean account, the family said, claimed that Warmbier then fell into a coma after being given a sleeping pill. The Warmbiers said they were told their son has remained in a coma since then.

There was no immediate confirmation from U.S. officials of North Korea's description of his illness — including whether he was stricken with botulism, a potentially fatal disease that is caused by a toxin but is not usually associated with loss of consciousness. U.S. officials in touch with Yun and medical personnel declined to say whether Warmbier remains in a coma or to make any comment on his current medical condition.

North Korean representatives at the United Nations did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

North Korea has woefully inadequate medical care, and it is not clear how North Korean doctors had been caring for Warmbier for more than a year in an unconscious state.

*[North Korea sentences U-Va. student to 15 years of hard labor in prison]*

Warmbier was to have graduated last month had he not been detained.

"While the entire University of Virginia community is relieved to learn of Otto's release from North Korea, we are deeply concerned and saddened to learn from his family that he is in a coma," U-Va. President Teresa A. Sullivan said in a statement Tuesday.

Annabella Vagonis, a family friend from Reston, Va., whose daughter was close with Warmbier at U-Va., said: "We were at turns incredulous, shocked, surprised, joyful and sad, all kind of emotions within a nanosecond of each other when we got the news this morning.

"We are so incredibly joyful that he is finally coming home. We are concerned about his overall health and not knowing the details of his

being in a coma. We're hopeful that with the excellent medical care that he'll receive that we'll receive some good news once they examine him."

Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) called Warmbier's arrest and trial "unnecessary and appalling," while lawmakers from Virginia also denounced North Korea's actions.

The three other Americans detained by North Korea remain there.

National News Alerts

Major national and political news as it breaks.

A former Virginia resident and naturalized American citizen, Kim Dong-chul, was arrested shortly after Warmbier on accusations of

espionage and was sentenced to 10 years with hard labor.

In April and May, North Korea detained two other Korean Americans, both of them affiliated with the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology, a private institution run by Korean American Christians.

Previous detainees have been released after visits from high-profile Americans, including former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. But efforts to persuade North Korea to release the men now held had not been successful until Warmbier's release Tuesday.

Fifield reported from Tokyo. Karen DeYoung, David Nakamura and

Jenna Portnoy in Washington contributed to this report.

**Read more**

Dennis Rodman is back in North Korea. Did Trump send him?

North Korea's trading partners are linked, and that could make them vulnerable

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**The  
New York  
Times**

## Friedman : Solving the Korea Crisis by Teaching a Horse to Sing

Thomas L.  
Friedman

5-7 minutes

In fact, one of the most popular housing markets for young Koreans today is Musan, located just south of the DMZ, the demilitarized zone separating the South from the North. It's an easy commute to Seoul, and young people have gamed out that if the North launched rockets or artillery shells, they would likely go over their heads because they are so close to the border! Human beings! God love 'em. Their ability to adapt never ceases to amaze me.

I interviewed a group of South Korean college students at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, and here's what some said: "The fear has been diluted — as time goes by you just get used to it." "We don't really believe that North Korea can harm us or launch war, because we think we are stronger than them economically and militarily." "We heard the G.D.P. gap between us and North Korea is 20 times, and we don't want to pay more taxes to fix them up." "When I went to the U.S. I freaked out [over] why people there care more about North Korea than me."

After a couple of days of such discussions, I realized that America is now the odd man out in this drama. Why? Because China and South Korea have one thing in common: The thing they fear most is not a North

Korean nuclear missile blowing them up. *It's North Korea either blowing itself up — economically collapsing under the weight of sanctions — or being blown up by America.*

That would spill refugees and fissile material into China and South Korea, presenting both with a huge cleanup bill and China with a possible united Korea with a nuclear weapon next door.

The U.S. — by contrast — now fears North Korea *blowing us up*, or at least Los Angeles. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Washington fears North Korea more than ever, while China and South Korea fear a unilateral U.S. strike on North Korea more than ever.

Or, as Rob Litwak, the Wilson Center Korea arms control expert, described it: Seoul's fear that Donald Trump could draw it into a catastrophic conflict on the Korean Peninsula "brings to mind Charles de Gaulle's admonition during the Cuban missile crisis that being a U.S. ally ran the risk of 'annihilation without representation.'"

And that's why the U.S. has dispatched to South Korea Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) antimissile batteries. But the new South Korean president is delaying their full deployment, fearing it will provoke the North or alienate China — which doesn't like a U.S. antimissile system near its border that can also cover its airspace; China has imposed a partial economic boycott on Seoul to make that clear.

Chaibong Hahm, president of the Asan Institute, explained, "When North Korea started to develop weapons of mass destruction that threatened us, the U.S. tried to assure us and Japan that 'we will protect you.'" Hahm said: "And the big question then was: 'Is the U.S. deterrence real? Will it really protect us?'"

But when North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un also started threatening the U.S. by building a long-range nuclear missile, the story shifted for America. "It was not about reassuring us anymore but its own people," added Hahm, "which means that Washington does not have to consult us. It can do what it needs to do." And Trump's America-first rhetoric only amplifies the worry here that he will. Some people "are more scared of [Trump] than Kim Jong-un," concluded Hahm. "Kim Jong-un they understand."

North Korea gets 95 percent of its oil from China. Beijing could shut down the North's economy overnight by shutting off that oil. But it hasn't. It has suspended purchases of North Korean coal, hurting Pyongyang financially, but not enough to stop missile testing. For now, it appears that China will do just enough to keep Trump at bay — by keeping North Korea from putting the last screws on a nuclear missile that can hit the U.S. — but never enough to collapse the regime or definitively end its nuclear program.

What about diplomacy? For now, North Korea shows no willingness to trade its nuclear arsenal for

guarantees that the U.S. will not pursue regime change, and Trump is not going to give such guarantees without total denuclearization.

In sum, China and South Korea don't dare starve the North for fear it could collapse. They don't dare shoot it for fear it could shoot back. They and the Americans don't dare negotiate with Kim for fear that they will end up blessing his nukes — and because they don't trust him to keep any deal. And they don't dare ignore him, because he keeps getting stronger.

So we all wait — *for something*.

Indeed, the whole situation reminds me of the medieval fable of the criminal hauled before the king to plead for his life and successfully does so by promising that if the king spared his life for a year he could teach the king's favorite horse to sing.

When the criminal got back to his cell, his cellmate scoffed at him: You could never teach the king's horse to sing if you had a lifetime. And the man said: "No matter. I have a year now that I didn't have before. And a lot of things can happen in a year. The king might die. The horse might die. I might die. And, who knows? Maybe the horse will sing."

And that is our North Korea policy. Waiting for *something* to solve this insoluble problem. Waiting for a horse to sing.

**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL**

## Editorial : Otto Warmbier's Homecoming

June 13, 2017  
7:12 p.m. ET 69 COMMENTS

2-3 minutes

University of Virginia student Otto Warmbier visited North Korea over

New Year's in 2015 as a tourist, and on Tuesday the 22-year-old

returned home to the U.S.—in a coma.



Mr. Warmbier traveled to North Korea for a five-day tourist trip, despite State Department warnings and the North's long record of taking Americans hostage. As he was preparing to leave with his fellow travelers in January 2016, he was detained and accused of stealing a propaganda poster from his hotel. The next month he gave a tearful public confession, and that March he was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor for a "hostile act" against the state.

Mr. Warmbier's parents told the Associated Press Tuesday that they recently learned their son has been in a coma since March 2016, or shortly after his show trial. They say North Koreans told U.S. authorities that their son contracted botulism and never awoke after he was given a sleeping pill. "We want the world to know how we and our son have been brutalized and terrorized by the pariah regime," Fred and Cindy Warmbier said in their statement.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson declined to comment on Mr. Warmbier's condition "out of respect for the privacy" of the family. But a U.S. official told the New York Times that the U.S. had recently obtained intelligence indicating the young man had been repeatedly beaten in custody. A United Nations commission documented in 2014 that "the use of torture is an established feature of the interrogation process" in North Korea.

Otto Warmbier's fate underscores the grotesque nature of former basketball player Dennis Rodman's latest visit this week with his pal Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang. Kim still holds three other American hostages, and any American who visits is tempting torture and death.

Appeared in the June 14, 2017, print edition.

The  
Washington  
Post

## Editorial : North Korea's outrageous mistreatment of a U.S. student must not go unpunished

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

3-4 minutes

By Editorial Board

The Post's View

Opinion

**Opinion** A column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages).

June 13 at 7:51 PM

OTTO WARMBIER was a 21-year-old University of Virginia economics major with a bright future when he signed on for a short tourist trip to North Korea in December 2015. Not until Tuesday was he finally flown home to Cincinnati, gravely ill and reportedly in a coma. He was arrested, tried on spurious charges and evidently subjected to horrendous mistreatment by North Korean authorities. This was outrageous behavior even by the

standards of one of the world's most vicious and isolated regimes. It should not go unpunished.

By his account, delivered at a scripted "news conference" weeks after his arrest, Mr. Warmbier attempted a foolish but harmless prank: trying (unsuccessfully) to pilfer a propaganda poster from the hotel where he was staying. For this he was sentenced to 15 years hard labor on a charge of "hostile acts against the state" following a one-hour trial in March 2016. He had not been seen in public since then, and Swedish diplomats representing the United States in Pyongyang were denied access to him.

Now it appears that Mr. Warmbier may have been gravely ill for much or all of that time. His parents told The Post that North Korean representatives suddenly informed U.S. officials last week that the student was in a coma. He was said to have lost consciousness after contracting botulism and taking a

sleeping pill — an account that strains credibility.

The Daily 202 newsletter

PowerPost's must-read morning briefing for decision-makers.

To its credit, the Trump administration arranged for Mr. Warmbier's evacuation. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson refused to provide details, though one official told The Post that the release had nothing to do with the latest bizarre excursion to Pyongyang by former NBA player (and Trump reality-show contestant) Dennis Rodman. Not until he can be examined by medical specialists in the United States will it be clear what condition Mr. Warmbier is in and whether it can be remedied. As it is, his family has "had to endure more than any family should have to bear," as Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) put it.

The harm done to an innocent student is the result of North Korea's odious practice of seizing

Americans to use as political pawns. Three other U.S. citizens are being held by the regime, including two who were teaching at a private school and one who worked in a special economic zone. President Trump should make their release a priority.

The United States should also move quickly to step up sanctions on the regime of Kim Jong Un, which has been racing to develop missiles that can reach the United States with a nuclear warhead. A new report by the research group C4ADS shows that by cracking down on a relatively small number of interlinked Chinese companies and individuals, the pressure on Pyongyang could be greatly increased. According to the Wall Street Journal, the Trump administration has asked China to act against some 10 entities; if Beijing does not respond promptly, the United States should act unilaterally.

The  
Washington  
Post

## Nakamura and DeYoung : Release of American raises the prospect of broader direct talks with North Korea

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

8-10 minutes

Not long after President Trump declared last month that he would be "honored" to meet North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un amid mounting nuclear tensions, a secret encounter took place in Oslo between officials from the two countries.

Joseph Yun, the U.S. special representative to North Korea, had persuaded his boss, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, to bless the rare, face-to-face dialogue with senior North Korean Foreign Ministry officials after assuring him that the agenda would focus on the status of four American citizens

imprisoned by the Kim regime, according to people familiar with the process.

Yun scored a breakthrough when the North Korean delegation agreed to allow Swedish diplomats in Pyongyang, who handle U.S. affairs there, to visit the American prisoners, including 22-year-old University of Virginia student Otto Warmbier.

Ultimately, North Korea allowed only one visit, with a different American held prisoner. As the administration continued to push, Pyongyang urgently requested to see Yun at the United Nations in New York. A June 6 meeting led a week later to Warmbier's sudden release Tuesday after 17 months of captivity. He was medically

evacuated in a coma; the other three Americans remain in captivity.

Whether the back-channel diplomacy will lead to broader talks with North Korea may depend on Warmbier's condition, and White House officials declined to comment on the geopolitical implications of his case.

After being detained for 17 months in North Korea, University of Virginia student Otto Warmbier arrived home in Cincinnati on June 13. He has been in a coma for more than a year. After being detained for 17 months in North Korea, University of Virginia student Otto Warmbier is due to arrive home in Cincinnati (Anna Fifield/The Washington Post)

(Anna Fifield/The Washington Post)

But the first high-level encounters between the two governments could be significant, at a moment when the countries have been trading threats and readying military forces for a possible confrontation.

*[Three other Americans remain imprisoned in North Korea]*

Even as North Korea has been escalating its ballistic missile launches and warning of a new nuclear test, Kim continued the "Track 2" dialogue in which former U.S. officials and nuclear experts meet regularly with North Korean counterparts. The dialogue has been regularly scheduled, but not official — until Oslo.

North Korea sent high-level Foreign Ministry officials to Oslo specifically to meet with Yun.

A State Department spokeswoman suggested that it was too soon to predict a deepening of engagement with Pyongyang.

"This is all so fresh," the spokeswoman, Heather Nauert, told reporters in Washington. "We were just able to get the release of Mr. Warmbier. We are grateful and thankful for that. He is on his way home. I think it's just too soon to say what that dialogue is going to look like."

U.S. diplomats, members of Congress and North Korea experts also were hesitant to declare a new chapter in bilateral relations. Several suggested that Kim's calculus was based less on a bid to continue dialogue with the Trump administration than on a fear that all avenues of engagement would be shut down if Warmbier were to die in North Korea.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told a Senate hearing on Tuesday that North Korea has released Otto Warmbier, a U.S. university student who has been held captive there for 17 months. Tillerson told a Senate hearing on Tuesday that North Korea has released Otto Warmbier, a U.S. university student who has been held captive there for 17 months. (Reuters)

(Reuters)

"For all of Kim Jong Un's bravado and his flaunting of the threat of nuclear-armed missiles, he really, really does not want an American citizen to perish under his custody," said Danny Russel, a State Department official on sabbatical who served as senior Asia director at the National Security Council in the Obama administration.

But Russel acknowledged that a secondary intent

of Warmbier's release "could be a form of diplomatic signaling, the functional equivalent to a lady dropping her handkerchief to see if the gentleman picks it up. . . . Does this go anywhere?"

A congressional aide familiar with the process said Tillerson was adamant that Yun participate in the meetings only under the precondition that the detained Americans be the focus of the agenda and that a pathway was laid out for their release.

"It was not for broader diplomacy or engagement," said the aide, who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private deliberations.

But the aide added: "You now have a channel with a senior administration official and a North Korean official with some degree of confidence. I wouldn't use the word trust, but confidence. Does this lead to anything bigger? Not necessarily. But this sort of engagement is a necessary precondition to have serious discussions."

Direct, formal talks between Washington and Pyongyang have been on ice since North Korea dropped a proposal in early 2016 to engage in formal peace talks with the Obama administration to officially end the Korean War. The breakdown occurred when Pyongyang refused to include its nuclear program on the agenda.

After North Korea accelerated its nuclear and ballistic-missile testing programs in recent months, the Trump administration declared an end to the Obama-era policy of "strategic patience," which had aimed to force Pyongyang to freeze its nuclear program through

economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation.

A senior administration official declared in April: "The clock has now run out, and all options are on the table for us."

The administration sent a Navy aircraft carrier strike group toward the Korean Peninsula in May as a warning after Kim tested a ballistic missile in late April that failed shortly after launch. Trump has lobbied China to exert more economic and political pressure on North Korea and has called on leaders of other Asian nations to cut their diplomatic ties with Pyongyang.

But it is unclear how the administration's strategy of "maximum pressure and engagement" will differ substantially from the policies in place when Barack Obama was president.

In interviews with news outlets in early May, Trump said he would be "honored" to meet with Kim under the right circumstances, and he called the North Korean leader a "pretty smart cookie," citing his ability to consolidate power in his mid-20s after his father, Kim Jong Il, died in 2011.

In a private conversation with Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte around the same time, however, Trump referred to the younger Kim as a "madman with nuclear weapons."

Trump's floating of a potential meeting is radical: No U.S. president has met with a North Korean leader since that nation's founding in 1948.

"I don't think this administration is ideologically opposed to talking with North Korea," said Victor Cha, a

Korea expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies who served as senior director for Asia on the National Security Council in the George W. Bush administration.

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But Cha emphasized that the political fallout in Washington over Warmbier's case could reflect negatively on Pyongyang because of the student's dire health.

"I have a feeling this will not be seen positively but will be seen negatively," Cha said. "For medical reasons, they had to get him out. Overall, it might have been meant to spur diplomacy, but I don't know if that will be the case because of his poor condition."

According to administration officials, concerns rose when the North Koreans reneged on the Oslo agreement to allow Swedish diplomats to visit all four Americans held prisoner, and then followed through with only one. Then came the sudden request for the diplomatic meeting in New York, where Yun was informed of Warmbier's deteriorating health.

Trump, after speaking with Tillerson, directed that a plane carrying Yun and medical personnel be sent to Pyongyang, telling — not asking — the North Koreans that it was going to land and that Warmbier must be seen, a senior administration official said.

The visit to his bedside was the first time the United States was able to confirm his status since he was sentenced.

**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL.**

Crawford

4-5 minutes

June 13, 2017 7:20 p.m. ET

U.S. agriculture is struggling. Net farm income has fallen by half since 2013, and commodity prices across the board are below the cost of production. This is especially detrimental given the number of jobs agriculture provides our economy. Direct on-farm employment accounted for 2.6 million American jobs in 2015, and another 18.4 million jobs were supported by agriculture, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## Boozman and Crawford: Open Cuba's Market to U.S. Farmers

John Boozman and Rick Crawford

The U.S. should consider expanding the agricultural market in its backyard: Cuba. Less than 100 miles south of Florida, Cuba imports nearly 80% of its food annually, from countries like Vietnam and New Zealand, including about 400,000 tons of rice. But being closer to Cuba geographically, the U.S. has the comparative advantage here and could provide cheaper, better-quality goods in hours instead of weeks.

But the Trump administration may be taking a step in the opposite direction. For the past several months, the White House has been reviewing its trade policy with Cuba, and a major announcement is expected Friday. Early reports foretell a rollback of Obama-era policies that relaxed U.S.

restrictions on the island nation. While the move may appease Cold War-era hawks and the minority of Cuban-Americans who still support the embargo, the American business community, agriculture in particular, needs access to Cuba's market.

There is a better way forward that satisfies both parties without repealing the embargo or changing its structure: allow agricultural goods to be sold on credit through private financing. Currently the U.S. trades agricultural goods with Cuba, but there are restrictions that limit trade to cash-only transactions. Considering that nearly all international trade relies on credit, this policy puts American farmers on the sidelines while competitors

like Brazil and China enjoy Cuba's \$2.4 billion market.

Two bills under consideration right now, the Cuba Agricultural Exports Act in the House and the Agricultural Export Expansion Act in the Senate, would remove the credit restriction and allow private financing of agricultural exports. President Trump's secretary of agriculture, Sonny Perdue, expressed his support for trade on credit with Cuba during his Senate confirmation hearing in March. Producers from Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Texas and other states would be the first to benefit directly from this change.

If there ever was a time for this bill to move, it is now. Agriculture is a crucial part of rural states'

economies. The most important thing that can be done now for American agriculture is to open new markets for U.S. products.

Following Fidel Castro's death in November, President-elect Trump said, "Our administration will do all it can to ensure the Cuban people can finally begin their journey

toward prosperity and liberty." He also has promised time and again to bring back American jobs and "make America great again."

Allowing agricultural trade on credit would be a good compromise: Those who support the Cuba embargo should be able to get on board. The Trump administration

would accomplish a bilateral trade deal that supplies the Cuban people with high-quality food. And all of this can be done while supporting rural American jobs—an undeniable victory for the Trump White House.

*Messrs. Boozman and Crawford, both Arkansas Republicans, are, respectively, a U.S. senator and*

*representative from the First Congressional District.*

Appeared in the June 14, 2017, print edition.

## ETATS-UNIS

**The  
New York  
Times**

### Jeff Sessions Denies Collusion, Deploring 'Detestable Lie' in Senate Testimony (UNE)

Matt Flegenheimer and Rebecca R. Ruiz

8-9 minutes

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Jeff Sessions offered an indignant defense on Tuesday against what he called "an appalling and detestable lie" that he may have colluded with the Russian effort to interfere in the 2016 election, but he declined during an often contentious Senate hearing to answer central questions about his or President Trump's conduct.

Sounding by turns wounded and defiant, Mr. Sessions, a former senator from Alabama, often infused his testimony with more emotion than specifics as he showcased his loyalty to Mr. Trump. He insisted repeatedly that discussing his private conversations with the president, however relevant they might be, would be "inappropriate," visibly frustrating senators who have been conducting one of several inquiries into Russia's election meddling.

Mr. Sessions cast his recusal from Russia-related investigations as a mere procedural matter stemming from his status as a prominent Trump campaign surrogate last year, and not a product of any wrongdoing. When Mr. Sessions removed himself in March, he was facing blistering criticism over previously undisclosed contacts with the Russian ambassador to the United States.

"I recused myself from any investigation into the campaign for president," he told the Senate Intelligence Committee on Tuesday, in what was the latest highly charged congressional hearing of the Trump age. "I did not recuse myself from defending my honor against scurrilous and false allegations."

The attorney general raged against the "secret innuendo being leaked out there about me," his easy drawl rising briefly to a simmer. He denied vague, unsubstantiated reports of a secret third meeting with the Russian ambassador, Sergey I. Kislyak, at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington.

Yet in several moments, Mr. Sessions seemed committed to revealing as little as possible, particularly about his interactions with the president. Pressed on his rationale for keeping quiet, Mr. Sessions allowed that Mr. Trump had not invoked executive privilege concerning the testimony of his attorney general.

#### Audio

#### Listen to 'The Daily'

The latest from Congress, where Jeff Sessions denied Russia collusion in his Senate testimony, and a Pennsylvania courthouse, where Bill Cosby awaits a verdict.

"I am protecting the right of the president to assert it if he chooses," Mr. Sessions said.

Democrats accused Mr. Sessions of trying to have it both ways: observing that only Mr. Trump can assert executive privilege but sidestepping questions on the grounds that he might, eventually.

In previous administrations, cabinet-level officials have at times declined to answer questions from lawmakers by arguing that their communications might be subject to executive privilege in the future, even if the president had not yet invoked that power.

The Justice Department pointed to memos from the administration of Ronald Reagan to bolster Mr. Sessions's case, saying that his reasoning was consistent with

"longstanding executive-branch-wide practice."

But experts consider the matter a constitutional gray area — and little precedent exists for such a witness strategy amid sprawling investigations into a foreign power's interference in the American democratic process.

"We are talking about an attack on our democratic institutions, and stonewalling of any kind is unacceptable," Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon, said at one point.

"I am not stonewalling," Mr. Sessions shot back. "I am following the historic policies of the Department of Justice."

Senator Angus King of Maine, an independent who caucuses with Democrats, questioning Mr. Sessions at the hearing on Tuesday. Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

Still, Mr. Sessions's appearance did little to move the White House beyond the shadow of Russia-tinged investigations, which have for months consumed the president and his team — often with firestorms of Mr. Trump's own making.

On Tuesday, as the attorney general came to Capitol Hill, the administration was straining to play down suggestions that Mr. Trump is considering firing Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel investigating possible ties between the president's associates and Russian officials.

Mr. Sessions spoke from the same hearing room where James B. Comey, the former F.B.I. director, testified last week that Mr. Trump had tried to derail an investigation into Michael T. Flynn, the president's former national security adviser. Mr. Comey, whom Mr.

Trump fired last month, also accused the president of lying and defaming him and the F.B.I.

That testimony colored much of Tuesday's hearing, with Democrats pressing Mr. Sessions on several key elements of Mr. Comey's account. Among the questions: Why was Mr. Sessions involved in Mr. Comey's firing — months after Mr. Sessions had removed himself from involvement in the investigations after failing to disclose past contacts with the Russian ambassador?

"It is absurd, frankly," Mr. Sessions began, "to suggest that a recusal from a single specific investigation would render the attorney general unable to manage the leadership of the various Department of Justice law enforcement components that conduct thousands of investigations."

Mr. Sessions also addressed Mr. Comey's recollection of a private meeting in February with Mr. Trump, when Mr. Comey said the president pressured him to drop the Flynn investigation. Mr. Trump asked that the two be left alone, the former director has said, and Mr. Sessions left the room after initially staying behind. Mr. Comey said he later told Mr. Sessions to never again leave him alone with Mr. Trump.

On Tuesday, Mr. Sessions seemed to confirm at least fragments of Mr. Comey's rendering.

"I do recall being one of the last ones to leave," he said. "I don't know how that occurred."

But Mr. Sessions said he did not see the arrangement as "a major problem," calling Mr. Comey an experienced official who "could handle himself well."

After the Oval Office encounter, Mr. Sessions recalled, Mr. Comey



"expressed concern to me about that private conversation."

"And I agreed with him, essentially, that there are rules on private conversations with the president," Mr. Sessions continued, disputing Mr. Comey's account that he had said nothing in reply. "But there's not a prohibition."

Justice Department policy calls for only the attorney general or the deputy attorney general to brief the president on law enforcement investigations, in part to limit the possibility of political interference. Should those officials designate a subordinate to update the president, department policy stipulates the attorney general or his deputy be told what was discussed.

Mr. Sessions, generally well-liked by fellow senators before leaving Congress, had already created a credibility deficit with some former colleagues in his new role. During his confirmation hearings this year,

he told lawmakers that he had no contacts with Russian officials during the campaign.

### Takeaways From the Sessions Testimony

Rebecca Ruiz took questions on Facebook Live and shared her analysis on the Attorney General's public testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee.

June 13, 2017. . Watch in Times Video »

But in March, Mr. Sessions was forced to acknowledge meeting Ambassador Kislyak on two occasions. On Tuesday, Mr. Sessions attributed the confusion in part to "a rambling question" at the time from Senator Al Franken, Democrat of Minnesota.

The unverified reports of the possible third meeting at the Mayflower Hotel are said to be traced to raw intelligence from American spy agencies that

lawmakers have reviewed. But American officials have said it is not corroborated.

Any confirmation of such a meeting could prove devastating for Mr. Sessions, whose relationship with Mr. Trump has already showed signs of strain. Mr. Trump has vented privately about Mr. Sessions's decision to recuse himself from any Russia-related investigations conducted by the Justice Department, suggesting the move was unnecessary.

At one point in recent weeks, Mr. Sessions offered to resign, telling Mr. Trump he needed the freedom to do his job. Senators did not ask him about that on Tuesday.

But Mr. Sessions did demonstrate sweeping support for the president's agenda, at times bouncing in his chair as he spoke during his opening statement. He said that questions about his conduct had

"only strengthened my resolve to fulfill my duty."

Often, Mr. Sessions found refuge in the questioning of Republicans on the committee, who accused Democrats of overreaching.

Senator Tom Cotton, Republican of Arkansas, suggested that his counterparts had ventured into the realm of spy fiction, citing the rumored meeting at the Mayflower.

"Have you ever, in any of these fantastical situations," he began, "heard of a plotline so ridiculous that a sitting United States senator and an ambassador of a foreign government colluded at an open setting, with hundreds of other people, to pull off the greatest caper in the history of espionage?"

Mr. Sessions smiled slightly.

"Thank you for saying that," he said. "It's just like, through the looking glass. I mean, what is this?"



## Jeff Sessions testifies: Refuses to say whether he spoke to Trump about Comey's handling of Russia investigation (UNE)

<http://www.facebook.com/matt.zapotosky>

10-12 minutes

Attorney General Jeff Sessions faced a slew of questions about Russia, former FBI director James Comey and conversations with President Trump from the Senate Intelligence Committee on June 13. Attorney General Jeff Sessions faced a slew of questions from the Senate Intelligence Committee on June 13. Here's a recap. (Video: Jenny Starrs/Photo: Melina Mara/The Washington Post)

(Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

Attorney General Jeff Sessions repeatedly refused to answer questions from senators Tuesday about his private conversations with President Trump, including whether he spoke to Trump about former FBI director James B. Comey's handling of the investigation into possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia during the 2016 presidential race.

In a number of testy exchanges with members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Sessions said he would not answer many of their questions because of a long-standing Justice Department policy that he said protects private conversations between Cabinet secretaries and the president.

The attorney general confirmed elements of Comey's dramatic

testimony before the same panel last week while disputing others. Sessions said he was in an Oval Office meeting in February with Comey and Trump when the president said he wanted to speak to Comey privately — and he acknowledged that Comey came to talk to him the next day about the meeting.

At other times, though, Sessions frequently said he couldn't recall specifics, particularly when asked about his meetings with Russian officials during the 2016 campaign.

Above all, Sessions, who served as a senator from Alabama before taking the attorney general post, tried to clear his name and win the sympathy of his former colleagues.

President Trump is calling it a "witch hunt," lawmakers are applauding it and the Justice Department says it's in the "public interest," but what can the newly appointed special prosecutor really do and can he still be fired? Here are four things to know. Can the newly appointed special prosecutor still be fired? Here are four things to know. (Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

(Jenny Starrs/The Washington Post)

He opened his testimony with a fiery assertion that he never had any conversations with Russians about "any type of interference" in the 2016 presidential election.

"I was your colleague in this body for 20 years," Sessions said. "The suggestion that I participated in any collusion ... is an appalling and detestable lie."

The attorney general seemed to understand the import of each of his words as the highest-ranking Trump administration official so far to testify publicly on the FBI investigation and Comey's firing. During one line of questioning by Sen. Kamala D. Harris (D-Calif.), he told her in a flash of anger not to rush his answers because "you'll accuse me of lying" and said she was making him "nervous."

Sessions took particular aim at news reports about a possible meeting he had with a Russian official during an April 2016 event at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, where Trump gave a pro-Russia speech. He acknowledged being at the event and said he had conversations with people there, but did not remember any conversations with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak.

"If any brief interaction occurred in passing with the Russian ambassador during that reception, I do not remember it," Sessions said.

He said that he had met twice with Kislyak — once during the Republican National Convention and once in his Senate office — and that he did not disclose that during his confirmation hearing. He said, however, that he did not remember any other meetings with Russian officials during the 2016 presidential

campaign and did not remember any conversations with Russian officials about the Trump campaign.

"Certainly not one thing happened that was improper in any one of those meetings," Sessions said.

The Post's Matt Zapotosky analyzes Attorney General Jeff Sessions's appearance before the Senate Intelligence Committee on June 13. The Post's Matt Zapotosky analyzes Attorney General Jeff Sessions's appearance before the Senate Intelligence Committee on June 13. (Video: Bastien Inzaurrealde/Photo: Melina Mara/The Washington Post)

(Bastien Inzaurrealde/The Washington Post)

When asked to explain why he wrongly claimed in his confirmation hearing that he never met with Russians, Sessions said he was flustered by the question from Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) after many hours of testimony.

The attorney general has since recused himself from the Russia investigation — a decision he sought to cast Tuesday as resulting from his role as an adviser on the Trump campaign, rather than because of any inappropriate interaction with Russian officials.

"I recused myself from any investigation into the campaigns for president, but I did not recuse myself from defending my honor against scurrilous and false allegations," he said.

But Sessions's answers seemed to contradict each other at times, particularly when it came to his recusal.

A March 2 email by Sessions's chief of staff said that he would not be involved in "any existing or future investigations of any matters related in any way to the campaigns for the president of the United States." Yet two months later, he played a direct role in Trump's decision to fire Comey, citing Comey's handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation during the 2016 race.

"The recusal involved one case in the Department of Justice and the FBI," said Sessions, referring to the FBI's Russia investigation and offering a different description of the scope of his recusal. "I'm the attorney general of the United States. It's my responsibility to ensure that the department is run properly. I do not believe it is a sound position that if you recuse from a single case, you can't make a decision about the leadership of that agency."

Sessions previously told senators explicitly that he would recuse himself from matters related to Clinton — though Justice

Department spokeswoman Sarah Isgur Flores said Tuesday that the case was already closed and therefore not part of the recusal.

When asked about his conversation with Comey on the day the president spoke to Comey alone, Sessions described the exchange differently than the former FBI chief did in his testimony last week.

Comey testified that after what he called a "disturbing" private talk with Trump, he went to Sessions. Without telling the attorney general that Trump had suggested the FBI drop its probe of former national security adviser Michael Flynn, Comey told Sessions, "It can't happen that you get kicked out of the room and the president talks to me." The president has denied asking Comey to drop the Flynn matter.

Comey said that the attorney general didn't say anything but that Sessions's body language gave him the sense that he was powerless to do anything.

Sessions said he did respond, telling Comey "that the FBI and the Department of Justice needed to be careful to follow department policies

regarding appropriate contact with the White House."

Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) suggested that the attorney general was ducking critical questions in his testimony.

"I believe the American people have had it with stonewalling. Americans don't want to hear that answers to relevant questions are privileged or off limits," Wyden said. "We are talking about an attack on our democratic institutions, and stonewalling of any kind is unacceptable."

Sessions shot back: "I am not stonewalling. I am following the historic policies of the Department of Justice."

Wyden noted that Comey had said it was "problematic" for Sessions to oversee the Russia probe, for reasons he did not explain in a public setting.

Sessions became angry again when Wyden pressed him to explain what facts might be "problematic" about his involvement in the probe.

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"Why don't you tell me? There are none, Senator Wyden. There are none," Sessions said. "This is a secret innuendo being leaked out there about me, and I don't appreciate it."

Earlier Tuesday, Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein appeared before lawmakers on the Senate Appropriations Committee. He responded to questions regarding comments Monday from Christopher Ruddy, the chief executive of Newsmax Media and a friend of Trump, that the president might fire special counsel Robert S. Mueller III. Mueller was recently appointed to lead the investigation into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to influence the 2016 election.

Rosenstein said that if the president ordered him to fire Mueller, he would comply only if the request was "lawful and appropriate."

Rosenstein, who has been on the job for six weeks, said only he could fire Mueller and only if he found good cause to do so. He described Mueller as operating independently from the Justice Department in his investigation.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

# Jeff Sessions Calls Russian Collusion Allegation an 'Appalling and Detestable Lie' (UNE)

Aruna Viswanatha, Paul Sonne and Del Quentin Wilber

8-10 minutes

Updated June 13, 2017 8:23 p.m. ET

Attorney General Jeff Sessions told a Senate panel on Tuesday that he never met with any Russian officials last year to discuss the presidential campaign and any suggestion that he colluded with them to help Donald Trump was "an appalling and detestable lie."

Mr. Sessions defended his role in firing former FBI Director James Comey, saying his decision to step aside from campaign-related investigations didn't apply to broad oversight of the Justice Department. He also refused to discuss the content of any conversations he had with President Trump on the subject.

Mr. Sessions, a former Republican senator from Alabama and a top adviser to Mr. Trump during the campaign, spoke forcefully before the Senate Intelligence Committee, saying he needed to defend himself from "scurrilous" accusations.

Mr. Sessions was at times combative and folksy in answering and parrying questions as he sought to dispel some of the shadows cast in part by Mr. Comey's testimony last week about the attorney general's behavior.

Mr. Sessions alternated between strong denials and hazy recollections, saying he couldn't recall whether he had a passing encounter with the Russian ambassador to the U.S. at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington or any other undisclosed interactions with Russian officials.

Tuesday's hearing became heated at times, as Mr. Sessions said he didn't appreciate the "innuendo being leaked out there about me" while Sen. Ron Wyden (D., Ore.) suggested Mr. Sessions was "stonewalling" by declining to answer questions about his conversations with the president.

Mr. Sessions said he was protecting the president's "constitutional right" to keep such conversations confidential and citing a Justice Department policy on not commenting on conversations between the attorney general and the president.

Such answers didn't satisfy the Democratic senators on the committee.

Sen. Martin Heinrich (D., N.M.) accused Mr. Sessions of blocking the Senate inquiry. "You took an oath," the senator said. "You raised your right hand here today and said that you would solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. And now you're not answering questions. You're impeding the investigation."

Testimony last week from Mr. Comey before the same panel intensified attention on Mr. Sessions' interactions with the Russian ambassador, Sergey Kislyak. But he said his two meetings with Mr. Kislyak had nothing to do with the campaign. "I have never met with or had any conversations with any Russians or any foreign officials concerning any type of interference with any campaign or election," Mr. Sessions said. He also said he had "racked my brain" to see if he could recall a third meeting but couldn't.

The Senate Intelligence Committee and several other congressional panels are investigating Russia's alleged interference in the 2016 election. The Russian government denies that, and Mr. Trump has

called the probes a "witch hunt." He has said no one on his campaign coordinated with the Kremlin.

The attorney general's highly anticipated testimony came after Mr. Comey portrayed Mr. Sessions as an attorney general who did little to manage a relationship between Mr. Trump and Mr. Comey that was becoming increasingly problematic. The former FBI director also hinted that there were reasons Mr. Sessions had to step away from the investigation into Russian interference in the election beyond what was publicly known.

Mr. Comey's abrupt firing on May 9 set off a chain of events that led to the appointment of Robert Mueller as special counsel to oversee the FBI's Russia probe.

Democrats have raised questions in recent days about why Mr. Sessions recommended that the president dismiss Mr. Comey, given Mr. Trump's suggestion that he fired Mr. Comey at least in part because of his handling of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Russia probe.

During his January confirmation hearing, Mr. Sessions said he would recuse himself from any investigations involving Mr. Trump's opponent in the campaign, Hillary

Clinton. In March, he stepped aside from any investigations into the 2016 campaign, including into Russian interference, after it emerged he hadn't disclosed two meetings with Mr. Kislyak he had during the campaign.

In response to senators' questions about why he then played a role in Mr. Comey's firing, Mr. Sessions said the recusals do "not and cannot interfere with my ability to oversee the Department of Justice, including the FBI, which has an \$8 billion budget and 35,000 employees."

He added: "I recused myself from any investigation into the campaigns for president, but I did not recuse myself from defending my honor against scurrilous and false allegations."

Mr. Sessions declined to say if he had talked about Mr. Comey's handling of the Russia investigation with Mr. Trump. And he couldn't explain the disparity between the reasons he and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein gave for firing Mr. Comey—namely the director's handling of the Clinton

investigation—and Mr. Trump's claim in an interview with NBC's Lester Holt that "this Russia thing" played into the decision.

"I'm not sure what was in his mind explicitly," Mr. Sessions said on Tuesday.

White House officials said at the time that Mr. Trump had for months been contemplating the possibility of removing Mr. Comey, and that the dismissal wasn't connected to the Russian probe.

Senators focused on a private meeting between the president and Mr. Comey that the former director described in his testimony. The meeting in February was one day after former national security adviser Mike Flynn was forced to resign after having misled Vice President Mike Pence and other Trump administration officials over the nature of Mr. Flynn's conversations in December with Mr. Kislyak.

Mr. Comey had told the committee that after a meeting at the Oval Office with several top officials, the president asked the rest of the attendees, including Mr. Sessions, to depart, leaving Mr. Comey alone

with Mr. Trump. Mr. Comey said Mr. Trump then asked him to drop an investigation into former national security adviser Mike Flynn, which Mr. Trump denies.

Mr. Comey said he later asked the attorney general to ensure he wouldn't be left alone with Mr. Trump again. Mr. Sessions didn't respond to that request, in Mr. Comey's telling.

Mr. Comey told the committee last week: "I have a recollection of him just kind of looking at me...His body language gave me the sense like, 'What am I going to do?'...He didn't say anything."

In contrast, Mr. Sessions testified Tuesday that when Mr. Comey raised concerns about being left alone with the president, he agreed with the director about the importance of handling such conversations properly and not discussing current investigations. Mr. Sessions said he encouraged Mr. Comey to "abide by the well-established rules governing any communications with the White House."

Mr. Sessions also said there is "no prohibition" on private meetings

between the president and the FBI director. He added that he thought Mr. Comey should have raised his conversations with Mr. Trump more explicitly with the deputy attorney general.

He broadly confirmed Mr. Comey's vivid description of Mr. Trump asking everyone but the FBI director to leave the room, with Mr. Sessions being among the last to do so.

"It didn't seem to me to be a major problem," Mr. Sessions said. "I knew that Director Comey, with longtime experience in the Department of Justice, could handle himself well."

**Write to Aruna Viswanatha at Aruna.Viswanatha@wsj.com, Paul Sonne at paul.sonne@wsj.com and Del Quentin Wilber at del.wilber@wsj.com**

Appeared in the June 14, 2017, print edition as 'Sessions Denounces Claims Of Collusion With Russia.'

## POLITICO Poll: Voters trust Comey over Trump

By **Shepard** and **Steven**  
4-6 minutes

Voters say by a nearly two-to-one margin that James Comey's statements hurt President Donald Trump rather than helped him. | Getty

Voters have greater faith in former FBI Director James Comey to tell the truth than in President Donald Trump, who has disputed the veracity of Comey's sworn testimony before a Senate committee last week.

A new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll conducted in the days following Comey's appearance before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 45 percent of voters said they trust Comey more to tell the truth, compared to 32 percent for Trump. Twenty-three percent have no opinion.

Story Continued Below

And despite Trump's insistence that Comey's testimony represented personal vindication, voters say by a nearly two-to-one margin that

statements hurt Trump rather than helped him.

But the survey found little change in voters' views of Trump and whether his firing of Comey last month was appropriate or not.

The POLITICO/Morning Consult poll shows 45 percent of registered voters approve of the job Trump is doing as president — virtually unchanged from 44 percent last week. Exactly half of voters disapprove of Trump's job performance.

Trump's base is sticking with him: 81 percent of GOP voters approve of his job performance. But his approval rating is far lower among Democrats (16 percent) and independents (39 percent).

That is consistent with other polls that show opinions of Trump are little changed over the past week since Comey's testimony.

A slight majority of voters, 51 percent, say they watched part or all of Comey's testimony last Thursday. Asked about Comey's honesty, a combined 53 percent say the former FBI director is either very or somewhat honest.

More voters say Comey's testimony hurt Trump (43 percent) than say it helped the president (23 percent). But 35 percent of voters say they don't know or have no opinion about whether it hurt or helped Trump.

Among Democrats, 58 percent say Comey's testimony hurt Trump, while only 16 percent think it helped him. Republicans say narrowly that Comey's testimony helped Trump (36 percent) rather than hurt him (28 percent). But among independents, far more thought it hurt Trump (41 percent) than helped (17 percent).

But voters are still mixed, following the hearing, on whether Trump acted appropriately in firing Comey last month. Thirty-seven percent say it was appropriate for Trump to fire Comey, while 44 percent say it was inappropriate.

"James Comey's Senate testimony was a massive political event," said Morning Consult Co-founder and Chief Research Officer Kyle Dropp. "However, initial polling indicates that it didn't swing public opinion one way or another. Views on why Comey was fired and whether it was appropriate have remained largely

stable in the days following his testimony."

Voters are actually more disturbed by Comey's actions after he was terminated. Fifty-four percent say it was inappropriate for Comey to ask a friend to share with a reporter the content of unclassified memoranda he'd composed following meetings with Trump; just 26 percent say that was appropriate.

Still, the poll shows voters are unwilling to let Trump off the hook for his missteps because of his inexperience in elected office. Only 27 percent agree with this statement: "President Trump is a political newcomer and unfamiliar with Washington. This should be taken into consideration when considering his behavior."

Twice as many voters, 54 percent, agree more with this statement: "The job of president demands immediate ability to perform all functions. President Trump should not be excused for behavior because he is a political newcomer."

The poll was conducted June 8-12, surveying 1,990 registered voters. The margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points.

**The New York Times** Editorial : Jeff Sessions Clams Up in Congress  
The Editorial Board

5-6 minutes



Attorney General Jeff Sessions testifying on Capitol Hill on Tuesday. Al Drago/The New York Times

How many ways are there to fail to answer a question under oath?

Ask Attorney General Jeff Sessions. The last time Mr. Sessions appeared before a Senate committee, during his confirmation hearing in January, he gave false testimony.

"I did not have communications with the Russians," Mr. Sessions said in response to a question no one asked — and despite the fact that he had, in fact, met with the Russian ambassador, Sergey Kislyak, at least twice during the 2016 presidential campaign. The omission raised questions not only about his honesty, but also about why he would not disclose those meetings in the first place.

On Tuesday Mr. Sessions returned to answer questions from the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is investigating Russian sabotage of the 2016 election and the Trump campaign's possible ties to those efforts.

That was the plan, anyway. In fact — and to the great consternation of the Democratic members of the committee, at least — Mr. Sessions was not on

board. He arrived in full body armor, testy and sometimes raising his voice to defend what he called his honor against "scurrilous and false allegations" that he had colluded with Moscow.

He also defended his misstatements in January, to the Judiciary Committee, as being taken out of context, and he lowered a broad cone of silence around all his communications with President Trump regarding last month's firing of James Comey as F.B.I. director, claiming it was "inappropriate" for him to discuss them. Did they involve classified information? No. Was he invoking executive privilege? No, he said, only the president may invoke that. Reminded that Mr. Trump has not done so, he said, "I'm protecting the right of the president to assert it if he chooses."

In lieu of a real excuse, he cited a longstanding policy at the Justice Department — although he couldn't confirm that it existed in writing or that, if it did, he had actually read it. In other words, Mr. Sessions has no intention to answer any of those questions now or in the future.

Senator Martin Heinrich, Democrat of New Mexico, angrily accused Mr. Sessions of "impeding this investigation" by refusing to respond, but perhaps the attorney general was wise to keep his mouth

shut. When he opened it, he often seemed to contradict himself, his staff at the Justice Department, or the president.

The most glaring example was his claim that the letter he wrote supporting Mr. Comey's dismissal was based on the former director's missteps in the bureau's investigation of Hillary Clinton's private email server — even though Mr. Trump himself had almost immediately blown that cover, telling a national television audience that he had the Russia investigation in mind when he decided to fire Mr. Comey.

Mr. Sessions's explanation would've been impossible to swallow anyway, since he, like Mr. Trump, had originally praised Mr. Comey's actions in the Clinton investigation.

The attorney general also had a strange reaction to Mr. Comey's plea that he not be left alone with the president again. By his own account, Mr. Sessions seemed less concerned with the president's highly unusual and inappropriate behavior than he was with Mr. Comey, telling him "that the F.B.I. and the Department of Justice needed to be careful to follow department policies regarding appropriate contacts with the White House."

So here are a few more questions that Mr. Sessions should answer, but probably won't.

Why did he not resist when Mr. Trump asked him and others to leave the Oval Office so he could have a private conversation with Mr. Comey? At the very least, why did he not take steps to find out what had happened?

Why does he believe he did not violate the terms of his recusal by taking part in Mr. Comey's firing? His recusal extended, in his own words, to "any existing or future investigations of any matters related in any way to the campaigns for president of the United States" — which clearly includes the Clinton email investigation.

If his recusal was truly based, as he claimed, on his closeness to the Trump campaign, why not announce it immediately upon his confirmation, rather than wait weeks, until after news of his undisclosed meetings with Mr. Kislyak broke?

And perhaps most pressing: Why, since he agreed with the committee that Russian interference in the election represents a profoundly serious attack on American democracy, has Mr. Sessions never received or read any detailed briefing on that operation?



## Editorial : Jeff Sessions' testimony was unconvincing

The Editorial Board, USA TODAY

4-5 minutes

Attorney General Jeff Sessions testifies on June 13, 2017. (Photo: Jack Gruber, USA TODAY)

Tuesday's much anticipated testimony by Attorney General Jeff Sessions before a Senate panel investigating Russian interference in the 2016 campaign lacked the high drama of James Comey's appearance last week.

In nearly three hours of questioning, Democrats on the Senate Intelligence Committee failed to land any knockout blows, nor did Sessions punch any meaningful holes in Comey's damaging testimony about President Trump.

The attorney general, a Trump loyalist during the campaign who formally recused himself from the Russian inquiry in March, forcefully defended himself against suggestions that he colluded with the Russians last year, calling it "secret innuendo" and "an appalling and detestable lie."

But Sessions often came across as forgetful, testy and defensive, his testimony sprinkled with the "do not recall" that reek of the lawyerly way public officials often evade accusations in Washington.

And if Republicans were looking for Sessions to undercut Comey's powerful testimony on the key issue — that the president asked Comey to end a criminal investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn — they were surely disappointed. Only around the edges did Sessions disagree with Comey's compelling account.

### OPPOSING VIEW

Sessions corroborated that Comey and Trump met privately in the Oval Office on Feb. 14, and a day or two later Comey expressed "concern about being left alone with the president." Sessions denied that he had said nothing and shrugged, as Comey had testified. Instead, Sessions said he "affirmed his concern that we should be following" Justice Department guidelines about such communications.

Sessions' least convincing testimony involved why, if he had recused himself from the Russia investigation, he was involved in recommending the firing of Comey, whose agency was overseeing the Russia investigation.

The attorney general asserted that he had long believed that the FBI needed fresh leadership after watching how Comey handled the investigation of Hillary Clinton's private emails. But, as one Democratic senator pointed out, Sessions had complimented Comey in television interviews last year. Indeed, soon after abruptly firing the FBI director, Trump acknowledged that the Russia investigation was on his mind.

Sessions' most consequential testimony was, oddly, his refusal to answer questions about his conversations with Trump.

Presidents ought to be able to have candid private discussions with top aides, but Sessions offered shifting and confusing rationales for dodging questions from the senators.

At one point, after acknowledging that only the president can cite "executive privilege," he repeatedly insisted that he was "protecting the right of the president to assert it if he chooses."

At other points, Sessions cited what he said was long-standing Justice Department policy protecting such private conversations, though he could not point to any written policy.

With his protectiveness of the White House, the nation's chief law enforcement officer left the impression that he regards his main client as Donald Trump, rather than the American people.

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## Rep. MacDaniel: Jeff Sessions' testimony shows integrity

Ronna McDaniel  
9:04 p.m. ET

June 13, 2017

3 minutes

Attorney General Jeff Sessions testifies on June 13, 2017. (Photo: Alex Brandon, AP)

Attorney General Sessions' testimony in an open hearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee again proved his unwavering commitment to transparency and dedication to upholding the integrity of the Justice Department.

Democratic senators' decision to promulgate unfounded character attacks on the attorney general is, in his own words, "appalling and detestable." Democrats sought to vilify Sessions' meetings with the

Russian ambassador, when they know — based on their own similar meetings — that it was normal for him to do so as a sitting U.S. senator.

Sessions made it clear that in those two meetings, there was no discussion of anything inappropriate or unlawful. Yet another hearing, and still no evidence of collusion.

The only new information to come out of this hearing is that James Comey was dishonest in his testimony last week.

In a memo sent to Comey, Sessions' chief of staff explicitly stated Sessions would recuse himself from any investigation involving the Trump campaign. In his testimony, Sessions made clear this was in compliance with the requirement that DOJ officials must

not be involved in investigations into a political campaign in which they were involved. That he immediately sought counsel within the department and acted decisively to uphold Justice Department standards speaks to his unmatched character and reverence for the judicial process. Attorney General Sessions made that crystal clear.

### OUR VIEW:

What is not clear is how Comey could testify that he was not aware of parameters around the attorney general's recusal when he received the memo directly to his inbox. For someone who claims to keep extensive records, that excuse doesn't hold much water.

Comey's amnesia seems to have also afflicted several Democrats at Tuesday's hearing. Sessions'

former colleagues were all too eager to attack the attorney general for keeping conversations with the president confidential, conveniently forgetting that the practice is common and was used by Obama administration officials.

In his testimony, Sessions left no room for ambiguity. He did not have any conversations regarding collusion with Russian officials. He has been open and transparent, proving that any continued questioning of wrongdoing is nothing but a Democratic witch hunt aimed at hindering the work this administration is doing on behalf of the American people.

*Ronna McDaniel is chairwoman of the Republican National Committee.*



## Bruni : The Mortification of Jeff Sessions

Frank Bruni

4-5 minutes

The next, you're ensnared in his recklessness, at the mercy of his tempestuousness and quite possibly the butt of his rage: the case with Sessions, who sank low enough that he felt compelled last month to offer Trump his resignation.

"It's just like through the looking glass: What is this?" Sessions said during his Senate testimony, and while he was alluding to the suggestion that he and the Russian ambassador had plotted together to steal a presidential election, he could just as easily have been referring to the warped topography of Trumplandia.

It's a reputation-savaging place. Ask Rod Rosenstein for sure. Herbert McMaster, too. Also James Mattis. Sean Spicer. Reince Priebus. Rex Tillerson. Dan Coats. All have been under pressure, undercut or contradicted. They've been asked to pledge their fidelity to — even

proclaim their adoration for — a man who adores only himself.

My God, that video, the one of the cabinet in full session at long last. I've never seen anything like it. It's the most chilling measure yet of Trump's narcissism, and it's a breathtaking glimpse into what that means for the people around him.

They don't volunteer purplish flattery like that because it's their wont. He wants it so badly that they cough it up. To buoy his ego, they debase themselves, and what you heard them doing in that meeting wasn't just swallowing their pride but choking on it. They looked like hostages — hostages in need of the Heimlich.

Well, most of them. Mike Pence has discovered a freaky talent for such freakish sycophancy, and called it "the greatest privilege of my life" to assist "the president who's keeping his word to the American people." (Which word is *that*?) He sounded like he believed it. The mysteries of faith, indeed.

A few others in the meeting summoned less ardor. "It's an honor," Mattis said, but then

continued, "to represent the men and women of the Department of Defense." Trump turned away just then, as if the absence of his name equaled the loss of his interest.

Mattis has suffered the humiliation of assuring allies of our commitment to NATO just before Trump, without warning him, sowed doubts about precisely that. McMaster, whose book "Dereliction of Duty" is expressly about talking truth to power, found himself at a lectern doing damage control for his damage-prone boss. He vouched that Trump's divulgence of classified information to Russian officials at the White House was no big deal.

No one in Trump's administration was forced into this service and its compromises. Some hungered for power, in whatever bastard package delivered it. At least a few, like Sessions, had poisoned reputations already.

But there were those with higher motives, too, and they find themselves in a White House governed by dread. Who's next to be shamed? What tweet or tantrum

awaits? They thought that they'd be bolstering a leader. They see now that they're holding a grenade.

You could sense the stress of that in Sessions, who endorsed Trump before any other senator did, won the prize of attorney general but on Tuesday was the prosecuted, not the prosecutor.

At times he had a hurt, helpless air. He cried foul at the "secret innuendo being leaked out there about me."

He called the suggestion that he'd conspired with Russia "an appalling and detestable lie."

"I did not recuse myself from defending my honor against scurrilous and false allegations," he declared. No, but he made it a hell of a lot harder the moment he took Trump's hand.

For all Trump's career and all his campaign, he played the part of Midas, claiming that everything he touched turned to gold. That was never true. This is: Almost everyone who touches him is tarnished, whether testifying or not.



## Trump Stews, Staff Steps In, and Mueller Is Safe for Now (UNE)

Glenn Thrush,

Maggie

Haberman and Julie Hirschfeld Davis

6-8 minutes

WASHINGTON — Last month's appointment of Robert S. Mueller III

as a special counsel to investigate possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia enraged President Trump. Yet, at least initially, he holstered his Twitter finger and publicly said nothing.

But behind the scenes, the president soon began entertaining the idea of firing Mr. Mueller even

as his staff tried to discourage him from something they believed would turn a bad situation into a catastrophe, according to several people with direct knowledge of Mr. Trump's interactions. A longtime friend, Christopher Ruddy, surfaced the president's thinking in a television interview Monday night, setting off a frenzied day of

speculation that he would go through with it.

For now, the staff has prevailed. "While the president has every right to" fire Mr. Mueller, "he has no intention to do so," the White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters late Tuesday.

But people close to Mr. Trump say he is so volatile they cannot be sure that he will not change his mind about Mr. Mueller if he finds out anything to lead him to believe the investigation has been compromised. And his ability to endure a free-ranging investigation, directed by Mr. Mueller, that could raise questions about the legitimacy of his Electoral College victory, the topic that most provokes his rage, will be a critical test for a president who has continued on Twitter and elsewhere to flout the advice of his staff, friends and legal team.

Rod J. Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general, who appointed Mr. Mueller, sought to assure a Senate committee on Tuesday that he would not permit Mr. Mueller to be dismissed without legitimate reason, though Mr. Trump could order him to roll back rules that protect the special counsel or fire him if he will not comply.

"As long as I'm in this position, he's not going to be fired without good cause," Mr. Rosenstein said. "I'm not going to follow any orders unless I believe those are lawful and appropriate orders," he added, emphasizing that the attorney general "actually does not know what we're investigating."

He said, "Director Mueller is going to have the full independence he needs to conduct that investigation appropriately."

In his testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee later in the day, Attorney General Jeff Sessions refused to answer what he said was a hypothetical question of whether he would support Mr. Mueller.

The president, when asked by the pool of reporters covering a midday meeting with Republican lawmakers at the White House whether he supported Mr. Mueller, gave no answer, even though he often uses such interactions to make headlines

or shoot down stories he believes to be fake.

That may have been by design, according to a person who spoke to Mr. Trump on Tuesday. The president was pleased by the ambiguity of his position on Mr. Mueller, and thinks the possibility of being fired will focus the veteran prosecutor on delivering what the president desires most: a blanket public exoneration.

For Mr. Trump, the line between whim and will is always thin. It is often erased in moments of anger, when simmering grievance boils over into rash action, exemplified by his firing of James B. Comey, the F.B.I. director, after a weekend of brooding at his resort in Bedminster, N.J.

Angered by reports in Breitbart News and other conservative news outlets that Mr. Mueller was close to Mr. Comey, Mr. Trump in recent days has repeatedly brought up the political and legal implications of firing someone he now views as incapable of an impartial investigation. He has told his staff, his visitors and his outside advisers that he was increasingly convinced that Mr. Mueller, like Mr. Comey, his successor as director of the F.B.I., was part of a "witch hunt" by partisans who wanted to see him weakened or forced from office.

But while the president is deeply suspicious of Mr. Mueller, his anger is reserved for Mr. Sessions for recusing himself from the Russia inquiry, and especially for Mr. Comey. Mr. Trump was especially outraged by Mr. Comey's admission last week that he had leaked a memo with details of his interactions with the president in hopes of spurring the appointment of a special counsel.

Several senior Trump aides believe that Mr. Comey went public with his doubts about the president's

behavior and trustworthiness with the intention of steering Mr. Rosenstein toward appointing his friend Mr. Mueller, according to one longtime Trump associate who remains close to the White House.

The two men worked closely together in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks when Mr. Mueller was F.B.I. director and Mr. Comey was a high-ranking Justice Department official in the George W. Bush administration. Mr. Comey endorsed Mr. Mueller's appointment when he appeared last week before the Senate Intelligence Committee, further angering Mr. Trump and his staff.

While the president's aides have sought to sow skepticism about Mr. Mueller, whom they interviewed about the possibility of returning to the F.B.I. job the day before he accepted his position as special counsel, few have advocated his termination, reflecting the recognition that Mr. Trump's angry reactions to the congressional and F.B.I. investigations now underway are imperiling his presidency.

The pushback also represented growing willingness among staff members to try to keep Mr. Trump from making damaging mistakes — an important internal change in a White House dominated by a president who often demands obeisance.

For all the talk of how no one in the West Wing tells the president "no," many people do — though often unsuccessfully.

Among the aides most alarmed by the idea of firing Mr. Mueller, according to people familiar with the situation, was Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff, whom Democrats mocked this week for publicly saying he feels "blessed" to serve Mr. Trump. Donald F. McGahn II, the White House

counsel, has also advised against firing Mr. Mueller.

Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and adviser, supported firing Mr. Comey, but he has been less pugnacious lately, administration officials said. Mr. Trump's wife, Melania, has adopted a more temperate tone, telling her husband that she believed the appointment of Mr. Mueller would speed resolution of the Russia scandal and expressing her view that he would be exonerated, according to two people with direct knowledge of her advice.

Mr. Trump's allies maintain that Mr. Ruddy's description in a television interview of Mr. Trump's deliberations over firing Mr. Mueller represented a secondhand account that echoed comments by Jay Sekulow, a member of Mr. Trump's legal team, on a Sunday TV show. They suggested that Mr. Ruddy had committed the most grievous sin in Mr. Trump's eyes: trying to get news media attention for himself on the president's name.

"Ruddy is nothing more than a journalist who doesn't know what he's talking about," said Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey, echoing the president's sentiments, according to West Wing aides.

Mr. Ruddy has told friends that he went public with the Mueller story, in part, to prevent Mr. Trump from making a rash decision. He also lashed out at Sean Spicer, the administration's press secretary, for suggesting he does not speak regularly with the president about important matters.

"It is a sad commentary that Sean Spicer spends so much of his time objecting to my comments at the same time he has done such a poor job in defending the president and promoting his many accomplishments," Mr. Ruddy said on Tuesday.



## Editorial : By firing Mueller, Trump would make a stronger case that he is obstructing justice

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

3-4 minutes

The Post's View

Opinion

**Opinion** Interpretation of the news based on evidence, including data, as well as anticipating how events might unfold based on past events Robert S. Mueller III. (Mark Wilson/Getty Images)

IT SEEMS unthinkable, but Washington has been abuzz with rumors that President Trump might fire special counsel Robert S. Mueller III, the man investigating Russia's election-year hacking and any possible Trump campaign collusion. We have viewed much of the talk to date about impeachment as overheated. But firing Mr. Mueller would, more than anything else the president has done in office, firm up a case that Mr. Trump is obstructing justice.

In a Tuesday Senate hearing, Deputy Attorney General Rod J.

Rosenstein, who could be called on to perform the firing, did not promise not to. But he set a high bar, committing that "I'm not going to follow any orders unless I believe those are lawful and appropriate orders."

On Mr. Rosenstein's first standard — legality — there is an argument that Mr. Trump would have the authority to dismiss Mr. Mueller, though doing so would not be simple. On appropriateness, however, there is no question.

Conservative commentators, including two with ties to Mr. Trump, have mentioned the possibility of dismissing Mr. Mueller or have begun making the case for doing so. Though the special counsel has a sterling reputation and broad bipartisan support, one charge is that he is friends with former FBI director James B. Comey, whom Mr. Trump unceremoniously sacked, which could color his views on the president and his circle. Another apparent concern is that Mr. Mueller hired staff who donated money to Democrats in the past.



We do not dismiss the concerns. Given the stakes, it is incumbent on Mr. Mueller to live up to his reputation and run a spotless investigation. He may, for example, insulate as much as possible any obstruction-of-justice probe from anyone who could be open to any kind of partisan attack.

But on the big picture, House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.) got it right on

**Los Angeles Times**

## Editorial : Firing Mueller would be a stupid, reckless act even for Trump

The Times  
Editorial Board

3-4 minutes

The Times Editorial Board

Only a few days before the 45th anniversary of the Watergate break-in, could President Trump really be contemplating a reenactment of one of the most notorious episodes of that scandal: President Richard M. Nixon's firing of Archibald Cox, the special prosecutor who was investigating the cover-up of that "third-rate burglary," a power play that also cost the president his attorney general and deputy attorney general?

According to conservative media executive Christopher Ruddy, a close friend of the president's, Trump is considering firing Robert

Tuesday. "I know Bob Mueller," Mr. Ryan said. "I have confidence in Bob Mueller." Mr. Mueller's track record is that of a longtime public servant, appointed to high positions by Republican and Democratic presidents and so well-respected that his 10-year term as FBI director was extended for an extra two years on a unanimous Senate vote. The relatively minor concerns expressed about him do not suggest he is

incapable of acquitting himself with the same professionalism he has shown over the course of decades. On the other hand, according to strong testimony from Mr. Comey, the president has already tried to improperly influence the very investigation that some are insinuating, with no evidence, Mr. Mueller might tilt.

Firing Mr. Mueller would have to be seen by Congress as part of a

concerted and continuing effort to foil a serious investigation into Mr. Trump and his associates. To start, lawmakers would have to reinstate a special counsel by acclamation. And that would be only the first step.

S. Mueller III, the special counsel in charge of the investigation of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and possible ties between the Russia and the Trump campaign.

Meanwhile, a chorus of Trump supporters, from former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich to commentator Ann Coulter, is assailing Mueller's independence. Gingrich, who only a few weeks ago called Mueller a "superb choice" with an "impeccable" reputation, tweeted on Monday: "Republicans are delusional if they think the special counsel is going to be fair."

The criticism of Mueller takes several forms. Gingrich pointed to Federal Election Commission reports that showed that some members of Mueller's staff had contributed to Democratic candidates, including Hillary Clinton,

in the past. Coulter suggested that because Comey had testified that Trump hadn't been personally under investigation while he was FBI director, the purpose of Mueller's commission "is now over." (That ignores the fact that other Trump campaign figures might be under investigation.) There also have been complaints that Mueller is a friend of Comey's.

We don't want to give this glorified rumor more weight than it's worth. Suffice to say that Trump would be nuts to think that these flimsy objections would provide him with cover if he made the disastrous decision to dismiss Mueller and abort the investigation. What's more, in order to accomplish that wrecking operation, the president would probably have to fire Rod Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general who entrusted the Russia investigation to Mueller after Atty.

Gen. Jeff Sessions rightly recused himself from any investigation connected with the election. Rosenstein has already said publicly that he sees no justification for firing Mueller, and that he wouldn't carry out an order from Trump to do so without "good cause."

That was a warning to Trump not to attempt his own version of Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre" — but it wasn't the only one. Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, couching the same advice in friendlier terms, said: "The best thing to do is to let Robert Mueller do his job," adding that "the best vindication for the president is to let this investigation go on independently and thoroughly."

For his own good, Trump should take this advice.

**The Washington Post**

## Ignatius : Trump firing the special counsel would be disastrous

5-7 minutes

The Washington Post's Ruth Marcus explains why lashing out might not be the best legal move for President Trump. The Washington Post's Ruth Marcus explains why lashing out might not be the best legal move for President Trump. (Adriana Usero/The Washington Post)

(Adriana Usero/The Washington Post)

Forewarned is forearmed. So perhaps the country is lucky that President Trump's allies have floated the possibility that he might fire special counsel Robert S. Mueller III. This speculation allows citizens to reflect on the consequences of such an action.

Trump has already taken the country to a darker place than even his sharpest critics would have

imagined six months ago. He has brought to the White House the values of a failed Atlantic City casino owner turned reality-TV star. We don't have to believe former FBI director James B. Comey's account of Trump's threats and blandishments. We can just watch the news and follow our Twitter feeds to see that, in many of his public statements, Trump has been deceitful.

Trump creates his own version of normal. So let's briefly review this most abnormal chain of events: The president was informed on Jan. 26 that the FBI was investigating his national security adviser, Michael Flynn. The next day, Comey says, Trump summoned him to dinner to ask for his loyalty. Trump decided he had to fire Flynn on Feb. 13, saying even as he did so that Flynn had done nothing wrong and shouldn't be punished. (Message: I'll protect you.) He allegedly told Comey the next day, "I hope you can let this go."

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After Comey didn't let it go, Trump fired him, too. He initially gave a false explanation about why, and then admitted it was because of the "Russia thing" and apparently bragged about it to the visiting Russian foreign minister. What is Trump so afraid of in the Russia investigation? Truly, we don't know. But as prosecutors sometimes say about those under investigation: We may not know what he did wrong, but he does.

*[Can the president fire special counsel Robert Mueller? (And then what?)]*

Trump's behavior in office has been disruptive, to put it mildly. But with the appointment of Mueller, the near-universally praised former FBI director, it seemed the country would have a chance to take a breath and return to something like normal order. But no. The president's friends are now pressing the argument that Mueller must go, too. If so, this crippling scandal

could veer into a much more dangerous phase of presidential lawlessness.

Jack Goldsmith, a Harvard Law professor who headed the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel during the George W. Bush administration, offered a careful assessment of the consequences of a Mueller firing early Tuesday on the Lawfare blog. His preface struck the right note of astonishment that we're even discussing this topic: "This seems like such a bad idea — for the nation, and for the President — that I have a hard time believing it is a live possibility."

Goldsmith proceeded to analyze what would happen if Trump did the unthinkable. Fortunately, it would not be as easy as his allies seem to believe. Justice Department regulations specify that a special counsel can be removed only for "misconduct, dereliction of duty, incapacity, conflict of interest, or for other good cause," and that the "specific reason" must be spelled out in writing.

Because the Justice Department's ethics office has already decided that Mueller doesn't have a conflict resulting from his law firm's representation of Trump family members, that argument looks soft. So do the others, given Mueller's reputation for probity. Perhaps Trump could argue that Mueller's appointment was compromised because it was triggered by Comey's leak of one of his memos about the president. The FBI's prepublication review guide does raise some

questions about Comey's actions, but not Mueller's.

Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein assured Congress on Tuesday that he would obey a presidential order to fire Mueller only if it were "lawful and appropriate." Trump could conceivably then fire Rosenstein and keep issuing the order until someone carried it out.

Goldsmith takes heart that if this "crazy scenario" ever happened,

"Congress would rise up quickly to stop the President," and noted: "If I am naive in thinking this, then we are indeed in trouble."

This gets to the heart of the matter. The protection against lawless behavior in a democracy, in the end, isn't the institutional framework set forth in our Constitution, but the will of public officials to make that system work — and the ability of the public to put aside factional differences and support the rule of law.

If Trump is wise, he'll leave Mueller in place and let this investigation run its course. But if he tries to sack the special counsel, he will be making a bet that the country is too weak and disoriented to stand together behind its constitutional structure of law — which, really, would be the saddest outcome of all.

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

## The New York Times Congress Set to Prod Trump, Who Denies Russia Meddled, to Punish Moscow

David E. Sanger and Matt Flegenheimer

6-8 minutes

WASHINGTON — President Trump appears all but certain to be confronted in coming weeks with a wrenching decision about Russia: whether to veto new, bipartisan sanctions against Moscow, partly for election interference that Mr. Trump has said is a fiction created by Democrats.

The sanctions, which would make it impossible for Mr. Trump to act alone to lift existing economic penalties imposed by President Barack Obama after Russia's annexation of Crimea, were approved late Monday by Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. They have been embraced by Republican leaders, though not by the White House.

The agreement reached on Monday means the new sanctions are set to land on Mr. Trump's desk just as his administration is fending off investigations into possible collusion with Russian officials during the campaign. Both Republicans and Democrats say they doubt Mr. Trump can afford to veto the bill.

But there is no question that the agreement reached in the Senate undercuts one of his stated goals.

In an interview last year with The New York Times, Mr. Trump raised questions about whether it was in the United States' interest to continue the sanctions on Russia. He argued at the time that the United States seemed more concerned about Russia's military activity in Ukraine than neighboring nations or Europe were.

The investigations underway in the House and the Senate, and by a Justice Department special counsel, are pursuing questions of whether Mr. Trump's former national security

adviser, Michael T. Flynn, discussed with the Russian ambassador the possibility of reversing sanctions that Mr. Obama imposed in the last days of his administration. Those sanctions sought to punish Russia for hacking that targeted the Democratic National Committee and state voting databases.

The new sanctions would make lifting those penalties almost impossible. They would cement the Ukraine sanctions, and impose new economic restrictions on "corrupt Russian actors," officials involved in human rights abuses, suppliers of weapons to the Syrian government and anyone who conducts "malicious cyberactivity on behalf of the Russian government."

For President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, the passage of the new sanctions suggests that the larger goal of last year's hacking and information warfare against the United States may have failed. If his strategic goal was to get sanctions lifted, he may enter his first meeting with Mr. Trump, expected this summer, with more sanctions coming at a moment of growing domestic unrest in Russia.

While it was unclear whether the House would accept the Senate version of the plan, it seemed likely that the Russia sanctions would remain in a final bill, appended to sanctions against Iran. A spokeswoman for Speaker Paul D. Ryan, Republican of Wisconsin, said he needed to review the legislation, but noted that he had supported efforts to impose sanctions on Russia in the past.

Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson before a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday. Brendan Smialowski/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

But on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson expressed at least some

reservations about the legislation, suggesting to lawmakers that new sanctions could undercut the administration's efforts to collaborate with Russia when it is in the United States' interest.

"We have some channels that are open where we're starting to talk," Mr. Tillerson said, citing efforts to engage diplomatically with Russia over its role in Syria. "And I think what I wouldn't want to do is close the channels off with something new."

Before the Senate pursued bipartisan sanctions against Russia, Mr. Tillerson had requested more time before new penalties were proposed, hoping to use the administration's early months to improve a relationship he said had reached a low point.

Some top Republicans had been inclined to give the White House time on the issue. But patience has worn thin — a shift made clear by the deal reached on Monday.

On Tuesday, Mr. Tillerson strained to demonstrate much progress, even after his trip to Moscow several months ago and a visit to Washington by Russia's foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov.

"Our relationship's at an all-time low, and it's been deteriorating further," he told senators on the Foreign Relations Committee, where he had been called to testify about the State Department's budget. "Our objective is to stabilize that."

In Syria, Mr. Tillerson said, American efforts to engage with Russia are "progressing in a positive way, but it is far too early in the process to say whether they're going to bear fruit."

He suggested that the administration would prefer "the flexibility to turn that heat up" on Russia sanctions if attempts to recalibrate the relationship with Moscow — the Trump

administration will not use "reset," a word favored by Hillary Clinton when she was secretary of state — ultimately falter.

"They have done plenty already that they should be responding to," Senator Robert Menendez, Democrat of New Jersey, shot back.

Democrats have been quick to cite Mr. Trump's friendlier posture toward Russia as a critical rationale for entrusting more review powers to Congress.

Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the minority leader, said that it was "particularly significant" that a bipartisan coalition was seeking to re-establish Congress "as the final arbiter of sanctions relief."

"Particularly," he added from the Senate floor, "considering that this administration has been too eager to put sanctions relief on the table." Mr. Schumer said he hoped the president would sign the legislation, "even though it cedes the power to Congress."

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Democrat of New Hampshire and a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, expressed relief that the bipartisan plan would ensure "that current sanctions cannot be unilaterally unwound by this administration."

Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, called the agreement "a signal action," framing Russia's efforts to interfere in last year's election as "the result of eight years of a failed foreign policy" under Mr. Obama.

But in acknowledging the effort at interference, Mr. McConnell was essentially accepting the findings of the intelligence agencies. Mr. Trump briefly acknowledged those findings at the end of December, but ever since he has questioned the quality of the intelligence. His aides say he views any effort to accuse the Russians of trying to

manipulate the election as part of a campaign to delegitimize his victory.

Lawmakers from both parties had expressed frustration that sanctions legislation had not been taken up sooner, in large part because Senator Bob Corker, Republican of Tennessee and the chairman of the

Foreign Relations Committee, said he would give the administration space to make good on its pledge to reshape the Russia relationship. On Tuesday, Mr. Corker said, "I really do think we've ended up with a very good piece of legislation."

Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, said this week that the delay in acting on Russia sanctions had been "unacceptable."

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, predicted that Mr. Trump would face

immense pressure not to stand in the way of bipartisan legislation punishing Russia.

"I'd be very, very surprised if the president vetoes this bill," he said before the deal was announced. "And he's surprised me in a lot of different things."

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Davidson

9-11 minutes

Updated June 13, 2017 7:41 p.m. ET

The White House is set to launch its search for the next Federal Reserve chief, according to a senior official, and it will be managed by Gary Cohn, the former Wall Street executive who some market strategists believe could be a candidate for the post himself.

Officials won't publicly outline any timetable for their decision or shortlist of candidates. Fed Chairwoman Janet Yellen's term runs through January, and President Donald Trump didn't rule out her reappointment in an April interview.

Ms. Yellen's reappointment isn't an outcome many observers expect because of Mr. Trump's fierce criticism of her during the final weeks of last year's presidential campaign. But his willingness to consider her speaks to the amicable relationship they have forged since Mr. Trump took office, observers say.

Since taking office, the president and his advisers haven't publicly questioned the Fed's actions—including its decision to raise short-term interest rates in March. The Fed has also signaled it is likely to raise rates again at its two-day meeting that concludes Wednesday.

An alternative to Ms. Yellen could be Mr. Cohn, who became Mr. Trump's top economic adviser after a 26-year career at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. Mr. Cohn has emerged as a key intermediary in the administration's relationship with the central bank.

When publicly asked if he is interested in the Fed job, Mr. Cohn and other White House officials have said he is focused on his current job. But former colleagues said he has cultivated an appreciation for the power of the Fed during his long career on Wall Street and for the institution's

relative freedom during his current stint in Washington.

While Mr. Trump's 2016 criticisms of Ms. Yellen suggested the central bank would face a rough time with the new administration, the president and Ms. Yellen are off to a surprisingly smooth start.

Weeks after his inauguration, Mr. Trump held court with Ms. Yellen in the Oval Office. Seated behind the office's Resolute desk, he told her she was doing a good job, according to people familiar with the exchange. Ms. Yellen sat across from Mr. Trump in a chair next to Mr. Cohn, who arranged the meeting.

The Republican president told Ms. Yellen he considered her, like himself, a "low-interest-rate" person, those familiar with the exchange said. During a conversation that lasted about 15 minutes, they discussed how economic policy might help the millions of U.S. citizens who felt left behind during the postcrisis recovery.

Mr. Trump's April comments marked a reversal from last year, when he accused Ms. Yellen of keeping rates low to help Democrats.

Mr. Trump and his administration have, so far, opted to stay neutral in public on Fed decisions, a contrast to his administration's criticisms of other nonpartisan institutions such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Congressional Budget Office and the courts.

"The Fed will do what they need to do, and we respect the powers of the Fed," Mr. Cohn said in a March interview on Fox News, one of his rare public comments on the central bank.

Mr. Trump wants a fast-growing economy, and that means he won't want the Fed raising interest rates so aggressively that it thwarts any boom. Ms. Yellen, for her part, wants to preserve the independence of an institution that faces more political hostility than at any time in a generation.

On paper, the White House and the Fed appear headed for a collision. The president wants to raise the economy's annual growth rate to at

least 3%, but Fed officials think demographic trends and slow productivity growth mean the economy can grow sustainably at around a 2% rate.

With the unemployment rate at 4.3%, the Fed would likely accelerate interest-rate increases if Mr. Trump's administration took steps to lift growth in a way that simply boosted short-term demand. This hasn't been a problem yet because Mr. Trump's administration hasn't managed to move its agenda through Congress.

Some observers caution against reading much into Mr. Trump's silence on Fed policy because the central bank hasn't done anything to upset the administration.

Stocks have moved to record highs while federal borrowing costs have fallen. A likely Fed move Wednesday would lift its benchmark rate to a range between 1% and 1.25%, a very low level historically.

But if the Fed takes action Mr. Trump perceives to be threatening, he could become more vocal, said Peter Conti-Brown, a financial historian at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

"The minute that 'Morning Joe' has a report about a Fed action that could harm Donald Trump, set an egg timer and see how long before he tweets," Mr. Conti-Brown said.

Though Mr. Trump and Ms. Yellen were born two months apart in neighboring boroughs of New York City, they couldn't be more different.

One, from Queens, is the brash celebrity developer who relies heavily on his gut, professes little interest in academic expertise and brings a deep skepticism of established institutions to Washington.

The other, from Brooklyn, is a risk-averse economist who prepares meticulously for speeches and meetings, has vacationed with suitcases full of books and has spent her career in the halls of academia and central banking.

Their placid relationship reflects Mr. Cohn's leading role. Ms. Yellen meets regularly with Mr. Cohn and Treasury Secretary Steven

Mnuchin, who also spent much of his career at Goldman Sachs.

Mr. Cohn has emphasized to colleagues the importance to markets of not publicly second-guessing monetary-policy decisions, following a rule established in the Democratic administration of former President Bill Clinton by another Goldman-executive-turned-presidential-counselor, Robert Rubin, who later became Treasury secretary.

Mr. Cohn takes pride in convincing Mr. Trump of the economic benefits of respecting the Fed's independence, including not firing off verbal or Twitter attacks on the central bank, according to people who have discussed the issue with him.

Mr. Trump can put his stamp on the institution by filling three open seats on the Fed's seven-member board of governors.

The Fed chairman and vice chairman jobs come open next year. Many Wall Street and Washington observers expect Mr. Trump to select his own candidate for the top job, possibly Mr. Cohn.

Mr. Cohn knows several central-banking officials from their time at Goldman Sachs, including New York Fed President William Dudley, the bank's former chief economist, who met with Mr. Cohn in the early weeks of the administration.

All of this comes at a time when the Fed is facing the most intense political scrutiny in decades. The financial crisis and its aftermath prompted lawmakers to debate monetary policy in a way not seen since Paul Volcker was Fed chairman in the 1980s.

The harshest criticism has come from congressional Republicans. Many resented the Fed's extraordinary measures to boost economic growth long after the 2007-09 recession, with ultralow borrowing costs making former President Barack Obama's deficits smaller than forecast.

Republican lawmakers also said the Fed worked too closely with Mr. Obama's Democratic administration and Democrats in Congress to



overhaul postcrisis regulation through the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act.

Some vitriol aimed at the Fed may ease once Mr. Trump makes his appointments, senior White House officials said.

Fed officials have defended the regulations. "We've accomplished a lot. We have a much safer system," Ms. Yellen told graduate students in Ann Arbor, Mich., in April.

Some White House officials believe Dodd-Frank gave the Fed too much power. They are preparing to

nominate a Fed vice chairman for bank supervision, Randal Quarles, who served in the Treasury Department of former GOP President George W. Bush, who could favor a lighter touch.

White House officials also have expressed reservations internally over the Fed's postcrisis purchases of mortgage-backed securities—one of the extraordinary measures it took to stimulate growth. Some critics said the purchases amounted to fiscal policy by determining the allocation of credit in the economy.

Mr. Trump's administration is considering nominating Marvin Goodfriend, a respected monetary economist who has articulated those reservations, to the Fed board.

These concerns haven't been aired publicly by the administration, in contrast with Mr. Trump's comments during last year's election, when he said Ms. Yellen should be "ashamed of herself" for keeping rates low.

"There was a lot of uncertainty about how this was going to play out," said Donald Kohn, a former Fed vice chairman who met with Mr. Cohn in February. "I would say, 'So far, so good.'"

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**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.**

## **GOP Lawmaker Floats 5-Year Phase-In of Border Adjustment Tax**

Richard Rubin  
6-8 minutes

"It's hard to determine where...the border begins in the cloud," he said.

Mr. Brady's proposal for a 20% top corporate-tax rate includes border adjustment, which exempts exports from U.S. taxation but denies companies the ability to deduct import costs.

Under the phase-in suggested by Mr. Brady, only 20% of import costs would be nondeductible in the first year of the new tax system, stepping up steadily each year until it reaches 100% in the fifth year. The tax exemption for exports would phase in on a parallel schedule. Mr. Brady said he was sensitive to long-term contracts and agreements denominated in dollars and wanted to give companies time to adjust.

The phase-in likely isn't enough to soften or halt the opposition to border adjustment.

"Chairman Brady's proposed five-year transition does nothing to change the harmful impact on consumers, it only delays the political consequences for lawmakers," said Joshua Baca, a spokesman for Americans for Affordable Products, a coalition of border-adjustment opponents. "It is past time for Chairman Brady to read the writing on the wall and sideline the Border Adjustment Tax so that our tax code can be reformed; otherwise, his actions serve no other purpose than to severely undercut a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Opponents warn that taxing imports would drive up consumer prices and they doubt that currencies would adjust to offset the tax changes as quickly and smoothly as some economists project.

If the currency did adjust quickly, with the dollar rising as much as 25%, importers would get a windfall benefit in the early years from

cheaper foreign products and then lose that edge as the border adjustment takes effect.

Border adjustments aren't new. They are a core feature of value-added taxes around the world. But no country has tried the border-adjusted corporate tax that Republicans are proposing, and the plan, if it ever became law, could trigger retaliation from other countries and a challenge at the World Trade Organization.

The issue has fractured the U.S. corporate world into competing coalitions with companies such as Eli Lilly & Co. and Oracle Corp. backing border adjustment and firms like Macy's Inc. and Best Buy Co. opposing it.

The American Made Coalition, which backs border adjustment, said Tuesday that it wanted Congress and the administration to keep working toward what it called a level playing field.

"It is unfortunate that some groups remain committed to sinking tax reform at every turn rather than work on ways to fix a broken system that hurts American workers," said John Gentzel, a coalition spokesman. "We applaud Chairman Brady for his steadfast commitment to comprehensive tax reform."

The idea has steadily lost support since Mr. Brady first pitched it in June 2016. It now seems nearly impossible for border adjustment to pass the Senate, and there's even opposition from several Republicans on Mr. Brady's committee.

The disagreement over border adjustment is one of several major obstacles standing in the way of Republicans' goal of rewriting the tax code this year. They still express public confidence despite a lack of unity on this item and other

major proposals to offset the budgetary effect of tax rate cuts.

But Mr. Brady and House Speaker Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) have clung to border adjustment for several reasons. First, it would generate up to \$1 trillion over a decade to offset rate cuts, though the phased-in approach would lower that number. According to the Tax Foundation, a conservative-leaning group, the phase-in would lower the revenue from border adjustment to \$1.027 trillion from \$1.244 trillion.

And second, border adjustment plays an important role in the way the U.S. taxes foreign income. Republicans and large corporations generally want what's known as a territorial system, in which the U.S. would stop taxing its companies' foreign income.

But that has to be paired with some rule to prevent companies from shifting their U.S. profits to low-tax jurisdiction. Otherwise, much of the corporate tax base could flee.

In the Ryan-Brady plan, border adjustment serves that function. That is because taxes are based not on where profits are earned, which is a definition that companies have learned to manipulate. Instead, taxes are based on the location of consumers, which is harder to move.

Republican senators and the Trump administration haven't offered an alternative plan.

Mr. Brady said he also hoped that border adjustment would encourage companies to shift their supply chains back to the U.S.

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Updated June 13, 2017 3:39 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—The top House Republican tax legislator floated a five-year phase-in to his controversial "border adjustment" idea on Tuesday in a bid to blunt mounting opposition to the concept.

The phase-in offered by Rep. Kevin Brady (R., Texas) is a response to critics who worry about the disruption that border adjustment could cause for companies, supply chains and consumers. It is a sign that Mr. Brady continues to press ahead with border adjustment and refine details of that plan rather than drop the proposal as some Republicans are urging.

"This reflects really the input we've gotten, the feedback we've gotten," Mr. Brady, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, said at the annual meeting of The Wall Street Journal's CFO Network. "A very gradual five-year phase in really resolves the major challenges."

Mr. Brady and House Speaker Paul Ryan are trying to advance their tax-policy vision in the face of unified Democratic resistance to tax cuts and steadily growing Republican concerns. They are aware of the objections and are talking to GOP senators and the White House. But until someone else presents an alternative, Messrs. Brady and Ryan see their plan as viable, and they are fleshing it out.

Mr. Brady also said his plan would include targeted rules for the financial services, insurance, communications and digital-services industries.

*the Atlantic*

## **Reports of Shots Fired at GOP Baseball Practice Game**

The Editors

7-9 minutes

House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, a Louisiana Republican, photographed at a press conference in 2015. *Yuri Gripas / Reuters*

Here's what we know:

—Shots were fired at the congressional baseball practice game.

—House Majority Whip Steve Scalise, a Louisiana Republican, has reportedly been shot. President Donald Trump tweeted that Scalise was “badly injured but will fully recover.”

—Congressman Mo Brooks, an Alabama Republican, told CNN the gunman “appeared to be a white male... if I had to guess, middle-aged.” Brooks said at least five people had been shot.

—Alexandria Police confirmed to *The Atlantic* that a suspect is in custody and does not pose a public-safety threat.

—This is a developing story and we'll update it as we learn more details.

—All updates are in Eastern Standard Time (GMT -4).

## Updates

### Attacks on Legislators are Rare, But They Do Happen

Violence against federal legislators is less common than assassination attempts against presidents, but the deliberative branch has seen its share of tragedies and near-tragedies.

The most recent shooting of a member of Congress took place only six years ago when the Arizona Democrat Gabby Giffords was shot in the head during a constituent event in Tucson in 2011. Giffords survived, but was

forced to leave Congress because of her injuries. After wounding Giffords, the gunman shot and killed six other people at the event, including federal judge John Roll. Giffords has since turned her attention to campaigning for stricter gun laws. On Twitter, she sent her regards to those injured Wednesday and praised members of the Capitol Police.

No member of Congress has been killed on U.S. soil since the assassination of Massachusetts Senator Robert Kennedy in 1968. He was the third legislator to die in the line of duty in the 20th century and the 14th overall in American history. Two House representatives were also subsequently killed outside the country: California's Leo Ryan, who was killed by followers of Jim Jones at Jonestown in Guyana in 1978, and Georgia's Larry McDonald, who was aboard KAL Flight 007 when it was shot down by Soviet air forces over the Sea of Japan in 1983.

Wednesday's attack on the baseball practice is the first attack on multiple legislators since a shooting inside Congress itself in 1954. A group of Puerto Rican separatists opened fire from a visitors' gallery into the House chamber during a debate, wounding five legislators but killing none of them. In 1998, a gunman killed two Capitol Police officers while attempting to enter the Capitol itself; one of the officers wounded him and prevented further attack.

Presidents are known for their extensive security detail and Capitol Hill itself is well-fortified by its own police force. But individual members of Congress rarely have their own police protection. In a CNN interview Wednesday morning, Kentucky Senator Rand Paul said the only reason Capitol Police were present during the baseball practice was because Louisiana Representative Steve Scalise, who

also serves as the House majority whip, is a member of congressional leadership.

Alexandria's Del Ray neighborhood prides itself on its small-town feel. It still has a thriving Main Street and locally owned businesses. The community, which is about seven miles outside of Washington, D.C., is a popular neighborhood for working professionals (I've lived here for nearly five years). Crime, as such, is not common; violent crime is even rarer. It's all but certain this incident will be discussed for some time to come.

Representative Mo Brooks of Alabama was on the baseball field at the time of the shooting early Wednesday. Brooks described the scene to CNN shortly afterward:

“I was on deck about to hit batting practice on the third base side of home plate and I hear a loud bam. And I look around and behind third base in the third base dug out, which is cinderblock, I see a rifle. And I see a little bit of a body and then I hear another bam and I realize there is an active shooter,” he said. “At the same time, I hear Steve Scalise over near second base scream. He was shot. He's our majority whip. The gun was a semiautomatic.”

He added: “It continues to fire at different people. You can imagine all the people in the field scatter. I run around to the first base side of home plate. We have a batting cage that's got plastic wrapped around it to stop foul balls. I hide behind the plastic. That plastic is not real good. I was lying on the ground as gunfire continued. I heard a break in the gunfire and decided to take a chance. I ran from home plate to the first base dug out, which is also cinderblock and down two or three feet so you can have better cover. There were a number of congressmen and congressional staffers ... lying on the ground. One

of them was wounded in the leg. I took off my belt and myself and another congressman—I don't remember who—applied a tourniquet to try to slow down the bleeding.”

Brooks then described shots fired between the gunman and the security detail. Once they got the all clear, Brooks said they “ran out to second base for Steve Scalise. We started giving him some liquids, putting—I put pressure on his wound in his hip and a congressman from Ohio ... fortunately is a physician. He started doing what you need to do to try to minimize the blood loss. Shortly thereafter the police showed up and a helicopter landed in center field and took away whomever the folks decided was the most wounded, most critical. I don't know who that person was. At that time the police were causing all of us to gather outside the first baseline in the chain link fence in order to help assure if there was a second shooter that we would be better protected.”

You can watch the interview here:

### Trump: 'We Are Deeply Saddened by This Tragedy'

In a statement, President Trump said that he and Vice President Mike Pence “are aware of the shooting incident in Virginia and are monitoring developments closely.” Here's the full statement from the president released Wednesday morning:

The Vice President and I are aware of the shooting incident in Virginia and are monitoring developments closely. We are deeply saddened by this tragedy. Our thoughts and prayers are with the members of Congress, their staffs, Capitol Police, first responders, and all others affected.

THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL

## Senators Say Trump's Planned State Department Cuts Won't Pass

Felicia Schwartz

5-7 minutes

Updated June 13, 2017 6:11 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Leaders of a Senate committee said Tuesday that the Trump administration's 2018 budget proposal, which includes large spending cuts at the State Department, won't make it through Congress and pressed Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to explain the administration's priorities.

Senators also asked Mr. Tillerson about the administration's policies toward North Korea and Russia in his first appearance on Capitol Hill as chief U.S. diplomat.

Mr. Tillerson appeared in front of lawmakers just after announcing that an American college student, Otto Warmbier, was released from prison in Pyongyang.

Mr. Tillerson announced the news to senators but declined to comment on what led to the North Korean regime's decision to release the student or on his medical condition. Mr. Warmbier's relatives said he had been in a coma for

months before his release, the Washington Post reported.

The U.S. chief diplomat said the administration of President Donald Trump has to make “difficult decisions” as it looked to cut the State Department budget by about one-third, and that the U.S. would focus its efforts on missions that deliver “the greatest value and opportunity” for Americans.

He argued that the people working at the State Department—rather than budget priorities—would make the State Department effective.

“I think you know that the budget that's been presented is not going

Asked by Sen. Chris Murphy (D., Conn.) whether the cuts to the State Department's budget were a deliberate strategy to pull back from world affairs, Mr. Tillerson said he didn't see it that way.

"I take a completely counter view to the way you've interpreted it," Mr. Tillerson said.

Explaining the administration's view, he said: "America has been leading for a very long time and American people have been reaching in their pockets and paying for this leadership for a very long time...but you, our allies, must do your part."

Mr. Tillerson will also face two House committees on Wednesday.

At a separate hearing on Tuesday, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said he stood by his statements predating the Trump administration in which he said cuts in diplomatic support would require increases in military spending—a way of saying U.S. outreach was as important as military force.

"I think America has two fundamental powers, the power of inspiration and the power of intimidation, and they have to work together and the State Department represents inspiration overseas," he said in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The Trump proposal would cut spending at the State Department and the related U.S. Agency for International Development by 32%.

Senators also asked Mr. Tillerson if he supported Russia sanctions legislation, which senators reached a deal on late Monday night.

Mr. Tillerson said the Trump administration wanted flexibility "to turn that heat up" depending on how bilateral efforts were going.

"We have some channels that are open where we're starting to talk," he said, pointing to efforts related to Syria and Ukraine, and said he wouldn't want to close them off.

Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D., N.H.), in the afternoon hearing, asked Mr. Tillerson about ongoing talks with Russia to possibly return recreational compounds owned by Russia, which the U.S. seized in retaliation for Russia's alleged interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

"This is part of how we take some of the irritants out of the relationship," Mr. Tillerson said, saying the U.S. also is raising its own concerns with Russia as part of this channel, including harassment of U.S. diplomats.

Lawmakers in the afternoon session also said they were concerned about cuts to embassy security, which Mr. Tillerson said could be explained in part by how the U.S. is committing to certain projects, and that the U.S. has increased funds for diplomatic security, the law-enforcement arm of the State Department that protects diplomats and embassies.

Sens. Cory Gardner (R., Colo.) and Bob Menendez (D., N.J.) asked Mr. Tillerson about a report released Monday about possible illicit trading networks benefiting North Korea's nuclear and missile programs.

Mr. Tillerson said he stressed the necessity of cracking down on North Korea's trade in every bilateral meeting he has, and said that North Korea's intricate financial networks are "difficult, but not impossible to address."

He said Russia and China are key players in this effort, and that the U.S. would raise North Korea sanctions in a high-level meeting with the Chinese next week.

—Gordon Lubold contributed to this article.

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## Milbank : What Republicans are doing while you're distracted by Sessions and Comey

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

6-7 minutes

Monday was the first anniversary of the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando that left 49 dead. Saturday will be the second anniversary of the church shooting in Charleston, S.C., where nine were murdered at Bible study.

In between these two somber remembrances, House Republicans will be commemorating the occasion in their own way: They will begin work relaxing restrictions on firearm silencers — thereby making it easier for shooters to shoot without being noticed.

Classy.

National News Alerts

Major national and political news as it breaks.

To this injury, the legislators add insult with the bill's name: a provision of the "Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act" called the "Hearing Protection Act" — as if it were subsidizing earplugs. That's like calling legislation that expands the availability of machine guns the "Carpal Tunnel Protection Act" because it spares would-be shooters the repetitive motion of trigger pulling.

With all the hullabaloo over Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the Russia scandal and President Trump's latest tweets, few are likely to notice when the bill gets a hearing Wednesday before a House natural resources subcommittee. And that's the point. Trump, as candidate and president, has been a weapon of mass distraction.

Admittedly, nobody would wish on himself the kind of distractions Trump has been generating lately. The inquiries into his and his aides' Russia ties and his firing of FBI Director James B. Comey could ultimately end his presidency. But though these are consequential and necessary matters — and though there's no way to avoid attention going to the many other bizarre happenings in Trump world, such as the televised hosannas showered on him at Monday's Cabinet meeting — these inevitably distract from serious matters that, in any normal time, would dominate headlines.

As the Comey craze and Sessions obsession entertain the nation, Senate Republican leaders have used the diversion to advance Trumpcare legislation in the shadows.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) invoked "Rule XIV," a procedure that allows legislation to skip committees and go directly to the floor. McConnell is hoping to rush the health-care bill to a vote before the July 4 recess, and

GOP senators working on the Senate legislation aren't even sharing the specifics with their Republican colleagues.

The news outlet Axios this week reported that Senate Republicans don't plan to divulge the details of their legislation publicly. "We aren't stupid," one senior GOP aide told Axios. No, they aren't. And their subterfuge is working. Unnoticed by most, Senate Republicans believe they have cobbled together the 50 votes necessary to repeal Obamacare.

On the very day that Comey testified before the Senate, the House passed legislation largely repealing the Dodd-Frank financial reforms implemented after the 2008 crash. The bill would, among other things, remove the requirement that retirement advisers put their customers' interests before their own. The House on Tuesday afternoon took up another controversial matter under cover of the Sessions distraction: As the attorney general testified in the Senate, the House voted along party lines to require a Social Security number for people to get Obamacare benefits. It is meant to block illegal immigrants from accessing health-care benefits. Opponents say it would also deny medical care for many newborn babies who are citizens.

The Comey contretemps has also obscured splits between mainstream and conservative

Republicans that have made a budget resolution unlikely. House Republicans are moving on with appropriations legislation for 2018 without a budget. This split could jeopardize tax reform and increase the likelihood of a government shutdown or default later this year.

It's difficult to focus on budget nuances, though, when Trump has turned the White House into a circus. In addition to the Comey and Sessions performances, there is also the clown show: At this week's Cabinet meeting, nearly all of Trump's Cabinet members offered praise for their boss. There were, in all, 46 occurrences of "thank you," 32 of "great," 15 of "honor" and seven of "privilege" as they extolled Trump and his virtues: "Just the greatest privilege of my life. ... My hat's off to you. ... What an incredible honor ... I can't thank you enough for the privileges you've given me. ... Thank you for the opportunity and the blessing that you've given us to serve your agenda."

As we gape in astonishment at a president receiving tributes from his coterie — like a strongman from his junta — Americans might find it difficult to concentrate on an equally astonishing thing happening this week: that House "hearing protection" bill, which would end nearly a century of strict regulation of silencers and thwart the new gunfire-detection technology cities use to fight crime.



It's no small irony that those trying to make silencers more available are relying on noise — the din of

Trump's antics and the clatter of the Russia probes — so that most

Americans don't hear what's happening until it's too late.



## Bernie Sanders: How Democrats Can Stop Losing Elections

Bernie Sanders  
6-7 minutes

Bernie Sanders with fellow Democrats outside the Capitol in May. Alex Wong/Getty Images

In 2016, the Democratic Party lost the presidency to possibly the least popular candidate in American history. In recent years, Democrats have also lost the Senate and House to right-wing Republicans whose extremist agenda is far removed from where most Americans are politically. Republicans now control almost two-thirds of governor's offices and have gained about 1,000 seats in state legislatures in the past nine years. In 24 states, Democrats have almost no political influence at all.

If these results are not a clear manifestation of a failed political strategy, I don't know what is. For the sake of our country and the world, the Democratic Party, in a very fundamental way, must change direction. It has got to open its doors wide to working people and young people. It must become less dependent on wealthy contributors, and it must make clear to the working families of this country that, in these difficult times, it is prepared to stand up and fight for their rights. Without hesitation, it must take on the powerful corporate interests that dominate the economic and political life of the country.

There are lessons to be learned from the recent campaign in Britain.

The Conservatives there called the snap election with the full expectation that they would win a landslide. They didn't. Against all predictions they lost 13 seats in Parliament while Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party won 32. There is never one reason elections are won or lost, but there is widespread agreement that momentum shifted to Labour after it released a very progressive manifesto that generated much enthusiasm among young people and workers. One of the most interesting aspects of the election was the soaring turnout among voters 34 or younger.

The British elections should be a lesson for the Democratic Party. We already have among the lowest voter turnout of any major country on earth. Democrats will not win if the 2018 midterm election turnout resembles the unbelievably low 36.7 percent of eligible voters who cast ballots in 2014. The Democrats must develop an agenda that speaks to the pain of tens of millions of families who are working longer hours for lower wages and to the young people who, unless we turn the economy around, will have a lower standard of living than their parents.

Eleanor Davis

A vast majority of Americans understand that our current economic model is a dismal failure. Who can honestly defend the current grotesque level of inequality in which the top 1 percent owns more than the bottom 90 percent? Who thinks it's right that, despite a

significant increase in worker productivity, millions of Americans need two or three jobs to survive, while 52 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent? What person who claims to have a sense of morality can justify the fact that the richest people in our country have a life expectancy about 15 years longer than our poorest citizens?

While Democrats should appeal to moderate Republicans who are disgusted with the Trump presidency, too many in our party cling to an overly cautious, centrist ideology. The party's main thrust must be to make politics relevant to those who have given up on democracy and bring millions of new voters into the political process. It must be prepared to take on the right-wing extremist ideology of the Koch brothers and the billionaire class, and fight for an economy and a government that work for all, not just the 1 percent.

Donald Trump wants to throw 23 million Americans off health insurance. Democrats must guarantee health care to all as a right, through a Medicare-for-all, single-payer program.

Mr. Trump wants to give enormous tax breaks to billionaires. Democrats must support a progressive tax system that demands that the very wealthy, Wall Street and large corporations begin paying their fair share of taxes.

Mr. Trump wants to sell our infrastructure to Wall Street and foreign countries. Democrats must

fight for a trillion-dollar public investment that creates over 13 million good-paying jobs.

Mr. Trump has withdrawn the United States from the Paris Agreement on climate change. Democrats must take on the fossil fuel industry and accelerate our efforts to combat climate change by encouraging energy efficiency and the use of sustainable energy.

Mr. Trump has proposed deep cuts to higher education. Democrats must make public colleges and universities tuition free, and substantially lower student debt.

Mr. Trump has doubled-down on our failed approach to crime that has resulted in the United States' having more people in jail than any other country. Democrats must reform a broken criminal justice system and invest in jobs and education for our young people, not more jails and incarceration.

Mr. Trump has scapegoated and threatened the 11 million undocumented people in our country. Democrats must fight for comprehensive immigration reform and a path toward citizenship.

This is a pivotal moment in American history. If the Democrats are prepared to rally grass-roots America in every state and to stand up to the greed of the billionaire class, the party will stop losing elections. And it will create the kind of country the American people want and deserve.



## Editorial : It's time to get realistic about the debt ceiling

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

June 13 at 7:50 PM

POLITICIANS DO some irresponsible things, but few could be more reckless than periodically fooling around with the "full faith and credit" of the United States.

The ironclad quality of the federal government's debt, established over centuries, has made Treasury securities universally tradable; these "risk-free" assets undergird the global financial system. Every so often, Congress must refresh America's credibility by extending the statutory limit on federal borrowing, thus removing even the smallest chance that the government will run out of cash and have to default on certain of its obligations.

Yet just as often, members of Congress and the executive branch say and do things to suggest a willingness to trifle with that responsibility; Republicans on Capitol Hill did so repeatedly during the Obama administration, seeking to attach otherwise unpassable spending cuts to debt-limit increases. Last month, White House budget director Mick Mulvaney publicly floated a similar approach, and National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn echoed him. This created confusion at a moment when the debt limit had already been technically exceeded and the Treasury Department was resorting to "special measures" to keep all of the financial balls in the air.

Act Four newsletter

The intersection of culture and politics.

Fortunately, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has stepped forward to dispel any doubt. In congressional testimony Monday, he clarified two important points: First, a failure to increase the debt limit would not be a manageable nonevent but would "create a serious problem." Second, though Treasury can indeed keep paying the bills through the summer, it would be far better to pass a bill well before August, and pass it cleanly — unencumbered by amendments.

Mr. Mnuchin's words carried extra weight because President Trump, to his credit, had publicly empowered the secretary to speak for the

4-5 minutes

The Post's View

Opinion

**Opinion** A column or article in the Opinions section (in print, this is known as the Editorial Pages).

By Editorial Board

The Post's View

Opinion

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administration on this point. Adult in the room, with respect to government debt, is a role Mr. Mnuchin has played for Mr. Trump before, most memorably during the 2016 campaign, when Mr. Trump suggested that the United States might reduce its debt by making a deal, a la Greece or Argentina. At that point, Mr. Mnuchin reassured everyone that “the government has

to honor its debts.”

We'll take Mr. Mnuchin's apparent ascendance in the latest kerfuffle as a sign that the president is moving up the learning curve. The kerfuffle itself, though — repetitive and unnecessary as it is — reminds us that the system of adjusting the national credit-card limit is in need of reform. At the hearing, Mr. Mnuchin floated one idea, which

would be for Congress to adopt additional borrowing authority in the same legislative act that calls for spending beyond the government's means. “The debt ceiling should not be a Republican issue or a Democrat issue,” he said. “It should be an acknowledgment that we have spent the money and need to fund the government.”

This is the same conclusion all of Mr. Mnuchin's predecessors and all previous Congresses have eventually reached, once those who saw political advantage in pretending otherwise had had their fun. It's simple realism: Wouldn't it be nice if the country could just write simple realism into law?

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Joffe: How Trump Is Like Obama

Josef Joffe  
6-7 minutes

June 13, 2017 7:19 p.m. ET

*Uncle Sam is getting pushed around by the rest of the world, and we aren't going to take it anymore.* That is the gist of President Trump's “America First” doctrine. But let's cut No. 45 some slack. He is not the first to chop away at the made-in-the-USA global order designed by Harry S. Truman 70 years ago. Pride of place must go to No. 44, Barack Obama.

What, that exemplar of internationalist virtue? True, President Obama did not trumpet “America First.” His standard shibboleth was “It's time for a little nation-building at home,” echoing George McGovern's “Come home, America!” from 1972. Let's lay down the burden and mend crumbling bridges and failing schools, Mr. Obama suggested. Cut to Mr. Trump, who wants to invest \$1 trillion in the domestic infrastructure.

*Come home or To hell with you—* either way, the message reads: The world's housekeeper will now look out for No. 1. So Mr. Trump keeps bullying the allies on defense spending, demanding zillions in back pay for the security the U.S. has always delivered at a discount. Now listen to Mr. Obama. In a 2016 interview with the Atlantic, he rumbled: “free riders aggravate me.”

Mr. Trump hasn't brought the boys home, but Mr. Obama did. He drew down the European force to about 50,000 from 75,000. During the

1980s, it numbered 350,000. That was supposed to be accompanied by the fabled “pivot” to Asia, but it didn't materialize. Instead Mr. Obama presided over a global retraction, most grievously in Iraq. Then, refusing to enforce his “red line” in Syria, Mr. Obama invited Russia in and effectively welcomed Iran, too. Turning away from old allies, he chased the will-o'-the-wisp of Iranian friendship. In Mr. Obama's view, paraphrased by the Atlantic's Jeffrey Goldberg, “the Middle East is no longer terribly important to American interests.” Meanwhile, Tehran has expanded to the Mediterranean.

The Obama agenda was *self*-containment, a first in the history of great powers. So who would mind the global store, as the U.S. had done since 1945? Under Mr. Obama, “Yes, we can” segued into “Others will.” Moscow, Tehran and Beijing did, but not as retainers of Aloof America. Rising powers have never seen a vacuum they did not like.

Set aside Mr. Trump's in-your-face tweets and savor the kinship between Donald the Crude and Barack the Cool. Each in his own way—softly or brutally—has signaled: America, previously the “indispensable nation,” is vacating its penthouse at the top of the global hierarchy. No great power has ever done so voluntarily; all America's predecessors were sent packing by more-muscular competitors.

Yes, but doesn't Mr. Trump want to “make America great again”? First, this is a mendacious slogan. By any

measure, America was not a limping giant on Jan. 20 but the greatest power on earth, given its economic primacy, military clout, diplomatic centrality and, not to forget, cultural sway. The world dresses, watches, listens and dances American. Some has-been!

Second, what makes a nation “great”? Mr. Trump thinks it is unbridled national egotism, flanked by the extended middle finger, as when he withdrew from the nonbinding Paris climate accord. Promptly, China began to posture as the guardian of global goodness. Another great victory was pushing aside the leader of tiny Montenegro at the NATO summit's photo-op last month.

The short take on Trumpist diplomacy: A schoolyard bully is never elected class president. The other kids may fear him, but they won't follow him. Leadership means taking care of others while going to the top. It comes from authority grounded in consent, not humiliation of the weak.

Still, America's slide into abdication began in 2009, not in 2017. What made America great after World War II? Sheer clout, at first. So why did the Pax Americana endure while Europe and Japan rose from the ruins and China grew into the world's second-biggest economy? Because of the genius of pre-Obama, pre-Trump diplomacy: Achieve your own ends not by going *mano-a-mano*, but by serving the interests of others in the process, like safeguarding security and the liberal trading order.

“Too expensive!” trumpets No. 45. Let's consult No. 33, President Truman: “Which is better for the country,” he asked with a view to Europe, “to spend 20 or 30 billion dollars to keep the peace, or to do as we did in 1920 and then have to spend 100 billion dollars for four years to fight a war?”

In World War II, U.S. defense outlays peaked at 41% of gross domestic product. Today, the cost of empire has come down to 3.6%—a steal. So the Europeans spend only 1.5% on average? Global powers always pay more for defense; that's part of what makes them great. The U.S. is not doing the European Union a favor by adding its own weight to an Atlantic order that doubles as the world's largest trade and investment relationship. The insurance premium is worth it, especially given Vladimir Putin's blatant strategic ambitions.

Do good for yourself by doing good for others—that has been the secret of America's *realpolitik* and exalted position. While Mr. Obama wielded hammer and chisel against the nation's perch, Mr. Trump is waving a chain saw. As friends retract, rivals rejoice: What a windfall! But take solace from Bismarck, who supposedly quipped: “God protects children, drunkards and the United States.”

*Mr. Joffe serves on the editorial board of Die Zeit in Hamburg and is a fellow of the Hoover Institution in Stanford, where he also teaches U.S. foreign policy. His latest book is “The Myth of America's Decline.”*

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Costlow : Can the U.S. Afford Modern Nukes?

Matthew R. Costlow

4 minutes

June 13, 2017 7:09 p.m. ET

When President Obama left the White House, he punted on a tough choice: how to modernize the U.S. nuclear force. In the coming weeks,

the Congressional Budget Office is expected to release a report that estimates modernization as currently proposed would cost \$1.2 trillion over 30 years, or about \$40 billion a year. Congress and the Trump administration shouldn't be intimidated by the ostensibly big number.

The plan analyzed by the CBO would replace the nuclear delivery

systems of bombers, missiles and submarines with new ones that incorporate the latest safety and survival features. These changes would enable some systems to perform well into the 2080s. It's ambitious, but this program isn't the budget buster nuclear disarmament supporters describe.

Under the plan, spending on the nuclear arsenal would peak in the

late 2020s at about 6.5% of the Defense Department budget, up from 3.2% today. Recall that military spending consumes only about 15% of the federal budget.

But determining whether modernization is affordable involves more than cost considerations. The Pentagon simultaneously has to consider its priorities and the costs of weapons systems when

determining the best way to protect U.S. interests. According to the Defense Department, the two highest priorities of U.S. strategy are “the survival of the nation” and “the prevention of a catastrophic attack against U.S. territory.” The Pentagon’s Quadrennial Defense Review lists “a secure and effective nuclear deterrent” at the top of a list describing how to achieve such priorities.

Given that the U.S. nuclear arsenal helps to deter the only existential threat to the U.S., major nuclear war, its value can’t be measured by traditional dollar

metrics alone. Budgets are about trade-offs and priorities. As the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Paul Selva, testified earlier this year, “We are emphasizing the nuclear mission over other modernization programs when faced with that choice.”

Critics will cry that every dollar spent on nuclear weapons, which have not been set off in anger since World War II, is a dollar taken from those who are fighting wars right now. But as then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter explained in a speech last year, U.S. nuclear forces are the “bedrock” of American security

and the “highest priority mission” of the Defense Department. They enable current war fighters to achieve their missions.

Even those in the military who could stand to miss out on spending increases because of nuclear modernization efforts, like U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley, support modernization: “It’s not even an Army system and it needs to be overhauled and brought back up to the level of readiness.”

The federal government can afford to spend less than 1% of its multitrillion-dollar budget on nuclear modernization. And with Russia,

China and North Korea all upgrading their nuclear weapons capabilities, just about the only thing the U.S. can’t afford is to end its modernization efforts before they begin.

*Mr. Costlow, a doctoral student at George Mason University, is a policy analyst at the National Institute for Public Policy.*

Appeared in the June 14, 2017, print edition.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Galston : The Revolt of the Forgotten Young

William A. Galston

5-6 minutes

June 13, 2017 7:10 p.m. ET

“The Millennials Are Moving Left.” That’s the headline of an important article in the New Republic by John Judis, who observes the trend in many Western democracies—the U.S., the U.K., France, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain, among others.

This was certainly the story in the British elections last week, which were catastrophic for Theresa May’s Conservatives. Not only did Labour candidates win 63% of voters age 18 to 34, but turnout among this cohort rose more than 20 percentage points from the previous general election, two years ago.

These young voters, Mr. Judis contends, are primarily motivated by underlying economic trends. There is no shortage of evidence in favor of this hypothesis, which points to the fundamental problems of slow growth and increasingly unequal distribution that so many Western democracies now face.

In a speech last December, Mark Carney, the governor of the Bank of England, said that the U.K. was mired in its “first lost decade since the 1860s.” Workers’ earnings after adjusting for inflation, he said, “have

grown at the slowest rate since the mid-19th century.” A Bank of England analysis shows that in the mid-1980s the 10-year moving average of real annual wage growth reached nearly 4%. As recently as 2007, it stood at about 3%. Now it has plunged below zero, meaning workers lost purchasing power for most of the past decade.

This would be bad enough if the pain were shared throughout the population, but of course it isn’t. Real incomes for U.K. residents 60 and over grew 11% between 2007 and 2014, while those 30 and under suffered a 7% loss. Projections suggest these trends are unlikely to improve soon. There are good reasons why young British voters flocked to the Labour Party, whose manifesto promised free college tuition and increased social benefits.

In much of Europe, young people face even greater economic challenges, including unemployment rates far higher than for older workers—25% in France, 38% in Italy, nearly 45% in Spain, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. In the U.S., the share of young Americans earning more than their parents did by age 30 has plunged from 9 in 10 for those born in the 1940s to barely half for those born in the 1980s. The young have been hit especially hard, moreover, by the workforce shift from long-term full-time employees to

contractors and part-timers. As they reach their late 20s and early 30s and begin thinking about marriage and homeownership, the charms of frequent job changes and unpredictable schedules begin to pale.

These economic trends are tilting the axis of political debate. In recent decades, left-wing parties and movements have been dominated by postmaterial concerns such as the environment, identity politics and opposition to wars. But last year Sen. Bernie Sanders, who focused almost exclusively on economic issues, rallied young adults to his side and mounted a surprisingly strong primary challenge to Hillary Clinton, the anointed candidate for the Democratic nomination. Younger voters express more skepticism about capitalism than did their parents, and they appear more open to government-driven responses to economic problems.

As a consequence, the center-left parties of the 1990s are being driven further left, and the ones that have not moved are losing ground to left-wing alternatives. With the exception of Germany, the broad center of democratic politics is being hollowed out. In the U.K., the Liberal Democrats ran as the sole champions of the 48% of voters who cast ballots last year to remain in the European Union. They made little impression on the electorate and gained back only a handful of

the nearly 50 seats they had lost in 2015.

Against this backdrop, the continuing political revolution in France assumes wider significance. In May, by a margin of 2 to 1, French voters chose as their next president Emmanuel Macron, an avowed centrist who ran as an independent, a 39-year-old former banker and appointed government minister with no previous experience in elected office. This past weekend, the electorate put Mr. Macron’s newly created political party within hailing distance of an outright parliamentary majority. If next weekend’s second round of legislative voting confirms the first, he will have a free hand to enact his proposals.

Previous governments have tried and failed to reform France’s rigid labor laws, whose protections for incumbent workers have made employers reluctant to hire new ones. If Mr. Macron can push through changes, and if a revitalized French economy can generate jobs and opportunity for younger workers and entrepreneurs, he could turn out to be the avant-garde for a new generation of centrists who seek a sustainable balance between state and market, and between social security and economic dynamism. If he fails? *Le déluge*, and not only in France.

Appeared in the June 14, 2017, print edition.

## The Washington Post

### Uber CEO Travis Kalanick takes leave amid sweeping changes at company (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/brian.d.fung>

8-10 minutes

Since the beginning of 2017, Uber has seen non-stop controversies

from #DeleteUber to accusations of technology theft. Here are all the controversies in one place. Since the beginning of 2017, Uber has seen non-stop controversies from #deleteuber to accusations of technology theft. (Daron

Taylor, Jhaan Elker/The Washington Post)

Since the beginning of 2017, Uber has seen non-stop controversies from #DeleteUber to accusations of technology theft. Here are all the controversies in one place. (Daron

Taylor, Jhaan Elker/The Washington Post)

Uber embarked on a massive corporate overhaul Tuesday that attempts to rehabilitate one of the technology industry’s most visible, valuable and controversial



companies as it struggles to emerge from months of scandal.

Out — at least for now — is brash chief executive Travis Kalanick, who is taking an indefinite leave and, whenever he returns, faces diminished power both within the company and on Uber's board of directors, which is adding several new "independent" members and diluting his authority.

But even as the company took steps to signal its seriousness in combating sexual harassment and other unprofessional conduct, David Bonderman, a billionaire businessman on Uber's board, made a quip about women at a company-wide meeting Tuesday that stunned many in the audience.

The Switch newsletter

The day's top stories on the world of tech.

As fellow board member Arianna Huffington spoke of the need for more women on Uber's board, Bonderman interrupted to say that would make it "much more likely there'll be more talking" at meetings. He soon apologized to Huffington and in an email to employees in which he acknowledged the joke was "inappropriate."

Hours later, he resigned from the board, saying he did not want to "create distraction as Uber works to build a culture of which we can be proud."

The gaffe marred what was otherwise a carefully managed rollout of 47 recommendations by former U.S. attorney general Eric H. Holder Jr., who along with colleagues at law firm Covington & Burling spent months investigating Uber's corporate culture. The board adopted all the recommendations on Sunday and announced them in Tuesday's meeting to Uber's 14,000 employees.

The moves require a tricky balancing act for a company that, only a few months ago, was among the most widely studied and emulated in the tech industry for its ability to upend an entrenched business model while building nearly \$70 billion in investor value.

Yet many of its strengths — a hard-driving culture built by a chief executive determined surmount any obstacle as the company spread to 75 countries worldwide — contributed to a corporate culture that underscores Silicon Valley's broader struggles with diversity and the treatment of women.

"The ultimate responsibility, for where we've gotten and how we've gotten here rests on my shoulders," Kalanick wrote in an e-mail to employees. "There is of course much to be proud of but there is much to improve. For Uber 2.0 to succeed there is nothing more important than dedicating my time to building out the leadership team. But if we are going to work on Uber 2.0, I also need to work on Travis 2.0 to become the leader that this company needs and that you deserve."

Stripping some of Kalanick's authority is the first of the 47 recommendations from Holder and his team which received inputs from employee polls, focus groups and hundreds of individual interviews.

Uber founder and chief executive Travis Kalanick is taking time away from the company. In an email sent to employees on Tuesday, he said he needs time to grieve for his recently deceased mother and groom his leadership skills. will Uber's chief executive and founder Travis Kalanick take time away from the company, citing the need to grieve for his recently deceased mother. Fred Katayama reports. (Reuters)

Uber founder and chief executive Travis Kalanick is taking time away from the company. In an email sent to employees on Tuesday, he said he needs time to grieve for his recently deceased mother and groom his leadership skills. (Reuters)

Though the company has withheld from the public the full text of the report, the changes announced Tuesday strongly hint of a company where contemporary corporate norms of employee behavior were flouted with impunity.

*[Read the Holder report recommendations]*

"The goal is to enforce a zero tolerance policy toward any kind of abusive behavior — whether it's sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, or any kind of unprofessional behavior," Huffington said in a statement to The Washington Post. "And as I've said again and again, no brilliant jerks will be allowed, and no one will be protected because they are top performers."

The changes run the gamut from new hiring practices to improve diversity and new reporting requirements to handle harassment complaints. The report called for a ban on sexual relationships between managers and their subordinates as well as limits on the consumption of alcohol and a prohibition on using illegal drugs during work hours and at company events.

Employee complaints are to be handled using a comprehensive process, while employee benefits were improved to include equal family leave time for male and female workers.

Even the company's 14 core "values" are getting replaced because some — such as "Let Builders Build" and "Always Be Hustlin'" — were sometimes "used to justifying poor behavior," according to Holder's report.

Yet the recommendations failed to impress former Uber engineer Susan J. Fowler, whose February blog post about her experience being sexually harassed triggered the company's decision to commission Holder's report.

"Ha! Yeah, they'll never apologize," Fowler wrote on Twitter in reply to another person. "I've gotten nothing but aggressive hostility from them. It's all optics."

Under the changes announced Tuesday, senior managers will undergo mandatory leadership training, and Uber's position of head of diversity will be renamed as the "chief diversity and inclusion officer" and report directly to the chief executive or chief operating officer. Uber also will adopt the equivalent of the National Football League's "Rooney Rule" requiring that when the company is filling a key job, at

least one woman and one minority candidate be interviewed before the hire can go forward.

Reports that Kalanick was considering a leave had sparked intense speculation over who might lead a company that has been built in the chief executive's brash image. In his note Kalanick did not name a temporary new chief executive, suggesting instead that he might stay close to operations even while on leave.

"During this interim period, the leadership team, my directs, will be running the company," Kalanick wrote. "I will be available as needed for the most strategic decisions, but I will be empowering them to be bold and decisive in order to move the company forward swiftly."

The corporate shake-up at Uber already has prompted several executive departures, including Monday's announcement that Senior Vice President for Business Emil Michael, a close Kalanick ally and confidant, was leaving amid pressure from the board.

Uber also announced Monday that it was adding a new member, Nestle executive Wan Ling Martello, to one of several empty seats on the board. She is expected to bring financial expertise while also providing another high-profile woman to a company criticized as exemplifying Silicon Valley's male-dominated "bro" culture.

As part of the internal investigation led by Holder, Uber already has fired 20 employees while issuing reprimands and requiring new training for others amid 215 reports of possible sexual harassment, bullying, retaliation and other unprofessional conduct.

"This is a hugely significant event," said Michael Useem, a management professor in the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He added that the list of recommendations reads like a textbook from "Leadership and Management 101" and, if implemented effectively, could serve as a model for other Silicon Valley companies grappling with diversity and harassment issues.