

Revue de presse américaine

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



Mardi 20 juin, réalisation : Josselin Brémaud

STAR TRIBUNE
S&K

Too **HIDEOUS** FOR HUMAN EYES!!!



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FRANCE – EUROPE

Editorial : For Macron, Triumph and a Warning

**The
New York
Times**

The Editorial Board
3-4 minutes

President Emmanuel Macron of France in Paris on Sunday. Pool photo by Bertrand Guay

Along with conferring the legislative power to easily enact promised economic and social reforms, the overwhelming victory by President Emmanuel Macron's party and its allies in Sunday's National Assembly election in France allowed Mr. Macron to make good on his promise of political renewal. Many of the winners in his party were first-time candidates, including some of Arab or African ancestry. A historic number of women

also won seats: 223 of 577 members, versus 155 in the last Parliament.

Sunday's vote also raised cautionary signs. Turnout was the lowest for any legislative race, about 43 percent. A shocking 70 percent of voters stayed away from the polls in the economically marginalized, heavily immigrant department of Seine-Saint-Denis. No candidate prevailed there from Mr. Macron's party, La République en Marche (the Republic on the Move).

But six candidates from Jean-Luc Mélenchon's leftist France Unbowed party did. This should give Mr. Macron serious pause and may give him headaches in Parliament. With an estimated 17 seats nationwide — including one for Mr. Mélenchon

himself in Marseilles — Mr. Mélenchon's party cleared the 15-seat threshold required to form an official parliamentary group, giving the party more speaking time and access to top roles in the assembly.

France's longtime standard-bearers on the left, the Socialists, are all but destroyed as a party after François Hollande's unpopular presidency, with 30 seats, down from 284. Against 350 seats to be held by Mr. Macron and his allies, the center-right Les Républicains party, with 112 seats, is the main opposition party in the new Parliament, despite its fall from 194 seats.

The far-right National Front's Marine Le Pen, who lost her presidential bid against Mr. Macron last month, won her first parliamentary seat, from a

northern rust belt area that elected four other National Front candidates. In all, though, the party won only eight seats.

Mr. Macron doubtless faces turbulence. "Abstention is never good news for democracy," Prime Minister Édouard Philippe asserted. "The government interprets it as a strong obligation to succeed."

The political divide in France, as elsewhere, is increasingly between society's winners and losers. Mr. Macron's government will succeed only if it delivers as much for those who did not vote for him or his party as for those who did.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL**

Editorial : France's Macron Moment (online)

June 19, 2017
7:16 p.m. ET 4

COMMENTS

4-5 minutes

France has for years been the sick democracy of Europe that can't reform itself. But suddenly the French have surprised the world, and maybe themselves, by handing new President Emmanuel Macron a legislative majority and a mandate to restore Gallic vitality.

In Sunday's runoff election for the National Assembly, Mr. Macron's La République en Marche party and its centrist ally Modem clinched 350 of 577 seats. A 60% majority in the Assembly looked impossible a few weeks ago, and the smart money thought Mr. Macron would be forced to cobble a legislative coalition with the center-right Republicans or the center-left Socialists.

Instead voters handed the new President and his upstart party a decisive mandate to act alone. The Republicans and

their center-right allies won 137 seats, down 88 from the previous Assembly. The previously ruling Socialists were humiliated with 45 seats, down 283. The party of Léon Blum and François Mitterrand is now a minor opposition group. The hard-right National Front secured eight seats, short of the 15 that would have allowed Marine Le Pen to shape some of the legislative agenda.

Credit Mr. Macron for seizing the political moment and pursuing the unorthodox strategy of recruiting newcomers and political outsiders as En Marche candidates. They arrive unburdened by a voting history, which means they can be more flexible than traditional politicians. On the other hand, they presumably don't have firm convictions beyond loyalties to Mr. Macron's call to revive French confidence and economic growth.

How will the 39-year-old use this malleable majority? European Union grandees are patting themselves on the back for checking the growth of insurgent political movements on the

Continent. They see Mr. Macron as putting a fresh face on the familiar European "social model" of burdensome regulation, high taxes and bureaucratic hauteur. German Chancellor Angela Merkel exemplified this attitude when she congratulated Mr. Macron for defeating "populism."

If Mr. Macron takes that advice, he'll fail like the last three French Presidents did. At its best Mr. Macron marshaled his own version of populism and even nationalism. This wasn't cramped or ethnocentric nationalism à la Ms. Le Pen. Instead it emphasized inclusive French pride. Married to a reform agenda, Mr. Macron's mode of populism could see France take its rightful place next to Germany and revive French influence in Europe.

Mr. Macron says he wants to start by loosening the 35-hour workweek, which will be a crucial test of his political will, but there's much more to do. As Economy Minister in the Socialist government, Mr. Macron tried limited privatization, but now he can make the case that taxpayers

shouldn't have to subsidize bloated state-run enterprises.

His proposal to cut corporate taxes to 25% from 33% is welcome, but French workers should get a tax cut, too, and the wealth tax that has been the terror of entrepreneurs should be scrapped. As a candidate he shied away from pension reform, but it's hard to see how France can prosper long-term with a current retirement age of 60. Some want to diminish the reform mandate because voter turnout fell to 43%. But Mr. Macron's duty is to those who showed their reform hope by voting.

Mr. Macron's big test will come when labor unions and the left hit the streets to paralyze the country as he moves his reform agenda in the assembly. Recent Presidents have wilted under that assault, and if Mr. Macron does the same he will fail too. Reform opportunities like Mr. Macron's come once in a generation. This one would be a terrible thing to waste.

**The
New York
Times**

For Emmanuel Macron, Fight for France Is Just Beginning

Adam Nossiter

6-8 minutes

PARIS — Emmanuel Macron won the battle of the votes in Sunday's parliamentary voting, but he hasn't necessarily won the battle of the voices, and that could spell trouble for his pro-market agenda down the road.

Two of the loudest voices in French politics won election to Parliament in the weekend voting. Jean-Luc Mélenchon on the far left and Marine Le Pen on the far right were elected, and both have already promised to wage all-out war on France's new president.

These populist orators and leaders of national movements in France will have only a fraction of votes in

Parliament compared with Mr. Macron's overwhelming 53 percent of representatives, known as deputies. But Ms. Le Pen and Mr. Mélenchon are potent voices with large constituencies in a country where Mr. Macron was only the second choice, at best, of a majority of citizens.

The two are experienced masters of rabble-rousing invective, skilled at

inciting the fear and anger of millions. They are anti-Europe, anti-globalization, largely suspicious of capitalism, and in the case of Ms. Le Pen, fiercely anti-immigrant. Mr. Macron, on the other hand, is receptive to all four policy areas.

In a country already nervous about the game-changing economic reforms Mr. Macron is proposing, both Ms. Le Pen of the National

Front and Jean-Luc Mélenchon, an ex-Trotskyite with ties to the Communist Party, will now have a powerful national platform to denounce them. They have all the tools to dominate in a political forum — the French National Assembly — where the gift of gab is often prized above all others. And they have already begun, hammering the record low turnout on Sunday.

The Macron camp is pondering who, in its horde of neophyte deputies, can stand up to these two lions. “We’re already thinking about who the leaders and orators will be, who will be able to take them on,” said Jean-Pierre Delevoye, a veteran in the Macron camp who chose the parliamentary candidates. “We’re already sharpening our weapons,” he said in an interview on Monday. But so is the other side.

“We are the only force of resistance to the dilution of France, to its social model and to its identity,” Ms. Le Pen declared Sunday night in the northern town of Hénin-Beaumont, an economically depressed National Front stronghold, after winning a parliamentary seat there for the first time.

Marine Le Pen, center, of the far-right National Front party, in a news conference on Monday in Henin-Beaumont. Denis Charlet/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

“We will fight the government’s harmful plans with all of our strength,” she said. “They may have a big majority, but their ideas are absolutely in a minority in this country,” she continued. “The French will not support these plans to weaken our nation.”

Seven other members of Ms. Le Pen’s National Front were

elected on Sunday, helping Ms. Le Pen stave off the predicted embarrassment of being the party’s sole parliamentary representative. Among them was her companion, Louis Aliot, who won in a far-south district in the Pyrenees.

It is far from the dream she once had of leading 100 or more deputies and of being, numerically, the principal opposition. That honor goes to the weakened and divided mainstream center-right parties, who have 130 deputies.

But Mr. Macron’s political movement, Republic on the Move, has 308 deputies, a score that leaves France’s traditional parties in the dust and constitutes a “revolution that since 1958 has no precedent,” a comment made by Le Figaro in a front-page editorial on Monday.

As he often does, Mr. Mélenchon sounded themes similar to Ms. Le Pen’s in his victory speech Sunday night from inner-city Marseille, where he parachuted in last spring to wrest a seat from an established Socialist parliamentarian and fellow leftist.

“I inform the new powers-that-be that not one meter of ground, in the domain of social rights, will be given up without a fight,” Mr. Mélenchon thundered. “This inflated majority in the National Assembly has no legitimacy,” he said, to “perpetrate the social-rights coup d’état that has been predicted.” He called for “total resistance” to “what this minority is proposing.”

Mr. Mélenchon’s France Unsubjugated movement won 17 seats, and the French Communist Party — which sometimes allies with his movement — won 10, giving the groups enough seats to form a

much-prized parliamentary “group,” something Ms. Le Pen will be unable to do. (A minimum of 15 deputies is required to form a “group.”)

Jean-Luc Mélenchon in Marseille on Sunday after the polls closed. Anne-Christine Poujoulat/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Groups in parliament receive state funding; their members are allowed to sit on important permanent parliamentary committees like those on laws and economic affairs; and they get more speaking time — a golden opportunity for orators like Mr. Mélenchon, whose redistributive stance has led to comparisons to Bernie Sanders.

Up against these two will be Mr. Macron’s green deputies, 91 percent of whom are entering Parliament for the first time and well over half of whom held no elective office at all last year. So untested and young are they — the youngest is a woman of 24 from the Savoy region — that they are all enrolled in a two-day training session on how to be a deputy this coming weekend. A record number of women were elected — 224 of the 577 deputies, or 36 percent, are women.

Mr. Macron may have held back the populist tide for now. But the scores he achieved in successive rounds of voting this spring do not leave much room for illusion, and indeed the mood in his camp was one of sobriety, not triumphalism, after the vote.

“There’s a France that’s impatient, that is facing major challenges,” Interior Minister Gerard Collomb told France 2 Television Sunday night. “We are being scrutinized carefully, and we are perfectly aware of it,” he said.

Mr. Macron got 24 percent in a first round of presidential voting in April against three opponents who all finished close behind. On Sunday, a record-breaking 57 percent of French voters boycotted the polls, leading to much anguished commentary in French media and questions about the legitimacy of Mr. Macron’s victory. And only two of his deputies elected Sunday received more than 30 percent of the registered voters in their districts, in Le Monde’s reckoning.

From Mr. Macron’s point of view, Ms. Le Pen and Mr. Mélenchon will, at best, fill up airtime in Parliament. But at worst, theirs will be the voices for the union and street opposition that is already gathering against Mr. Macron to oppose his proposed changes to France’s rigid and job-killing labor code. Both Ms. Le Pen and Mr. Mélenchon suggested Sunday night that this is where they will be concentrating their fire in the months to come.

We will fight the new work law, which destroys the rights of employees,” Ms. Le Pen said, while Mr. Mélenchon warned against “the destruction of the entire social order, by this repeal of the labor code.”

The battle of ideas during the election campaign is far from over, in the view of Mr. Delevoye, the Macron camp veteran. “French society, in all its diversity, finds itself divided between those who are fearful of globalization, and those who want to undertake the adventure of the future,” he said. “What’s begun is a cultural change, which is moving from fear toward hope, and the liberty to create.”



Emmanuel Macron just won a majority in France’s National Assembly. Here is why it matters. (online)

By Verónica Hoyo and William M. Chandler

8-10 minutes

By Verónica Hoyo and William M. Chandler

June 20 at 8:00 AM

On June 18, a newly created political party, La République en Marche! (LREM!), won 43.06 percent of the vote in the second round of the French legislative elections. Under France’s highly disproportional electoral system, where smaller percentages of the vote can translate into a larger proportion of seats, LREM! claimed

308 out of 577 total seats in France’s National Assembly.

Though short of prior estimates, this voting outcome leaves LREM! in a dominant position, especially in conjunction with its ally MoDem, which claimed 42 seats with 6.06 percent of the vote. This effectively gives President Emmanuel Macron, elected in May, the backing of a combined 350 seats.

In an unprecedented move, this election leaves France with a single dominant party in the center — and no solid opposition forces on either side. France’s traditional electoral system, designed to favor larger, established parties and prevent fragmentation, had created solid competing blocs, usually from the

traditional right and left. This pattern of representation has now been shattered.

[4 key lessons from France’s presidential election]

Here are some points to explain this major shift in French politics, and why it occurred:

Institutions matter, and Macron knew how to use them to his advantage.

France’s 577-seat lower chamber is elected for a five-year term. There are two requirements for a candidate to win on the first ballot: at least 25 percent of the registered voters must cast a vote and a candidate must win an absolute majority in his or her district. This

year, there were only four such first ballot winners in the June 11 voting round. Candidates with at least 12.5 percent votes of registered voters then competed in the second round on June 18.

Macron’s majority also reflects a combination of the “honeymoon cycle” (legislative elections that follow closely behind the presidential ballot tend to produce a majority supportive of the president); the frequency of elections (since October 2016, there have been three party primaries and four rounds of national elections); and part of the electorate’s desire to have stable government and avoid “cohabitation” (a divided executive where the president lacks an assembly majority).

At 57.4 percent in the second round (51.3 percent in the first one), abstention was, undoubtedly, a “winner” of this electoral season. Low turnout appears due in part to voter fatigue — see Figure 1 — but there’s more to the story than the many election rounds in a short period of time. One analysis of the low turnout suggests that the “crisis of representation,” or general disaffection with politicians and politics, continues to be the main reason French voters abstain. One interpretation of this is that the French public may have little faith in political change. This would suggest the new government may be under pressure to deliver results quickly.

The decline of traditional parties, but persistence of anti-establishment leaders.

Les Républicains (LR), a party on the traditional right, came in second with 22.23 percent of the vote (113 seats). LR was severely weakened by internal strife — between those who supported the new government and those who vehemently opposed it — and by Macron co-opting conservative figures to his Cabinet. His choice of prime minister, for instance, was the mayor of Le Havre — and a Europhile with both elected office and private sector experience in the nuclear industry, and a reputation for striking compromises.

France’s Parti Socialiste (PS) was in total disarray with only 5.68 percent

of the vote, giving it 29 seats. The election also witnessed losses of numerous top leaders previously associated with the presidency of François Hollande. This confirms what was already apparent in the previous rounds: Voters sanctioned the exiting administration.

[France’s critical election happens in June, not on Sunday]

Anti-establishment voices appear here to stay. Both Marine Le Pen, leader of the radical right party Front National (FN), and Jean Luc Mélenchon, leader of the radical left party France Insoumise (FI), won parliamentary seats for the first time.

Despite falling short of the 15 seats required to form a parliamentary group, the FN, by gaining eight seats in Parliament, has become a permanent fixture, with a small but solid core of voter support. Mélenchon’s FI, while still outperforming all other radical left contenders, claimed 17 seats and could have done better were it not for his strategic mistakes — he refused to endorse Macron for the presidential second round and did not join forces with the Communists. Though both Le Pen and Mélenchon will have small voices in the legislature, they will no doubt offer very vocal opposition to the governing majority, which could guarantee their continued survival despite little policy influence.

Macron’s accomplishments — what happens next?

Running as an “outsider” with *savoir faire*, Macron began his ascent without a party and without significant experience, and yet has managed to carry four elections in two months. He has completely transformed voter expectations, going from an unknown to a savior. He managed to mobilize under his *En Marche!* movement, tapping into a disaffected electorate that was frustrated by France’s right/left political system.

Macron also knew how to assemble a legislative party by crowdsourcing support and building candidacies based on five principles: gender parity; renewal of the political class; probity; political pluralism; and attachment to his governing project. Not only will these MPs, many of whom come from civil society posts, be loyal to him, but they also bring skills from the private sector and from other forms of political engagement which will prove necessary for governing.

Macron appears to have forged a strong image for himself and for France. Initial interactions with Angela Merkel, Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and Theresa May show that he has specific agendas with each of these global leaders — and a keen interest in France regaining its prominence in world politics.

Monkey Cage newsletter

Commentary on political science and political issues.

Less clear, however, is what Macron’s longer-term priorities will be — but he definitely knows that time is of the essence. His first real tasks will be the passage of a labor code starting in the summer and reenergizing a disillusioned citizenry.

Looking forward

The 2017 national elections in France showed that Emmanuel Macron effectively reshaped French democracy by occupying the political center. By capitalizing on voter disenchantment with traditional politics and presenting himself as a “new generation” of politician, someone more inclusive and more attuned to societal needs, Macron seems ready to start moving France forward. Whether this is a short-lived change or a real revolution in France is still an open question.

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Macron’s government expected to quickly pass big laws (online)

By Sylvie Corbet | AP

4 minutes

By Sylvie Corbet | AP June 20 at 2:29 AM

PARIS — France’s new president Emmanuel Macron has vowed to quickly implement security, anti-corruption and labor measures he considers as priorities. They are expected to easily pass parliament during a special session in July, now that the government has a wide majority at the National Assembly.

SECURITY

The French government is going to seek an extension of the state of emergency from July 15, its current expiration date, until Nov. 1.

The measure is in place since the November 2015 attacks by Islamic extremists in Paris. It would be its sixth extensions.

The state of emergency gives police exceptional powers to make house arrests, raids, and ban protests, among others.

In parallel, the government plans to pass a bill to make some extraordinary security measures permanent beyond the end of the state of emergency.

The Socialist party and other voices on the left have called on Macron to abandon the project, saying the state of emergency is specific and cannot become a permanent rule — to the risk of regressing on human rights.

ETHICS INTO POLITICS

France’s government has presented a draft law on cleaning up political ethics after years of corruption scandals.

The new bill notably would ban lawmakers and government members from hiring family members, following the scandal surrounding conservative candidate François Fillon during the presidential campaign. His wife, Penelope, was richly paid as a parliamentary aide, allegedly without actually working.

Judges would be allowed to ban a person convicted for fraud or corruption-related crimes from

running for an elected office for up to 10 years.

Lawmakers would be asked to report their expenses — a first in the country. Until now, they get monthly allowances to cover expenses they don’t have to justify.

Yet the measure, a key Macron campaign promise, is already clouded.

Justice minister Francois Bayrou’s centrist party Modem is under investigation for possible misuse of European Parliament funds.

Two other government members are facing a probe, one for a similar claim and the other for his past business practices. They all deny wrongdoing.

LABOR REFORM

The most sensitive of Macron’s reforms is a set of measures that would ease hiring and firing with the aim to bring down the unemployment rate — now just below 10 percent. Unions fear it would destroy workers’ protection instead.

The government proposes to cap the financial penalty for companies illegally firing employees. It also wants to simplify employee representatives’ bodies and allow every business to have more flexibility to define its own internal working rules.

Today’s WorldView

What’s most important from where the world meets Washington

The details of the bill haven’t been disclosed yet. A series of meetings between government and unions are scheduled during summer.

Workers unions have criticized the labor reform and Macron’s decision to skirt normal procedure in parliament to pass changes.

The government plans to use a special procedure to pass the measures by the end of the summer without an extended debate in parliament. The process doesn’t allow lawmakers to amend the text.

The measures will then have to be ratified by parliament.

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Vox : Meet some of the colorful, wildly inexperienced members of France's new parliament

Rebecca Tan

7-8 minutes

A math genius known as the “Lady Gaga of math.” A self-taught cyber guru. A female professional handball player. A 27-year-old economist orphaned in the Rwandan genocide.

Meet the newest members of France's parliament. They're young, they're diverse, and many have zero political experience.

Recruiting these candidates was a key part of newly-elected French president Emmanuel Macron's strategy to revamp French leadership. As Amélie de Montchalin, a 32-year-old first time parliamentarian, told Vox on Friday, Macron attracted candidates to run by promising to prioritize skill over loyalty or political experience.

He wanted a parliament that was more representative of France — and boy did he get it.

The “Lady Gaga of math”: **Cédric Villani** Eccentric mathematician Cédric Villani with French President Emmanuel Macron *Frederic Stevens / Getty Images*

Before winning nearly 70 percent of votes in a Southern Paris suburb, 43-year-old Cédric Villani already stood out from the hundreds of other candidates, appearing at events with an ever-present, oversized silk bow tie and large spider brooch.

Often called the “Lady Gaga” of mathematics, Villani has traveled the world to convince people that math is sexy. He won the Fields Medal (considered the highest prize possible for a mathematician) in 2010, and was awarded the French national legion of honor in 2011 — the highest order of merit for any civilian.

Until very recently, Villani had no interest in politics whatsoever.

In the video below, he said he was only inspired to join the election by

the opportunity to work with Macron's younger, and more moderate government.

“Together, with other people of goodwill, we can do something,” he said.

The self-taught cyber guru: **Mounir Mahjoubi**

Mahjoubi is part of Macron's inner circle and is known to have been crucial to his presidential campaign *Swanny Mouton / Flickr*

33-year-old Mounir Mahjoubi, a son of Moroccan immigrants, will become the youngest member of Macron's cabinet as a junior minister for digital affairs.

Mahjoubi, who had no experience in politics prior to this election, led Macron's digital strategy. He worked particularly hard to live-stream videos of Macron, from his rallies to more intimate moments, such as the time Macron walked straight into a picket line of angry factory workers chanting “Marine for president.” Macron talked and listened to these protestors, explaining why his rival Marine Le Pen wouldn't be able to prevent their factory from shutting down. By the end of the video, he had calmed the protestors down.

This digital strategy worked: Macron wound up with the most live-streamed videos among all the candidates, many of which were watched by millions.

But Mahjoubi really secured his place in Macron's inner circle when he disrupted hacking attempts from Russia during the last few days of the campaign. He led a “cyber-blurring” effort, creating numerous false email accounts and filling them with fake documents to throw the hackers off.

The former entrepreneur is also one of the few political representatives of immigrant and minority communities France — a country that has long grappled with integrating immigrant communities.

As the Guardian reported, Mahjoubi comes from a world often invisible to white upper-class French citizens who have dominated parliament. As a child, Mahjoubi traveled across Paris to use the free computers in museum foyers; as an adult, he entered the startup industry after realizing that his Arab-sounding name was turning employers off his resume.

But none of these experiences was as definitive as spending his teen years working as a technician at a call center. At 16, he took on a part-time job at Club Internet, France's first internet-service provider. He ended up staying there for eight years, through his degrees in law and business.

“I learned life,” Mahjoubi said of his time at the call center “Because with 9,000 calls, that's 9,000 lives you're stepping into — it makes you humble. You listen, you help.”

The female professional handball player: **Aude Amadou**

Aude Amadou has been a professional handball player for 17 years. The 37-year-old was frequently the captain of her teams in Nice and Toulun Saint-Syr, where she played division 1 and 2 handball.

Now, she's retiring from professional sports to focus on her new role in parliament, which she has said needs her full attention.

Like many of the other citizen-candidates, Amadou didn't have a strong interest in politics prior to the election, but was drawn in by the movement under Macron, which she said “has regained the values of the sport, the spirit, and the team.”

The 27-year-old economist: **Hervé Berville**

Hervé Berville was orphaned in the Rwandan genocide before being adopted by a couple in Brittany at the age of four. He went on to obtain degrees from the London School of

Economics and France's Sciences-Po.

Berville was working as a researcher for Stanford University in Kenya last year when he was jolted to enter politics by the populism that led to the election of President Trump.

“The day after Trump's election in November, I resigned and I returned,” he said.

Berville is just 27 years old, but he's not even the youngest En Marche candidate elected: that honor goes to 24-year-old Typhanie Degois, who beat out Dominique Dord, a conservative with the Republican Party who has been in parliament since 1997.

These newly-minted officials are all pretty unorthodox, but France's political leadership could have been much, much weirder

There was Marie Sara, a former bullfighter, who lost narrowly in an effort to unseat the Front National for En Marche; Marion Buchet, a female ex-fighter pilot who lost to an incumbent from the Socialist Party and Isabelle Laeng (aka Cindy Lee), a former stripper who ran for the presidency on behalf of the “pleasure party,” and got close to 200 votes.

The 2017 election was also the third time that Isabelle Laeng tried to run for the French presidency. *LucEdouard / Flickr*

Safe to say, the French election was anything but boring, but now these new officials need to get down to business.

Macron took a risk when he decided to recruit candidates with little political experience and it paid off this weekend when French voters gave En Marche an absolute majority over the government. Now, Macron and the people he picked need to show the French people and the world that this new model of French politics can actually work.

The New York Times

In French Labor Overhaul, Union Leader Offers a Way to a Compromise

Liz Alderman

7-8 minutes

PARIS — As thousands of workers last summer protested changes to France's labor laws, Laurent Berger, the head of one of the country's

most influential unions, got an unsettling call.

Around 100 protesters had split from a rally and surrounded the headquarters of his union, the French Democratic Confederation of Labor, shouting and smashing windows. Scrawled near the

entrance was a warning in red paint: “This treason must end!”

The “treason” referred to a contentious decision by Mr. Berger to support revisions to France's 3,400-page labor code — a rarity in a country known for stark divisions between union leaders and government officials. Some of the

changes would relax rules around the cherished 35-hour workweek, which Mr. Berger saw as a way to encourage companies to hire.

Such union backing will be critical as President Emmanuel Macron moves to overhaul the economy and change the notoriously rigid labor law. Although Mr. Macron's party

secured a sweeping parliamentary majority on Sunday, labor remains a powerful force to block change. And Mr. Berger's union, the most moderate in France, provides a potential path to compromise.

"We've just had a profound political shift, so we're at a turning point where things can really change," Mr. Berger said in an interview.

Much is at stake. Unemployment has been stuck around 10 percent for four years, and the economy has failed to recover from the financial crisis as fast as Germany's.

Mr. Macron wants to steer France toward a more Scandinavian-style economic model known as "flexible security." Pioneered in Denmark, it promotes consensus between unions and employers, and it aims to minimize joblessness by making it easy for companies to adjust their work force and by retraining the unemployed.

The idea is to no longer protect jobs for life, while giving people skills to transition to different careers.

"Workers still need protection, but in a globalized world, the economy must be able to adjust, too," Mr. Berger said. "If unions just oppose everything, we'll never move forward."

A labor union protest at Place de la République in Paris in June 2016. Peter Kneffel/European Pressphoto Agency

Whether Mr. Berger follows words with actions remains to be seen. The C.F.D.T., as the union is known, recently became France's largest when its membership surpassed the militant General Confederation of Labor, which has dominated the landscape for decades.

Amid Mr. Macron's rise, Mr. Berger has sometimes painted his union as a moderating influence in France's labor movement at a crucial moment for the economy. Mr. Berger has pushed for a more flexible approach in France as the forces of

globalization change the competitive landscape.

Yet he is not immune to protesting when the stakes are high. On Sunday, he urged Mr. Macron to maintain discussions with unions and employer groups — or risk new demonstrations.

In France, even small changes tend to rile labor organizations, which have historically sought to secure workplace protections through protests and strikes. The General Confederation of Labor, known as the C.G.T., has been at the forefront of mobilizing frequent, sometimes violent actions, whether burning tires or even holding bosses captive.

And while unions are at their weakest membership levels ever — representing just 8 percent of the work force — they can still thwart big changes to totems like the length of the workweek, or measures that would undermine their own power.

Mr. Macron's plans contain several elements that unions, including the C.F.D.T., see as red lines. Foremost is a proposal to allow employers to negotiate directly with employees on a range of workplace issues, overriding sector-wide accords struck by unions. Labor organizations also oppose a measure to cap compensation awards in unfair dismissal cases.

Mr. Berger insists his union is not the government's foe. An imposing, energetic man from a working-class family in northern France, he became a labor activist after an early career helping disadvantaged and poor people.

He is willing to give employers more flexibility to downsize when the economy sours, provided that they hire when conditions improve and that those who lost jobs are protected and retrained.

In France, "there's a natural conflict between employers and employees," he said at the C.F.D.T. headquarters, where sun streamed

through gleaming windows replacing the ones that had been smashed. "But does it take a battle or dialogue to build compromise? I choose dialogue."

His position has engendered detractors, who see the C.F.D.T. as selling out to business interests. The protesters who vandalized his offices denounced him as a traitor. Others wielded signs proclaiming, "When slavery is re-established, the C.F.D.T. will negotiate the length of the chains!"

President Emmanuel Macron, left, met with Mr. Berger at the Élysée Palace in Paris last month. Pool photo by Michel Euler

Yet it would seem to be a strategic move in the era of Mr. Macron, a centrist whose swift rise has upended France's traditional power balance. His République en Marche party's majority in the National Assembly will give him momentum to push a strongly pro-business agenda.

Divisions within France's labor movement may play to Mr. Macron's advantage. The C.G.T., which traces its roots to the French Communist party, has never been overtaken by another union. It may face challenges if Mr. Berger's union sets a more moderate tone for trade-offs.

Philippe Martinez, the C.G.T.'s leader, has said his organization does not necessarily oppose changes to the labor code. But last week, he maintained threats of mass protests if employee protections are cut too much.

Just weeks into his presidency, Mr. Macron has already summoned labor leaders — starting with Mr. Berger — for marathon sessions to discuss overhaul plans, which will be fast-tracked through executive orders in summer. Mr. Macron has scheduled 50 more meetings with the unions through July, and more rounds in August and September.

"Macron is good at talking to the unions, at giving them something," said Philippe Aghion, an economics professor at Harvard and at the prestigious Collège de France who mentored Mr. Macron as a student, and who advises him on labor policy. "He'll take what they say into account."

Still, Mr. Macron's political wins mask weaknesses that are not lost on union leaders. His parliamentary victory was overshadowed by record-low voter turnout. And many who backed Mr. Macron for president did so to keep his rival, the far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen, from winning — not to see him weaken labor protections.

"Right now, people are saying, 'He's just been elected president, let's give him a chance,'" Jean-Claude Mailly, the leader of Force Ouvrière, the third-largest union, said at a recent news briefing. "But there's real anger in France."

In the current discontent, Mr. Berger is similarly walking a fine line between playing a leadership role during the president's overhaul drive, and placating members of his own union wary of radical change. Still, Mr. Berger insists he is not aiming to incite mass protests just yet.

"There's a mentality in France that says we should cut off the heads of those at the top," he said. "And there's also a French tendency to focus on things that could go wrong."

He paused, then continued in a firm voice. "We can change that," he said.

"I have no desire to be among those who keep saying, 'None of this will work.' It has to work," Mr. Berger added. "Because if it doesn't, we'll wind up with Le Pen in another five years. And things will be much, much worse."



Two Macron Ministers Quit, Turning Heat on French Justice Chief

@gviscusi More stories by

Gregory Viscusi

5-7 minutes

by and

20 juin 2017 à 07:50 UTC-4

- Defense minister resigns over EU probe into party funding

- Her ally at justice ministry annoyed Prime Minister Philippe

Emmanuel Macron, France's president, stands on stage at the Viva Technology conference in Paris on June 15, 2017.

Photographer: Marlene Awaad/Bloomberg

Two of Emmanuel Macron's ministers, both early backers of his bid for the presidency, resigned from his cabinet, underlining the challenge of maintaining a

government without a hint of scandal and increasing pressure on Justice Minister Francois Bayrou.

Richard Ferrand, who helped Macron set up his political party, said Monday he would give up his role as regional development minister. Defense Minister Sylvie Goulard handed in her resignation Tuesday morning, saying in a statement she didn't feel she could remain part of the government while investigators are looking into whether she and other European deputies from the centrist MoDem

party misused allowances to pay for party activities.

Sylvie Goulard

Photographer: Christophe Morin/Bloomberg

At stake is both the public perception of the new administration and the fate of Macron's one-time rival Bayrou, the leader of MoDem, who provided a key endorsement for Macron during the presidential campaign but has also drawn controversy for his old-style partisan behavior and treatment of the

press. Macron's party Sunday won 308 seats in the National Assembly and MoDem took 42, meaning Macron doesn't need Bayrou's group for a majority in the 577-seat body.

"If Sylvie Goulard is leaving it's because of the questions related to MoDem in the European Parliament, so it raises the question of the possible departure of all ministers from that party," said Thomas Guenole, a professor at the Sciences Po Institute in Paris. "This comes at a time when MoDem itself is weakened. Francois Bayrou's endorsement of Macron was critical during the campaign, but he is no longer vital."

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The intense scrutiny of ethical issues in French public life is unprecedented after scandal brought down Republican candidate

Francois Fillon when he looked set to win the presidency. Reports that Fillon had given his wife and children fake jobs as parliamentary assistants over the course of decades, funneling about \$1 million into family coffers, caused his poll ratings to plummet and helped propel Macron to victory.

Ferrand Probe

Richard Ferrand

Photographer: Christophe Morin/Bloomberg

Ferrand has been under pressure since prosecutors opened a preliminary probe into whether the former Socialist's partner benefited from a real estate transaction with a mutual insurer that he ran in 2011, before becoming a member of parliament. Ferrand has denied any wrongdoing and has been asked by Macron to lead his party in the Assembly.

Throughout his campaign, the 39-year-old president promised he'd

"renew" French politics by enacting a series of laws to ensure ethical conduct in public life. He said any minister facing criminal charges would have to resign. Goulard said she doesn't want to find herself in that position.

"In the event that the preliminary probe on MoDem leads to a verification of the employment conditions of my assistants at the European Parliament, I want to be free to demonstrate my good faith," she said in a statement. "That is why I have asked the president of the republic and the prime minister to let me play no further part in the government."

Bayrou Deflects

Le Monde reported on its website that Bayrou said Goulard's decision was "strictly personal" and didn't put MoDem's participation in the government in doubt. Bayrou last week was reprimanded by Prime Minister Edouard Philippe for having called reporters at a radio station

asking them to not report on the probe into MoDem's EU parliament assistants.

As justice minister, Bayrou is responsible for promoting a new law providing a strict framework for ministers and parliamentarians.

"For now public opinion is vigilant but not naive, they don't expect everything to change in a snap," said Adelaide Zulfikarpasic, a director of BVA Opinion in Paris. "On the other hand, if it's still the case two years from now, that will be a problem."

Philippe said Tuesday that he will announce the new cabinet members before 6 p.m. Wednesday. As is the custom in France, the entire cabinet resigned after the parliamentary election, though most ministers are expected to be remain in place.

The Washington Post

France's Macron to reshuffle govt after huge parliament win (online)

By Sylvie Corbet | AP

4-5 minutes

By Sylvie Corbet | AP June 19 at 2:57 PM

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron is poised to rearrange his Cabinet after his new centrist party engineered a landslide in the country's parliamentary election, enabling the government to quickly start passing its first big laws.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe formally resigned on Monday afternoon, a largely symbolic move required after a legislative election. He was immediately renamed to his job and is in charge of forming a government by Wednesday afternoon, the French presidency said in a statement.

Since Macron's new party, Republic on the Move!, won an absolute majority in the 577-seat National Assembly, government spokesman Christophe Castaner said on RTL radio the government reshuffle would be "technical and not far-reaching." He refused to say whether ministers who have come under suspicion

of corruption would keep their jobs.

Macron's plans have been slightly delayed by an attempted attack Monday afternoon on security forces on the Champs-Elysees in Paris.

Interior Minister Gerard Collomb went to the scene and said he will present a bill Wednesday at a Cabinet meeting to extend France's state of emergency from July 15, its current expiration date, until Nov. 1. He will also talk about a new law aiming at maintaining "a high security level" beyond the end of the state of emergency.

After Macron vigorously campaigned on a promise to renew France's political landscape, other parties also made efforts to promote new faces. The victorious newcomers started arriving Monday at the National Assembly to learn their way around before the first parliament session next week.

The National Assembly says new lawmakers' average age is down from 55 in the previous term to 49 now. The youngest is 23, the oldest 79. The number of female lawmakers is the highest ever in France's lower house of parliament, reaching 38.7 percent — up from 26.8 percent. Three-quarters are starting their first term at the

National Assembly. Some previously had local political experience, but many are newcomers to politics.

Republic on the Move! and its allies from the Modem party took 350 seats — far more than the 289 needed for a majority, according to the Interior Ministry's definitive results.

Macron's government is expected to pass its first set of measures during a special parliamentary session starting on June 27 — laws to strengthen security, improve ethics in politics and reform France's restrictive labor laws.

The conservative Republicans and their allies are the main opposition group in parliament, winning 136 seats. The Socialist Party, which dominated the outgoing Assembly, was the main loser in Sunday's vote, winning only 30 seats. Far-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon's party won 17 seats, over the minimum of 15 needed to form a group, a tool that provides extra funds and speaking time.

The far-right party National Front won 8 seats — up from two in the outgoing Assembly — including one for its leader, Marine Le Pen.

Le Pen on Monday praised Sunday's vote as "historic" result but denounced an "anti-democratic voting system" that she says doesn't represent the "real weight" of her party in the country.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

The National Front won 8.75 percent of the votes nationwide, which is more than the Socialists and Melenchon's far-left party, yet it has fewer seats.

"We're worth at least 80 (seats) in my opinion, given the energy we will use to promote our views," Le Pen told a news conference.

Others agree that France's current two-round voting system favors mainstream parties and their allies. Collomb said the government wants to reduce the number of lawmakers in the future and change the voting system to introduce a partial proportional representation, which would give smaller parties better representation.

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The Washington Post

Marine Le Pen will have few friends in France's new Parliament (online)

By James McAuley

6-8 minutes

PARIS — A little more than a month ago, France's far-right seemed on the cusp of power.

But the populist fervor that swept Britain and the United States never

reached the same pitch in France, and the National Front fell into disarray when Emmanuel Macron crushed Marine Le Pen in May's presidential election. Now, the party

is facing the reality that it will have minimal representation in Parliament.

While Le Pen had hoped that her party might serve as the principal

opposition to Macron's majority, the National Front earned only eight of the 577 parliamentary seats, according to totals from Sunday's second round of voting. The result was particularly stunning given that the party had gotten more than one-third of the votes cast in the final round of the presidential election.

There was, however, a silver lining: a seat for Le Pen herself, a small but symbolic victory that some said would enshrine the far-right leader in France's political establishment.

In her victory speech, Le Pen, elected in the northern, industrial constituency of Hénin-Beaumont, insisted her party retained an important role. "Facing a bloc that represents the interests of the oligarchy, we are the only force of resistance," she said.

Le Pen has been a presence in French political life for decades, although she's never held a major office in the national government. While her father, the convicted Holocaust denier Jean-Marie Le Pen, and her niece, Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, have both served in France's Parliament, she never has.

For political analysts, her victory strengthened her personal brand and her chances of remaining party leader. The National Front's total number of parliamentary seats also rose from two to eight — an expansion but far short of what the party had expected.

"The victory of Marine Le Pen is an important thing for her personal image," said Jean-Yves Camus, a leading expert on the radical right. "If her leadership is contested, she can say she was very comfortably elected."

The National Front had approached the presidential elections in a confident mood, with polls showing Le Pen No. 2 in a crowded field of aspirants. She had vowed to "demonize" the party, long associated with anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

But during the campaign, she denied France's complicity in an infamous World War II roundup of Jews and named as an interim party head a man who once reportedly challenged the fact that Zyklon B was used in the Nazi gas chambers. She also performed poorly in a critical pre-election debate, and proved incapable of capturing the kind of anti-establishment zeal that contributed to the election of President Trump and Britain's vote to leave the European Union.

Her crushing defeat by Macron led to a crisis in the National Front, with party aides — and even members of the Le Pen family — pointing the finger at one another in public.

After that debacle, there were those — even among the party's supporters — who said that the National Front would perhaps be better served by a total transformation, including a new name and a leader from outside the Le Pen family.

Her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, minced no words Tuesday when he insisted that his daughter should step down as party leader following the disappointing parliamentary results. "You outlive your usefulness when you start harming your party by your policy stances or your stubbornness," the elder Le Pen told reporters, having been locked out of a party meeting at National Front headquarters outside Paris.

The party's co-founder, now 89, was expelled from his party in 2015 after reiterating, in an interview, his view that the Nazi gas chambers were a "detail of history" and is nominally estranged from his daughter. But the elder Le Pen retains an honorary title, and the organization he controls contributed significantly to his daughter's 2017 campaign.

Yet with Le Pen's ascent to Parliament, any such "transformation" is unlikely to come anytime soon, Camus said.

"It gives the party a new voice in the National Assembly," said Camus, referring to the Parliament's lower house. He said that the party leader "has been playing a long game for victory."

Le Pen had unsuccessfully tried four previous times to win a parliamentary seat.

In interviews with The Washington Post during the presidential campaign earlier this spring, both Jean-Marie Le Pen, 89, and Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, 27, emphasized that regardless of election

outcomes, a majority of French voters agreed with their program. "We won the battle of ideas," Marion Maréchal-Le Pen said in April.

But election results would suggest otherwise.

Marine Le Pen, in her victory speech, suggested that the National Front represented a silent majority of voters, if not any kind of significant parliamentary presence.

"It is scandalous that our party — which won 7.6 million votes in the first round of the presidential election and 3 million more in the second round — cannot obtain a group at the assembly," she said Sunday.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

A "group" in France's Parliament requires at least 15 seats. Such groups help set the parliamentary agenda and are entitled to certain resources, such as extra office space and larger shares of public funds. Initially, pollsters had said Le Pen could win as many as 50 seats in the legislative elections.

In the end, she received about one-sixth of that number.

But if the political prospects of the National Front remain unclear, the party will have at least some kind of future, Camus noted, especially with Le Pen in Parliament.

As he put it: "It's a party that's going to last for a while."

the Atlantic Macron's Majority

Yasmeen Serhan

5-7 minutes

French President Emmanuel Macron's decisive win in the second round of the country's legislative election Sunday was no surprise, with polls projecting strong showings for both Macron's La République En Marche (LREM) party and its small centrist ally, Democratic Movement (MoDem), which collectively took 350 of the National Assembly's 577 seats.

Related Story

The Fate of French Populism

While the results mark a transformation of France's political landscape from one controlled by two establishment parties to one controlled by a year-old political movement, it also marks a renewal

of the very faces that make up the country's lower, but more powerful, house of parliament. Of the 354 incumbents who sought re-election, 148 retained their seats—giving way to 429 new deputies, making up 75 percent of the incoming legislature. Historically, turnover rates average closer to between 120 to 270 seats.

Dr. Rainbow Murray, an associate professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London, told me this outcome marks the French public's continued rebuke of mainstream political parties.

"There's huge turnover unlike any we've seen before," Murray said. "We saw that very clearly from the offset in the primary elections of the two big parties—the big names that everyone expected to win all got knocked out and then Macron, the outsider, was the one who won the election and then they gave him a parliamentary majority."

She added: "What this suggests is that they want a break from the

status quo—they're sick of the same old faces."

Indeed, Macron pledged this "renewal of faces" in the months leading up to his presidential win last month, vowing to field a diverse slate of parliamentary candidates, half of whom were women and more than half of whom never previously held political office. The pledge paid off: The average age of deputies dropped from 53 to 48, with the number of deputies under the age of 30 jumping from four to 29. The number of women now stands at 38.65 percent, up from 27 percent—a change that prompted France to surge from 64th to 17th place in the world's rankings of female parliamentary representation and sixth place in Europe, besting both Britain and Germany.

"In terms of a break from the past, the previous French parliament was nearly 75 percent male, it was almost exclusively white," Murray said. "The politicians all tended to

come from this same sort of background."

They still do. Though the legislative election saw an overall turnover in the National Assembly's make up, the occupations of those in office remain more or less the same, with private-sector executives leading as the most-represented professional group (there are 92 private-sector executives in this newly elected parliament, compared to 51 in 2012).

But Macron's diverse slate of candidates was not the only cause of this parliamentary turnover. Murray said the overturning of a rule that previously allowed French politicians to hold office at both the legislative and local levels was in part to blame, with many incumbents now opting to keep their local seats over their parliamentary ones.

"Some people saw the way that party politics was going nationally and thought, 'I'm probably going to

lose my seat in parliament, maybe I should stick with my local office rather than trying to hold on to my parliamentary office if I had to choose," Murray said. "So some of them chose their local office and didn't defend their seats in parliament."

The election was also marked by low voter turnout. The second-round abstention rate was 57.35 percent—the lowest voter turnout rate for a second round of a French parliamentary election in the history of the Fifth Republic.



Though Macron's party rolls up wins in France, a cautionary tale next door

The Christian Science Monitor

6-8 minutes

June 19, 2017 Rome and Paris—When elected a year ago this month, she was hailed as a youthful breath of fresh air, a powerful force for change who would shake up the ossified establishment.

Virginia Raggi, an up-and-coming poster child of the populist Five Star Movement, became Rome's first ever female leader, after 2,500 years of Etruscan kings, Roman emperors, powerful popes, and the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

"This is a historic moment and a turning point," she said in her victory speech. "For the first time Rome has a woman mayor. I will be a mayor for all Romans. We will work to bring back to the city legality and transparency. We're going to change everything."

Her words sound familiar in France, where President Emmanuel Macron rode a wave of anti-establishment sentiment to clinch victory May 7, a year after starting a social movement from scratch. Defying expectations just a few months ago, he followed his presidential win with an absolute majority in the second round of parliamentary elections Sunday night. His La République en Marche! (Republic on the Move!, or REM) party and its allies won 350 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly.

But Five Star, which similarly came into office under a desire for fresh faces, may also show that even the most impressive political triumphs by newcomers do not guarantee success. In the first round of Italy's local elections last week, the party performed much worse than expected in dozens of key towns

and cities, including Verona, Parma, Palermo, L'Aquila and — humiliateingly for Beppe Grillo, the stand-up comedian who founded the party in 2009 — Genoa, his home town. Ms. Raggi herself is under mounting pressure, as Rome's longstanding problems continue to dog the city.

Macron's failure to earn a public mandate could weaken his ability to push through some of his more controversial campaign promises, such as labor-market reforms. Though he will have enough members of parliament to override any pushback from the *Républicains*, his primary center-right rivals, who have 137 seats, he can't claim to have the backing of voters who chose to stay home.

"Considering Macron is offering more ambitious and potentially painful economic reforms to resolve some of the countries longterm difficulties, he's going to face

resistance—and that resistance has managed to break the will of all of his predecessors," Murray said. "It really remains to be seen if he has the determination to see it through or whether he too ends up succumbing to the streets."

Protests may not be Macron's only problem. Commanding such a large majority—one defined by both the breadth in ideology and political experience of its members—could pose an unprecedented challenge for his new government. Dr. David Lees, a researcher on French politics at Warwick University, told me Macron's favorability could save

him. A recent Ifop poll put Macron's popularity at 62 percent.

"He's enjoying huge popularity here in France because he is able to speak to a lot of people across the world, he comes across as an international statesman," Lees said. "His maneuvering in and around key players like Donald Trump have been significant in changing people's minds."

He added: "It's a huge swing towards a party created in the image of the president, which we haven't seen since Charles de Gaulle in the early days of the Fifth Republic."

Could Five Star's plight stand as a cautionary tale for Macron's REM?

Popular reform

En Marche and Five Star are, of course, not on an allied path. Mr. Grillo had harsh words after Macron's victory in France. "Europe will see another government coming out of the banks," he wrote in a blog post. "More precious time will be wasted to benefit this plastic formation, these dummies who are slaves of an impossible currency," he said.

While Five Star, like En Marche, refuses to classify itself as right or left, it embraces policies on the far-right and far-left, from its anti-euro to its anti-immigration stances. Macron says his post-ideological party is not a rejection of the right or left but a plan to take the best policies of both to move France forward. In an age of anti-establishment sentiment, REM candidates say the party can reboot confidence in mainstream politics at the center.

Leading up to the race, the hype around both shared similarities, underlined by a viral comment by political analyst Christophe Barbier: "You could take a goat and give it Macron's endorsement and it would have a good chance of being elected."

In the end, despite its clear victory in Sunday's elections, REM did not get the overwhelming majority that the French worried would lead to an unhealthy hegemony. But it did see

something as worrisome: turnout at just below 44 percent, a record low for the Fifth Republic.

Voter abstention has led to concerns that Macron, while facing a friendly parliament, could run into questions of legitimacy on the streets as he turns to making promises into policy.

It also shows that while Macron has emerged as an international sensation, the French are much more cautious — and low voting rates reveal a degree of indifference.

"All along his stupefying path to the Elysee, Emmanuel Macron has benefited from mistrust of existing structures," argues *Le Monde* in its editorial today. "But these legislative elections show that neither he nor his candidates have yet begun to rebuild the trust that would engender real support beyond his circle of enthusiasts."

'The initial fizz has gone'

Five Star, meanwhile, remains a clear protest party, even as they come under fire like the establishment before them. Nowhere is that clearer than in Rome, where Raggi's pledges to tackle the capital's multiple crises — poor public transport, gridlocked traffic, potholed roads, official corruption, and chaotic garbage collection — have remained unfulfilled. Much has in fact worsened. Shopkeepers resort to buying sacks of bitumen and filling in the potholes outside their premises themselves. Rubbish spills out onto the streets from uncollected plastic sacks, providing a feast for rats, pigeons, and seagulls.

In the first round of voting, Five Star lost out to a resurgence of the traditional parties of the center-left and center-right: the Democratic Party of former prime minister

Matteo Renzi and a center-right coalition consisting of Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party and the anti-immigrant Northern League. A second vote is scheduled for June 25.

"It's fair to say that some of the initial fizz and excitement has gone out of the party," says Roberto D'Alimonte, a political scientist from Luiss University in Rome.

Still, he warns the movement is not finished. Indeed, Five Star in recent Pew polling enjoyed the highest rating of any party in Italy, at 41 percent.

And while REM faces challenges in France, no other party came close to them last night. The center-left Socialist party lost more than 250 seats, winning just 29. The center-right *Républicains*, once aiming for a majority, landed in a distant second with 113 seats.

Yet the problems that have befuddled the mainstream parties remain in place. In Italy, that is slow growth and its position at the front lines of the migration crisis. In France, it's the labor reform that Macron needs to boost employment and revitalize the economy — and its role in Europe. Such unpopular reform long eluded his predecessors.

REM "has drawn from a very large spectrum of candidates, from both the left and right, and it remains to be seen if they can stay united when voting on things like labor reform or taxing France's wealthiest earners," Jerome Fourquet of the polling firm IFOP told the Anglo-American Press Association ahead of the National Assembly vote. "Their biggest challenges are yet to come."

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5-6 minutes

20 juin 2017 à 02:00 UTC-4

Marine who?

Emmanuel Macron's year-old political party has just won a handsome majority in the French parliament, a month after the centrist ex-banker became the country's youngest president.

Of course, as Britain's Theresa May will attest, things can turn ugly very quickly in politics. It's disturbing to think what might happen in France should Macron fail to deliver on his early promise. But, for now at least, his ascendancy looks good for the shareholders and CEOs betting on a sorely needed shakeup of the French labor market. The country should find it easier to attract investment as a result.

There will doubtless be skepticism about whether change will actually happen. After all, this is France we're talking about. But provided a broader economic recovery holds up, and investors recognize this is a gradual catch-up rather than a radical overhaul, Macroeconomics deserves a fair try.

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The financial market reaction to Macron's victory shows faith that he can convert parliamentary dominance into faster profit growth and a more robust economy. French blue chips outperformed broader European stocks on Monday, with

carmakers, engineers and financial firms among the top gainers. The cost of insuring against a French sovereign debt default fell to its lowest since 2009. France's country-risk premium as tracked by Bloomberg data has fallen to about 8.5 percent from about 10 percent a year ago.

Macron, who's been mocked for his Zeus-like political style, is certainly attracting boardroom worshippers. French CEOs, desperate to loosen the shackles of French worker protections, are lining up to praise the reform agenda.

One Paris investment banker says business is getting busy again after a prolonged period of angst. Equity fund managers specializing in Europe now see France as their preferred investment destination, even ahead of Germany, according to a Bank of America survey. Brexit-exposed Britain is bottom of the class.

The brightening mood is natural. A disappointing voter turnout shows the dangers if Macron doesn't deliver, but he could hardly have a stronger hand given the majority he commands. That should make it easier to fast-track reforms, including more flexibility on company hiring and firing.

His campaign also promised cuts to corporate tax and wage costs. Lower taxes could lift French company earnings by 12 percent, while a reduction in labor costs could lift pretax profit by up to 11 percent for blue chips, according to Kepler. That's on top of an earnings recovery already taking place in Europe and France.

While there's always the threat of protests, the plans were well-

telegraphed and so have a mandate from voters. This was less the case with predecessor Francois Hollande's reforms. That should improve Macron's chances, says Bloomberg Intelligence's Maxime Sbaihi, even if the economic pain is felt before the gains kick in.

It's important to remember, though, that everyone's luck runs out and even someone as charmed as Macron has only limited control over events.

Indeed, it was that broader economic recovery that arguably swept Macron to power. And while Morgan Stanley expects French GDP growth to outpace Italy and the U.K. in 2018, it will lag Germany, Spain, Portugal and Ireland. Meanwhile, French unemployment may keep creeping downwards but will probably stay above 9 percent for the next few years.

Finally, pushing through crucial eurozone reforms needs German support.

Macron's victory has put the brakes, for now, on a populist Eurosceptic wave and laid the groundwork for achievable reform. But delivering his spending promises while cutting France's heavy social costs would be tough for any politician, let alone an untested one.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Fortune: France: Parliament Has Record Number of Women After Elections

Julia Zorthian

2 minutes

France elected a record number of women to its Parliament in Sunday's second round of parliamentary voting.

Women now fill 223 of the 577 positions in the National Assembly, the French lower house of Parliament, the *BBC* reports. That's nearly 39% — a significant jump from the country's previous record of 26% of female MPs elected in 2012, according to data from the Inter-parliamentary Union.

The record-breaking total follows President Emmanuel Macron and his Republic on the Move (LREM) party choosing an equal number of women and men for its initial list of 428 candidates last month. Macron's party emerged with a sweeping 308-seat majority on Sunday, of which 47% of the newly elected deputies are women — the highest majority out of all the parties.

"For the first time under the (postwar) Fifth Republic, the National Assembly will be deeply renewed — more diverse, younger," LREM Acting President Catherine Barbaroux told Reuters. "But above all, allow me to rejoice, because this is a historic event for the representation of women in the National Assembly."

When stacked up against other parliaments in the world in terms of gender diversity, France just moved from 64th to 17th place. It also jumped to sixth place for Europe, now beating out Germany and Britain, according to Reuters.

This follows Macron's commitment to gender equality on his team. The newly elected French president made his cabinet gender-equal last month when he selected women for 11 of the 22 positions.

Fortune : Emmanuel Macron's Majority Win Boosts European Stocks

Reuters

5-6 minutes

European stocks headed for their biggest rise in two months on Monday as investors snapped up cut-price retail and tech stocks and France's markets cheered a parliamentary majority for pro-business President Emmanuel Macron.

Risk was back in vogue and the Nasdaq was expected to regain 0.7% of the near 3.5 % it has lost over the last couple of weeks as investors have top-sliced the likes of Apple, Amazon and Alphabet that have been on a tear all year.

Europe's banks also drove higher following broker upgrades for Credit Suisse, while there was little sign of tension for the sector or for the pound or euro as formal Brexit negotiations kicked off in Brussels.

Projections showing Macron had won a commanding majority in France's weekend vote saw Paris stocks make a 1.1% gain as the country's bonds also outperformed in fixed income markets.

"We expect the Macron reforms to transform France like the Thatcher reforms had cured the erstwhile sick man of Europe, the United Kingdom, some 35 years ago," said Berenberg Europeaneconomist Holger Schmieding.

"And like the 'Agenda 2010' reforms had turned Germany from one of the weakest into one of the strongest economies in Europe almost 15 years ago."

Asia had kicked off the week strongly as well with a two-week closing high for Japan's Nikkei.

There were 1-1.2% jumps in China and Hong Kong too ahead of MSCI's annual review on Tuesday which expected to see it add mainland-listed Chinese stocks to its top share benchmarks for the first time.

Related

Chinese data had also helped, with signs of easier liquidity conditions

and home prices up 10.4% in May from a year ago, although slowing from April's 10.7% gain.

"A-shares could be included though at fairly limited weight," Asha Mehta, a portfolio manager at Acadian Asset Management, said of the MSCI review, which will be announced at around 2130 GMT.

"MSCI has expressed that while liquidity and now access is there, some regulatory requirements are not ideal for index inclusion."

Emerging markets went sailing higher with stocks enjoying their biggest daily gains in nearly four weeks though another day of weaker oil prices took a toll on

Russia again, where the rouble was down another half a percent.

Europe's retailers continued to claw back some ground having been clobbered along with U.S. peers like Wal-Mart and Target on Friday by net-giant Amazon's \$13.7 billion deal to buy upscale grocer Whole Foods Market.

It was Amazon's first major bricks and mortar acquisition in the sector and spooked traders on worries it could now be going hard after the sector's traditional.

Brexit Beckons

In the currency markets, the differing messages of the world's major central banks on inflation and monetary policy prodded the dollar higher against the yen ahead of a series of appearances by U.S.

Federal Reserve officials this week.

Fed chief Janet Yellen's confidence as her team raised interest rates for the third time in six months last week surprised investors who had expected more caution about the economy.

Sterling also nudged higher to just under \$1.28 and 87.42 pence per euro as formal negotiations got underway on Britain's exit from the European Union, which are expected to generate plenty of headlines for the currency in the weeks ahead.

Brexit Secretary David Davis held negotiations in Brussels on Monday, which will be followed by a Brussels summit on Thursday and Friday where Prime Minister Theresa May will meet - but not negotiate with - fellow European Union leaders.

Davis's agreement to Monday's agenda led some EU officials to believe that May's government may at last be coming around to Brussels' view of how negotiations should be run. May's own political survival is in doubt after she lost her parliamentary majority in an election this month.

"We are starting this negotiation in a positive and constructive tone," Davis told reporters. His EU counterpart Michel Barnier's response was: "We must first tackle the uncertainties caused by Brexit."

The euro was steady at \$1.1195, retaining Friday's 0.5% gain. The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of six global peers, was also little changed at 97.182.

The market is awaiting comments by New York Fed President William

Dudley, a close ally of Yellen's, when he speaks at a business roundtable in New York state.

"In the wake of Friday's weak U.S. data, Dudley could provide insight into whether the Fed is still poised to continue normalising monetary policy," said Masafumi Yamamoto, chief forex strategist at Mizuho Securities in Tokyo.

In commodities, oil futures lingered near six-week lows over concerns about a supply glut amid faltering demand.

U.S. crude ticked up 0.2 percent to \$44.83 a barrel, while global benchmark Brent rose 0.3 percent to \$47.56.

Gold touched a 3-1/2-week low earlier in the session and was trading down slightly at \$1,250 an ounce ahead of U.S. trading.



Andelman: Macron is a novice with a big new majority. He'll likely do better than Trump.

David A. Andelman, Opinion contributor

5-7 minutes

Published 11:41 a.m. ET June 19, 2017 | Updated 21 hours ago

French President Emmanuel Macron.(Photo: Sean Gallup, Getty Images)

PARIS — French president Emmanuel Macron and his political party dominated by electoral novices scored an unassailable margin in France's parliament in Sunday's national elections. He's now cleared the way for the kind of revolutionary social, economic and political transformation President Trump so desperately seeks — and now seems increasingly unlikely to attain.

But just as in Washington there may be lots more here in Paris than meets the eye.

In both France and the United States, voters have rejected career politicians and opted for presidents, and now legislators, with resumes that have little or no political flavor. About three-quarters of the new French parliament will be neophytes who, like Macron and of course Trump, are new to their office.

Indeed, one of Macron's principal opponents on the far left, Jean-Luc Melenchon, proclaimed Sunday evening that despite an apparently overwhelming victory, Macron "does not have the legitimacy to perpetrate the social coup d'état" that he clearly has been contemplating.

Macron certainly has the resume of a French president. He was a top honors graduate of the elite Ecole National d'Administration (ENA) where the bulk of French presidents over the past half century passed through. He served as a Minister of Finance under his predecessor, the socialist Francois Hollande. And he had enough political savvy to cobble together from scratch his own political party in just 15 months.

None of this, however, guarantees political success. I've had the good fortune to teach at the ENA in years past. Each of my students — in the "Intensive Spring Course" — was unquestionably brilliant. But none had the deep intellectual curiosity or flexibility, nor in particular the desire, to question what was being taught. "It is not for us to question you, monsieur le professeur, but to write down what you tell us and repeat it effectively on our exams," one student finally confessed to me after I'd sought to engage the class in an intellectual give-and-take.

This might work well in the Trump White House and might have worked well for French presidents of the past. But today it is hardly a recipe for effective leadership of a troubled nation or, in the case of Macron and his aspirations, the continent of Europe.

Success ultimately may depend less on a leader's education or resume and far more on his or her temperament. And it may hinge, as well, as much on the skills unlearned as those learned. Some of the key attributes of leadership

include flexibility and a willingness to negotiate, an understanding of how to avoid the far too prevalent political disease whose symptom is hubris, and above all a sensitivity to those one rules. Through the years I've run across a scattered few who managed to internalize and deploy a collection of these attributes.

POLICING THE USA: A look at race, justice, media

Thailand's King Bhumibol Adulyadej, at his death last year the world's longest-serving head of state, won the adoration of his people and managed to maintain his nation's fierce independence during the decades that a virulent communist insurgency raged next door in Indochina. I've traveled with him in remote northern Thailand when tens of thousands of his subjects knelt for hours by the side of the narrow jungle road, candles held to their faces, so their ruler might see them when his motorcade flew past.

The current King of Jordan, Abdullah II and his father, King Hussein, cared profoundly for the well-being of their own people, while demonstrating their deep-seated humanity to fellow Arabs by welcoming hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighboring wars in Syria, Iraq and beyond.

These rulers and others in charge of their nations today, from German chancellor Angela Merkel to Canada's Justin Trudeau, all with vastly disparate resumes, have managed to exhibit and deploy traits

that go far beyond any line item on a political resume. Macron, too, seems at first blush at least to understand what a substantial number of his people seem to want from their 39-year-old leader — namely to assure themselves of a secure and financially strong future.

Both Macron, the former banker, and Trump, the real estate magnate, now have firm majorities of their own party in their legislatures that should allow them to govern effectively. But if Macron is to succeed and if Trump is to escape the sickening downward spiral that is pulling in his closest family and supporters, both will need to understand how to listen carefully to what their people — all their people — want, then adjust their programs and priorities accordingly.

David A. Andelman, member of the board of contributors of USA Today, is the author of "A Shattered Peace: Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today." He formerly served as Paris correspondent for CBS News. Follow him on Twitter @DavidAndelman.

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Gobry: Why Macron's Rising and May's Falling

@pegobry More stories by Pascal-

Emmanuel Gobry

5-6 minutes

Politics

Both Theresa May and Emmanuel Macron were defined by their approach to taking risks.

by

20 juin 2017 à 05:45 UTC-4

Defining moment.

Photographer: ERIC FEFERBERG/AFP/Getty Images

Once a dominant force in her country's politics, British Prime Minister Theresa May looks increasingly like a lame duck leader, while French President Emmanuel Macron just swept the legislative elections in his country. Comparing the two leaders' styles goes a long way to showing why one is up and the other down, especially their response to two dramatic events that threatened to upend their political career: the Whirlpool factory strike for Emmanuel Macron, and the tragic Grenfell Tower fire for Theresa May.

Often, a simple moment or news cycle can cement for the electorate a sense of a leader's character and

values. The way that a leader chooses to respond to an unplanned, unfolding situation can be very revealing.

Although the fire that consumed a housing block happened after the British general election, the Prime Minister's response provided a good clue to how she managed to turn a seemingly insurmountable poll lead into a minority in the House of Commons. Grenfell Tower was a public housing block, and though not much is known at this point and an inquiry is underway, the ease with which the fire consumed the place seems to many on the left to symbolize a Conservative government's disregard for the under-privileged.

After the disaster, Theresa May refused to visit the site, her office citing security concerns, an excuse that looked even less credible when the Queen did her own visit the day after. This only solidified the vision of her as both out of touch and easily scared. Her decision to eventually visit only made it worse by making her look a weathervane.

As this unfolded, I couldn't help but think of a moment days before the runoff stage of the French presidential election. For months, workers had been staging industrial action at a factory owned by Whirlpool in the North of France that

was slated for closure and offshoring. While Macron was busy at a planned meeting with union and business representatives behind closed doors in a secure location, his runoff opponent Marine Le Pen, who had been railing against outsourcing for years, showed up at the factory with cameras and took selfies with enthusiastic workers, stealing the news cycle. Macron looked out of touch and scared to meet with workers about to lose their job.

As the PR disaster unfolded in real time, Macron decided to make a visit that day. He showed up outside the factory and had a long, sometimes heated, discussion, with worker representatives. News cycle rescued.

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More interestingly, after the election, a fascinating fly-on-the-wall campaign documentary of Macron gave us the inside story on how Macron decided to go into the fray. As he and his spin doctors follow the unfolding PR disaster on their phones, he decides he has to go to the factory. His security detail protests as his minders fear he might get pelted or assaulted in some way, making the disaster even

worse. Macron shuts them down with lines that have become memorable: "You have to take the risk. You have to get into the heat of things, every time. If you listen to the security guys, you end up like Hollande. Maybe you're safe but you're dead," he said, referring to the now former French president and Macron's mentor.

Theresa May has advanced cautiously every step of her political career. She ran a cautious campaign, always playing it safe. She tried to play it safe again after Grenfell. Macron's advice should ring in her ears as in the ears of many politicians around the world: politicians who are afraid to enter the fray, end up punished.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

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CNBC : Kharpal: Macron's vision to make France a tech leader requires a big mentality shift

Arjun Kharpal

4-5 minutes

"Vive la French tech!" That was the message last week during the Viva Technology conference in Paris, where some of the biggest names in the industry came together.

The message was clear from newly-elected President Emmanuel Macron: France will become Europe's leader in technology and transform into a "country of unicorns" – the term for companies valued at more than \$1 billion.

"I want France to attract new entrepreneurs, new researchers, and be the nation for innovation and start-ups," Macron told CNBC on the sidelines of the event, prior to the announcement.

The speech he delivered was met with a standing ovation and there is cause for optimism in France. Venture capital investments in France hit \$1.6 billion in 2016, just a

touch lower than the \$1.7 billion recorded in 2015, according to KPMG. In contrast, VC funding in Germany fell sharply to \$1.9 billion in 2016, from \$3.6 billion the year before, while the U.K. also saw a hefty drop.

France remains the third-largest player in terms of VC funding into start-ups, but it didn't see the falls recorded in Germany and Britain, which is encouraging. Europe's third-largest economy is also beginning to build billion dollar start-ups with the likes of BlaBlaCar and Criteo.

But the path to become a "start-up nation" could be a tough one given some of the structural issues in France. Entrepreneurs complain about the country's rigid labor laws which can make hiring and firing staff difficult, while a French wealth tax levied on those with personal assets of 1.3 million euros or more, has faced criticism.

Marlene Awaad | Bloomberg | Getty Images

Emmanuel Macron, France's president, speaks on stage at the Viva Technology conference in Paris, France, on Thursday, June 15, 2017.

Also, a lot of money raised by start-ups in France has come from corporates. Around \$1.1 billion of capital raised in 2016 by French start-ups involved corporates, more than the figure in Germany and the U.K., according to non-profit technology firm Sirris. While it shows that large firms are trying to work with start-ups, it can also be a hindrance.

"Too many French startups focus on France-first, versus becoming global companies. That's changing, but not fast enough," Hussein Kanji, partner at London-based VC firm Hoxton Ventures, told CNBC by email.

"It's reinforced by French investors who don't seek outlier returns and are happy with median returns focused just on the French market. I don't think the government understands it reinforces this by

encouraging tax incentives and French corporates to act as venture capitalists."

Macron, however, has made positive noises about loosening labor laws and regulation, cutting corporation tax, and supporting entrepreneurs. But turning France into Europe's leader will require more than just law changes. It will need a more global looking tech ecosystem, ready to think bigger than just France.

President Macron has at least inspired entrepreneurs, who delivered a standing ovation after his speech at Viva Tech. The path to become a "start-up nation" will no doubt be tough, but the country will be hoping Macron's vision will be real, and not just as fictional as unicorns.

Fortune : Reynard: The March(e) Of Macron: An End To European Political Risk?

Cherry Reynard

4-5 minutes

I write about financial markets, companies and economies.

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

French President Emmanuel Macron looks on during a joint press conference with Jordan's King Abdullah II following a meeting at the Elysee Palace in Paris on June 19, 2017. / AFP PHOTO / POOL / GONZALO FUENTES (Photo credit should read GONZALO FUENTES/AFP/Getty Images)

Theresa May will be casting envious eyes across the Channel, as Emmanuel Macron secures an unexpected triumph in the French parliamentary elections. At the same time, France's new President and German Chancellor Angela Merkel appear to have a chumminess that Britain is unlikely to enjoy with its European peers any time soon. For investors, the ebbing of Eurozone political risk should make it a more attractive place to

invest, but does it?

Europe is currently enjoying a surprising economic recovery. Surprising because for some time, it had been seen as the weak spot of the global economy, with its messy political union and intransigent central bank suppressing growth. Step forward Mario Draghi and a new era of looser monetary policy, and the Eurozone is now seeing sustained economic growth. The most recent Eurostat figures show GDP for the region expanding at 1.9% year on year, the fastest growth since the fourth quarter of 2015. Let's not forget, the latest US GDP figures showed just 1.2% growth.

This should have made European markets attractive, but political risk had been a pretty strong deterrent. Iain Stealey, bond fund manager at JP Morgan Asset Management, says: "Earlier this year, everyone was very concerned about France. It looked like there might be a run-off between Far Left Melanchon, or Far Right Le Pen." A Reuters poll of leading economists in February found that potential anti-establishment upsets in national

elections in France, the Netherlands and Germany, alongside a global rise in protectionism pose the biggest threats to the euro zone economy

Yet here we are. Stealey says: "We have a strong leader in Macron, and it looks like there will be stable government. The German elections appear to be a foregone conclusion." The ECB also remains supportive, he says, with Mario Draghi taking a very dovish tilt at the recent central bank meeting: He concludes: "Inflation is nowhere near target, even if they have revised economic growth estimates higher. This suggests they will be slower in the tapering process than previously thought."

Nevertheless, this is Europe, and it would be naïve to dismiss political risks altogether. Macron has tough labour negotiations ahead, populism hasn't disappeared and upcoming Italian general elections look to hold more risk. The populist Five Star Alliance – Eurosceptic and anti 'political elites' – was, until recently, polling at up to 50% of the vote. Recent local elections suggest that its support may not be as strong as

it was, but it remains a looming threat. JPM says: "The markets can only focus on one or two things at once, so attention may be focused on Italy towards the end of this year as the General election comes closer." That said, Europe has come a long way from the Greek crisis.

Stock market valuations have long reflected the higher political risk in the Eurozone. Now that risk has dissipating, valuations have not necessarily caught up. Over the past three months, in local currency terms, the MSCI North American index remains slightly ahead of its European equivalent (3.03% versus 2.52%). This is in spite of the conclusions of the recent influential Bank of America Merrill Lynch fund manager survey, which said US equities were 'by far' the most over-valued globally, particularly the technology sector. The same survey found far greater enthusiasm for European markets, particularly France and Germany.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Car Crashes Into Police Van in Paris

Noemie Bisserbe

2-3 minutes

June 19, 2017 1:36 p.m. ET

PARIS—A car rammed into a police van before bursting into flames on the Champs-Élysées Monday afternoon, in an assault authorities are investigating as a possible terror attack.

The driver died at the scene, but no one else was injured, said police.

Fire arms and explosive materials were found in the car, French Interior Minister Gérard Collomb said, without

disclosing further details.

"This shows that the terror threat remains extremely high in the country," Mr. Collomb said speaking on national TV.

Prosecutors have opened a terror probe into the attack, a spokeswoman for the Paris prosecutor's office said Monday.

A string of attacks—including the Nov. 13, 2015, assault by Islamic State militants that killed 130 in Paris and the truck attack in Nice that killed 86 people on Bastille Day last July—has put France on edge. The government has declared and renewed a state of emergency, but

the crackdown hasn't stopped the drumbeat of periodic attacks.

This is the second attack in less than three months on the famous Champs Élysées avenue. In April, a gunman opened fire on the Champs-Élysées, killing a police officer and wounding two other people. Police returned fire, killing the gunman, who was later identified as Karim Cheurfi, a French national. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the April attack, said SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors the extremist group's communications.

Earlier this month, French authorities locked down the area around Notre Dame Cathedral after

a man attacked police with a hammer, yelling "This is for Syria." The attacker struck an officer in the head as he patrolled Notre Dame's square. Police responded by shooting him in the leg.

Knives were discovered inside a backpack carried by the assailant. Antiterrorism prosecutors are probing the assault for possible terror links, the spokeswoman for Paris prosecutors said.

Write to Noemie Bisserbe at noemie.bisserbe@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'Probe Follows Car Crash In Paris.'

The Washington Post

Driver dies after ramming car into police vehicle on Champs-Elysees in probable terrorist attack (online)

By James McAuley

5-6 minutes

A driver rammed his car into a police van on Paris's Champs Elysees on June 19, dying in the crash. No officers or bystanders were injured and the situation was under control. A driver rammed his car into a police van on Paris's Champs Elysees on

June 19, dying in the crash. (Reuters)

(Reuters)

PARIS — A car exploded as it crashed into a police vehicle on Paris's famed Champs-Elysees on Monday in what authorities called a probable terrorist attack.

Police were treating the incident as a deliberate act, and the Paris

prosecutor opened a terrorism investigation.

The driver, whose identity was not immediately released, was killed in the crash, Gerard Collomb, France's interior minister, told reporters at the scene. No one else was injured, Paris police sources said.

Police said the attacker — who was 31 and from the northwestern Paris suburb of Argenteuil — was known to French authorities, the Associated

Press reported. He was reportedly listed on the government's "Fiche S," a dossier of people suspected of posing a threat to national security.

"Once again, French security forces were targeted with this attempted attack on the Champs-Elysees," Collomb said. He added that "a number of weapons, explosives to blow up this car" were discovered at the scene.

Video captured by a bystander appears to show police dragging away a driver who rammed a car into a police van on Paris' Champs Elysees avenue on June 19. Video captured by a bystander appears to show police dragging away a driver who rammed a car into a police van on Paris' Champs Elysees avenue on June 19. (Reuters)

(Reuters)

In late April, before the first round of voting in France's presidential election, there was a similar incident on the Champs-Elysees, when a man opened fire on police parked on the street, killing one and wounding two.

The Islamic State, through its affiliated Amaq News Agency,



3-4 minutes

A suspect who tried to attack security forces on the Champs-Elysees shopping district in Paris Monday afternoon -- when he rammed his car into a police van -- had a rifle and explosives in his vehicle, French investigators said.

The attacker died shortly after the incident, the French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb said. The attacker, a 31-year-old man from the Paris suburb of Argenteuil, was badly burned after his car exploded when he deliberately crashed it into a police van. The police van caught fire, but it was quickly contained, officials said. The bomb squad was called to the scene.

Authorities discovered a gas tank and an AK-47 rifle in the attacker's

claimed responsibility for that attack.

Monday's incident came less than a day after a vehicle attack on Muslim worshippers outside two mosques in north London. Since March, the British capital has suffered two other terrorist attacks, one of which involved a vehicle attack on Westminster Bridge outside the Houses of Parliament.

[*Van strikes crowd near London mosques in 'terrorist attack'*]

France also has a history of deadly vehicle attacks: In July, an Islamic State-inspired assailant plowed through crowds gathered to celebrate Bastille Day, the national holiday, on a seaside promenade in Nice, killing 86.

Security analysts say vehicle attacks often represent last-ditch attempts at violence and are difficult to prevent.

The information that has emerged in this latest incident could fit a recent pattern, said Jean-Charles Brisard, a French intelligence expert and director of the Paris-based Center for the Analysis of Terrorism.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

"We have a situation where a lot of individuals are radicalized in France, and it's very difficult to prevent them," he said. "The intelligence services are doing a lot, but they cannot stop everyone."

Collomb said Monday's attack justified further extension of France's "state of emergency," a heightened security and surveillance regimen that has been in place since November 2015, when Islamic State militants carried out

coordinated attacks on a concert hall and cafes across Paris, killing 130.

Critics have said the security regimen has not prevented attacks and has resulted in warrantless, extrajudicial searches and house arrests. Muslim advocacy organizations have said that French Muslims have been targeted disproportionately, often without probable cause.

In one of the most controversial moves of his young presidency, Emmanuel Macron has advocated enshrining certain state of emergency special police powers into French law.

Read more

Paris attack: Champs-Elysees driver had explosives and rifle, was flagged for extremism

car, Fox News confirmed. The man had been flagged by investigators earlier for extremism, French police said.

The attacker was identified as Adam Dzaziri. Dzaziri, who had been raised in the Salafi Islamic ideology, didn't have a criminal record but he had been on France's security watch list since 2015 due to ties to "the radical Islamist movement," according to news.com.au.

France's anti-terrorism prosecutor has opened an investigation into the incident.

Eric Favereau, a journalist for Liberation newspaper who was driving a scooter behind the military officers, said he saw a car blocking the convoy's path, then an implosion in the vehicle. Favereau wrote that the officers smashed open the

windows of the car while it was in flames and dragged out its occupant.

Other officers used fire extinguishers to put out the flames, Favereau said.

There were no other reported injuries.

Champs-Elysees is Paris' most popular avenue and one of the city's most famous tourist attractions. This was the second incident on the avenue this year. An attacker defending the Islamic State terror group shot and killed a police officer on the Champs-Elysees in April, days before a presidential election, prompting an extensive security operation. France is under a state of emergency after a string of deadly Islamic extremist attacks.

Collomb said he will present a bill on Wednesday at a Cabinet meeting to extend the state of emergency from July 15, its current expiration date, until Nov. 1. He added that Monday's incident showed that a new security law "is needed" in France and the measure would "maintain a high security level" beyond the end of the state of emergency.

France has been under a state of emergency since the November 2015 attacks by Islamic extremists in Paris.

The incident also came after a van mowed down several people leaving a London mosque just after midnight on Monday. One person died and 10 people were injured in the assault.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



French and Kurdish journalists killed in Mosul blast

By Stephanie Halasz and James Griffiths, CNN

A walk through the devastation of West Mosul

Story highlights

- Iraq is one of the deadliest countries for journalists
- More than 26 journalists have been killed there since 2014, according to RSF

(CNN)Two journalists have died following a blast in the Iraqi city of Mosul.

France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said its national Stéphane Villeneuve was killed by a mine blast while on assignment for the France 2 television network.

The explosion also killed Kurdish journalist Bakhtiar Haddad, according to watchdog Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF), and injured two others.

"We offer our condolences to (Villeneuve's) family, whose pain we share," the ministry said in a statement. "His courage and professionalism made him a respected journalist and admired by all those with whom he worked."

Stephane Villeneuve was killed by a mine blast in Mosul.

Deadly arena

RSF said the men were killed while accompanying Iraqi army forces in areas held by ISIS in the Ras Al-Jadah district of Mosul, in northern Iraq.

"Iraq is one of the world's deadliest countries for journalists," RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire said.

"In 2015 and 2016, it was one of the three countries where the most journalists were killed in the course of their work. War is obviously dangerous but every death or injury

is a victim too many. No one should have to pay such a high price just for reporting the news."

The group said a total of 26 journalists have been killed in Iraq since the beginning of 2014, with at least three dying since the battle to retake Mosul from ISIS began in October 2016.

Ten Iraqi journalists and media workers are also being held by ISIS forces in Mosul, according to RSF.

Residents at risk

Fighting to retake Mosul is still ongoing, with Iraqi forces saying late last month they were launching a large-scale operation to push ISIS

forces out of their remaining footholds in the city.

Mosul's Old City is still largely held by the militant group, and has been heavily shelled in preparation of clearance operations.

The fighting has caused the displacement of more than 700,000 people since the offensive began, and the United Nations migration agency has warned the number of people fleeing the city has soared in recent weeks.

"Although the UN is not present in the areas where fighting is occurring, we have received very disturbing reports of families being shut inside booby-trapped homes and of children being deliberately targeted by snipers," UN Under-

Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Stephen O'Brien said last month, adding that residents lacked access to clean water and medicine.



Counterterror Force for West Africa Stalled by U.S.-France Feud

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Foroohar

6-8 minutes

by and

20 juin 2017 à 00:00 UTC-4

- Scaling back UN peacekeeping is key goal of U.S. envoy Haley
- Dispute is latest between Trump and Macron since taking office

France wants to bolster efforts to fight terrorism in West Africa through a United Nations-backed force. The U.S. doesn't want to get stuck with the bill.

France circulated a draft UN resolution on June 6 authorizing the deployment of a five-country African military force that would "use all necessary means" to combat terrorist organizations in the Sahel, a semiarid region stretching along the southern end of the Sahara from the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea that has become a haven for groups linked to al-Qaeda and Islamic State.

Usually France, the U.S. and the U.K. team up to persuade Russia and China -- the other members of the veto-wielding Security Council -- to support their initiatives, but this time it's two historic allies struggling to agree. The French goal conflicts with a key Trump administration objective: scaling back UN deployments as part of a broader effort to rein in spending. The U.S. pays about 28 percent of the UN's

\$7.9 billion peacekeeping budget.

"The dispute appears to be mostly about money," said Richard Atwood, the New York director of the International Crisis Group. "The U.S. is worried that a Security Council resolution might open the door to funding at a time when cutting back their UN funding is a priority."

President Emmanuel Macron's government wants to cement gains made by the deployment of French forces to Mali in 2013 to drive out fundamentalist Islamic terrorist groups, which had seized key cities in the country's north, while eventually being able to draw down the approximately 4,000 French troops that remain.

Tight Handshake

French-U.S. tensions are nothing new in diplomacy, but Macron and President Donald Trump have found little common ground on issues such as climate change and the role of the European Union. They even appeared to engage in brinkmanship, of sorts, over a tight handshake in May.

But a public rebuff by the U.S. of the French call for the peacekeeping force would be a new low.

"A U.S. veto would be a major blow to France," said Martin Quencez, a senior program officer in the Paris office of the German Marshall Fund of the U.S. "A U.S. refusal based purely on stinginess would be very serious and means this won't be the last standoff."

The U.S. doesn't think a formal UN authorization is needed to create the force and believes the French proposal is too broad, according to a

U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because negotiations are continuing. Washington's contribution to UN peacekeeping is more than the combined payments by China, Japan and Germany, the next three largest contributors.

'Irresponsible' Move

"We have a very strong and large support among the members of the Security Council on this resolution," François Delattre, France's UN ambassador, told reporters last week. He said it was "irresponsible of the council not to come together on Sahel."

Under Ambassador Nikki Haley, the U.S. is scrutinizing each of the 16 existing UN peacekeeping missions as they come up for renewal by the Security Council. The world body already agreed to trim personnel and spending on the costliest mission, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, under U.S. pressure.

France sent a military force to Mali in 2013 to drive out fundamentalist Islamic terrorist groups, some of which were linked to al-Qaeda, which had seized key cities in the country's north. A multinational peacekeeping force backed by the UN was later dispatched to protect the civilians as the French troops battled jihadist groups.

Mali Attacks

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Despite France's military intervention in Mali, the country still suffers attacks, and Islamist groups are spreading in other countries of

the Sahel. Four guests and one member of Mali's security forces died in a militant attack on a resort popular with foreigners on the outskirts of the capital, Bamako, on Sunday, underscoring rising insecurity in the West African nation. According to a UN report, Islamist groups from Mali have also attacked Niger and Burkina Faso.

In response to U.S. criticism, France has revised its draft resolution, which would authorize a force made up of troops from Niger, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mauritania.

Neither France nor the U.S. is providing financial estimates for the cost of the new force, for which the European Union said it will contribute \$56 million. The Mali peacekeeping mission, with about 15,200 personnel currently deployed, has a budget of \$933 million for the year ending June 2017.

Such costs are what has the U.S. wavering, even though the Trump administration describes fighting terrorism as one of its top priorities.

"France expected an easier ride, expecting the U.S. to support its resolution because of the counterterrorism element," said Atwood of the International Crisis Group. "There are questions about the mandate of the mission, particularly regarding which armed groups it will confront. It is almost certain a regional force will deploy, but it is important to clarify exactly what it is doing and how it will relate to the UN peacekeeping mission."



Amazon-Whole Foods Deal Puts Spotlight on France's Carrefour

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Williams

5-6 minutes

by and

20 juin 2017 à 00:00 UTC-4 20 juin 2017 à 04:56 UTC-4

- Digital-savvy CEO seeks to turn around French store chain

- Carrefour could become European target for Amazon: analyst

Carrefour SA, which pioneered the big-box supermarket combining food and general merchandise in the 1960s, has been stepping up efforts to fuse e-commerce and in-store shopping. Amazon.com Inc.'s \$13.7 billion deal for Whole Foods Market Inc. raises the ante for the French retailer.

Carrefour this month named a new chief executive officer, turning to 44-

year-old Alexandre Bompard, who has been leading electronics retailer Fnac Darty SA since 2011. His mission, which is taking on additional urgency in the wake of the Amazon deal, is to expand his new employer's online presence while revamping its tired "hypermarkets."

Such stores have gone from being Carrefour's backbone to its Achilles heel, struggling with competition from Amazon as well as nimble big-box operators like Societe d'importation Leclerc SA,

discounters and higher-end grocers like Grand Frais.

"The hypermarket concept needs to be fundamentally rethought in terms of what it's bringing to the market and in terms of differentiation from online," said Joelle de Montgolfier, retail consultant at Bain & Co.

French retailers, with Carrefour among the leaders, have been more successful in e-commerce. Click-and-collect services have flourished in France for more than a decade, making the industry more advanced

in that respect than the U.S. Carrefour has more than 500 sites where online shoppers can pick up their groceries, while Wal-Mart Stores Inc. started introducing the option in 2014.

Bompard takes over as new French President Emmanuel Macron, bolstered by a strong legislative majority, aims to loosen up the country's rigid labor market and stimulate the digital economy.

At Fnac, Bompard wowed investors by steering the retailer in a high-tech direction and by leading the acquisition of appliance chain Darty. Together, Fnac and Darty's e-commerce receive nearly as many visitors as Amazon in France, according to a study by Mediametrie

and French e-commerce federation Fevad. Shares in Fnac Darty roughly tripled since its 2013 IPO, and digital prowess has spared it from going the way of Borders bookstores, which succumbed to Amazon.

Carrefour shares are trading about 70 percent below their 1999 peak as rapid growth in Brazil and the roll-out of smaller city shops have failed to compensate for investor concern over the French hypermarkets. After the Whole Foods deal on Friday, Carrefour plunged along with other supermarkets, before rebounding slightly on Monday and Tuesday, when the shares were up as much as 1.6 percent in early Paris trading.

Even before the arrival of Bompard, who takes over July 18, Carrefour has been trying to boost its e-commerce presence. Its more than 50 acquisitions since 2000 include organic food provider Greenweez and technology and home goods marketplace Rue du Commerce. Online sales had a gross merchandise value of 1.2 billion euros (\$1.34 billion) in 2016, and current CEO Georges Plassat has targeted 4 billion euros annually by 2020.

Still, Carrefour is lagging behind its peers in the French market for online groceries. Poor execution in the first years of its services has allowed rival Leclerc to take first place, accounting for 43.5 percent of French online grocery revenue,

Sanford C. Bernstein said in a report, citing Kantar Worldpanel data. Carrefour's 9 percent share also lags behind Auchan's 25.3 percent.

With a digital-savvy new CEO ready to change that, Carrefour could find itself on Amazon's shopping list, said Xavier Caroen, an analyst at Bryan Garnier.

"If worst comes to worst, provided that Alexandre Bompard does the job properly, Carrefour would be a target of choice for Amazon," Caroen said in a note.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Georgi Kantchev

7-9 minutes

Van Plows Into Crowd Near London Mosque in Suspected Terror Attack

Wiktor Szary,
Jenny Gross and

who they believed to be the sole suspect. Photos from the scene showed a white van with the logo of a Welsh rental company on the side. Police declined Monday evening to name the alleged attacker.

British media reported that the alleged attacker lived in Wales, and that the police searched a property in the suburbs of Cardiff, the Welsh capital, in connection with the incident.

After the attack, the man jumped out of the van and fled, but was chased down and pinned to the ground as he shouted anti-Muslim obscenities, witnesses said. As police detained him and took him away, he smiled and laughed at people in the crowd, they said. One witness described him blowing kisses.

The attack unfolded while the man who died was already receiving first aid from the public at the scene, police said. Some witnesses said people were tending to someone who had fainted before the car hit.

"We saw a van was driving very fast, so we thought at the beginning he wanted to catch the traffic light," said Saeed Hashi, 28, who said he saw the attack. "But he didn't. He hit a woman first and then two men. He carried on, and another three, or four, or five."

Mr. Hashi said he and five others restrained the alleged attacker, who he described as a muscular man with a tattoo. Some were punching him, but the mosque imam intervened, telling them to stop and wait for police, others said.

"He said, 'I've killed the Muslims, kill me please,'" said a 30-year-old man who runs a coffee shop across the street and said he helped apprehend the attacker. "As he was being arrested, he blew us kisses and smiled at us," he added.

The assault recalled two recent London attacks in which Islamist-linked terrorists used vehicles to mow down pedestrians. Just over two weeks ago, three assailants plowed down people on London Bridge before stabbing and slashing others with knives, leaving a total of eight people dead. In March, an attacker used a vehicle to hit pedestrians on Westminster Bridge before stabbing a police officer, killing five.

It also comes less than a month after a suicide bomber blew himself up outside Manchester Arena following an Ariana Grande concert, killing 22, many of them teenagers.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said there has been a "spike in hate crime," particularly against Muslims, since the London Bridge attack. He promised "zero tolerance" toward such crimes.

Mrs. May condemned the attack as a "sickening" act aimed once again at innocent people going about their daily lives. Echoing a statement she made following the London Bridge rampage, she warned that the country had been too tolerant of extremism, "and that means extremism of any kind, including Islamophobia."

After criticism in the neighborhood and on social media that the authorities were slow to declare the incident a terrorist attack, Mrs. May said police did so within eight minutes. Some at the scene had said they hadn't seen the same outpouring of grief as in other attacks.

Adding to the grim news, police said Monday that the death toll in a fire last week at a high-rise in the Kensington area of London had risen to 79 people.

"What we have seen throughout—whether in the heroism of the ordinary citizens who fought off the attackers at London Bridge; the unbreakable resolve of the residents in Kensington; or this morning the spirit of the community that apprehended this attacker—is that this is an extraordinary city of extraordinary people," Mrs. May said.

"It is home to a multitude of communities that together make London one of the greatest cities on Earth," she said. "Diverse, welcoming, vibrant, compassionate, confident and determined never to give in to hate."

Police said extra police would be deployed around London, especially to protect Muslims.

In Finsbury Park, the imam at the Muslim Welfare Center, Mohammed Mahmoud, told reporters that bystanders held the attacker down, but couldn't push back people who were trying to hit him, so he and others "pushed the people back."

He said people who wish to divide the U.K. and London have influenced some who are "vulnerable and impressionable into thinking we're barbaric and that we are people who like to shed blood."

Some remained shaken. Adil Rana, 24, said he was in front of the mosque when he saw the van accelerate toward him. He ducked for cover and then saw people on the ground covered in blood.

"I'm extremely upset," he said. "This will only escalate violence. People are angry. I'm angry."

Ibn Omar said he had received texts from friends and family telling him to stay away from mosques.

"I can't practice my religion freely," Mr. Omar said. "How will the

government assure us we are safe? Who will be next?"

After she woke up and saw the news on TV, Allison, a Finsbury Park resident of 37 years, headed to the scene, where she held up a banner she made reading "Leave our Muslim neighbors alone."

"I'm so angry about this stupid act," she said. "I wanted to show my

support and show that I love them. I hope, I pray, this doesn't tear us apart."

Witnesses said they had come from praying at the Finsbury Park Mosque, where Egyptian-born radical cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri, who was jailed for life by a U.S. court for supporting terrorism, used to preach. In 2005, the mosque

changed its board of trustees and imams. It hasn't been linked to extremism since the changes.

—Paul Hannon and Joanna Sugden contributed to this article.

Corrections & Amplifications
Police arrested a 47-year-old man. An earlier version of this article stated he was 48 years old based

on incorrect information from police. (June 19, 2017)

Write to Wiktor Szary at Wiktor.Szary@wsj.com, Jenny Gross at jenny.gross@wsj.com and Georgi Kantchev at georgi.kantchev@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'U.K. Terror Attack on Muslims Sparks Outcry.'

**The
New York
Times**

An Attack on Muslims Shakes Cosmopolitan London (UNE)

Katrin Bennhold
9-12 minutes

LONDON — Like many of London's Muslims, Mohammed Abdullah grew tired of defending himself, and his religion, after Islamist terrorists carried out two attacks in the city and another in Manchester during the past three months. Hostile glances followed him on the street, and rising fury greeted him on social media.

Then came last week's devastating fire at Grenfell Tower, a citywide tragedy that killed at least 79 people inside the 24-story tower, including many Muslims. "Good riddance," one far-right forum commented.

But early Monday, a white British man rammed a rental van into a congregation of Muslims leaving prayers during Ramadan, the holiest month on the Muslim calendar. One person was killed and at least 10 were injured.

"It feels like you're under siege," said Mr. Abdullah, 23, a law student standing outside Finsbury Park Mosque in North London on Monday morning hours after the attack. "I wonder," he said, "is anyone going to write about a 'white Christian terrorist' this time round?"

London may be the most diverse and tolerant city in the world and is home to more than one million Muslims from dozens of countries. The city's mayor, Sadiq Khan, is Muslim, and he enjoys broad support outside the Muslim community, too. When Britain voted to leave the European Union, London voted to stay.

But this proudly cosmopolitan city is now confronted with the tensions and ugliness that have been simmering on the fringes for years and are boiling to the surface.

As Hamdan Omar, another student who grew up in the area, put it, "There are people on both sides who want the clash of civilizations."

The man under investigation for the mosque attack was identified by the police as Darren Osborne, 47, of

Cardiff, Wales. Prime Minister Theresa May, who has been criticized for her response to the Grenfell fire, denounced the assault as an act of "evil" and "hatred" and promised to bolster security at mosques.

The authorities said they were treating the attack as an act of terrorism against Muslims, while many of the city's Muslim leaders pleaded for calm and warned against a rising tide of anti-Islamic sentiment.

Recent Attacks in Britain

An attack at a London mosque is being investigated as terrorism. Britain has seen several such assaults recently.

- **March 22: Westminster Bridge**

A 52-year-old Briton drove into pedestrians, killing five people. He then fatally stabbed a police officer before being shot and killed near Parliament.

- **May 22: Manchester Arena**

A 22-year-old resident of Manchester, England, killed 22 people, many of them children, and injured dozens in a suicide bombing at an Ariana Grande show.

- **June 3: London Bridge**

Three men in their twenties and early thirties rammed pedestrians with a van, then rampaged a popular nightspot with knives. Eight people died, and dozens more were wounded. The police killed the assailants.

- The Islamic State claimed responsibility for all three attacks. The group considers anyone whose actions were inspired by it to essentially be a member.

"Over the past weeks and months, Muslims have endured many incidents of Islamophobia, and this is the most violent manifestation to date," said Harun Khan, the

secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain.

In the week after the June 3 terrorist attack on London Bridge and at Borough Market that killed eight people and was carried out by three men inspired by the Islamic State, the Metropolitan Police reported 120 Islamophobic events, compared with 36 the previous week. Similar increases were recorded after the terrorist attacks in March on Westminster Bridge in London, and in May at the Manchester Arena.

On Monday in Finsbury Park, one of London's many diverse neighborhoods, residents left flowers and messages of solidarity outside the mosque.

"With love, sympathy and support to our Muslim neighbors, victims of this horrific act of terrorism," one handwritten note read. "This does not represent Finsbury Park," another read.

The children of a local school had drawn a colorful, even cheerful, sign: "One Community. Standing Together."

By late morning, the initial fear and shock over the attack had given way to anger — anger at the government and at the news media for too often amalgamating Islam and Islamists. But by the afternoon, another sentiment made itself heard powerfully here: defiance.

"Things like this will only strengthen London," said Mr. Abdullah, the law student. His grandfather and father had both been praying at the mosque before the attack and were inside when it happened. "An event like this will be met with resilience."

Uba Osman, 20, a local business manager, concurred: "There are some people who are trying to divide us," she said. "But they won't divide us. Londoners are not like that."

There was a sense of relief here, carefully expressed, that the man suspected in the attack was not from the city. "Somehow, it would have been even worse if he had been from our city," said Zahra Mounia, 45, a mother of two who lives in

South London but traveled here to see a friend after the attack. "We are so proud of this city and what it stands for."

Londoners Fear 'We're Not Safe'

Residents on Monday voiced their uneasiness and praised the community response after an attack in which a van plowed into pedestrians outside a mosque during Ramadan.

By CAMILLA SCHICK and ELSA BUTLER on June 19, 2017. Photo by Daniel Leal-Olivas/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images. Watch in Times Video »

But some worried London's tolerance was fraying on the edges, too. Over the past three months, as Islamist militants struck three times, several residents said they experienced small but unsettling episodes of hostility.

"In London, people feel they must tolerate you, so they won't say anything but you get the dirty looks, people avoiding eye contact," said Suzanne Stone, 42, a convert to Islam and a writer of children's books. "My friend outside of London gets real abuse."

Her husband, Omar Faruq, said he worried about some of the things in the news media. "They say things on the radio and are not held to account," he said, recalling one show in which a member of the far-right anti-Muslim English Defense League "was calling on people to form militias."

Mr. Faruq was also concerned that the government might further stigmatize Muslims by expanding the country's already powerful antiterrorism legislation. "Now there is a lot of talk about nonviolent extremism," he said. "What does that mean? If you don't believe in a certain way, you are extremist? Everything is extremism now."

He pointed out the way the news media had been quick to identify Finsbury Park Mosque as a former hotbed of radicalization. He wondered if that was appropriate. "It just takes away that little bit of sympathy," he said.

Details matter. That is something many people here said on Monday. It was Muslims, awake because of Ramadan, who saved a lot of lives in Grenfell Tower by waking up neighbors and alerting the fire department. And it was an imam of the Muslim Welfare House who helped form a protective ring around the van driver on Monday before the police arrested him. "How many people know that?" asked Omar Hussain, a community worker.

Language matters, too. When The Daily Mail initially described the assailant outside the mosque as a "white van driver" rather than a terrorist, Muslims were not alone in their indignation. J. K. Rowling, the author of the "Harry Potter" books, criticized The Mail, an influential right-wing tabloid, for the way it referred to him. "The Mail has misspelled 'terrorist' as 'white van driver,'" she wrote, but later deleted, on Twitter. "Now let's discuss how he was radicalised."

One answer, said Jacob Davey of

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

7-8 minutes

June 19, 2017 5:04 p.m. ET

LONDON—The thudding of helicopter rotors jolted Halima Ali awake after midnight on Monday morning. Instinctively, she said, she jumped from her bed to check on her 4-year-old daughter.

"I just knew in my bones it was another horror," said Ms. Ali, a 27-year-old university student.

Police had flooded into Ms. Ali's north London neighborhood in response to the fourth terror attack in Britain since March—this time by an assailant who plowed a rented van into a crowd of Muslims leaving Ramadan prayers. One man died and eight others were rushed to the hospital.

It was the latest in a troubling litany of events this year that has exposed divisions in the U.K. along lines of religion, ethnicity and class, fraying a nation, and particularly a capital, that prides itself on keeping calm and carrying on.

"These have been a terrible few weeks for London, unprecedented in recent times," the city's mayor, Sadiq Khan, said Monday, before urging citizens to stay strong.

Monday's violence came days after a fire in a public-housing complex that left at least 79 people dead and missing, according to the latest

the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, who analyzes extremist online narratives, is that Islamist militants and far-right extremists have fed on one another's hatred to recruit people for their causes.

After the Grenfell fire, the English Defense League posted an image of the tower on Facebook (later removed) with the caption: "They say Ramadan saved Lives. It would be the first time Islam saves lives."

In another Facebook thread about Monday's mosque attack, one comment read, "What do you expect?" Another, "Civil war has begun."

Meanwhile, on Ummah News, a forum that supports the Islamic State, commenters reacted to the Monday attack by calling for Muslims to fight back: "Oh Muslims you need to wake up the war is starting now in your own streets outside your own Masajids. Your elders could be killed, your sisters

official tally. That disaster has focused attention on the wide disparities between London's rich and poor and led to protests by critics who blame government spending cuts and lax enforcement of safety rules for the blaze and the shockingly high death toll.

Earlier in June, three Islamist extremists rammed pedestrians with a van on London Bridge and stabbed others, killing eight people and injuring dozens before they were shot and killed by police. In March, another Islamist terrorist—also using a vehicle and a knife—killed five, including a policeman guarding Parliament.

In between those two attacks, a suicide bomber in May killed 22 people at a pop concert in the northwestern British city of Manchester.

That string of violence, sustained by Monday's assault on Muslims, raised fears for some of further copycat and revenge attacks. London's police force, already stretched as it provides heightened security in the capital, on Monday said it would step up protection at mosques.

Britain and its government are grappling with all this amid great political uncertainty. Prime Minister Theresa May suffered a serious setback in national elections this month and was weakened after her Conservative Party lost its majority in Parliament.

At the same time, on Monday, formal talks began on Britain's exit

could be attacked. They hate your Oh Muslims."

Nazir Afzal, who was once the acting chief prosecutor for London and has lived in the city for 20 years, said it was a powerful message to people "on the cusp of radicalization."

In Finsbury Park, some linked last year's vote to leave the European Union to a change in atmosphere in the country that also left its mark on London, its opposition to the British exit notwithstanding.

"Since the 'Brexit' vote, things have been crazy," said Mr. Abdullah, the law student. "The spotlight is on minorities. The signal is, 'You're not wanted here.'"

Brendan Cox, whose wife, Jo Cox, a member of Parliament, was shot and killed a week before the referendum by a right-wing extremist, urged the country to fight hateful ideology against Muslims, just as much as it was fighting Islamist militancy.

from the European Union—a process that will redefine the country's place in the world after decades as a member of the bloc.

Ali Ibrahim, a 23-year-old graduate student who witnessed Monday's attack, said hatred and divisions within society feel palpable after so much violence in such a short period of time.

"If we're united, we can overcome," Mr. Ibrahim said. "But right now, there's a lot of turmoil, with this Brexit, a hung Parliament. We don't know what direction we're heading in, you know? It could possibly be—I don't really want to say it—but London is falling at the moment."

The atmosphere overall in the capital is far from one of crisis. Restaurants are crowded. Tourists throng the city's attractions. And the vast majority of people are going on about their lives as usual. But there is an undercurrent of unease.

Michael Biggs, a University of Oxford sociologist, said the climate today feels different from the frustration that erupted in August 2011, when four nights of rioting led to more than 1,000 arrests and more than \$300 million in damages. "I haven't seen anything really that would give an indication" that the recent events would lead to public disorder, he said.

Unlike in 2011, he said, Britons are expressing a shared sense of injustice over the plight of those affected by the apartment-building fire. He likened that event to the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire in New

"When Islamist terrorists attack we rightly seek out hate preachers who spur them on," Mr. Cox wrote on Twitter. "We must do the same to those who peddle Islamophobia."

Mendy Korer, the rabbi of Islington, one of many local faith leaders who had come to Finsbury to show solidarity, said he was confident the local community would beat hatred. "We have a duty to break that cycle," he said.

Not everyone was so optimistic.

"I think it could escalate," said Shiraz Kothia of the London Muslim Community Forum, who helps the Metropolitan Police to manage community relations during major episodes like this. "We've got the right-wing extremists and we've got the Muslim extremists."

"I'm really worried," he added. "Today outside a Muslim mosque. Tomorrow outside a church?"

York, which killed 146 immigrant workers and became a watershed moment for workers' rights.

The impact of the latest terror attack was still raw on Monday. Anger mixed with despair as armed police blocked off streets and paramedics gave first aid to the injured. The weather was unusually hot for London, with daytime temperatures in recent days in the 80s.

Some witnesses of the crime sat or paced alone nearby. Others loudly voiced their frustration with the government and media.

"He's a white terrorist," shouted one man. "Tomorrow they will say he is mentally ill," said another.

Mohamed Abdulle, a 20-year-old who delivers takeaway meals on a motorbike, said he no longer feels safe in London out of fear a similar attack would happen again. He said he was driving just behind the van used in the attack and saw the driver mow down worshippers.

"I don't think I will go to the mosque after what happened last night," said Mr. Abdulle, who moved to London six months ago from Bristol in southwest England. "All religions live in London," he added. "This should not be happening."

London's Metropolitan Police said there had been 182 reported incidents of hate crimes against Muslims in the two weeks after the London Bridge attack, an increase from the average of 50 usually recorded every 14 days in the city.

"There has been a cycle of violence recently. We must break that cycle," Rabbi Mendy Koror of the nearby Chabad synagogue said Monday. Adrian Newman, the Anglican bishop of Stepney, condemned Monday's violence as appalling. "An attack on any faith is an attack on us all," he said.

Mrs. May tried to assuage Muslims' fears and called for a crackdown on extremism of all kinds, saying

**The
Washington
Post**

8-9 minutes

LONDON — In a city on edge over a series of Islamist-inspired attacks, where police keep extensive watchlists and monitor potential militants, terror took a new turn when a van plowed into a group of Muslim worshippers here Monday.

A man identified as Darren Osborne, a 47-year-old from Cardiff, Wales, was allegedly behind the wheel. He was not on any security watchlists. But if he took the authorities by surprise, the act capped a growing dread in London's Muslim community.

Witnesses said the driver was heard shouting after he was wrestled to the ground that he wanted to kill Muslims. It was chilling but not, in the Finsbury Park neighborhood, entirely unexpected. Fears have been growing among Muslims here that they could be singled out by extremists in tit-for-tat attacks because of other attacks carried out in the name of Islam, even though they are widely denounced by the mainstream Muslim community.

Monday's early morning attack was confounding in another way, too. Using vans, trucks or cars as weapons poses huge challenges to public safety.

Hours after the London attack, a man in Paris drove his car into a police car; only the attacker died, but the incident underscored the difficulty of defending against violence perpetrated by vehicle.

The Paris assailant has not been publicly identified but was known to French authorities, the Associated Press reported, and was listed in a dossier of people suspected of posing a threat to national security.

In England, an attack by a man who was on no one's radar has deepened the anxiety, especially as he appears to have deliberately targeted Muslims. (Scotland Yard has not confirmed that the suspect,

Monday's assault was "every bit as sickening" as the ones that came before.

"It was an attack that once again targeted the ordinary and the innocent going about their daily lives—this time British Muslims as they left a Mosque having broken their fast and prayed together at this sacred time of year."

who was arrested, is Osborne; he was identified by several British media outfits.)

"We don't feel safe anywhere," said a young man who gave his name as Adil Rana. "We don't feel safe walking the streets or going to the mosque."

The incident occurred in Finsbury Park, for years considered to be a hotbed of Islamist extremism. A relatively deprived immigrant neighborhood in north London, it is the home of the Finsbury Park Mosque — once notorious for housing the radical Egyptian cleric known as Abu Hamza al-Masri, who was later extradited to the United States and found guilty of terrorism charges.

But like many of its surrounding neighborhoods, the area has rapidly gentrified in recent years, arguably becoming more diverse and tolerant at the same time. Kebab shops sit comfortably next to cafes serving flat white espressos. Finsbury Park Mosque has undergone its own dramatic reforms, too, with its extremist edges stripped away.

For the past decade, the mosque has sought to emphasize, according to its website, the "true teachings of Islam as a religion of tolerance, cooperation and peaceful harmony amongst all people who lead a life of balance, justice and mutual respect."

In 2014, the mosque won a prestigious award for its services to the community. But its past links to extremism have made it — and its neighborhood — a target for criticism from Britain's far right.

Even before this attack, Muslims said they had seen a sharp rise in hate crimes, here and elsewhere in Britain.

"Over the past weeks and months, Muslims have endured many incidents of Islamophobia, and this is the most violent manifestation to date," Harun Khan, secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, said in a statement.

At least 10 people were injured when the van hit the crowd of

Fearing further backlash against the Muslim community, Ms. Ali, the university student, said she wouldn't be taking her daughter to school for at least two weeks. Other Muslim parents aren't either, she said.

Even before Monday's attack, the recent incidents across Britain had her on edge, she said.

"I get paranoid when I walk on the street and I see a van or a bigger

car approaching," Ms. Ali said. "It's getting scarier and scarier here by the day."

Write to Jenny Gross at jenny.gross@wsj.com and Georgi Kantchev at georgi.kantchev@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'Cascade of Fatal Violence Puts Uneasy Nation Further on Edge.'

Terror in London seems to confirm Muslims' growing dread (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/griff.witte>

worshippers who had just left a Ramadan prayer service at the Muslim Welfare House, in Finsbury Park. One man died at the scene, but police said that he was receiving first aid before the van struck, and it was unclear whether he died as a result of the attack.

Abdulrahman Aidroos said he and his friends were attending to the man who had collapsed when suddenly he saw a van driving "straight into us."

The driver jumped out of the vehicle and tried to run, Aidroos said.

"I tackled him on the floor until the police came," he told the BBC. "When he was running, he said, 'I want to kill more people. I want to kill more Muslims.'"

The driver was subdued by the outraged group, but one of the mosque imams appealed for calm, possibly sparing him serious harm.

"We found a group of people quickly started to collect around him, around the assailant. And some tried to hit him, either kicks or punches," Imam Mohammed Mahmoud of the Muslim Welfare House told reporters. "By God's grace we managed to surround him and to protect him from any harm. We stopped all forms of attack and abuse toward him that were coming from every angle."

Mahmoud said he flagged down a passing police car and told the officers: "There's a mob attempting to hurt him. If you don't take him, God forbid he might be seriously hurt."

Rana, who witnessed the incident, said the attacker taunted onlookers as he was arrested.

"He said, 'I'd do it again,'" Rana said. "It was a premeditated attack. He picked this area well, and he knows Finsbury Park is predominantly a Muslim area."

Fearing copycat attacks, many Muslims urged extra security for mosques and other sites. East London Mosque, one of the city's largest, said it was evacuated

Monday after receiving a fake bomb threat.

[After attack, a local imam may have saved the suspect's life]

Neil Basu, a London police official, told reporters the Finsbury Park case was being treated as a terrorist attack. The suspect was arrested on terrorism charges as well as attempted murder.

British Prime Minister Theresa May met with members of the Muslim community even as they denounced a rising climate of anti-Islamic sentiment. Her response contrasted with her handling of a deadly fire in London last week, when she was widely criticized for not meeting survivors on the first day of the disaster.

[In Paris, car rams police vehicle]

This was the third attack in London this year involving vehicles, and it came a month after a suicide bombing in Manchester killed 23 people and injured more than 100.

May described Monday's attack as "every bit as sickening" as those that have come before. She also hailed the "bravery" of those who detained the driver at the scene.

"Hatred and evil of this kind will never succeed," she said.

[Mosque attack is perfect scenario for Islamic State recruiters]

Sadiq Khan, London's first Muslim mayor, called the incident a "horrific terrorist attack" that was "clearly a deliberate attack on innocent Londoners, many of whom were finishing prayers during the holy month of Ramadan."

[A brief history of Trump's feuds with London's mayor]

"While this appears to be an attack on a particular community, like the terrible attacks in Manchester, Westminster and London Bridge, it is also an assault on all our shared values of tolerance, freedom and respect," he said in a statement.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

Saadik Mizou, a 35-year-old chef who is from Belgium, said the attack had made him reconsider whether

he could go to the mosques in Finsbury Park again.

"Twenty days in a row I've been here," he said. "Nothing happened. It's all going good. People are eating, doing charity, doing things

like helping people, praying and then going home. That's it. And now that's happening? We're not safe. If I stay here, people could come and attack me with a car.

"It's better to be safe and stay at home," Mizou said. "Simple."

Adam Taylor in London, James McAuley in Paris and Brian Murphy in Washington contributed to this report.

**The
New York
Times**

Terrorist or Disturbed Loner? The Contentious Politics of a Label

Max Fisher
6-8 minutes

When a 48-year-old man rammed a van into a crowd near a London mosque on Monday morning, controversy quickly erupted over whether the attack would be treated as less significant than others because it was committed against Muslims but not by them.

Such debates have typically played out over whether anti-Muslim violence is labeled terrorism. Though Monday's attack appears to fit scholarly and legal definitions for terrorism, past incidents have been called hate crimes or attributed to disturbed loners with far-right leanings but no real agenda.

Prime Minister Theresa May called the attack terrorism. But debate has continued, suggesting it is about more than labels, but a suspicion that society grants greater importance to non-Muslim than Muslim victims and to Islamist than far-right or other threats.

Description With Deeper Meaning

These debates have raged since 2015, when the rise of attacks by the Islamic State coincided with an uptick in violence against Muslims in the United States and Europe.

The question of how to talk about and treat those two forms of violence overlaps with sensitive issues related to the integration of Muslim communities into Western societies.

As attacks against Muslims have risen, many have been labeled something other than terrorism. For Muslim victims, this seemed to confirm suspicions that society sees them as potential threats more readily than as fellow citizens to be protected.

Civil rights groups say the hesitation in labeling anti-Muslim violence as terrorism is part of the same anti-Muslim bias that manifests in, for example, policing and hiring discrimination.

But other factors play a role as well. Formal definitions of terrorism typically rest on motive, which can be tricky to determine, particularly in

the immediate moments after an attack.

According to British law, an attack is deemed terrorism when it seeks "to influence the government" or "intimidate the public" with the aim of "advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause."

Louise Richardson, an Irish political scientist, has posed a similar definition: "Terrorism simply means deliberately and violently targeting civilians for political purposes."

Islamist attacks often seem to meet this standard more easily.

Transnational groups like the Islamic State or Al Qaeda are eager to claim faraway attacks and have the public relations machinery to do so. Their reach online often means the attacker will have visited their sites or forums, allowing the groups to claim even loners as their own.

Far-right extremists tend to be less organized. Groups are smaller and online communities more fractured. Though attacks are rising, often there is no group to claim them. The police may fall back on calling the incident a hate crime, which is easier to prove.

An attack can be both. When Omar Mateen killed 49 people last year at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla., he appeared motivated by animus against gay people as well as the political agenda of Islamic State, to which he had sworn allegiance. The F.B.I. called the attack terrorism as well as a hate crime.

Post 9/11, the Language of War

Over time, as this disparity has fed into Muslims' sense of being second class, the issue of labeling terrorism has grown more charged.

Calling an attack terrorism has become a way of asserting that the targeted community feels terrorized and of asking society to take that threat as seriously as it does other forms of terrorism.

The debate is less about legalistic definitions than a way to examine which groups society is willing to protect, and what kind of violence it is willing to tolerate.

And it is a reaction against the politics around Islamist terrorism.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, Western policy makers have described terrorism in the language of war, with President George W. Bush saying Al Qaeda sought to destroy "our way of life."

Though leaders like Mr. Bush were careful to distinguish extremist groups from mainstream Islam, some rights groups warned that the political climate contributed to anti-Muslim violence.

Ever since, some see the speed with which Muslim attackers are called terrorists as proof that Muslims are considered outsiders. When episodes of right-wing violence are not labeled terrorism, that is taken as proof of a deadly double standard.

For others, any hesitation at labeling an Islamist attack as terrorism demonstrates that political correctness prevents policy makers from fully addressing the threat.

Years of seeing terrorism as a foreign threat, and of arguments that Muslim communities must address the roots of extremism, has freighted the term with accusations that extend beyond the attacker to his or her community.

As far-right violence has risen, accusations of responsibility once leveled at Muslims are now directed at white communities and right-wing politics broadly.

Experts dispute that entire social groups can be blamed for terrorism. Still, some worry that far-right extremism is under-addressed as leaders strain to avoid the appearance of bias against mainstream conservatives — a consideration not so easily afforded to Muslims.

Micah Zenko, who studies terrorism at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote in 2014, "We treat 'terrorism' in the common vernacular differently because it is ascribed to foreigners who are unlike us, whereas similarly savage behavior conducted by fellow Americans is a reflection of us."

When a Department of Homeland Security report on right-wing extremism leaked in 2009, it prompted accusations that Democrats were persecuting

conservatives. The report was withdrawn and the office that had produced it quietly dismantled.

A Sense of Hierarchy

When far-right violence is described as a hate crime or the act of a disturbed loner, even if that is true, it can exacerbate a sense among targeted communities that they matter less.

In 2015, Dylann S. Roof, a South Carolina man who had once worn white supremacist patches, killed nine people at a mostly black church.

The Black Lives Matter movement had spent two years campaigning against violence against African-Americans, particularly those killed in encounters with the police. Mr. Roof's attack, they argued, demonstrated the threat facing black people.

If Islamist terrorism had inspired national mobilizations and sweeping policy changes, they argued, so should violence against blacks. And the crime appeared to neatly fit terrorism's legal definition.

When Mr. Roof was charged with hate crimes, rather than terrorism, social media and rights groups angrily denounced the decision. It seemed to confirm that the government took violence against black people less seriously and would refuse to fully tackle far-right extremism.

Legal scholars said prosecutors likely chose hate crime charges because they are significantly easier to prove than terrorism charges, reducing the risk of an acquittal. Federal terrorism charges are tailored to certain acts, like airplane hijackings, rather than shootings like Mr. Roof's.

Shortly after, Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch called hate crimes "the original domestic terrorism."

It was an acknowledgment that "terrorism" has different meanings in the courtroom and in society more broadly and that its use carries meaning beyond describing a particular act. But it hardly quieted the outrage that, as long as deeper issues remain, seems bound to recur.

Brexit Talks Begin With Tight Schedule Set and Divorce-Bill Disagreement

Laurence Norman and Valentina Pop

6-7 minutes

Updated June 19, 2017 4:01 p.m. ET

BRUSSELS—The U.K. and the European Union concluded their first day of negotiations over Britain's departure from the bloc with the EU securing its preferred timetable for the talks and divergent views immediately emerging over a divorce bill the EU is demanding from London.

The talks on Monday started almost exactly a year after last June's U.K. referendum vote to quit the EU. The complex talks are on a tight timetable: They must be done in time for Britain to leave in March 2019.

In an early concession, 11 days after U.K. elections in which Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party lost its parliamentary majority, British negotiators agreed to focus early talks on the EU's key priorities: settling the future rights of EU citizens in the U.K., discussing past spending pledges the EU wants Britain to fulfill and avoiding a hard border in Ireland.

The EU has said only once there is "sufficient progress" on these issues can talks begin on the future trade relationship between the two sides. The bloc's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, said he hopes the two sides can reach that point by October.

In a sign of the tensions that lie ahead, EU officials said U.K. Brexit Secretary David Davis didn't accept the EU's legal case for a British divorce bill—financial commitments

made by the U.K. that it hasn't yet fulfilled—saying there were different legal views on the issue. EU officials have said Britain has made spending pledges of at least €60 billion (\$67 billion) that it must fulfill.

At a news conference after the first day of talks, Mr. Davis and Mr. Barnier categorized the talks as positive.

"The first session was useful indeed to start off on the right foot and the clock is ticking," Mr. Barnier said.

Mr. Davis said he was encouraged by Monday's seven hours of talks. "There is a long way to go but we are off to a promising start," he said. "We have taken the first critical steps together."

Mr. Davis said he hoped for quick progress on agreeing the rights of EU citizens in the U.K. and British citizens in the EU.

He said Mrs. May would brief her counterparts at a Brussels summit this week on what British officials have called a generous British proposal on the rights of the three million EU citizens in the U.K. and the one million U.K. citizens in the EU. The details of that plan will be published next Monday.

The two sides agreed they would meet for one week a month to conduct the negotiations, with the next talks beginning on July 17. They set up three working groups on citizens' rights issues, on the EU's financial settlement demands and other divorce issues.

They also established a separate dialogue, at a higher political level, to discuss the politically sensitive and technically complex issue of avoiding a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Mr. Davis acknowledged

that solutions for Ireland would take longer.

Mr. Barnier has said he wants to conclude the talks by October 2018 to give enough time to ratify a divorce deal after more than four decades of British membership in the bloc. The two sides are also supposed to shape a future partnership between Britain and its neighbors.

Mrs. May has said she wants a close economic and security partnership with the EU but has acknowledged that any future deal can only be secured once Britain exits the EU. Some European officials have warned that could take years to achieve.

Britain started Monday's negotiations at a time of huge political volatility at home, with Mrs. May struggling to rebuild her authority after calling early elections that ended with a disastrous result for her party. Since the vote, there have been calls from senior Conservative politicians for Mrs. May to soften Britain's Brexit goals.

After Monday's negotiations, Mr. Davis said there would be no change in the government's intention to leave the EU's single market of goods and services and exit the EU's customs union. "The position hasn't changed," he said.

Mr. Barnier said the EU side also was negotiating on that basis. He warned that while his team were determined to try to reach a deal with the U.K., leaving the bloc without a deal would have real consequences for the country. "A fair deal is possible and far better than no deal," he said.

While the U.K. government insists it won't change its negotiating position, senior officials have said

they aren't closing off options for a possible transitional agreement that could cushion the economy for the first few years after Britain leaves the bloc.

However, any decision to stay temporarily in the single market after March 2019 would mean accepting continued EU rules and the oversight of EU courts. Staying in the customs union for a few years would prevent Britain completing bilateral trade agreements with other countries during the transition.

On Monday, top trade officials from the U.S. and U.K. said they are eager to explore a bilateral free-trade agreement—but any possible deal is likely at least two years away from taking shape.

"We're not allowed to conclude any negotiations as long as we're still part of the European Union," Liam Fox, the U.K.'s international trade secretary told a U.S. government-run investment conference just outside Washington, in a joint appearance with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross.

Mr. Fox, though, showed he was eager to begin exploring the prospects, pointing to a working group the two sides had established.

"From the U.S. side," Mr. Ross told the group, "we've made clear we're prepared to begin as soon as the U.K. is ready."

Write to Laurence Norman at laurence.norman@wsj.com and Valentina Pop at valentina.pop@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'Divisions Emerge as U.K. Exit Talks Begin.'

'Brexit' Talks Open in Brussels, With a Mountain to Climb

Steven Erlanger
6-8 minutes

BERLIN — Britain and the European Union began formal negotiations on Monday over how Britain will leave the bloc and what might come afterward. The talks began a year after British voters chose withdrawal in a referendum and three months after Britain gave formal notice of its intention to pull out.

The negotiations, which could last nearly two years, did not produce anything revelatory on the first day.

But they are crucial to the future of Britain and to the cohesion of the other 27 member states of the bloc.

And they come at a time when the government of Prime Minister Theresa May is hanging by a thread, and when a new debate is in progress over what Britain's future relationship with Europe ought to be.

The meeting, held around a large oval table, will be the first of many as the clock ticks toward March 29, 2019, the day when Britain will be out of the European Union, with or without a deal.

Entering the talks, David Davis, Britain's secretary of state for exiting the European Union, known as Brexit, said that he aimed for "a positive and constructive tone, determined to build a strong and special partnership" with "our European allies and friends."

Michel Barnier, Europe's chief negotiator, also called for constructive talks, but he focused on the need to agree on an agenda, citing the bloc's preferred priorities. "We must first tackle the uncertainties caused by Brexit — first, for citizens, but also for the beneficiaries of E.U. policies and for

the impact on borders, in particular Ireland," he said.

Mr. Barnier, who comes from France's mountainous Savoie region, presented Mr. Davis with a hiking stick, presumably implying a long, steep route ahead.

In a news conference on Monday evening after the talks, both men said that the atmosphere had been good.

The European Union wants to settle the rights of its citizens now living in Britain and to agree on a form of arbitration in disputes. It also wants Britain to pay the union a large but

negotiable sum, possibly 40 billion to 60 billion euros (\$45 billion to \$67 billion) or more, probably spread out over five years. Both sides want to preserve an open border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, which will stay in the bloc, while figuring out how to handle customs issues there.

Only after European officials in Brussels deem that “sufficient progress” has been made, does the union want to begin discussing a future relationship with a post-Brexit Britain.

Mrs. May has often said that she wants to hold those talks in parallel with the divorce. But with her current political difficulties — having lost her party’s parliamentary majority in an election she called — more time to think through Britain’s preferences for the future may be welcome.

Mrs. May announced a “hard Brexit,” with Britain outside both the European single market and its customs union. But she did not get a clear mandate for that at the polls, with Britons favoring closer continuing ties to the bloc becoming more vocal. But there is considerable confusion in Britain about how the European Union works.

And as long as controlling migration remains at the core of Britain’s position, backed by both Mrs. May’s Conservatives and the opposition Labour Party, continuing access to the single market would seem to be impossible.

Staying in the customs union would ease the Irish border problem, but would cover only about 20 percent of the British economy, which is mostly built on services, not goods. It would also prevent Britain from making its own trade deals.

So there seems to be growing pressure on Mrs. May to choose a longer transition, lasting well past the 2019 date, that would keep Britain adhering to the single market and paying money to Brussels, as Norway does, while it negotiates a comprehensive free-trade deal. That process could take five years or more.

But all that is for the future. Right now, Mrs. May has pressing political problems like fending off a party leadership challenge, completing a deal to keep her minority government in power, and dealing with the fallout from recent terrorist attacks and a horrible fire.

“The Europeans are very clear about their position on the Brexit talks, but it’s very difficult to see any such clarity on the British side, since there might not even be the same government there in a few months’ time,” said Fabian Zuleeg, director of the European Policy Center, a research organization in Brussels. “Any deal reached in Brussels might not even politically pass the British Parliament, and then we end up with a chaotic exit.”

For the Europeans, Brexit is a distraction. Britain’s departure will be a considerable blow, but the union has other problems, including

an aggressive Russia, a migrant crisis, porous borders and, importantly, an ambivalent if not hostile President Trump.

There has been some good news, like a gathering economic recovery and an ebbing of the populist challenge. European officials are breathing a bit easier with the smashing electoral victory of France’s new pro-Europe president, Emmanuel Macron, and with signs that Angela Merkel will win another term as chancellor of Germany in September.

It is also clear that Europe’s big decisions on Brexit will be made by member governments and will probably come only after the German elections. So there is time for Britain to get its act together and for the Europeans to see whether Mrs. May will survive in office.

Britain’s foreign minister, Boris Johnson, a proponent of Brexit, told reporters in Luxembourg on Monday that there would be arguments with Brussels over money and much else. “But I think the most important thing about us now is for us to look to the horizon,” he said cheerily, adding, “I think, in the long run, this will be good for the U.K. and good for the rest of Europe.”

Still, Britain’s negotiating position is weaker now. Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament’s coordinator for Brexit, said time was running out.

“I am glad that we are sticking to the negotiating timetable, which is already quite tight,” he said. “Let’s

now, first of all, make progress in the field of citizens’ rights and create legal certainty for both our people and our companies.”

Mr. Zuleeg of the European Policy Center noted that Britain had already lost influence over policy issues in the union. “In many ways, Brussels has already moved on,” he said.

Mrs. May plans to attend a European Council summit meeting in Brussels on Thursday, where she is bound to encounter a degree of annoyance with her new political vulnerability, mixed with some sympathy. The German foreign minister, Sigmar Gabriel, noted in a newspaper interview published on Sunday that by calling and then losing a snap election, Mrs. May had created a “difficult, even impossible situation, without clear majorities and clear negotiation strategy.”

He added, “We will negotiate fairly, and fair means that we want to keep the British as close as possible to the E.U. — but never at the price that we divide the remaining 27 E.U. states.”

Mr. Gabriel is an important member of Germany’s Social Democratic Party, a junior member of the current governing coalition, and his party his is trying to unseat Mrs. Merkel in September. So, like Mr. Johnson and Mrs. May, he speaks these days as much for his party as for his government.



Negotiations begin over British split from European Union

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

6-8 minutes

BRUSSELS — Britain and the European Union began talks Monday to sever their 43-year partnership, kicking off unprecedented divorce negotiations that will shape future relations between them.

Discussions began with an immediate concession from the British over how the talks will be structured, a display of the weakness of the British position in the face of an unusual degree of unity among the E.U.’s 27 remaining members.

British politics were thrown into turmoil after voters narrowly decided just short of a year ago to leave the E.U., long a source of love-hate angst in British politics. The move toppled one leader and may be close to toppling a second, British

Prime Minister Theresa May, after a crippling election earlier this month in which her Conservatives lost their majority.

[In historic break, Britain gives formal notice it is leaving the European Union]

Despite sharp splits in London over what to seek in the divorce, the lead British negotiator vowed that his nation would plunge onward with a full declaration of independence, dampening expectations after the election that Britain would move to preserve some ties with Brussels.

“Today marks the start of a journey for the United Kingdom and for the European Union,” the British minister charged with negotiating the deal, David Davis, said Monday after a day of meetings with his E.U. negotiating counterpart, Michel Barnier. “There’s no doubt that the road ahead will at times be challenging.”

The Brexit victory shocked even backers of the measure and added

momentum to a wave of nationalism and populism in Europe and the United States that was seen as helping elevate Donald Trump to the White House.

But British society has remained deeply divided about the meaning of the Brexit vote and the extent to which leaders should pull out of wide-ranging relationships that have delivered prosperity and frustration to generations of British citizens.

Speaking alongside Davis, Barnier offered a grave outlook about what lies ahead.

“The United Kingdom has asked to leave the European Union. It’s not the other way around,” said Barnier, speaking in French, a decision that itself is a measure of Britain’s waning influence in Europe.

“The consequences are substantial,” he said. But he said that the E.U. approach to Britain will not be “about punishment — it’s not about revenge.”

[As Britain softens Brexit demands, E.U. leaders say door is still open]

European leaders have repeatedly said that Britain need not go through with its plans for divorce — although they have been tough about what a split will mean if it happens.

Barnier, a veteran French politician, has been vested by the E.U. to enforce its no-compromise red lines that any deal for Britain must not be more favorable than the one it has as a full member.

His first victory came Monday, when he forced Britain to accept the E.U. timetable for the talks: first a negotiation over the split, and only then a discussion about the future relationship between the two sides. Britain had sought for the talks to proceed in parallel, a structure that would have given London more bargaining power.

[What’s at stake for the European Union?]

The issues at stake are daunting.

Unresolved is everything from the status of E.U. citizens living in Britain, to intelligence sharing, to the future of tens of thousands of British jobs that could be wiped out if businesses move to Europe to avoid new trade barriers.

So far, European leaders have remained united that Britain cannot have full access to European markets unless it also allows full access to its own. European demands for British restitution have also increased, from \$67 billion a few months ago to \$112 billion now, a measure of the degree of E.U. toughening against May.

The prime minister is a deeply weakened leader who was badly

damaged after parliamentary elections this month swept away her majority. That against-all-odds result means that the British leader is far from assured of staying in her seat, even as the Brexit talks get underway.

But further turmoil and a new prime minister could risk any progress that is made in the first weeks of talks if the new leader decides to take a different direction.

May plans to present E.U. leaders with a proposal Thursday that would detail British plans for E.U. citizens living in Britain.

Any deal will depend on the willingness of both sides to bargain

as the clock ticks toward March 2019, when, under treaty rules, Britain will leave the E.U. whether it has reached a deal about how the new relationship will function or not.

But as Europe grows more confident in its future after the election in France of the pro-E.U. Emmanuel Macron as president and the growing assurance from German Chancellor Angela Merkel that she will be reelected in September, analysts say there may be fewer reasons for Europe to compromise.

Act Four newsletter

The intersection of culture and politics.

[As Brexit begins, the British face a Europe with far more at stake]

"They can be more relaxed about Britain crashing out without a deal that could destabilize the E.U. economy and destabilize the euro zone," said Charles Grant, director of the Center for European Reform, a London-based think tank.

Though the basic outlines of a deal could be struck within the allotted time, he said, uncertain British politics could add a challenge.

"The more that Britain is unstable politically, the more difficult it is to complete the talks on time," Grant said.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Anton Troianovski | Photographs by Ksenia Kuleshova for The Wall Street Journal

6-8 minutes

German Building Boom Unearths Explosive Problem

June 19, 2017 7:00 a.m. ET

ELLENSERDAMMERSIEL, Germany—This country's construction boom has reached such heights that its unexploded-ordnance-removal technicians can barely keep up.

"This really takes it out of you," one of them, Hans Mohr, said one recent Saturday after a 65-hour workweek—not counting this morning's assignment, which was digging up a railway bed. "I can't keep going on like this."

Thanks to low interest rates and a humming economy, new construction activity in Germany is approaching 20-year highs. That building boom is disturbing the thousands of tons of bombs, artillery shells, and hand grenades from two world wars that are still hidden underground.

People have been digging up unexploded ordnance in Germany for decades. But more than 70 years after the end of World War II, statistics from across Germany show that its governmental unexploded-ordnance technicians are now busier than they have been in years.

"We're not going to go extinct," said Karl-Friedrich Schröder, another veteran of the trade, as he locked up a secret bunker filled with recovered bombs in the Westphalian hills. "Interest rates are still low."

British and U.S. airplanes dropped some 1.4 million tons of explosives on German cities and production centers during World War II. The

bombs that didn't explode are among the remnants of previous conflicts and land-warfare ordnance, including artillery shells and hand grenades, now buried underground. The country's main construction trade group says that around 100,000 tons of unexploded ordnance still lie in German soil.

Mr. Schröder's office in the intensely bombed Ruhr region has seen its workload increase more than 30% this year. The state of Lower Saxony, where Mr. Mohr is based, disposed of 93 tons of unexploded ordnance last year—the most in at least a decade. In the large German states of North Rhine-Westphalia, Hesse, and Baden-Württemberg, the number of inquiries received by ordnance-removal services is up more than 40% since 2011.

And another challenge looms underwater: a surge in wind-park construction is forcing the country to reckon with the more than one million tons of munitions long hidden under the sea. Last year, officials received 264 reports of ordnance finds off German coasts—compared with 148 in 2013, when nationwide records started being kept.

For construction projects, the impact of unexploded bombs runs deep. In Hannover, the discovery of three British bombs under an apartment-building construction site forced 50,000 people to be evacuated in May.

In Dortmund, pump manufacturer Wilo SE is spending €150 million (\$168 million) to build a new factory complex on the site of a World War II-era steel plant. The budget includes as much as €3 million for bomb-disposal work, a spokesman says. To check for bombs, workers there have been drilling 20,000 holes around 25 feet deep, lining each with PVC pipes, dropping magnetic probes, and excavating

the areas where metal appears to be buried. The process takes five months, with as many as seven drilling machines operating simultaneously, according to site construction manager Burkhard Liseicki.

Germany's unique circumstances and building boom has produced a thriving bomb-disposal trade. On the ground are the *Sprengmeister*, or masters of detonations, who sometimes crisscross the countryside in vans marked "*Kampfmittelbeseitigungsdienst*," or ordnance-removal service. Supporting them are experts who scan aerial photographs and magnetic readouts for hints of unexploded ordnance, and specialized contractors who are experiencing a business boom of their own.

In the Arnsberg district of North Rhine-Westphalia, an industrial area where some city centers were virtually destroyed in World War II bombings, the ordnance-disposal office added five new employees since late last year, bringing its staff to about 40.

Charlotte Albers spends her day peering at photographs taken by British bombers during World War II, searching for the signatures of unexploded bombs amid the wreckage.

"You look at this and you know that very, very many people died there," she says about a black-and-white aerial photograph of a cluster of houses with their roofs blown off. "In terms of your feelings, you need to stand back from this."

Bomb disposal is risky. In 2010, three ordnance experts were killed in the Lower Saxon city of Göttingen by a 1,000-pound bomb that was dropped by the Allies. A chemical delayed-action fuse that had failed

to detonate within days of impact as it was designed to had left the bomb intact.

It was Mr. Mohr who took over the bomb-disposal unit after its chief was killed in the explosion.

"My colleagues were more difficult to handle than the bombs," Mr. Mohr recalls. "They had seen their colleagues torn to pieces."

The following year, in 2011, Chancellor Angela Merkel decided to phase out nuclear power and boost green energy, touching off a boom in offshore wind parks. Since then, work off the Lower Saxony coast has kept Mr. Mohr increasingly busy.

In January, a ship patrolling a new North Sea wind park spotted a floating German World War II sea mine threatening the 42-windmill facility. Mr. Mohr sped in his van, blue light flashing and siren blaring, to a German Navy base.

A Sea King helicopter flew his team to the site and lowered the three in a basket. The seas were too rough to try to detonate the mine on the spot. Instead, Mr. Mohr attached a 450-foot cable to the mine, had a ship drag it 70 miles to a sand bank, waited for low tide and then blew it up.

When Sprengmeister find munitions that they can safely defuse, they usually take them to a storage bunker before they're destroyed in special plants. In one bunker on a wooded hillside, the yield of two months of work lined the floors. Hans-Peter Eser, a senior Arnsberg unexploded-ordnance official, showed The Wall Street Journal the bunker on the condition that its location wouldn't be disclosed.

The smaller bombs, some covered in a yellowish crust, were stacked on top of each other against the wall. A

British 1,000-pounder rested on a wooden pallet in the middle of the room. Hand grenades in a cardboard box were taped to keep them from detonating. A blue plastic

barrel sealed a possible chemical agent. A large metal suitcase held incendiary bombs.

"It's not our job to come to terms with the past," Mr. Schröder said.

"This is all a technical problem. Others have to do that."

Write to Anton Troianovski at anton.troianovski@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'German Building Boom Unearths Old Bombs.'

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Chinese Cash Blunts Europe's Criticism of Beijing's Human-Rights Record

Nektaria Stamouli and William Wilkes

6-7 minutes

June 19, 2017 1:06 p.m. ET

ATHENS—Greece's recent veto of a European Union statement condemning Chinese human-rights violations shows the return Beijing is getting on its multibillion-dollar investments in the bloc's cash-strapped periphery.

China's acquisition spree in Western Europe last year raised fears about the commercial costs of losing cutting-edge technologies. Less foreseen was the degree to which Beijing's investment in poorer parts of Europe appears to have bought silence on China's human-rights record, according to analysts, diplomats and human-rights organizations.

On Thursday, Greece was alone among the 28 EU members in objecting to criticism of China by the bloc, which sought to challenge Beijing's crackdown on political activists and dissidents.

"Greece's position is that unproductive and in many cases selective criticism against specific countries doesn't facilitate the promotion of human rights in these states, nor the development of their relation with the EU," a Greek foreign ministry official said.

EU officials played down the rift.

"The global human-rights agenda is best served when the EU speaks with one voice," said a spokeswoman for EU Foreign Affairs chief Federica Mogherini.

"We will continue our work to bring all 28 together."

China has helped fund major infrastructure projects in Europe's south and east, offering billions of euros in finance for railways, power lines, roads and bridges across such economically squeezed countries as Greece, Hungary, Croatia and Portugal.

For Greece, under pressure from its international creditors to slash public spending, Chinese cash has been vital. It helped refurbish Greece's largest port and propped up its wheezing state-owned power-grid operator.

China's investment has bought influence in Athens, human-rights groups said after Greece told fellow EU members it was uneasy about criticism of China's human-rights record before blocking the statement on Thursday.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has called Greece China's "most reliable friend in the EU." Hungary and Croatia have also blocked EU statements chastising Beijing. The three countries last year repeatedly thwarted a statement from the 28 member states taking issue with China's aggressive stance in the South China Sea.

"Those countries are in a weak situation economically and they want those investments," said Nadège Rolland, a senior China analyst at the National Bureau of Asian Research in Washington.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said while Beijing didn't know specifics of internal EU discussions on the issue, China wanted to commend

"the relevant country" for taking the right position on the matter.

"We oppose politicizing the human-rights issue" and using it to interfere with countries' sovereignty, Mr. Geng said.

Greek officials have acknowledged Europe's concerns about the political and economic effects of Chinese investment.

Chinese officials say they use infrastructure loans—particularly for transport projects—to buy diplomatic influence in Europe, a strategy dubbed "high-speed rail diplomacy" by one Chinese government-backed university.

China's European investments mirror the country's moves in Asia, where it is building roads, railways and power plants as part of its "Belt and Road Initiative" to link Europe and Central Asia to China.

High-speed rail investment has been a key part of China's push to gain diplomatic leverage in parts of Europe. Beijing in 2013 said it would finance 85% of a \$2-billion project to build a high-speed railway between the capitals of Serbia and Hungary.

Hungarian politicians have lauded Chinese investment and moved to shield China from criticism. Prime Minister Viktor Orban said in Beijing last month that developed countries lecturing on human rights has become "increasingly offensive."

China has also lent money for the construction of a bridge in Serbia, a power station in Bosnia and new roads in Macedonia. Further west, Portugal and Spain have received Chinese investment in energy-production networks.

China has been one of the few investors debt-laden Greece has attracted in recent years. Greece's left-wing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has visited China twice—most recently last month—during the last two years in an effort to lure investors to his economically struggling country.

During his last trip, Greek telecommunications company Forthnet and Chinese telecom equipment maker ZTE Corp teamed up with two other Chinese firms to finance a fiber-optic network in Greece in a €500-million (\$560-million) investment. China's state coal producer Shenhua Corp. teamed up with Greece's Copelouzos Group on green energy projects in an investment valued at €3 billion, with many more promised to follow.

China says its investment promotes EU integration by addressing the uneven development among the bloc's member states. But European policy makers worry Beijing's investments also work to lure financially stressed eurozone countries into its sphere of influence.

"If every single government enters a dog race over attracting more Chinese investment than their next-door neighbors, then that's inviting a divide-and-conquer approach," said Reinhard Bütikofer, a member of the European Parliament and co-chair of the European Green Party.

—Josh Chin and Brian Spegele in Beijing contributed to this article.

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'China's Cash Blunts Europe's Criticism.'

INTERNATIONAL



Russia Threatens U.S. Warplanes in Syria, Escalating Tensions

Paul McLeary | 1 hour ago

6-8 minutes

Russia warned Monday that any U.S. or coalition aircraft flying west of the Euphrates River in Syria will be tracked by Russian warplanes

and anti-aircraft batteries, a swift reaction to Sunday's shoot-down of a Syrian Su-22 bomber by an American F-18.

It is unclear if the Russians have the capability to track the dozens of sorties flown by U.S. and coalition aircraft over Syria on any given day, but the threat further raises tensions

as U.S.-backed Arab and Kurdish fighters press on the Islamic State's stronghold of Raqqa, and American forces increasingly tangle with Iranian-backed militias in Syria's south.

Russia is a staunch ally of the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad, along with Iran, and the downing of

the Syrian warplane by a U.S. fighter jet represented yet another escalation in an increasingly tense situation unfolding in southeastern Syria. With Islamic State losing territory, forces loyal to the Syrian regime and Iranian-backed militia are increasingly butting heads with troops aligned with the United States.

As part of its protest against the shooting down of the Syrian jet — which the Russian Ministry of Defense called a “flagrant violation of international law, in addition to being actual military aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic” — Moscow also said it was shutting off the hotline maintained by U.S. and Russian military officers in the region, where each side provides warnings about impending air operations in Syria.

U.S. defense officials said on Monday the hotline remains open. Speaking in Washington on Monday afternoon, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Joseph Dunford said the two sides discussed the matter as recently as Monday morning, and urged patience as the two sides continued to discuss operations in Syria.

“I’m confident that we are still communicating between our operations center and the Russian Federation’s operations center,” Dunford told an audience at the National Press Club. “I’m also confident that our forces have the capability to take care of themselves.”

Russia briefly shut down the line in April, after U.S. ships fired 59 Tomahawk cruise missiles at a Syrian air base in response to a chemical weapons attack on civilians launched from the base.

“The Russian Federation has indicated that their purpose in Syria,

like ours, is to defeat ISIS, and we’ll see if that’s true here in the coming hours,” Dunford said.

“We will continue to conduct air operations throughout Syria,” despite the Russian rhetoric, spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition Col. Ryan Dillon told Foreign Policy Monday. The shoot-down was in “accordance with the rules of engagement and international law,” he said.

Dunford backed that up during his appearance Monday, saying the shoot-down was legal under the 2001 authorization Congress passed for the U.S. military to strike al Qaeda and its offshoots. Since U.S. forces are targeting the Islamic State in Syria, they are covered under that blanket protection.

The Russian statement was careful not to promise to shoot down coalition aircraft, but warned that any coalition aircraft “will be followed by Russian ground-based air defense and air defense aircraft as air targets.”

The shoot-down of the Su-22 was the first time an American plane shot another manned aircraft down since an incident in Bosnia in the late 1990s. Last week, an F-15 shot down an Iranian-made drone that had attacked U.S. commandos and a group of anti-ISIS Syrian fighters on patrol in southern Syria, near the Iraqi border.

Russia has deployed its S-300 and S-400 air defense systems to bases

in western Syria, but it is doubtful they could engage aircraft as far away as Raqqa. Michael Kofman, a research scientist at CNA Corporation told FP that due to the presence of mountains between the Russian coastal batteries and the rest of the country, “they probably can only see only at really high altitudes, and even then it’s doubtful they can see out that far east,” to target aircraft near Raqqa.

The incident began on Sunday after pro-regime forces — a blanket term the Pentagon attaches to the groups of Iranian-backed Hezbollah fighters, Iraqi Shiite militias and other groups fighting alongside Syrian government forces — attacked a U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces unit near the city of Taqba, west of Raqqa. The assault came despite what one U.S. defense official told FP was an agreement between the local SDF commander and the Syrian commander not to attack one another in the specified area.

The United States’ involvement in the six-year old Syrian conflict is getting more complicated. The downing of the Syrian jet, and the subsequent Russian warnings, come as American forces and their allies have grown increasingly entangled with Iranian-backed forces in Syria. As the Islamic State’s hold on territory shrinks, Iran has pushed to gain a foothold over as much territory as possible to keep lines open from its border with

Iraq, all the way through to Damascus, and on to Lebanon.

U.S. warplanes have bombed Iranian-backed Hezbollah fighters three times over the past month, after they moved too close to a U.S. garrison at al-Tanf near the Iraqi border.

Col. Dillon said that the U.S. is tracking the pro-regime forces as they continue to move east from the Taqba area toward Deir Ezzor province that borders Iraq. U.S. commanders have said much of the Islamic State’s leadership has fled Raqqa for the villages along the Euphrates River Valley in the province, and they expect the city of Maydan, in the valley, to be another large battle.

On Sunday, Iran fired six ballistic missiles at Islamic State targets in Deir Ezzor in response to the recent attack on the Iranian parliament building and a shrine in Tehran.

The Trump administration has been engaged in an internal debate about how to respond to the presence of Iranian-backed militia in southeastern Syria, with some White House officials pushing for a more aggressive approach that would prevent Iran and its proxies from securing the Iran-Syria border area.

FP’s *Dan De Luce* contributed to this article.

Photo Credit: PAUL GYPTEAU/AFP/Getty Images

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Russia Warns U.S. as Risks Rise in Syria

Dion Nissenbaum in Washington and Thomas Grove in Moscow

7-9 minutes

Updated June 19, 2017 6:38 p.m. ET

Tensions between Washington and Moscow escalated on Monday when Russia threatened to track American warplanes in Syria after a U.S. pilot shot down a Syrian jet for the first time in the country’s six-year war.

The U.S. military responded to Moscow’s warnings by shifting the flight routes of some pilots carrying out missions in Syria, U.S. officials said, an effort to minimize risks to American pilots as the White House and the Pentagon both appealed for calm.

Sunday’s U.S. downing of the Syrian regime warplane came as American forces are increasingly at risk of direct confrontation with

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his allies from Russia and Iran.

The U.S. military has stepped up its operations in Syria as the American-led coalition tries to push Islamic State from its stronghold in Raqqa. Over the past month, U.S. forces have shot down an Iranian-made drone that targeted coalition forces in southern Syria and carried out three airstrikes on Iranian-backed fighters. The U.S. targeted the Syrian jet on Sunday after it carried out an airstrike on American-backed forces near Raqqa in northern Syria.

Tehran has also stepped up its military actions in Syria by launching cruise missiles at Islamic State fighters in eastern Syria and sending one of its top military commanders to pray on the front lines with Iranian-backed fighters, a move seen by some U.S. officials as a deliberate taunt aimed at Washington.

On Monday, Moscow said it would treat U.S. and coalition aircraft flying west of the Euphrates River in Syria

as “targets” that could be tracked by air defense systems or Russian pilots.

But Russia stopped short of threatening to shoot them down, giving some U.S. officials hope that the situation won’t worsen.

“I think the worst thing any of us could do right now is address this thing with hyperbole,” Gen. Joe Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Monday in Washington. “The only actions that we have taken against pro-regime forces have been in self-defense—and we’ve communicated that clearly.”

As a practical matter, U.S. officials said, the Russian threat could have only a limited impact, since much of the American military focus right now is on driving Islamic State out of Raqqa, which is on the eastern side of the Euphrates.

The new standoff with Russia comes amid a swirling debate within the Trump administration over its Middle East strategy. While key

military officials, including Gen. Dunford, want to focus on defeating Islamic State, other administration officials are pushing for a more aggressive confrontation with Mr. Assad and his Iranian allies.

At the White House, spokesman Sean Spicer said the U.S. wanted to avoid further clashes with Mr. Assad and his allies.

“The escalation of hostilities among all of the factions that are operating there doesn’t help anybody,” he said. “While we want to de-escalate the situation there...we will always preserve the right of self-defense.”

On Sunday, the military shot down the Syrian jet that targeted the U.S.-backed Kurdish and Arab coalition leading the assault on Raqqa. The U.S. cited “collective self-defense” when it warned Syria not to attack the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces. The Syrian regime denounced the U.S. attack and said its pilot was carrying out airstrikes against Islamic State.

Moscow responded to the incident by threatening to sever military contact with the U.S. used to prevent midair mishaps over Syria.

U.S. officials said they were waiting to see if Russia would follow through with the threat.

This isn't the first time Moscow has issued such a threat. Russia vowed to shut down the so-called deconfliction line in April after the U.S. carried out a cruise missile strike on a Syrian regime airfield to deter Mr. Assad from using chemical weapons.

Despite the vow, the U.S. and Russian military quietly kept channels of communication open. U.S. officials are hoping the same thing will happen this time.

"As the entire battle space starts to get more congested, it's all the more important that we communicate and not allow mishaps to have strategic effects," said Col. Ryan Dillon, a Baghdad-based spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition battling Islamic State.

The increasingly congested

battlefield is raising fears that the U.S. could be drawn more deeply into the Syrian war. Under former President Barack Obama, the U.S. sought to avoid direct confrontations with the Assad regime while it focused on defeating Islamic State.

President Donald Trump has embraced a more aggressive approach in Syria by sending in more U.S. forces to work side-by-side with the Syrian Democratic Forces and other American-backed fighters battling Islamic State, also known as ISIS.

That has created more friction points. Colin Kahl, who served as national security adviser to former Vice President Joe Biden, said U.S. actions haven't yet deterred what he called the "Axis of Assad."

"The Pentagon is driving things and they may want to de-escalate, but the 'enemy gets a vote,' and the battlefield is getting congested," he said.

While the U.S. has stepped up direct military action against Syrian government forces in recent weeks, the Russian government has

pushed a narrative that Washington is hampering its efforts to target Islamic State.

In a recent briefing in Moscow, Col. Gen. Sergei Surovikin, the commander of Russian forces in Syria, condemned recent U.S. strikes on Syrian regime forces, saying they were actually aimed at thwarting the advances of the Syrian government.

The coalition strikes, he said, "blocked the way for government troops that carry out the task of destroying the ISIS groupings," adding that recent actions were a violation of Syrian sovereignty.

"It creates the impression that it is the government forces of Syria, not the terrorists of ISIS, that present the real danger to the coalition," Gen. Surovikin said.

On Monday, Iranian officials from across the country's political spectrum praised Tehran's missile attack against Islamic State.

"Terrorist supporters should receive Iran's message of power," Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of the prominent

Expediency Council and former commander of Iran's hard-line Revolutionary Guards force was quoted as saying by state TV.

The Iranian strikes were retaliation for a June 7 attack on Iran's parliament and a shrine in Tehran claimed by the terror group.

Iranian state television aired celebratory footage of the strikes, which were launched by mobile systems in western Iran. Iranian state TV showed footage sent by a drone of the targets being hit, and a TV reporter standing close to a launch point said "bon appétit" to the Islamic State fighters being targeted.

—Aresu Eqbali and Rebecca Ballhaus contributed to this article.

Write to Dion Nissenbaum at dion.nissenbaum@wsj.com and Thomas Grove at thomas.grove@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition.

**The
New York
Times**

Russia Warns U.S. After Downing of Syrian Warplane (UNE)

Michael R. Gordon and Ivan

Nechepurenko

7-9 minutes

WASHINGTON — Long-running tensions between the United States and Russia erupted publicly on Monday as Moscow condemned the American military's downing of a Syrian warplane and threatened to target aircraft flown by the United States and its allies west of the Euphrates.

The Russians also said they had suspended their use of a hotline that the American and Russian militaries used to avoid collisions of their aircraft in Syrian airspace.

The episode was the first time the United States downed a Syrian plane since the civil war began there in 2011 and came after the SU-22 jet dropped bombs on Sunday near American-backed fighters combating the Islamic State. It followed another major American military action against the Syrian government: a cruise missile strike to punish a nerve gas attack that killed civilians in April.

The latest escalation comes as competing forces converge on ungoverned swaths of Syria amid the country's six-year civil war. Syrian forces and Iranian-backed militias that support them are extending their reach east closer to

American-backed fighters, including forces that the Pentagon hopes will pursue the militants into the Euphrates River valley after they take the Islamic State's self-declared capital of Raqqa. The collision of the disparate forces has, in effect, created a war within a war.

"The escalation of hostilities among the many factions that are operating in this region doesn't help anybody," Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, told reporters on Monday. President Trump has allowed military commanders more say in conducting operations against the Islamic State, urging them to surround the militants in their strongholds and "annihilate" them.

Russia's warnings could turn out to be posturing. The Russian military has threatened to halt its use of the hotline in the past — notably after Mr. Trump ordered April's missile launch — only to continue and even expand its contacts with the United States military. But in the complicated and quickly unfolding situation in Syria, even bluster can risk an unintended showdown.

"Anytime we have multiple armed forces working in the same battle space without de-confliction, there is a dangerous risk of things spinning out of control," said Douglas E. Lute, a retired three-star Army general who was the United States representative to NATO until January. "Tactical incidents on the

ground or in the air over Syria can be misunderstood and lead to miscalculation."

American military officials rushed to de-escalate the situation, saying they hoped Russia could be persuaded to keep using the hotline.

"This is a delicate couple of hours," Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Monday afternoon. He added that the United States would work both diplomatically and militarily "to re-establish de-confliction."

But the latest statement from Russia's Defense Ministry was particularly stark. "All flying objects, including planes and drones of the international coalition, detected west of the Euphrates, will be followed by Russian air defense systems as targets," said the Defense Ministry statement, which stopped short of declaring that the targets would be shot down.

The Pentagon also vowed to continue airstrikes against the Islamic State in Syria.

The downing of the Syrian SU-22 on Sunday, the first time the American military had shot down an enemy plane since an F-16 took down a Soviet-era MIG-29 during the 1999 conflict over Kosovo, was the latest in a series of confrontations between the United

States and forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad of Syria.

One previously undisclosed confrontation followed a drone attack on June 8 on American-supported Syrians patrolling alongside their coalition advisers. The weapon was a Shahed 129 drone made by Iran, though American officials said they do not know who directed it.

An American F-15E shot down the drone, which had dropped a bomb that missed its target. But a Syrian warplane appeared hours later and began maneuvering to bomb the American-backed fighters, only to be intercepted by an American F/A-18 jet.

"When the airplane got close to where he wanted to deliver his bombs, he realized he had an F/A-18 behind it," said Lt. Gen. Jeffrey L. Harrigan, who runs the coalition's air war and described the episode.

Instead of attacking, the Syrian SU-22 zoomed away, and the Americans did not attack.

"We didn't shoot it because he dumped his bombs off in the middle of the desert," General Harrigan added in a telephone interview from his command center at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

American officials have repeatedly urged Russians to advise their Syrian allies to keep their distance

from the American-supported fighters, known as the Syrian Democratic Forces.

But after a Syrian SU-22 dropped bombs on Sunday near fighters south of Tabqa whom the United States is supporting and advising, an American F/A-18 shot the plane down.

The Russian threat to target American aircraft west of the Euphrates poses complications, particularly because Raqqa, which sits on the river in northern Syria, is well within range of Syrian and Russian air defenses. General Harrigan said there have been "occasional illuminations" or instances when ground-based targeting radars have been directed at coalition planes.

General Harrigan indicated that while the American-led coalition would continue to strike the Islamic State and provide air support for the Syrian Democratic Forces, he had made some adjustments to air operations.

"We have positioned ourselves such that we are able to manage and mitigate threats

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Editorial : Skirmishing Over Syria

June 19, 2017
7:20 p.m. ET 94 COMMENTS

4-5 minutes

A bipartisan conceit has been that the U.S. can defeat Islamic State by ducking the larger conflict in Syria, and now we're finding out that may not be possible. A U.S. F-18 jet shot down a Syrian bomber on Sunday to protect U.S. allies fighting Islamic State, and on Monday Russia and Iran threatened to target U.S. planes in response.

A U.S. fighter shot down the Syrian SU-22 plane after Syrian aircraft made their second bombing run against Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) allied with the U.S. near Taqba. The regime was clearly testing whether the U.S. would assist its allies on the ground. The U.S. needed to send a deterrent message or Syrian President Bashar Assad will continue to press his offensive across SDF-held territory.

to our folks to a reasonable level," he said.

General Harrigan declined to provide details. After the United States cruise missile attack in April, the American-led air war command initially used armed drones in and around Raqqa instead of piloted aircraft, and stealthy F-22s flew around the clock in northeast Syria. This was done to guard against the risk of retaliation by Syrian and Russian air defenses as part of a step-by-step process that eventually saw the United States and its allies return to normal operations.

Weeks after President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia ordered his country's military forces to Syria in September 2015 to prop up the government of Mr. Assad, Russia and the United States signed a memorandum on preventing air clashes between the two countries.

The hotline has been a crucial link that has allowed Moscow and Washington to notify each other about its air operations over Syria, where Iran, Israel, Russia, Syria, Turkey and the United States with its allies have carried out attacks in pursuit of often-competing aims.

The risk of escalation is real, but this isn't a skirmish the U.S. can easily avoid. Mr. Assad and his allies in Moscow and Tehran know that ISIS's days controlling Raqqa in Syria are numbered. They want to assert control over as much territory as possible in the interim, and that means crushing the SDF.

The Russian threat on Monday to target with anti-aircraft missiles any U.S. aircraft flying west of the Euphrates River in Syria is part of the same intimidation strategy. Russia also suspended a hotline between the two armed forces designed to reduce the risk of a military mistake. Iran, which arms and assists Mr. Assad on the ground, vowed further Syrian regime attacks against SDF, all but daring U.S. planes to respond amid the Russian threat.

The White House and Pentagon reacted with restraint on Monday, calling for a de-escalation and open lines of communication. But if Syria and its allies are determined to escalate, the U.S. will either have to

back down or prepare a more concerted effort to protect its allies and now U.S. aircraft.

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forces was "military aggression." He called on the United States and all other countries involved in the Syria conflict to "coordinate their actions."

"We urge everyone to avoid acting unilaterally, to respect the sovereignty of Syria," Mr. Lavrov said.

"Escalation can never be ruled out," said Frederic C. Hof, who worked on Syria policy at the State Department under President Obama before leaving and becoming a sharp critic of the administration's limited support of Syrian rebels. "I doubt, however, that the Russians will permit themselves to be taken hostage by a regime it knows to be both murderous and incompetent.

"But who knows?" Mr. Hof continued. "Common sense and the rational actor model don't always prevail. One hopes there is a sharp distinction between Russian rhetoric and action."

Mr. Assad wants to reassert control over all of Syria, not a country divided into Alawite, Sunni and Kurdish parts. Iran wants a Shiite arc of influence from Tehran to Beirut. Mr. Putin will settle for a Mediterranean port and a demonstration that Russia can be trusted to stand by its allies, while America is unreliable. None of this is in the U.S. national interest.

The alternative would be to demonstrate that Mr. Assad, Iran and Russia will pay a higher price for their ambitions. This means refusing to back down from defending U.S. allies on the ground and responding if Russian aircraft or missiles attempt to take down U.S. planes. Our guess is that Russia doesn't want a military engagement with the U.S. any more than the U.S. wants one with Russia, but Russia will keep pressing for advantage unless President Trump shows more firmness than his predecessor.

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition.

**The
Washington
Post**

Editorial : What happens after the Islamic State is defeated in Iraq and Syria?

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

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

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

June 19 at 7:57 PM

THE UNITED STATES is committed to defeating the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, but as that goal nears realization, another strategic question looms: What security order will replace it, and which of the outside powers enmeshed in the region will stand behind that order? The Trump administration doesn't appear to have a strategy for that, but others clearly do — which helps to explain the incidents over the weekend in which the United States downed a Syrian government warplane, while Iran fired intermediate-range missiles from its territory at Islamic State targets in eastern Syria.

Though the two incidents were nominally unrelated, they have a common cause: the drive by Iran and Russia, along with their Syrian and Iraqi Shiite clients, to dominate

the space that will be left when the Islamic State is driven from its capital of Raqqa in eastern Syria, which is under assault from U.S.-backed Kurdish and Syrian Arab forces. At stake are both Syria's oil-producing area to the south of Raqqa and a land corridor between Baghdad and Damascus that Iran aspires to control. Russia, for its part, hopes to drive the United States out of the region.

In the past month, U.S.-backed forces in Syria's southeastern corner have come under pressure from Iranian-backed Shiite militias. U.S. commanders have twice bombed convoys that entered an exclusion zone around a border town where American advisers are based and they have destroyed a drone. The Syrian fighter bomber shot down Sunday violated another exclusion zone around the forces surrounding Raqqa. Meanwhile, Iran's missile attack, which it said was in response to the Islamic State's recent raid on the parliament

building in Tehran, was a bold assertion of its willingness to escalate militarily in Syria and maybe elsewhere in the region.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

Syria and Iran may calculate that the Trump administration can be induced to abandon the area rather than risk being dragged into a war in the Syrian desert unrelated to the Islamic State. Russia's loud protests about the downing of the fighter — and its threats to challenge U.S. planes over Syria — show that Moscow is more than ready to support this gambit.

The United States doesn't have a strategic reason to control southern and eastern Syria, but it does have a vital interest in preventing Iran from establishing a dominion from Tehran to the Mediterranean with Russia's support. That would pose an existential threat to Israel, which

is already struggling to prevent Iranian infiltration of Syrian territory adjacent to the Golan Heights, and would undermine U.S. allies in Jordan and Iraq.

Countering Iran and Russia requires tactical defense by U.S.-backed forces, like that recently ordered by commanders on the ground. But it will also require a broader strategy to create a security order in the region acceptable to the United States and its allies. To achieve that, the administration may need to raise the military or economic pressures on Iran, Russia and the Syrian government while pressing for negotiations on a new Syrian political order. Not only should the United States reject Moscow's bluffing about Syrian airspace, but also the Trump administration should make clear to Vladimir Putin's regime that if it continues to ally itself with Iran in the region, it will forfeit any chance of resetting relations with Washington.

NATIONAL
REVIEW
ONLINE

French: Syrian Conflict — Our Fight with ISIS Pits Us against Assad

7-9 minutes

There was always going to be a reckoning. When President Obama began the American war against ISIS in 2014 — a belated and necessary step to stop ISIS's blitzkrieg across Iraq — there was a lingering question: Then what? If and when we defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria, what comes next? Ideally, American allies would defeat the world's most vicious terrorists, the warring parties in Syria would then have the space to reach a political settlement, and a genocidal civil war would finally end.

Yet when ideals meet the hatred and confusion of the Middle East, ideals always lose. So rather than staring peace in the face, we're not only raising the risk of direct and sustained confrontation with Syria (and its chief ally, Russia), we're inching toward an outright invasion and extended occupation of northern Syria. All without congressional approval. All without meaningful public debate.

To understand the dangers ahead, it's important to understand where we've been. At the risk of oversimplification, let's break down America's military involvement in Syria into three main stages reflecting the gradual evolution of the conflict.

Stage one was the emergency deployment of military force to prevent the collapse both of our Kurdish allies in Iraq and the central Iraqi government in Baghdad. At the

peak of the ISIS blitzkrieg in the summer of 2014, there was real concern that America might suffer a military disaster not unlike the fall of Saigon, except with ISIS invaders more bloodthirsty and far more directly dangerous to Americans than were the Communist North Vietnamese.

In the initial phase there was no immediate conflict with the Assad regime, because Assad was on the ropes, fighting for his life in cities far from ISIS's centers of power. The Syrian civil war contained multiple conflicts — Assad versus American-backed rebels, Assad versus jihadists (with the line between American-backed rebels and jihadists blurry indeed), rebels versus rebels, ISIS versus virtually everybody, and the American-led coalition versus ISIS.

Stage two began with Vladimir Putin's decisive entry into the conflict. Only the gullible believed he had arrived to fight ISIS. Whereas America's goals were nebulous and idealistic (beat ISIS and somehow make peace), his goals were brutal and simple (crush Assad's enemies and win the war), and he set about accomplishing his goals with ruthless efficiency. He largely left ISIS alone and instead bombed American-backed rebels and other anti-Assad militias into the dust. Gradually, the front stabilized. Gradually, Assad won key battles and recaptured key cities.

In the meantime, American-backed allies made progress in the North.

Kurdish and Arab militias — with American support on the ground and in the air — advanced to the outskirts of Raqqa. As ISIS began to crumble and Assad triumphed in the south and west, it became clear that instead of a potpourri of armies and militias and conflicts, the civil war was moving toward a climax where just *two* distinct forces held the balance of power — the Russian-allied Syrian regime and the American-allied forces holding the north.

That brings us to stage three, the present day. The key warring parties increasingly face a stark choice — agree to a de facto partition of the country or inch toward a great-power conflict. It works like this: As American-allied forces *and* Assad's regime steadily defeat and degrade their enemies, their zones of control expand, thus expanding the potential for direct conflict. As American forces advance with their local allies, they also increase their chances of direct encounters with Assad's forces. In response, Assad is testing America's commitment to defend not just our own troops but also (and this is quite important) our allies as well. A map of the conflict from the *Washington Post* shows the territorial reality:

Four times times in the last month U.S. forces have directly engaged Syrian forces that were threatening either American troops or American-allied forces. The most dramatic encounter happened this weekend when a U.S. F/A-18 shot down a Syrian plane after it bombed

American-backed troops. The official American statement was telling:

The Coalition's mission is to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria. The Coalition does not seek to fight Syrian regime, Russian, or pro-regime forces partnered with them, but will not hesitate to defend Coalition or partner forces from any threat.

Let's put this in plain English. American forces and American allies are not only taking territory from ISIS, they're holding that territory against regime forces. There's a word for what happens when a foreign power takes and holds territory without the consent of the sovereign state — that word is "invasion." In many ways, current American policy is a lighter-footprint, less ambitious version of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. We're using local allies, but our own boots are on the ground, and we're directly defending our forces and our allies from threats from Syria's own government.

I happen to believe that a strategy of defeat, hold, and negotiate represents the best hope for a satisfactory solution to the Syrian crisis. In other words, defeat ISIS, help our allies hold the territory they've taken (while clearly communicating our intentions to Russia and Syria), and then negotiate a permanent solution that protects our interests. Russia and Assad would have to be insane to attempt to dislodge Americans by force, and clarity will decrease the chances for great-power conflict.

It's past time for a true congressional vote on American engagement in Syria.

As it is, we have not (publicly, at least) articulated our strategic goals in Syria. Ambiguity breeds confusion. Confusion increases the risk of miscalculation and conflict. While there is not yet a crisis between Russia and the U.S., the risk of a deadly incident is rising.

**The
New York
Times**

Soufan: Can You Kill the Islamic State?

Ali H. Soufan

5-6 minutes

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-appointed caliph of the self-described Islamic State, might have been killed. Again.

In announcing last week the airstrike that may have felled the Islamic State's leader, Russia wisely hedged its bets. If Mr. Baghdadi's death is confirmed, though, this would be a positive development. The resulting leadership vacuum, and the scramble to fill it, would no doubt hasten the coming disintegration of the Islamic State. In truth, however, the handwriting was on the wall long before last week's announcement.

From its inception, the Islamic State's real power resided not in religious extremists like Mr. Baghdadi but in a corps of former Saddam Hussein loyalists behind the scenes who had linked up with convicted jihadists when they were together in American-run prisons in the mid-2000s. These ex-Baathists, with a talent for eye-catching violence and unsurpassed knowledge of the inner workings of Iraqi society, kept the Islamic State alive through lean years before leading it to sweeping victories following the American departure from Iraq.

Now almost all of the ex-Baathist

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL**

NATO's Stronger Baltic Force Riles Russia

Julian E. Barnes

4-5 minutes

Updated June 19, 2017 12:29 p.m. ET

ADAZI, Latvia—The North Atlantic Treaty Organization said its deterrent force is fully in place in the Baltic area with the addition of a Canadian-led battle group in Latvia, enhancing deployments criticized by Russia.

Russia's decision to treat coalition aircraft "as targets" when allied aircraft operate west of the Euphrates while Russian combat planes are in the air isn't exactly a shoot-down promise, but it does signal our increasing peril.

It's past time for a true congressional vote on American engagement in Syria. Any argument that previous use-of-force resolutions applicable to Iraq or al-

leaders are dead, as are most of their immediate lieutenants. This represents a key difference between the Islamic State today and Al Qaeda in 2011: When Osama bin Laden died, many of his deputies were around to keep the organization running.

A video still released by the Islamic State in 2014, believed to show Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

This Islamic State, by contrast, has been robbed of any strength in depth it may once have possessed. With Mosul mostly back in Iraqi hands and United States-backed forces encroaching on Raqqa, the Islamic State's de facto capital in Syria, it is only a matter of time before the group will cease to be.

The real question is what happens next. One fact can be taken for granted: Its thousands of fighters will not melt away. Instead, like generations of jihadists before them, they will seek alternative outlets for violence. As previously demonstrated by Al Qaeda, territorial loses don't necessarily limit a group's ability to inspire supporters far from the battlefield.

The Islamic State's most obvious successors might seem to be its network of affiliates. The biggest of these, based in Eastern Libya, has several thousand members and may have helped train the Manchester Arena bomber Salman

A ceremony on Monday, featuring parading troops from Latvia, Canada, Poland, Italy, Spain, Slovenia and Albania, marked complete deployment of the fourth and final alliance battle group to the Baltic region. In all, NATO has positioned some 4,500 troops in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland.

Allied and Russian forces have both been building up in the Baltic region. The deployments have raised the risk of miscalculation, some analysts said, but both sides

Qaeda also apply to the current conflict evaporate the instant American forces find themselves holding foreign territory in hostile opposition to the foreign sovereign. There is no credible argument that any current authorization allows American forces to occupy a single square inch of Syria without the consent of its government.

The Constitution cannot be discarded when it's inconvenient,

Abedi. There is precedent for a jihadi group morphing from a proto-state into a global network: Al Qaeda managed just that after the fall of the Afghan Taliban. Again, however, Al Qaeda had the benefit of a surviving cadre of senior leaders capable of providing continuity and centralized direction; the Islamic State does not. At this point, it seems unlikely that its web of franchises, always loose to begin with, will hold together without the "caliphate" in Syria and Iraq.

Unfortunately, that is far from the end of the matter. The impending destruction of the caliphate raises another dangerous possibility: reconciliation between the Islamic State and Al Qaeda. The dispute between the two groups has always been both ideological and personal. Ideologically, the Islamic State claims to represent the reborn caliphate, and therefore demands the allegiance of all Muslims — fealty that Al Qaeda refuses to offer. Once there is no caliphate, this ideological dispute will fall away.

On a personal level, the Islamic State loathes Ayman al-Zawahri, the current leader of Al Qaeda, whom it views as a usurper. They never forgave Mr. Zawahri for supporting the Nusra Front, Al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, when it broke from their group.

A popular trope among Islamic State members is their claim to represent "bin Laden's Al Qaeda,"

have said they are necessary defensive initiatives.

The U.S. has deployed a tank brigade to Central and Eastern Europe and is conducting exercises in the Baltic Sea region. This month, the U.S. flew B-2 stealth bombers to Europe for what American military officials called a demonstration of reassurance for allies. The U.S. has also deployed other bombers and Army units for exercises in the Baltic Sea area.

Russia, too, is enlarging its forces. It is creating a larger permanent

and inertia is no substitute for strategy. America's necessary war against ISIS is evolving into a Syrian invasion. Handled correctly, this evolution could lead to a better outcome in the conflict (we're way past any "ideal" resolution), but this evolution requires public debate and congressional consent. The risks are profound. Long-term entanglement looms. Let's have the debate the Constitution requires.

as opposed to "Zawahri's Al Qaeda." But the day may not be far off when Al Qaeda's emir will once again bear the name of its founder. In an audio message in 2015, Mr. Zawahri introduced a man he called "a lion from the den" of Al Qaeda. The next voice on the tape was that of Mr. bin Laden's son Hamza, now in his late 20s.

On audio messages Hamza sounds remarkably like his father, with the same hushed intensity and much of the same phraseology. Recently, Al Qaeda has begun according him the title of "sheikh," a mark of his growing power. Perhaps most significantly of all, while Mr. Zawahri continually rails against the Islamic State's leadership, Hamza is careful not to say anything that might antagonize Mr. Baghdadi's followers.

We should not be surprised if Hamza replaces Mr. Zawahri as emir. With the caliphate consigned to history and a bin Laden once again at the top of Al Qaeda, the door would be open for former Islamic State fighters to rejoin the fold, bringing with them months or years of front-line experience.

With or without Mr. Baghdadi, the Islamic State in its current form is doomed. Bin Laden's ideology, however, is destined to survive well into the future.

military presence in the region, including missiles and new army units, moves it says counter the NATO deployments. Russia and Belarus are also preparing for a large military exercise in September.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said he didn't see any "imminent threat" to NATO forces or the Baltic states. He also said he hoped to convene a meeting between NATO ambassadors and their Russian counterpart so the two

sides could brief each other on coming exercises.

"We see increased military presence in this region," Mr. Stoltenberg said in an interview. "The increased military presence underlines the importance of transparency, predictability, and risk reduction."

Russia has said the NATO deployment violates an agreement with Moscow not to permanently station significant combat forces on Russia's borders.

Russian officials have consistently said the NATO force is undermining, not improving, security. Alexander Grushko, the Russian ambassador to NATO, recently said the alliance should

focus on fighting terrorism, not defending against Moscow.

Mr. Grushko also said NATO's buildup risked an arms race. "The situation is dangerous," he said. "We know from our previous experience when there is a military dynamic...it will reproduce the logic of having additional assets, additional assets."

Mr. Stoltenberg said the alliance hadn't violated agreements with Russia. Canadian Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan said the NATO arrangements were clearly defensive. He said it was Russia that had committed aggression by annexing Crimea, prompting Canada to deploy its largest force to Europe since the Cold War.

"You really have to ask Russia that question: Who is the aggressor here," Mr. Sajjan said in an interview. "We, with NATO, are sending an important message for our alliance, we stand together....This is not an aggressive message."

In recent months, the alliance has had to deal with political sensitivities as U.S. President Donald Trump has said European powers don't spend enough on their militaries, and questions have been raised about whether the U.S. would live up to its commitment to defend allies.

Mr. Trump said in May that current spending was inadequate and raised the prospect of increasing the NATO target from 2% of

economic output to 3%, allied officials said.

With most allies spending well below 2%, there is little appetite to raise the target, they said. Mr. Stoltenberg said he has urged countries to abide by the 2014 Wales pledge to move toward spending 2%.

"I know that President Trump has recognized the progress we see across Europe and Canada," Mr. Stoltenberg said. "He has actually said the money is pouring in."

Write to Julian E. Barnes at julian.barnes@wsj.com

The New York Times Afghan Government Quietly Aids Breakaway Taliban Faction (UNE)

Taimoor Shah,
Rod Nordland
and Jawad Sukhanyar

7-9 minutes

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — It was a particularly bitter fight in the heavily contested district of Gereshk in Helmand Province. The adversaries deployed suicide attackers, roadside explosives and a magnetic bomb stuck to the undercarriage of a commander's car, amid pitched firefights that went on for several days last week.

When it was over, at least 21 people were dead on both sides — and all were members of the Taliban.

As a result, Gereshk remained one of the few places in the province still mostly under the Afghan government's control, thanks to a breakaway Taliban faction that has become a de facto ally of the government.

Infighting among the Taliban is nothing new. But Afghan officials have now chosen sides, with a policy that amounts to "If you can't beat them, at least help their enemies do so."

In recent months, the government has quietly provided the breakaway faction — popularly known as the Renouncers — with weapons, safe passage and intelligence support in their fight against the mainstream Taliban. The result has been a series of successes in areas where the government has otherwise suffered repeated defeats, particularly in Helmand, a southern province where the mainstream Taliban still control 90 percent of the territory.

The Renouncers are followers of Mullah Mohammad Rasoul, who split with the main Taliban group after revelations in 2015 that the former Taliban leader, Mullah Muhammad Omar, had long been dead. Mullah Rasoul and his followers were angered that Mullah Omar's replacement, Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour, had kept the death a secret.

After Mullah Mansour was killed in an American airstrike last year, his successor, Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada, antagonized the Rasoul faction even more, especially by choosing a hard-line member of the Taliban's Haqqani wing, Sirajuddin Haqqani, as deputy leader in charge of military operations.

While they have been most active in Helmand Province, other Renouncer factions have engaged in bitter fights with the mainstream Taliban in Shindand District of Herat Province, in the northwest, and in the western provinces of Farah and Ghor.

An ambulance carrying the body of a suspected militant who was killed in a suicide bomb blast in Helmand last week. Gereshk is one of the few places in the province still mostly under the Afghan government's control. Watan Yar/European Pressphoto Agency

The fighting last week began when the mainstream Taliban attacked a Renouncer base in Gereshk, one of the few areas outside Helmand's provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, that are not under Taliban control. The base, near an Afghan Army base, was struck by a pickup truck loaded with explosives and driven by a suicide bomber, killing 11 of their fighters, according to Hamidullah Afghan, a local police official. He said the authorities helped evacuate

those Renouncers who were wounded to a hospital in Lashkar Gah.

In retaliation, the Renouncers began their own suicide attack against the Taliban at a bazaar in the district, according to Abdul Salam Afghan, a spokesman for the Helmand police. In all, 11 of the Renouncers and 10 of the mainstream Taliban were killed in the fighting, which was still flaring this week in the area of the bazaar, in Seminar Dasht village.

Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, the spokesman for the mainstream Taliban in southern Afghanistan, said the group they had attacked in Gereshk was a unit trained and equipped by the National Directorate of Security, the Afghan intelligence agency. He said it had no affiliation with the Taliban.

Mullah Abdul Manan Niazi, the spokesman for the Renouncer faction, denied that the group was government-supported, saying that it was a popular movement spurred by resentment toward the mainstream Taliban.

"The reason they targeted us with a car bomber is the Taliban are afraid of us, because we are enhancing our influence in Helmand and the people realize now the Taliban are getting financial support from Iran and Russia," Mullah Niazi said. "They have lost touch with the grass roots."

He said the group had also fought against the Taliban in Ghor and Farah provinces. "We have told the residents not to allow Taliban to stay in their villages, and if anyone is found giving shelter to the Taliban, their homes will be burned to ashes," Mullah Niazi said.

Government officials in Helmand publicly deny any support for the Renouncer faction. But several police officials there confirmed that the government had helped transfer wounded Renouncers to the hospital after the fighting last week. And a border police official, who spoke only on the condition of anonymity, said that among the units guarding the entrances to Lashkar Gah is a Renouncer unit trained and equipped by the National Directorate of Security.

The intelligence agency pays the fighters salaries equivalent to \$150 to \$300 a month, and supplies them with food, weapons and vehicles, the official said.

Afghan forces patrolling the district of Pachir Agham near Tora Bora, in Nangarhar Province. Last week, the Islamic State scored a symbolic victory against the Taliban by taking control of the cave and tunnel complex in the area. Ghulamullah Habibi/European Pressphoto Agency

The mainstream Taliban are worried that the Renouncers, who dress and look like other Taliban, have been infiltrating their ranks. In May, they claimed to have arrested 90 such infiltrators in Helmand, who they said were involved in assassination plots against the mainstream group.

Further complicating the picture in Helmand are groups known as the Sangorians, after a popular television drama that depicts a hero wandering the mountains and fighting evildoers, disguised in local garb. These groups, according to local officials, are recruited and trained by the intelligence agency, but dress as Taliban and infiltrate into Taliban-controlled areas to fight behind their lines.

Far to the north in Herat Province, the Taliban has made its most serious inroads in Shindand District. There the Taliban shadow governor, Mullah Samad, brought in reinforcements from other provinces to fight against Nangyal, the local leader of the breakaway faction. (Like many Afghans, Nangyal uses only one name).

Nangyal was defeated and surrendered to the government, which then helped him reorganize his forces as a Renouncer group aligned to Mullah Rasoul, and return to the fight against the mainstream Taliban.

The
Washington
Post

Opium use booms in Afghanistan, creating a 'silent tsunami' of addicted women (UNE)

https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100011342442800&ref=br_rs

9-11 minutes

One recent morning, three figures in white lab coats descended cautiously into a pitch-black netherworld beneath a crumbling bridge in the Afghan capital. They picked their way through garbage and sprawled limbs, passing hundreds of huddled men whose gaunt, wary faces were briefly illuminated by the flare of matches and drug pipes.

The doctors were headed to a lone tent pitched nearby on the dry riverbed, where they knew that a female addict named Marzia had been sleeping on her own. They approached quietly, saying they had come to help. From within came shouts of "Go away, leave me alone!" Suddenly the young woman flung open the tent flap, cursing and hurling debris. Stumbling along the riverbed, she darted under the bridge and vanished into the protective company of fellow lost souls.

Drug addiction in Afghanistan, once mostly limited to men who spent years as laborers or war refugees in Iran, has exploded into a nationwide scourge that affects millions of people, including a growing number of women and children.

Over the past five years, programs of crop eradication and substitution have been largely abandoned as foreign funding has ended and insurgent attacks have increased. As a result, tens of thousands of farmers have returned to the lucrative business of growing opium poppies. Last year, 420,000 acres in Afghanistan were devoted to poppies, and opium production rose 43 percent over 2015, to 4,800

tons, according to Abdul Hameed Noor, a former governor of Shindand.

"Rasoul's group are supported by the government forces, they operate very freely in government controlled areas," said Haji Ajab Gul, another former governor of the district. "They can come to the main town of Shindand and target people they dislike."

Last month, the Afghan Army detected a buildup of mainstream Taliban forces planning an attack on followers of Mullah Rasoul in another part of Herat Province, and government forces thwarted the

rehabilitation specialist who works at the recently opened National Center for the Treatment of Addiction for Women and Children in Kabul.

[It's official: The U.S. drug war in Afghanistan is a \$7.6 billion failure]

Most Afghan opium is sold for export to the heroin trade in Europe and Russia, with an estimated revenue value of nearly \$1 billion. But the boom has also led to a sharp drop in domestic prices, while widespread unemployment and anxiety created by years of war have fueled demand for the cheap escape of drugs.

In 2010, U.N. experts estimated that there were about 1 million regular drug users in Afghanistan, mostly using opium as "a kind of self-medication against the hardships of life." They warned that addiction was following "the same hyperbolic growth of opium production." By 2015, they reported, the number of addicts in the country had soared to 3 million — an astonishing 12 percent of the populace — and more of them were using heroin.

Today the problem has burst into the open, overwhelming police and public health agencies. Dirt-streaked men can be seen passed out on almost any sidewalk in Kabul, and the few treatment centers are constantly full.

The most startling aspect of the drug boom, though, is still largely hidden from sight. Tens of thousands of Afghan women, confined to their homes by tradition and often dependent on addicted men, are succumbing, too. This has created a growing phenomenon of drug-centered households where family relations, economic stability and social traditions can easily collapse.

"It is a silent tsunami, and if it is not controlled, in another few years it will be a disaster," said Shaista Hakim, a physician and drug

assault with a pre-emptive strike, according to Lal Muhammad Omarzay, the governor of Adraskan District, where the clash took place.

"We do not have any direct contacts with Mullah Rasoul's group, but we do not fight them either," Mr. Omarzay said. "They do not face us, and we do not face them either."

In several parts of the country, the Taliban also have to contend against the Islamic State in Khorasan, followers of the extremists in Iraq and Syria. The group, also known as ISIS or ISIL, is particularly strong in parts of

eastern Nangarhar Province, but it also has had a presence in Ghor, Farah and other areas. Most of those elements began as Taliban factions that turned against the mainstream group.

Last week, the Islamic State scored a symbolic victory against the Taliban by taking control of the Tora Bora cave and tunnel complex, once used by Osama bin Laden as a hide-out. The Afghan military said on Sunday that it was in the process of ousting the militants from the area.

addict. For a woman in our society, that is worse."

The new rehabilitation center, run by the Ministry of Public Health but funded largely by the U.S. government, houses and treats women for 45-day stints of detoxification and therapy at no cost. The premises are locked and guarded; no women are allowed out, and no men are allowed in except for limited visits. Children are welcome to stay, but they are separated from their mothers for play and study, and some are also under treatment for addiction.

At the moment, 72 women and children are living at the center, a brightly decorated, four-story hive of activity. Some of the women were found by the medical intervention team at Pule Sukhta or picked up there by police and transferred to the center in lieu of arrest. Others have checked in voluntarily or been brought by relatives from other provinces. Almost all are uneducated; the center offers literacy classes as well as training in tailoring and hairdressing.

During a recent visit by a Washington Post reporter and photographer, the staff tried to keep things orderly, but emotions ran high and drama erupted often. Several women going through withdrawal pleaded to go home, swearing they would never touch drugs again. There were sounds of pounding on locked doors and babies wailing.

The only quiet area was a dorm room where two disheveled women who had just arrived from Pule Sukhta were sprawled in sleep.

Some patients were reluctant to tell their stories for fear of family gossip or public stigma. Others were proud of their progress and eager to explain the paths that had led them to drugs, as well as the hard

choices they had made to escape them.

Their tangled tales had some common threads: addicted and jobless husbands, children taken away and sent to orphanages, conflicts with disapproving relatives, and lives of poverty and wartime hardship in which drugs offered short-term release but caused lingering damage.

"I want the world to know what I went through," said Shaimsa Khan, 26, who was about to complete her second 45-day stay. She said she had run away from her addicted husband and tried to kick drugs at the center. But after health authorities refused to return her young son, she relapsed and found herself drawn back to the addicts' colony.

"I was alone and had no one to protect me. It was better under the bridge than going off with a strange man," Khan said.

At lunchtime, the women and children crowded together on the floor, eating bowls of stew and bread. Suddenly there was a commotion at the front door. A gaunt woman had arrived, weeping and shrieking in protest. Three children were with her: a slender, grim-faced girl of 16 and a distraught 9-year-old boy who took turns holding a year-old baby.

Today's WorldView

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As the argument continued, it became clear that the mother had not brought her children; they had

brought her. The daughter, Mahdia, who has never been to school, alternately scolded and soothed her mother while explaining the situation to the center staff. She said her mother's addiction was out of control, that she kept running away to find drugs, and that she had forced both Mahdia and her sister to marry older men so she could use the dowry money to buy drugs.

"She is our mother, but she has ruined our family," Mahdia said, balancing the baby on her hip. "She goes to the bridge, and if she doesn't find drugs she beats us, and she faints all the time. I want her to be healthy, not crazy. I want us to have a normal life."

The girl handed the baby to her brother and put her arms protectively around her weeping

mother's shoulders, but her eyes were hard with resolve.

"It doesn't matter what she says. She must be kept here until she recovers," Mahdia said. "There is no other way."

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Iran's Islamic State Problem Isn't Going Away

Paul McLeary | 1 hour ago

10-13 minutes

On Sunday, six ballistic missiles launched by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) launched from western Iran, and came crashing down on their targets in Syria's eastern governorate of Deir Ezzor. The attack, Iranian officials said, was retaliation for the Islamic State's June 7 terror attacks in Tehran, which left 18 people dead. An IRGC spokesman said the attack was also a "warning message" for the terror group's "regional and international allies."

Iran's top leadership has left little doubt who it believes those allies are. In an earlier speech, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei responded to President Donald Trump's remarks accusing Iran of being the godfather of terrorism in the Middle East. "You [the United States] and your agents are the source of instability in the Middle East," the Iranian leader charged. "Who created the Islamic State? America."

Iran's terror problem, however, cannot be resolved by lobbing ballistic missiles at eastern Syria or rhetorical bombs at the United States. The June 7 terror attack by five lightly armed but well-organized terrorists against two of Iran's top landmarks — the parliament and the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic — serve as a stark reminder of the dangers of blowback from Iran's multiple interventions in the Arab world.

Without some kind of introspection, Iran will likely remain in the line of fire of Sunni jihadis for a long time to come.

Invincible no more

While all five of the Islamic State terrorists were Iranian nationals hailing from Kurdish-populated regions on the border with Iraq, the deadly sectarian worldview that they espouse is very much imported from the vicious, years-long wars in Iraq and Syria — wars that Iran, through its military interventions, has helped intensify and prolong.

The Islamic State is vowing more attacks are to come. In a video claiming responsibility for the attack, the group promised, "Tehran [will be] transformed into open battlefields for the soldiers of the Islamic State." In a video released from the attack, the Sunni Iranian recruits are heard saying: "Do you think we will go away?"

There is no reason to think they will. About 10 percent of Iran's 80 million people are Sunni. This large minority lives predominately in the border regions: in southeastern Balochistan and the coastal regions of the south, and in Iranian Kurdistan, a region that spans much of Iran's border with Iraq. The community has many grievances with the central government, from political marginalization to socioeconomic deprivation. But the vast majority of Sunni Iranians continue to see themselves as part of Iran, and hope for serious political reform someday. It is not a coincidence that reformist candidates have done best in Sunni areas: In the last presidential election, Rouhani scored his two

biggest victories in Balochistan and Kurdistan.

For decades, Balochistan and Kurdistan have experienced limited, localized anti-government militancy motivated by ethnic nationalism and leftist ideology. This began to shift in the mid-2000s, when a growing number of ethnic Balochs and Kurds joined the bandwagon of Sunni jihad in neighboring Iraq. The focus of their attacks on the central government in Tehran shifted from it being "Persian" to it being "Shiite."

The internationalization of Iran's Sunni jihadis really took off with the emergence of the Islamic State in 2014.

The internationalization of Iran's Sunni jihadis really took off with the emergence of the Islamic State in 2014. In Balochistan, the Sunni jihadi group Jundallah began to express solidarity with the Islamic State in its propaganda, and the Iranian Kurdish Sunni jihadi group Ansar al-Islam declared its outright allegiance to the group. Both groups, which are designated as terrorist entities by the United States, have remained small. Still, their transformation was nonetheless a direct result of a regional sectarian rage in which Iranian state policies are partly guilty of fanning.

Tehran was hardly in the dark about these developments. As early as mid-2014, while the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was ferrying Afghan and Pakistani Shiite volunteers to Syria to fight on behalf of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime, Iranian intelligence services were arresting other kinds of recruits: Afghans and Pakistanis traveling through Iran to

join the Islamic State. Meanwhile, the latest Islamic State propaganda shows not only that the organization has succeeded in recruiting Sunni Iranians to its cause, but that it is able to provide the kinds of sophisticated logistical groundwork that was needed to carry out the June 7 attacks.

Less than a week after the Tehran attacks, Iranian security forces reportedly killed four Islamic State operatives in the Hormozgan province on the Persian Gulf — not a region known for militancy, although home to a considerable Sunni minority. Another 41 alleged Islamic State members were reportedly arrested on June 9 in different locations around the country.

Meanwhile, Iranian Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi says that Islamic State plots are intercepted daily. That sounds like an attempt to exonerate the authorities for failing to stop the June 7 attack — but it is also a glimpse into the potential for far more Sunni jihadi actions on Iranian soil. In fact, Alavi's statement this week suggests that the authorities in Tehran have in the past methodically downplayed the local Sunni jihadi threat.

What forward defense?

For years, Iranian officials have justified their intervention in the Arab world with the mantra, "We have to fight them in Iraq and Syria so we don't have to fight them at home." Now that the Islamic State has exposed the futility of that strategy, Tehran has a choice: It can reassess its military adventurism or double down on its policy of so-called forward-defense and take the fight to its enemies.

The initial reaction suggests that the principal architects of Iran's costly Arab policy remain undeterred. Iran's Supreme Leader

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed the attacks as mere "firecrackers"

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed the attacks as mere "firecrackers" while Iranian armed forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Bagheri pledged to soon "teach ISIS an unforgettable lesson."

Iran's hard-line officials are also using the attack as ammunition against their regional opponents — and to drive home the point that they alone control Iran's regional policies. Take Khamenei's reaction: While the moderate voices in President Hassan Rouhani's government largely avoided pointing the finger at anyone besides the Islamic State, the supreme leader went out of his way to lay the attacks at the feet of Iran's principal adversaries, such as the United States and Saudi Arabia.

In the aftermath of Rouhani's big reelection victory on May 19, Khamenei has taken every opportunity to underscore that he still favors a revolutionary foreign policy. For the supreme leader, "revolutionary" means giving the generals of the Revolutionary Guards — such as Quds Force chief Qassem Soleimani, who was recently photographed on the Syrian-Iraqi border — a free hand to

determine Iran's approach to the Arab world.

And Khamenei, who is the commander-in-chief, is seemingly putting his money where his mouth is. In November, he appointed a new commander for the regular Iranian ground forces, the Artesh. The force has always been a conventional conscript army was structured to defend the nation's borders, not act as an expeditionary force in foreign conflicts — but that may be about to change. The new commander, Kiumars Heidari, comes from a background in the Revolutionary Guards and has unveiled plans to convert some of the Artesh units into "mobile offensive forces" that can be in deployed outside of Iran.

It remains to be seen what will come of such plans, but it appears as if Tehran is experimenting with the idea of establishing a much larger offensive military force, modeled on the Quds Force. If so, this would represent Iran taking its asymmetric war capabilities to new heights and a sign that Tehran sees itself busy in regional wars for a long time to come.

Arguably, the IRGC's experience from its involvement in multiple regional wars has taught it that plenty of Arab constituencies are receptive to its message and open to its patronage. The question Iran may soon have to confront is whether it wants to provide such

patronage to the Arab world indefinitely, and at what cost. If the Iranian government is as committed to intra-Arab conflicts as it suggests, it could remain militarily tied up for years to come. To this day, the Iranian state has revealed no information about the financial cost of its operations in Iraq and Syria.

Doubling down

At a minimum, Iran's rhetoric and military reorganizations suggest it is intent on further military mobilization. Whether there will be pushback from the Iranian public remains to be seen. The political space in Tehran for questioning Iran's Iraq and Syria policy is limited, as a number of prominent political activists have found out. Take Gholamhossein Karbaschi, a former mayor of Tehran and a prominent reformist, who was sternly reprimanded for merely suggesting that the solution of the regional wars might require more than just "money, arms, and killing."

But if the costs of Iran's interventions in the Arab world mount — in terms of money, or domestic security — the political calculations at home could shift as well. Nor can Tehran rely on backing from key allies such as Russia if it chooses to go down the path of fortifying its so-called axis of resistance.

When the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali

Shamkhani, spoke recently about Iran and Russia being in one front — together with Syria, Iraq, and Hezbollah — the Russians were quick to grumble. Shamkhani's effort to bind Moscow to the likes of Hezbollah and Hamas was said by Russia's Pravda.ru to be a distortion of Moscow's policies. Shamkhani's statement "has caused damage to Russia's image and interests," the Pravda.ru article read. "True allies do not act like that."

In other words, Russia is in Syria to secure its own geopolitical objectives — but has no interest in having Iran set the agenda for the future of the Middle East. Meanwhile, the Islamic State attacks in Tehran showed that the violent sectarianism on Iran's doorsteps is moving closer to the heart of the regime.

So far, instead of looking inward for reasons why radical Sunni militancy has gained a foothold on Iranian soil, Tehran has doubled down on a military response to the problem. Iranian officials should know better. The IRGC, after all, has taken the lead on security in Balochistan since as early as 2008 — its failure to quell the threat shows that a strategy based on force alone will only treat the symptoms and not the cause of jihadi violence. The Islamic State's attacks in Tehran is the moment for Iran to stop pretending.

ATTA KENARE/AFP/Getty Images



Saudis Say They Seized 3 Iranians Planning 'Terrorist Act' at Sea

Thomas Erdbrink and Rick

Gladstone

3-4 minutes

TEHRAN — Saudi Arabia said on Monday that its navy had seized three members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards piloting a boat loaded with explosives toward a Saudi offshore oil drilling rig.

The claim was not confirmed but threatened to further fray relations between the rival powers, which have accused each other of fomenting terrorism and instability against a growing backdrop of tensions roiling the Middle East.

Iran denied the Saudi claim and accused the Saudi Navy of having shot at boats belonging to "simple fishermen" from Iran's southern Persian Gulf port of Bushehr in an unprovoked attack that had left one Iranian dead.

About the only thing both sides appeared to agree on was that the episode happened on Friday, when

Iran's state media first reported its version of events.

The Saudis said over the weekend that their navy had fired warning shots at three small boats and two had escaped, but it reported nothing about arrests made or explosives found. Why the Saudis amended their side of the story on Monday was not made clear.

The Saudi Information and Culture Ministry said in a statement quoted by Agence France-Presse that three captured Iranians, identified as members of the Revolutionary Guards Corps, had been caught late Friday as their boat approached the Saudi-owned Marjan oil field in the Gulf. The ministry said the captives were "being questioned by Saudi authorities."

The ministry said the boat's cargo had made it "clear this was intended to be a terrorist act in Saudi territorial waters designed to cause severe damage to people and property."

In Iran, the Interior Ministry director general for border affairs, Majid

Aqababai, said "Saudi Arabia's claim on the arrest of Iranian military personnel is not true because the individuals who were confronted were simple fishermen on a fishing boat."

In remarks quoted by Iranian news services, Mr. Aqababai also reiterated the Iranian contention that "Saudi Arabia shot at two Iranian fishing boats and killed one of the fishermen."

Relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, which compete for influence in the Middle East, have been increasingly strained over the opposite sides they have taken in the Syria and Yemen conflicts.

But the tensions have been particularly aggravated in the month since President Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia, when he emphatically embraced its Sunni rulers. They signed a \$110 billion weapons deal with the United States and extolled Mr. Trump's denunciations of Iran.

Apparently emboldened by Mr. Trump, the Saudis moved quickly to isolate Qatar, one of the few

Persian Gulf nations that maintains good relations with Iran, a shift that has aggravated political tensions among them and left the United States in an awkward position because Qatar hosts the largest American air base in the Middle East.

Then on June 7, two prominent sites in Tehran were hit in deadly terrorist attacks that were claimed by the Islamic State, the militant group also known as ISIS. Iran said they had been encouraged by Saudi Arabia.

On Sunday, Iran fired missiles into Syria, claiming it was hitting Islamic State targets in retaliation.

"The wood is very dry in the Gulf, it's dangerous," said Cliff Kupchan, chairman of the Eurasia Group, a political risk consultancy that follows Iran. "When Iran looks at ISIS it sees Saudi Arabia."

Mr. Kupchan said he did not expect a Saudi-Iranian war, "but we're going to have to live with an increased level of destabilizing incidents for a long time."

Mead: Fear Is What Changed Saudi Arabia

Walter Russell
Mead

5-6 minutes

June 19, 2017 6:45 p.m. ET

Saudi Arabia used to be one of the most cautious players in the world of diplomacy. Not anymore. In the past three weeks, the Saudis have launched a coordinated diplomatic offensive against neighboring Qatar, hinted at new ties with Israel, scolded Pakistan, turned up the heat in their confrontation with Iran, and carried on a war of words with Turkey. Meanwhile, they continue to bomb Yemen to support their local allies in that country's increasingly bitter civil war.

The Saudis are also bringing new gusto to domestic policy: The 2030 plan backed by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is the most far-reaching and ambitious program for Saudi reform and restructuring ever seriously proposed. Privatizing the state oil giant Aramco (or at least part of it) and using the money to diversify the economy is, by Saudi standards, a revolutionary idea.

The jury is out on whether the Saudis' new foreign and domestic policies will work, but no doubt something

fundamental has changed in what used to be one of the world's most cautious and slow-moving countries. The question is why. Some look to the deputy crown prince, a 31-year-old reformer elevated to his current role in 2015. But his rise is more a sign of the times than the main force driving change. After all, in the old Saudi Arabia, a mere 30-something never would have been allowed anywhere near the reins of power.

So what is behind the new Saudi activism? Fear. It's an emotion that comes naturally to an oil-rich kingdom with a relatively small population in a neighborhood full of predatory rivals. For years fear made the Saudis cautious, since they felt they could take shelter behind a strong and confident America. Now they aren't so sure.

In Riyadh, the Age of Insecurity began during President Obama's tenure. Mr. Obama's outreach to Iran—and his willingness to overlook its unprecedented regional aggression in his quest for a nuclear deal—left the Saudis feeling isolated and betrayed. As Iranian power spread across Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, Saudis concluded that the U.S. no longer saw Saudi security as part of its core national interest.

The Trump administration has sought to reassure the Saudis that

the "tilt to Iran" has ended, but their insecurity runs deep. From Riyadh, and from many other world capitals, the erratic shifts in American foreign policy—from Bush to Obama to Trump—raise disturbing questions about the future. Who comes after Mr. Trump? Elizabeth Warren? Sean Hannity? As American politics becomes less predictable and more extreme, countries that have grounded their national strategy on the stability of an American alliance must reassess their options.

Then there is oil, an issue on which Saudis and Americans once saw eye to eye. With their enormous reserves, the Saudis believed that they were in the oil business for the long term. Unlike more aggressive players, who wanted to push oil prices as high as possible, the Saudis used their position as a "swing producer" to keep markets reasonably stable—something the U.S. appreciated. The Saudi goal was to keep their customers committed to oil long term and forestall heavy investment in alternative fuels.

The shale revolution is shifting this balance. The U.S. and Saudi Arabia are no longer allies in the oil market. American frackers, who can quickly increase or decrease output as prices change, are challenging

Saudi Arabia's role as the global swing producer.

Worse, from a Saudi point of view, the long-term dynamics of the oil market seem to be changing. There is much less talk of "peak oil" in the sense of peak production, and more talk of "peak demand." Advances in energy efficiency and alternative power-generation are shifting the long-term demand curve for hydrocarbons. At the same time, Saudi Arabia's rapidly growing population will place increasing demands on its economy. Riyadh worries that if oil becomes less profitable, it will be unable to keep its people happy.

All this suggests that the current turbulence in the Gulf is here to stay. If the Trump administration wants to restore tranquility, it should think holistically about Saudi Arabia's economic and security problems—and creatively about how this American alliance, a pillar of Middle East stability since World War II, can be renewed.

Mr. Mead is a fellow at the Hudson Institute, a professor of foreign affairs at Bard College, and editor at large of the American Interest.

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition.

Otto Warmbier, American Detainee Released by North Korea, Has Died (UNE)

Felicia Schwartz and Jon Kamp

7-9 minutes

Updated June 19, 2017 11:20 p.m. ET

Otto Warmbier, the American college student imprisoned in North Korea for more than a year before returning home with a severe brain injury last week, died Monday, adding to pressure for more strenuous action against Pyongyang.

The death of Mr. Warmbier, who was 22 years old, came as top U.S. and Chinese officials were set to meet in Washington on Wednesday to discuss security and diplomatic matters.

Mr. Warmbier died midafternoon Monday surrounded by his family, according to a statement. Doctors at the Cincinnati hospital who began treating Mr. Warmbier six days ago, said he suffered extensive loss of brain tissue and was in a state of "unresponsive wakefulness."

"Unfortunately, the awful torturous mistreatment our son received at the hands of the North Koreans ensured that no other outcome was possible beyond the sad one we experienced today," his family said in the statement, released by the University of Cincinnati Medical Center.

"We hold North Korea accountable for Otto Warmbier's unjust imprisonment, and demand the release of three other Americans who have been illegally detained," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said in a statement Monday.

North Korea's office at the United Nations didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on Mr. Warmbier's death. North Korea said through its state media that it released Mr. Warmbier on humanitarian grounds. A North Korean official said at a forum in Mongolia last week that he was punished because he sought to overthrow the North Korean regime.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who took office last month, is set

to visit the White House next week. He and President Donald Trump are expected to discuss economic issues and "coordinate on North Korea-related issues, including countering the growing North Korean nuclear and missile threats," the White House said last week.

Mr. Trump said in a statement: "Otto's fate deepens my administration's determination to prevent such tragedies from befalling innocent people at the hands of regimes that do not respect the rule of law or basic human decency. The United States once again condemns the brutality of the North Korean regime as we mourn its latest victim."

The U.S. has few new options, but officials have said it could turn to so-called secondary sanctions, which would target companies that do business with North Korea in a no-holds-barred effort to economically isolate the country. Washington often has warned it could take such steps, but has held

back in the face of Chinese opposition.

While U.S. laws block virtually all trade with North Korea, United Nations resolutions don't go nearly as far. China, which is North Korea's largest trading partner, has said it would only follow these international statutes.

Another last-resort move would be to eliminate travel by Americans to North Korea, a step U.S. officials previously have considered but set aside, although the State Department strongly discourages people from traveling there. A bipartisan bill in the House of Representatives would block U.S. citizens from traveling to North Korea for tourism, and Rep. Ed Royce (R., Calif.), the chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, called Monday for the ban to be enacted.

Mr. Tillerson told lawmakers last week that the State Department is examining such a ban, an extremely rare measure, but hasn't made a final decision.

The North Koreans detained the University of Virginia student at the Pyongyang airport in January 2016 as he was preparing to leave, and sentenced him to 15 years of hard labor for allegedly defacing a political poster while on tour there.

On Monday, Young Pioneer Tours, the China-based company offering "budget tours" to North Korea that organized Mr. Warmbier's trip to Pyongyang, said Mr. Warmbier's death had "led us to reconsider our position on accepting American tourists."

Though North Korea is isolated, roughly 5,000 Western tourists visit the reclusive nation each year.

Mr. Warmbier's family had no information about their son for over a year until learning this month that he was in a coma, his father, Fred Warmbier, said last week. At a secret meeting, North Koreans told U.S. officials that Mr. Warmbier lost consciousness after contracting botulism and taking a sleeping pill, U.S. officials and family members have said.

Sen. Ed Markey (D., Mass.), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said "the North Korean authorities must account for exactly what happened to Mr. Warmbier while he was in their custody and ensure that anyone who is responsible for his death is brought to justice."

Sen. John McCain (R., Ariz.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said the U.S. "cannot and should not tolerate the murder of its citizens by hostile powers."

Doctors treating Mr. Warmbier said they couldn't firmly say what caused Mr. Warmbier's brain injury, citing the limited information about his condition from North Korea. Speaking at a press conference last week, his physicians said it appeared he suffered the brain injury at least 14 months ago, and that the damage was consistent with cardiopulmonary arrest. Intoxication or trauma might cause cardiopulmonary arrest in someone as young as the University of Virginia student, his doctors said.

Mr. Warmbier's family said that when their son returned to Cincinnati he was unable to speak, see or react to verbal commands.

"He looked very uncomfortable—almost anguished," the family said. "Although we would never hear his voice again, within a day the countenance of his face changed—he was at peace. He was home and we believe he could sense that."

Raised near Cincinnati, Mr. Warmbier graduated in 2013 near the top of his class at Wyoming High School in Wyoming, Ohio. At the University of Virginia, he double-majored in economics and commerce with a concentration in finance, and minored in global sustainability, according to the website of a student-run group last year.

His social media accounts at the time of his capture showed that Mr. Warmbier was into vintage clothing, running and rap music. A Facebook page that appeared to be his shows him mugging casually with friends; in one image he is nose-to-nose

with a cow. The Facebook page was taken down Jan. 22, 2016, the day North Korea announced it had arrested and was detaining him.

Mr. Warmbier was on track to graduate from UVA this May, had he not been detained. The school "will not forget one of our own," school president Teresa Sullivan said in a tweet Monday.

Mr. Warmbier ventured abroad to Europe and London before his trip to North Korea.

"I am proud of Otto and the courage he showed by going to North Korea and having that adventurous side to him," Mr. Warmbier's father said in a press conference last week. "And so the fact that he was taken and treated this way is horrible and it is tough to process."

—Jonathan Cheng contributed to this article.

Write to Felicia Schwartz at Felicia.Schwartz@wsj.com and Jon Kamp at jon.kamp@wsj.com



Otto Warmbier dies days after release from North Korean detention (UNE)

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

12-16 minutes

Fred and Cindy Warmbier announced June 19 that their son, Otto, has died, days after he was medically evacuated from North Korea. Fred and Cindy Warmbier say their son, Otto, has died, days after he was medically evacuated from North Korea. (The Washington Post)

Fred and Cindy Warmbier announced June 19 that their son, Otto, has died, days after he was medically evacuated from North Korea. (The Washington Post)

Otto Warmbier, the University of Virginia student who was detained in North Korea for nearly a year and a half, died Monday afternoon, days after he returned home in a coma, his parents announced.

Warmbier, 22, had been medically evacuated last week and was being treated at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center. His parents, Fred and Cindy Warmbier, did not specify the cause of death.

But they made clear in a written statement that they blamed North Korea for what happened. Their son was arrested in January 2016 at the end of a brief tourist visit to the isolated country.

"Unfortunately, the awful torturous mistreatment our son received at the hands of the North Koreans ensured that no other outcome was possible beyond the sad one we experienced today," the Warmbiers said.

Warmbier's death was mourned by his wide circle of friends and by complete strangers, and it intensified political reaction to his detention, with outraged critics calling it murder.

"There is nothing more tragic for a parent than to lose a child in the prime of life," President Trump said in a statement. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Otto's family and friends, and all who loved him."

"Otto's fate deepens my Administration's determination to prevent such tragedies from befalling innocent people at the hands of regimes that do not respect the rule of law or basic human decency. The United States once again condemns the brutality of the North Korean regime as we mourn its latest victim."

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a statement: "Otto Warmbier, an American citizen, was murdered by the Kim Jong-un regime. In the final year of his life, he lived the nightmare in which the North Korean people have been trapped

for 70 years: forced labor, mass starvation, systematic cruelty, torture, and murder.

"North Korea is threatening its neighbors, destabilizing the Asia-Pacific region, and rapidly developing the technology to strike the American homeland with nuclear weapons. Now it has escalated to brutalizing Americans, including three other citizens currently imprisoned in North Korea. The United States of America cannot and should not tolerate the murder of its citizens by hostile powers."

Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin (Md.), ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in a statement that "Otto is dead because of Kim Jong-un's repressive, murderous regime," and that North Korea "must be held accountable for their continued barbaric behavior."

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) also said North Korea must be held accountable for the "murder."

Warmbier's death could push Congress or the Trump administration to restrict or ban Americans from traveling to North Korea.

Reps. Adam B. Schiff (D-Calif.) and Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) have introduced the North Korea Travel Control Act in the House, which

would require Americans who want to travel to North Korea to obtain a license. There would be no licenses for tourists.

The Senate has been more reluctant to introduce restrictions on Americans — but Warmbier's death might be the trigger that they need, analysts say.

President Trump reacted to news that American student Otto Warmbier died only days after being released in a coma from 17 months of detention in North Korea. Trump reacted to news that American student Otto Warmbier died only days after being released in a coma from 17 months of detention in North Korea. (Reuters)

President Trump reacted to news that American student Otto Warmbier died only days after being released in a coma from 17 months of detention in North Korea. (Reuters)

Separately, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has raised the prospect of the administration using an executive order to ban travel to North Korea.

"We have been evaluating whether we should put some type of travel visa restriction to North Korea," Tillerson told a House committee last week. "We haven't come to a final conclusion, but we are considering it."

On Monday, Tillerson issued a statement: "Today we received with deep sadness the news that Otto Warmbier has passed away."

"On behalf of the entire State Department and the United States government, I extend my condolences to the Warmbier family, and offer my prayers as they enter a time of grief no parent should ever know."

"We hold North Korea accountable for Otto Warmbier's unjust imprisonment, and demand the release of three other Americans who have been illegally detained."

They are Kim Dong-chul, a former Fairfax County, Va., resident, as well as Tony Kim and Kim Hak-song, two Americans affiliated with the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology.

Currently, the State Department "strongly warns" U.S. citizens not to travel to North Korea, noting that going there puts them at risk of arrest and long-term detention in accordance with what North Korea calls "wartime law."

Warmbier had gone to North Korea as a tourist on his way to Hong Kong for a study-abroad program, but was stopped when he tried to leave the country. After a sham trial, he was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor for what North Korea called "hostile acts against the state."

Undated video shows American student Otto Warmbier throwing snowballs in North Korea before his arrest for "committing hostile acts" against North Korea. Undated video shows American student Otto Warmbier throwing snowballs in North Korea before his arrest for "committing hostile acts" against the North. (Austin Warmbier)

Undated video shows American student Otto Warmbier throwing snowballs in North Korea before his arrest for "committing hostile acts" against North Korea. (Austin Warmbier)

Fred Warmbier said North Korea lures American tourists to the country with tour groups such as the one his son joined, Young Pioneer Tours, and then "they take them hostage."

Young Pioneer Tours said after Warmbier's death that it would no longer take American citizens to North Korea.

Fred and Cindy Warmbier had no news about their son during his detention after March of last year. He was not allowed consular visits, and it was not until this month that U.S. officials and the family were

told that he had been in a coma for more than a year.

He was medically evacuated, landed in Cincinnati on Tuesday night and was rushed to the hospital.

[Otto Warmbier has extensive loss of brain tissue, no obvious signs of trauma]

On Thursday, doctors said Warmbier had extensive loss of brain tissue, and was in a state of unresponsive wakefulness.

That morning, Fred Warmbier denounced what he called the "pariah" regime that brutalized his son.

[Otto Warmbier's father denounces North Korea]

Fred and Cindy Warmbier issued a statement Monday afternoon:

It is our sad duty to report that our son, Otto Warmbier, has completed his journey home. Surrounded by his loving family, Otto died today at 2:20pm.

It would be easy at a moment like this to focus on all that we lost — future time that won't be spent with a warm, engaging, brilliant young man whose curiosity and enthusiasm for life knew no bounds. But we choose to focus on the time we were given to be with this remarkable person. You can tell from the outpouring of emotion from the communities that he touched — Wyoming, Ohio and the University of Virginia to name just two — that the love for Otto went well beyond his immediate family.

We would like to thank the wonderful professionals at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center who did everything they could for Otto. Unfortunately, the awful torturous mistreatment our son received at the hands of the North Koreans ensured that no other outcome was possible beyond the sad one we experienced today.

When Otto returned to Cincinnati late on June 13th he was unable to speak, unable to see and unable to react to verbal commands. He looked very uncomfortable — almost anguished. Although we would never hear his voice again, within a day the countenance of his face changed — he was at peace. He was home and we believe he could sense that.

We thank everyone around the world who has kept him and our family in their thoughts and prayers. We are at peace and at home too.

Fred & Cindy Warmbier and Family

Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), who worked to try to free Warmbier, said in a statement Monday afternoon: "Otto Warmbier was such a promising young man. He was kind, generous and accomplished. He had all the talent you could ever ask for and a bright future ahead of him. His passing today is a loss for Ohio and for all of us. Jane and I are lifting up the Warmbier family in our prayers at this difficult time, and we are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of this remarkable young Ohioan."

Gov. John Kasich (R) said in a written statement: "All Ohioans mourn the death of Otto Warmbier, a young man of exceptional spirit. Our prayers go out to his family, who have shown great strength and courage throughout this terrible ordeal. This horrendous situation further underscores the evil, oppressive nature of the North Korean regime that has such disregard for human life."

Teresa Sullivan, president of U-Va., said by phone Monday afternoon: "It's just such a waste of a promising young life. That's very hard — that's very hard to accept."

"I feel so sorry for his classmates and his fraternity brothers. He had many friends at the university, professors who taught him, I think everyone feels, very deeply, this loss."

"I think we always somewhere, deep down, thought he would come back to us and finish his degree with us."

Video shot by a family friend in 2013 shows Otto Warmbier giving a speech as salutatorian at his graduation from Wyoming High School, in Wyoming, Ohio. Warmbier died on June 19, days after being released from North Korean detainment. Otto Warmbier's 2013 speech as salutatorian at his graduation from Wyoming High School, in Wyoming, Ohio (Courtesy of Fred and Cindy Warmbier)

Video shot by a family friend in 2013 shows Otto Warmbier giving a speech as salutatorian at his graduation from Wyoming High School, in Wyoming, Ohio. Warmbier died on June 19, days after being released from North Korean detainment. (Courtesy of Fred and Cindy Warmbier)

Warmbier was much loved. He was homecoming king and captain of his high-school soccer team, an expert in underground rap music and economics, a thrift-store shopper who wore his selections, like a purplish-striped sweater under a plaid jacket, with a big, confident grin.

He was a top student at U-Va., with a scholarship designed for the most "intellectually curious" students, and that inquisitiveness led him to befriend strangers, have long talks with friends about big ideas, and travel abroad to places such as Ecuador and Cuba. He took care of friends and family, offering advice to his younger brother and sister, reminding his mother they should visit a relative who was sick, surprising friends with throwback jerseys, paintings, Hawaiian shirts and other thrift-store finds.

He was unusually disciplined, certain of his major and with his path to a career in finance mapped out early on; as a junior he already had enough credits to graduate, a summer at the London School of Economics completed, and a summer internship likely to lead to a job offer after graduation.

Last month, his classmates graduated from U-Va. without him.

Todd Siler, a teacher at Wyoming High School, said Monday that he saw two of Warmbier's friends from the graduating class of 2013, of which he was salutatorian, earlier Monday. They had been to the hospital to see him, and came to school to see their friend's name on the graduation walk; all the students have their name etched on a brick there. "Tough, tough moments today," he said.

The Wyoming City Schools said in a statement Monday that they were deeply saddened by the loss of Warmbier: "The countless contributions he made to his school and community through his leadership, actions, and limitless enthusiasm will be felt far into the future."

Siler said, "Otto just brought out the best in people."

Grade Point newsletter

News and issues affecting higher education.

"In a short time he had an impact on so many people of all different walks of life. ... I think that's what makes his passing so hard — there aren't enough people like that in this world. We lost a good one. We lost a great one."

"Otto was strong, such a strong kid," Siler added. "His spirit touched everybody, and I want to believe that, despite the treatment that he experienced, that he was hanging on to come home. And he did that. He knew he was there and with family. ... I think there was a part of him still left that understood that."

"He's home. So it's okay to let go."

Fifield reported from Tokyo. Staff this report.
writer Carol Morello contributed to

**The
New York
Times**

Otto Warmbier, American Student Released From North Korea, Dies

Sheryl Gay
Stolberg

4-5 minutes

Otto F. Warmbier, the University of Virginia honors student who was released from a North Korean prison last week after spending 17 months in captivity and more than a year in a coma, died on Monday at the Cincinnati hospital where he had been receiving treatment, his family said.

Mr. Warmbier's parents, Fred and Cindy, said in a statement that their son, 22, had "completed his journey home" and "was at peace" when he died on Monday at 2:20 p.m.

"When Otto returned to Cincinnati late on June 13, he was unable to speak, unable to see and unable to react to verbal commands," the couple wrote. "He looked very uncomfortable — almost anguished. Although we would never hear his voice again, within a day, the countenance of his face changed — he was at peace. He was home, and we believe he could sense that."

The death was the end of a wrenching ordeal for the Warmbier family, and is likely to worsen the already tense relations between the United States and North Korea, which technically remain in a state of war dating to the armistice that halted the 1950-53 Korean War. President Trump issued a terse statement condemning North Korea, which is still holding three

Americans hostage.

"Otto's fate deepens my administration's determination to prevent such tragedies from befalling innocent people at the hands of regimes that do not respect the rule of law or basic human decency," the statement said. "The United States once again condemns the brutality of the North Korean regime as we mourn its latest victim."

Former Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico, an expert on North Korea who has helped free other Americans held there, said in an interview on Monday that he had met with North Korean diplomats 20 times while Mr. Warmbier was being held, and that they had never hinted that anything was amiss with Mr. Warmbier's health.

Mr. Richardson called on the North to release the three other Americans it is holding, as well as a Canadian hostage, and to "disclose what happened to Otto, fully, to the international community."

Mr. Warmbier, a onetime high school soccer player and homecoming king with an adventuresome spirit, was traveling in China in December 2015 when he signed up for a five-day tour of North Korea with a Chinese company that advertised "budget travel to destinations your mother would rather you stayed away from." The company, Young Pioneer Tours, said Tuesday that it would no longer take Americans to

North Korea because the "assessment of risk" was too high.

Mr. Warmbier was detained at the Pyongyang airport in early January 2016, charged with a "hostile act" against the country's authoritarian government and convicted less than two months later of trying to steal a propaganda poster, after he delivered a tearful, televised confession. His trial lasted one hour.

His parents, who live in the tiny city of Wyoming, Ohio, just outside Cincinnati, had heard nothing of him since his trial. Then, about two weeks ago, they received a call telling them their son was comatose. Days later, he was on a flight home. At a news conference on Thursday morning, Fred Warmbier — wearing the same cream-colored jacket Otto had worn during his trial — recalled kneeling to hug his son when he finally arrived home late last Tuesday.

"Otto is a fighter," Mr. Warmbier said then, adding that he and his wife "firmly believe that he fought to stay alive through the worst that the North Koreans could put him through."

Otto Warmbier was taken immediately to the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, where doctors said that two M.R.I. scans sent by the North Koreans indicated that Mr. Warmbier had sustained a catastrophic brain injury shortly after his conviction, most likely before April 2016.

The doctors said he had "extensive loss of brain tissue in all regions of his brain," most likely caused by cardiopulmonary arrest that cut off the blood supply to his brain.

But the doctors could not say what had caused the initial injury. While one senior American official said Mr. Warmbier had been singled out for particularly brutal beatings, doctors found no evidence of broken bones or other injuries consistent with physical abuse. The North Koreans blamed a combination of botulism and sleeping pills for Mr. Warmbier's condition, but the doctors found no evidence of botulism.

Relations between the United States and the North have fallen to new lows in recent months over threats by North Korea's young leader, Kim Jong-un, to attack the United States with nuclear weapons. Mr. Warmbier was one of more than a dozen Americans imprisoned in North Korea over the years, some for as long as two years, on accusations including illegal entry and sedition.

But he is the first to have been sent home in a coma. In their statement on Monday, the Warmbiers said that they, like their son, were "at peace and at home," even as they lashed out at North Korea.

"Unfortunately," the statement said, "the awful, torturous mistreatment our son received at the hands of the North Koreans ensured that no other outcome was possible beyond the sad one we experienced today."

**The
Washington
Post**

Caryl : The North Koreans treated Otto Warmbier like one of their own

By Christian
Caryl

4-5 minutes

June 19 at 6:28 PM

Fred and Cindy Warmbier announced June 19 that their son, Otto, has died, days after he was medically evacuated from North Korea. Fred and Cindy Warmbier say their son, Otto, has died, days after he was medically evacuated from North Korea. (The Washington Post)

Fred and Cindy Warmbier announced June 19 that their son, Otto, has died, days after he was medically evacuated from North Korea. (The Washington Post)

Let's pause for a moment to consider some essential truths about the regime in North Korea. A little more than a year ago, the government there arrested a visiting American student named Otto Warmbier. The charge? He had allegedly tried to steal a propaganda poster. Even if he did commit this heinous offense, it's also likely that Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un wanted a bit of additional leverage during a moment of tension with the United States, and Warmbier made a good target. North Korea has often held Americans as hostages in the past.

But this time, matters took a terrible turn. Not long after his captors forced Warmbier to make a bizarre public confession, he disappeared. The Swedish diplomats in Pyongyang who handle such matters on Washington's behalf

couldn't even get a hint of what was happening. Then, after long months of silence, the North Koreans suddenly announced they were sending Warmbier home — in a coma. American doctors diagnosed extensive brain trauma. And now we learn that he has died, at age 22.

Think about it: Kim's minions realized that their captive American was brain-dead — so they decided to unload the responsibility onto his parents. That in itself is appalling enough. But the question remains: What did they do to this kid to create such horrific damage? Why did they single him out for such barbaric treatment?

DemocracyPost

Opinions illuminating the challenges facing democracy around the world

We'll probably never know. In his novel "1984," George Orwell invented the notion of the "memory hole," a place where uncomfortable truths go to die. North Korea, the closest equivalent in today's world to a genuine Orwellian dystopia, is one giant memory hole. Millions of people there — yes, millions — have been consumed by its state-created famines, its purges, its frenzied political campaigns. Few other regimes in the world have shown such maniacal contempt for their own citizens. The North Korean defector Shin Dong-hyuk, who grew up in a concentration camp, once told me how inmates who tried to supplement their meager diets with rats were brutally punished — for "theft of state property."

My heart goes out to Warmbier's family. Neither he nor they deserved

any of this. But at least — miserable consolation that it is — he will be remembered. The same cannot be

said for the legions of North Koreans who populate their country's mass graves, faceless

and forgotten. As we mourn the fate of this poor American, let's spare a thought for them as well.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Top U.S., Chinese Officials to Meet for High-Level Talks

Felicia Schwartz
4-5 minutes

is working with China to try to crack down on North Korean entities that go through China to do business.

Chinese officials, meanwhile, are hoping to shift the focus of bilateral discussions to trade, as U.S. optimism for further cooperation over North Korea has dimmed.

Emphasizing how both countries stand to gain from closer trade links, Beijing is pointing to its recently lifted restrictions on imports of American beef, after 14 years, and how the growing appetites of Chinese consumers can benefit the U.S.

"The next step is to import a huge volume of agricultural goods," Wei Jianguo, a former Chinese trade official who is now a senior figure at a state-supported think tank, told foreign reporters in Beijing on Monday. "Ignoring a market this big, how is that going to solve the U.S.'s problems?"

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis will host Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi and Gen. Fang Fenghui, chief of the Joint Staff of the People's Liberation Army, at the State Department on Wednesday.

"For North Korea we are...trying to create a global echo chamber," Ms. Thornton said, "where all countries

come together behind the U.N. Security Council resolutions that have been developed to address North Korea's illicit weapons programs, and we are trying to get all countries to take actions to increase the pressure on North Korea through sanctions implementation and other measures."

Wednesday's meetings are the latest iteration of bilateral talks between Washington and Beijing that began under the Bush administration. During the Obama administration, economic, diplomatic and security issues were handled on a single track. The Trump administration has altered the format, so that economic ties have their own session. There also are separate tracks for law enforcement and cyber issues, as well as another for cultural exchange.

Ms. Thornton said Washington and Beijing are likely to discuss norms for conduct in cyberspace on Wednesday, rather than specific incidents.

The U.S. also will urge China to pause in its construction projects on contested islands in the South China Sea, to allow China and other claimants to resolve the disputes

through diplomacy and international law.

Mr. Trump frequently used heated rhetoric toward China while campaigning for president, but has moderated his tone, particularly after meeting with Mr. Xi, and has linked together the trade and security relationships with China.

He said he told Mr. Xi that China will get a better trade deal "if they solve the North Korea problem."

On Monday, Ms. Thornton said the Trump administration expects that cooperation on North Korea could have broad effects on bilateral ties.

Addressing prospects for enhanced cooperation on North Korea, Ms. Thornton said: "If we're not getting it, it's going to color the sense among people as to whether or not China also wants a constructive and positive relationship with us."

—Josh Chin in Beijing contributed to this article.

Write to Felicia Schwartz at Felicia.Schwartz@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'U.S. Seeks an Ally in Beijing.'

June 19, 2017 5:42 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—The U.S. will press China to ramp up pressure on North Korea in a round of high-level talks on Wednesday, hoping for action on what Washington sees as a pre-eminent threat, a senior U.S. diplomat said Monday.

The Trump administration is pursuing a strategy of leaning strenuously on Beijing to curtail North Korea's nuclear weapon and missile programs, but provocations by Pyongyang have continued since President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in Florida in April.

The State Department's top diplomat for Asia, Acting Assistant Secretary Susan Thornton, told reporters on Monday that China is the leading facilitator of North Korea's economic activity, and noted that Beijing's ban on buying North Korean coal has had an effect.

"But we would like to see China do more, and we're going to be talking to them about that this week," Ms. Thornton said, adding that the U.S.

The Washington Post

5 killed in attack on Mali resort outside capital

By Associated Press

Group, which monitors Islamist militant websites.

A Malian soldier and three civilians — a Chinese citizen, a Malian and a French-Gabonese dual national — also were slain in the deadliest terror attack to strike Bamako since late 2015.

E.U. foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said the Malian victim worked for the European delegation in Bamako.

The attack struck a resort area that was considered safe enough that it was an approved rest and recreation location for soldiers with the E.U. mission. It was not immediately clear how the attackers managed to overpower the security staff and shoot at guests.

Mali's special forces arrived at the scene not long after the reports of gunfire erupting from Campement

Kangaba, known for its three swimming pools and serene surroundings as an escape from the bustling capital's heat and traffic.

Initially, the country's security minister said one of the wounded attackers had escaped, but on Monday officials said they had accounted for all the militants.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

"At this hour, all of the terrorists have been killed. The situation is under control," said Mali's security minister, Salif Traoré.

Witnesses described a chaotic scene Sunday afternoon, with one man saying the first attacker on the scene arrived by motorcycle shouting "Allah akbar." Three others subsequently arrived in a vehicle

and began firing their weapons. One of the attackers was subdued by a French soldier who was staying at Campement Kangaba for the weekend, according to a witness at the scene. The attacker was wounded and later died.

The attack took place during the final week of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Sunday's violence also came about a week after the U.S. State Department warned of possible attacks on Western diplomatic missions and other locations in Bamako that Westerners frequent.

In March 2015, five people died when militants attacked a popular restaurant in the capital. A devastating attack on the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako later that year left 20 dead — six Malians and 14 foreigners.

3-4 minutes

By Associated Press June 19 at 5:29 PM

BAMAKO, Mali — An al-Qaeda-linked Islamist group said Monday that it staged an attack the previous day on a resort area in Mali popular with foreigners, killing five people, including a Portuguese soldier who had been serving in the European Union mission to stabilize this West African country racked by mounting extremism.

The recently formed Mali-based Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimeen extremist group has asserted responsibility for the attack, according to the SITE Intelligence



Editorial : What refugees might say of World Refugee Day

The Christian Science Monitor

3-4 minutes

June 19, 2017 —In 2000, when the United Nations designated every June 20 to be World Refugee Day, little did it know that new conflicts would create the highest levels of displacement on record. In recent years, about 66 million people, or 1 percent of the world population, have fled their homes. More than 22 million are refugees, or those forced to live in a foreign land.

Yet even as these numbers have grown, so too has fresh thinking about how to include refugees and other forcibly displaced persons in the humanitarian response to their situation – not only as victims but as participants able to reclaim their inherent dignity. World Refugee Day, in other words, should not simply be a pity party.

“We must ensure that refugees are included not just as beneficiaries

but as real actors,” said Filippo Grandi, UN high commissioner for refugees, at a conference last week that brought together groups working on behalf of refugees. The focus of the conference was on ways to assist refugees to become self-reliant and contribute to their host countries.

A good reflection of the new thinking is the UN’s latest goodwill ambassador to refugees, Yusra Mardini, a young woman who fled Syria in 2015. When the engine on the boat carrying her and other refugees failed near Greece, she jumped into the sea and towed the boat for hours to safety. She went on to swim in the 2016 Summer Olympics on a special refugee team.

“There is no shame in being a refugee if we remember who we

are,” she says. “I am a refugee and I’m proud to stand for peace, for decency and dignity for all those fleeing violence.”

Another example is the world’s largest refugee settlement, located in Uganda and called Bidi Bidi. Its more than 270,000 refugees, mainly from South Sudan, have been given land and supplies to integrate quickly into Ugandan society. As in many of the less-developed countries that host most of the world’s refugees, the newcomers are encouraged to become assets to the economy.

President Trump, even though he seeks cuts in American foreign aid, may have captured the spirit of the new thinking in a speech last month in the Middle East. He praised Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon for their role in hosting some 4 million

refugees. And he added: “This region should not be a place from which refugees flee, but to which newcomers flock.”

The World Bank has joined the bandwagon by financing a special economic zone in Jordan to employ Syrian refugees and teach them new skills. The goods produced in the zones will be given special trade preferences by Britain and Europe. In the long run, the project will grow Jordan’s economy. Most of all, says bank president Jim Yong Kim, it will “allow refugees to actually have some hope in their lives.”

It remains important not to see refugees as people simply in a temporary plight. Refugees, says UN Secretary-General António Guterres, “never lose ... their desire to better our world.”

ETATS-UNIS

THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.

Kristina Peterson

7-9 minutes

Updated June 19, 2017 7:48 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Senate GOP leaders have set a timeline to vote next week on legislation to repeal large chunks of the Affordable Care Act, even though they don’t yet appear to have secured enough support to pass it.

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) is intent on keeping pressure on Senate Republicans to move quickly on the bill rolling back and replacing much of the 2010 health law, lawmakers and GOP aides said. The push for a quick vote before the weeklong July 4 recess could backfire, however, as some conservative and centrist Republicans have expressed concern about the emerging shape of the legislation.

“I expect us to vote on it next week,” Sen. Richard Burr (R., N.C.) said Monday evening of the health bill. “I believe the majority leader when he says he’s going to take it up.”

Mr. McConnell could pull back if he calculates that a little extra time could get him the votes needed to cross the finish line. He can lose no more than two GOP votes for a bill to pass. All Democrats are expected to oppose it.

Senate GOP Plans Health-Care Vote Next Week (UNE)

Stephanie Armour and Kristina Peterson

Still, Mr. McConnell has reasons to try for a quick health-care vote. The pressure could force lawmakers to reach a consensus on sticking points that have divided them. And GOP leaders in both chambers want to move on to other legislative items.

Failure to take a vote before either the July 4 recess or the longer break later in the summer also could open Republican lawmakers up to pressure from constituents either concerned about losing their health coverage or expecting Republicans to follow through on pledges to repeal the law known as Obamacare. Some town-hall meetings during the spring, when the House was considering its legislation, saw lawmakers greeted by boisterous crowds.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated the House bill passed in May would leave 23 million fewer Americans with health coverage in 2026 versus current law.

GOP aides and others familiar with the negotiations said they anticipate the Senate bill’s text will be released later this week. The CBO is expected to release its estimate of the Senate bill’s impact on the federal budget and insurance coverage early next week, and a vote could potentially be held next Thursday, before lawmakers scatter.

Democrats and consumer groups have criticized Senate Republicans for crafting the bill in closed-door

sessions without any hearings or other input. As a form of protest, Senate Democrats are planning procedural maneuvers to try to delay legislation or nominees.

Democrats are planning to “embarrass the heck out of Republicans, who are as much in the dark as we are about their own leadership’s plans on the bill,” said Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D., Conn.). “Our tools are limited, but we’re going to use every one of them.”

For their part, many Senate Republicans have said they have yet to see their bill and want to make sure they are given enough time to review it.

“There isn’t a bill yet—nobody has seen any language,” Sen. Chuck Grassley (R., Iowa) said Monday. Sen. Dan Sullivan (R., Alaska) said he wanted “significant time” to review the bill—“certainly days” rather than hours, he said.

Mr. McConnell has said all 52 Senate Republicans have been involved in the negotiations on issues the party has been talking about since the ACA passed in 2010.

Meanwhile, provisions in the GOP bill that had proved vexing, including the fate of Medicaid expansion and tax credits to consumers, appear close to being resolved, people familiar with the negotiations said.

Under an option being strongly considered, the bill would exact

steeper financial cuts to Medicaid than under the House-passed legislation, the people said, a move likely to draw criticism from a number of Republican governors who want to preserve Medicaid open-entitlement funding and the ACA’s expansion of the program.

The entire funding system for the state-federal program for low-income and disabled people would be changed to a per capita cap, which would limit federal spending to states. That is the approach that also passed in the House bill, which would cut federal spending on Medicaid by \$834 billion over 10 years.

Under one proposal, the Senate bill would lower Medicaid’s spending growth to a rate set in the House bill until 2025, when it would then be more sharply curtailed, according to people familiar with the discussions. The bill would slow the growth of federal spending on Medicaid by tying its growth rate to a lower price index, a change sought by Sen. Pat Toomey (R., Pa.).

That is likely to draw opposition from Republicans in states that expanded Medicaid under the ACA, including Sens. Rob Portman of Ohio, Dean Heller of Nevada and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia.

“Rob does not support a growth rate that is lower than the House bill,” Kevin Smith, a spokesman for Mr. Portman, said Monday.

The bill is expected to start phasing down enhanced federal funding to

the 31 states that expanded Medicaid, people familiar with the deliberations said. States could get a lower amount of federal funding for new enrollees in 2020, and the amount would fully phase down by 2023.

The bill would also provide assistance to people who don't get health insurance on the job. But unlike the House version that set up tax credits based largely on income, the Senate version could provide subsidies that are larger for people who are low-income or in areas with high health-costs, a person familiar with the proposal said.

Those tax credits are likely to be structured in

ways similar to the ACA subsidies as a way to preserve restrictions on abortion funding, according to Senate GOP aides. Provisions restricting the use of the House bill's tax credits to pay for abortion hit procedural hurdles in the Senate.

The ACA subsidies, which are advance tax credits paid to insurance companies to lower the cost of health-insurance premiums, currently can't be used to cover the cost of abortions.

A senior White House official said they expected to have a stronger sense of how the votes were lining up by the end of the week and that they were confident the tally was heading in the right direction.

The White House is set to continue emphasizing insurance-market woes this week as a reason to get health legislation done fast, an argument that President Donald Trump has made for weeks and that is taking on additional force as state insurance deadlines pass and insurers' rates and withdrawals from the marketplace become public. Democrats argue that Republicans are hurting the marketplaces by threatening to halt payments that are used to reduce out-of-pocket costs for lower-income patients and by raising questions about enforcement of the ACA's coverage mandate.

Wednesday is a federal filing deadline for insurance companies to

decide whether they will participate in the ACA's exchanges and the rates they want to charge.

—Louise Radnofsky and Natalie Andrews contributed to this article.

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Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'Senate Planning Health Vote.'

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Top Court Drops Suit Filed by Immigrants Imprisoned After Sept. 11

Jess Bravin

5-6 minutes

Updated June 19, 2017 6:56 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court on Monday quashed a prison-mistreatment case, filed by illegal immigrants rounded up after the Sept. 11 attacks in 2001, against former Attorney General John Ashcroft and other officials.

"High officers who face personal liability for damages might refrain from taking urgent and lawful actions in a time of crisis" if they fear possible lawsuits, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote for the majority of the court.

Federal authorities rounded up hundreds of predominantly Muslim and Arab men following the Sept. 11 attacks and, under a policy to detain them even on minor pretexts while terrorism investigations proceeded, held them for immigration violations.

Six Arab and South Asian men jailed at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, N.Y., sued, alleging their rights had been violated by their unjustified detention under the strictest conditions permitted by federal regulations, which included sleep deprivation, solitary confinement and frequent strip searches, as well

as unauthorized verbal and physical abuse, including broken bones.

If the allegations are true, "what happened to respondents in the days following Sept. 11 was tragic," Justice Kennedy wrote, joined in whole or in part by Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito.

But while federal law would permit inmate lawsuits against state officials over similar allegations in state prisons, Congress had provided no such remedy for those in federal custody, he wrote.

The court dismissed claims against Mr. Ashcroft, former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Robert Mueller and former Commissioner James Ziglar of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

"These claims would call into question the formulation and implementation of a general policy," Justice Kennedy wrote, allowing courts to review "the whole course of the discussions and deliberations that led to the policies and governmental acts being challenged." The court suggested that other remedies against executive overreach, such as habeas corpus suits challenging illegal detention, were more appropriate.

"The court's decision allows for high-level officials to violate the Constitution without fear of personal accountability—a dangerous

message in this time of rampant state-sponsored discrimination against Muslim and immigrant communities," said Rachel Meeropol, an attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York who argued for the plaintiffs.

Bill McDaniel, an attorney for Mr. Ziglar, said no evidence showed that the senior officials directed the mistreatment. "It's not appropriate for policymakers at a high level to be subjected to suits for money damages when they are facing a crisis," he said. "The pressure these people were under on the day of and the days after 9/11 was just tremendous."

In a 1971 case known as *Bivens*, the Supreme Court found an implied right to sue federal officials for violating certain rights, and Congress has never acted to alter that. The Supreme Court, however, has been reluctant to extend the *Bivens* doctrine to additional abuses by officials. The majority concluded that permitting the suit against senior officials would entail extending the *Bivens* doctrine.

In dissent, Justice Stephen Breyer said the allegations fell well within the scope authorized by the *Bivens* doctrine.

"History tells us of far too many instances where the executive or legislative branch took actions during time of war that, on later examination, turned out

unnecessarily and unreasonably to have deprived American citizens of basic constitutional rights," Justice Breyer wrote, joined by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Justice Breyer read his dissent from the bench, a signal at the Supreme Court of deep distress among the minority over a case's disposition. It was the first time any justice had taken the step during the current term.

The 4-2 decision, which potentially gives Trump administration officials a freer hand when responding to emergencies, was rendered by a short-handed court. Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan were recused because of contact with the case before joining the high court, while President Donald Trump's appointee, Justice Neil Gorsuch, hadn't been seated when the case was argued in January.

The court, however, didn't extinguish claims against the jail's warden, Dennis Hasty, who was accused of "deliberate indifference" toward the inmates' mistreatment. Lower courts will have to reconsider whether that suit can proceed, the majority said.

Write to Jess Bravin at jess.bravin@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'Suit Over Post-9/11 Muslim Roundup Is Tossed.'

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Editorial : The Justices Act Like Grown-Ups

June 19, 2017
7:11 p.m. ET 60 COMMENTS

4 minutes

Political emotions are high and rising, so be grateful that at least

one branch of government is keeping its head. On Monday, in a hot case that involved immigration, the Supreme Court protected the constitutional separation of powers and confirmed that courts are supposed to interpret laws, not make them.

After the 9/11 attacks, hundreds of illegal aliens were detained and some were held for months without trial while law enforcement investigated their potential terror connections. The confinement conditions were harsh for some of these detainees, such as small cells

and little exercise time, and they sued then Attorney General John Ashcroft and other high-ranking federal officials under a 1971 precedent known as *Bivens*.

That opinion allows people who have suffered from unreasonable

searches and seizures to sue prosecutors or police for money damages, but it belongs to another judicial era. The Warren Burger Court “inferred” a private cause of action into an 1871 statute—a style of jurisprudence that was already in retreat by the 1980s on both the legal left and right. The High Court has since been more cautious about recognizing such “implied” rights, unless Congress explicitly creates them by passing statutes.

In *Ziglar v. Abbasi*, the detainees asked to expand *Bivens* in order to challenge policy decisions that they claim resulted in violations of their Fifth Amendment due process rights. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals complied, but the Supreme Court was more

modest about judicial power. In a 4-2 decision (with two recusals), the majority held that, absent legislative instruction, the prisoners lack the standing to sue.

The question when applying the *Bivens* relic to new circumstances, wrote Justice Anthony Kennedy, “is ‘who should decide’ whether to provide for a damages remedy, Congress or the courts? The answer will most often be Congress.” The legislature accountable to voters is better positioned than judges to balance the equities and protect the public interest.

This is especially true because the foreign nationals could still have challenged their detention and

remedied any constitutional violations under habeas corpus. The real purpose of their suit wasn’t financial compensation for injuries but to second-guess the executive branch’s response to 9/11 and the national security choices made by Mr. Ashcroft and others acting in their official capacities amid an emergency.

Justice Stephen Breyer read his overwrought dissent from the bench, invoking Japanese internment in World War II, the Alien and Sedition Acts and even Civil War prison camps. But our guess is that *Ziglar* would be unexceptional in more conventional political times.

The Trump Presidency has inspired some judges to be more

confrontational, even if they exceed their Article III powers to send a message to Article II. Mr. Trump’s travel ban is in our view legal and constitutional, if unwise, yet two appellate circuits have discovered pretexts to strike it down. The danger is growing of an ends-justifies-the-means cascade with the Constitution as an afterthought.

Justice Kennedy ends his opinion with a pledge of fidelity to “the idea of the rule of law that must inspire us even in times of crisis.” *Ziglar* is a model for good judicial behavior when a real crisis inevitably arrives.

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Supreme Court to Consider Limits on Partisan Drawing of Election Maps

Brent Kendall

7-9 minutes

Updated June 19, 2017 7:24 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider whether there are constitutional limits to how far lawmakers can go in drawing electoral districts to maximize partisan political advantage, a case that could have profound implications for U.S. elections.

The justices in a brief written order said they would review a redistricting case from Wisconsin, where a three-judge lower court last year invalidated a redistricting plan enacted by the Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature in 2011.

In a hint of the potential divisiveness of the case, the high court on a 5-4 vote stayed the effect of the lower court ruling while it hears the case. That means Wisconsin officials for now won’t have to put a remedial redistricting map in place.

The stay suggests the court is proceeding with some trepidation as it wades into a highly political issue that has bedeviled justices in the past. The court’s four liberal justices would have denied the stay and left in place the lower court’s order requiring a new map by Nov. 1.

Political gerrymanders are as old as the republic, though they have become more sophisticated as the technological possibilities of mapping have expanded with time. Both Republicans and Democrats have been accused of engaging in excessively partisan line-drawing in states where they hold power.

Critics say the tactic creates too many uncontested districts, encourages overly partisan candidates and enables the party in power to skew voting results in its favor.

Other cases are pending in court, including ones challenging Republican-backed lines drawn in North Carolina and map-making by Democrats in Maryland. Any rules announced by the high court would almost certainly affect districts drawn by state lawmakers both for Congress and for state legislatures.

Justin Levitt, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, said the timing of the case was particularly important with a new census on the horizon in 2020. States traditionally redraw their congressional and legislative districts after each decennial census.

“We are on the brink of drawing new districts everywhere, for everything,” Mr. Levitt said. “A ruling here will undoubtedly change the landscape. It could give legislators more flexibility to draw lines, or less flexibility, or change how they use what flexibility they have.”

A minority of states use commissions to draw district lines, but the overwhelming majority leave the task to lawmakers, and if one party is in power, it has a good deal of control over the process. Courts can and have drawn voting lines in states where lawmakers deadlocked on how to do so.

Because the GOP currently controls a majority of state legislatures, in the near term it potentially has more to lose if the court adopts new limits.

The lower court in Wisconsin said lawmakers redrew the state’s

legislative districts after the 2010 census to unlawfully maximize the number of Republicans elected and dilute the power of Democratic voters. Election results since then have shown the redistricting had that effect, with the GOP winning a larger majority in the state Assembly, even as the statewide tally of votes was nearly even between Republicans and Democrats, the lower court said.

Some Supreme Court justices have previously expressed concern about partisan gerrymandering, but a majority of the court has been hesitant to intervene so directly in the American political process and to say how much partisanship is too much. On the other hand, gerrymandering that discriminates against minority voters long has been held unconstitutional, and both the Supreme Court and lower courts frequently have invalidated such maps.

Critics of gerrymandering, including retired Justice John Paul Stevens, say both racial and partisan gerrymandering often overlap, because party affiliation in the U.S. frequently correlates with race.

The court took up a major case on partisan gerrymandering 13 years ago involving a challenge by Democratic voters to a Republican drawing of Pennsylvania’s congressional districts. The ruling produced a 5-4 vote that threw out the lawsuit, but the court’s reasoning was splintered and left the issue unsettled.

Four conservative justices in that case said courts couldn’t referee partisan gerrymandering claims because there was no workable standard for deciding when partisan line-drawing crossed a

constitutional line, and because there wasn’t a good way for a court to fix a violation if one did exist.

The court’s fifth conservative, Justice Anthony Kennedy, agreed that the specific Pennsylvania lawsuit should be thrown out, but he left open the possibility that the court in a future case could declare that the use of partisan favoritism in drawing districts was unconstitutional.

Justice Kennedy’s middle-ground position in the 2004 case makes him a focal point this time around. Moreover, one of the justices who allowed the Pennsylvania map, Antonin Scalia, has since died, and his successor, Justice Neil Gorsuch, hasn’t weighed in on the topic.

David Wasserman of the Cook Political Report said he remained skeptical the high court would act to curb partisan gerrymandering, in large part because of the trouble with crafting legal rules that would work in the real world.

“Hypothetical standards would run into geographic realities,” Mr. Wasserman said, pointing to California as an example. The GOP wins a third of the vote in the state, but it’s hard to point to heavily Republican areas of California, he said.

In a 2-1 ruling in the Wisconsin case, a special three-judge court said state Republicans drew district lines “to make it more difficult for Democrats, compared to Republicans, to translate their votes into seats.” For example, Wisconsin Democrats in 2012 received 51.4% of the statewide vote, but only 39 of 99 state Assembly seats, according to the court opinion.

The dissenting judge said Wisconsin's map complied with traditional redistricting principles, adding that Republicans likely would have won control of the state Legislature in 2012 and 2014 even without the alleged gerrymandering.

State officials appealed the case to the Supreme Court, saying the lower court ruling was erroneous and unprecedented. The officials said recent election results were

similar to those before the Republican-drawn map, citing among other things the advantages enjoyed by incumbents.

They also argued recent results reflected the state's political geography, because Democrats are heavily concentrated in urban areas, making them less efficiently dispersed in districts statewide.

Democratic challengers argued that the state's Republicans had an

"obsessive focus on partisan advantage" when they drew the map. They said the GOP gave itself not only a large advantage but a durable one, with fewer overall seats subject to competitive contests.

"Wisconsin's Assembly...bears no resemblance to its evenly split electorate," they wrote in their initial papers submitted to the high court.

The court will hear arguments in the case, *Gill v. Whitford*, during its new term, which begins in October.

—Jess Bravin contributed to this article.

Write to Brent Kendall at brent.kendall@wsj.com

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition as 'High Court Weighs Gerrymanders.'

**The
New York
Times**

Justices to Hear Major Challenge to Partisan Gerrymandering (UNE)

Adam Liptak

6-7 minutes

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court announced on Monday that it would consider whether partisan gerrymandering violates the Constitution, potentially setting the stage for a ruling that could for the first time impose limits on a practice that has helped define American politics since the early days of the Republic.

The term gerrymander was coined after Elbridge Gerry, Massachusetts's governor, signed an 1812 law that included a voting district shaped like a salamander to help the electoral prospects of his party. Over the centuries, lawmakers have become ever more sophisticated in redrawing legislative maps after each decennial census, carving out oddly shaped districts for state legislatures and the House of Representatives that favor their parties' candidates.

While the Supreme Court has struck down voting districts as racial gerrymanders, it has never disallowed a legislative map because of partisan gerrymandering.

The new case is an appeal of a decision striking down the legislative map for the Wisconsin State Assembly drawn after Republicans gained control of the state's government in 2010. The decision was the first from a federal court in more than 30 years to reject a voting map as an unconstitutional partisan gerrymander.

The map, Judge Kenneth F. Ripple wrote for the majority of a divided three-judge Federal District Court, "was designed to make it more difficult for Democrats, compared to Republicans, to translate their votes into seats."

Paul Smith, a lawyer for the voters who challenged the map, said it was time for the Supreme Court to act.

"Partisan gerrymandering of this kind is worse now than at any time in recent memory," Mr. Smith said. "The Supreme Court has the opportunity to ensure the maps in Wisconsin are drawn fairly, and further, has the opportunity to create ground rules that safeguard every citizen's right to freely choose their representatives."

Wisconsin's attorney general, Brad Schimel, said he was "thrilled the Supreme Court has granted our request" to hear the appeal. "Our redistricting process was entirely lawful and constitutional," he said.

The case is part of a larger debate over political gerrymandering. Some critics, like Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican and the former governor of California, say districts should be drawn by independent commissions rather than politicians. Prominent Democrats, including former President Barack Obama and his attorney general Eric H. Holder Jr., are pushing an effort to undo the redistricting gains Republicans made after the 2010 census when the next census is taken three years from now.

In Wisconsin, the redistricting took place after Republicans had gained complete control of the state government for the first time in more than 40 years. Lawmakers promptly drew a map for the State Assembly that helped Republicans convert very close statewide vote totals into lopsided legislative majorities.

In 2012, Republicans won 48.6 percent of the statewide vote for Assembly candidates but captured 60 of the Assembly's 99 seats. In 2014, 52 percent of the vote yielded 63 seats.

In the past, some justices have said the court should stay out of such political disputes. Others have said partisan gerrymanders may violate the Constitution.

The fate of the case is very likely to turn on the vote of Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, who has taken a middle position, leaving the door to such challenges open a crack,

though he has never voted to sustain one.

Not long after the court agreed to hear the case, it issued an order suggesting the court was quite likely to be closely divided when it hears arguments next fall.

The order granted a request to stay the district court's decision while the Supreme Court considers the case. The court's four liberal members — Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan — dissented. Justice Kennedy was in the majority.

In 2004, Justice Kennedy wrote in a concurring opinion on a gerrymandering case that he might consider a challenge if there were "a workable standard" to decide when such tactics crossed a constitutional line. But he said he had not seen such a standard.

The challengers in the new case, *Gill v. Whitford*, No. 16-1161, say they have found a way to distinguish the effect of partisanship from the many other factors that influence how districts are drawn.

The proposed standard tries to measure the level of partisanship in legislative maps by counting "wasted votes" that result from the two basic ways of injecting partisan politics into drawing the maps: packing and cracking.

Packing many Democrats into a single district, for instance, wastes every Democratic vote beyond the bare majority needed to elect a Democratic candidate. Cracking, or spreading Democratic voters across districts in which Republicans have small majorities, wastes all of the Democratic votes when the Republican candidates win.

In a recent article, Nicholas O. Stephanopoulos, a law professor at the University of Chicago and a lawyer for the plaintiffs, and Eric McGhee devised a formula to measure partisanship. The difference between the two parties' wasted votes, divided by the total

number of votes cast, yields an efficiency gap, they wrote.

The gap in Wisconsin was 13.3 percent in 2012 and 9.6 percent in 2014, according to the formula. The Wisconsin voters who sued to challenge the Assembly map argued that gaps over 7 percent violated the Constitution. That number was meant to capture the likelihood that the gap would endure over a 10-year election cycle, but critics say it is arbitrary.

Adopting it could transform American elections. A 2015 report from Simon Jackman, then a political scientist at Stanford and an expert witness for the plaintiffs, found that a third of all redistricting plans in 41 states over a 43-year period failed the 7 percent standard. Elections in 2012 and 2014 in Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming featured efficiency gaps of more than 10 percent, he found.

Judge Ripple did not ground his opinion in the efficiency gap, relying instead on a more conventional legal test that considered discriminatory intent, the map's partisan effects and whether they were justified by other reasons. But Judge Ripple did say that the efficiency gap corroborated the majority's conclusions.

In a supporting brief urging the Supreme Court to reverse the ruling, the Republican National Committee said the efficiency gap "is a tool that advances the partisan interests of the Democratic Party."

If Democrats lack electoral power, it is because of geography rather than gerrymandering, the brief said. Democrats are often concentrated in cities, effectively diluting their voting power, while Republicans are more evenly distributed across most states, the brief said.

Judge Ripple acknowledged that how voters are distributed explains at least part of the gap. "Wisconsin's political geography, particularly the high concentration of

Democratic voters in urban centers like Milwaukee and Madison, affords the Republican Party a

natural, but modest, advantage in the districting process," Judge Ripple wrote, for instance.

But partisan gerrymandering amplified the Republicans' advantage, he wrote.



Supreme Court to hear potentially landmark case on partisan gerrymandering (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/robert.barnes.3139>

8-10 minutes

The Supreme Court will consider whether gerrymandered election maps in Wisconsin violate the Constitution. The Post's Robert Barnes explains. Video: Supreme Court to hear case on partisan gerrymandering (Video: Gillian Brockell/Photo: Matt McClain/The Washington Post)

(Gillian Brockell/The Washington Post)

The Supreme Court declared Monday that it will consider whether gerrymandered election maps favoring one political party over another violate the Constitution, a potentially fundamental change in the way American elections are conducted.

The justices regularly are called to invalidate state electoral maps that have been illegally drawn to reduce the influence of racial minorities by depressing the impact of their votes.

[Supreme Court says Virginia redistricting must be reexamined for racial bias]

But the Supreme Court has long been tolerant of partisan gerrymandering — and some justices have thought that the court shouldn't even be involved. A finding otherwise would have a revolutionary impact on the reapportionment that will take place after the 2020 election and could come at the expense of Republicans, who control the process in the majority of states.

The court accepted a case from Wisconsin, where a divided panel of three federal judges last year ruled that the state's Republican leadership in 2011 pushed through a redistricting plan so partisan that it violated the Constitution's First Amendment and equal rights protections.

The process of re-drawing district lines to give an advantage to one party over another is called "gerrymandering". Here's how it works. The process of re-drawing district lines to give an advantage to one party over another is called "gerrymandering". Here's how it works. (Daron Taylor/The Washington Post)

(Daron Taylor/The Washington Post)

The issue will be briefed and argued during the Supreme Court term that begins in October.

[Wisconsin case offers Supreme Court chance to tackle partisan gerrymandering]

The justices gave themselves a bit of an out, saying they will further consider their jurisdiction over the case when it is heard on its merits.

And the justices gave an indication of how divisive the issue might be. After granting the case, the court voted 5 to 4 to stay the lower court's decision, which had required that new state legislative districts be drawn this fall. Wisconsin had argued that would create unnecessary work should the Supreme Court ultimately overturn the lower court's decision and allow the Republican plan to stand.

The liberal justices — Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan — went on record saying they would have denied the stay, meaning that the court's five conservatives granted it. Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, who probably holds the key to the case, voted for the stay.

The court's action comes at a time when the relatively obscure subject of reapportionment has taken on new significance, with many blaming the drawing of safely partisan seats for a polarized and gridlocked Congress. Barack Obama has said that one of his post-presidency projects will be to combat partisan gerrymanders after the 2020 Census.

Both parties draw congressional and legislative districts to their advantage. A challenge to congressional districts drawn by Maryland Democrats is making its way through the courts.

But Republicans have more to lose because they control so many more state legislatures. The Republican National Committee and a dozen large Republican states have asked the court to reverse the decision of the federal court in Wisconsin.

That state's legislative leaders asked the Supreme Court in their brief to reject any effort that "wrests control of districting away from the state legislators to whom the state constitution assigns that task, and

hands it to federal judges and opportunistic plaintiffs seeking to accomplish in court what they failed to achieve at the ballot box."

But the dozen plaintiffs — voters across the state — said the evidence laid out in a trial in the Wisconsin case showed that "Republican legislative leaders authorized a secretive and exclusionary mapmaking process aimed at securing for their party a large advantage that would persist no matter what happened in future elections."

In the election held after the new district maps were adopted, Republicans got just 48.6 percent of the statewide vote, but captured a 60-to-39 seat advantage in the State Assembly.

The Supreme Court has been reluctant to tackle partisan gerrymandering and sort through arguments about whether an electoral system is rigged or, instead, a party's political advantage is because of changing attitudes and demographics, as Wisconsin Republicans contend.

The justices last took up the topic in 2004 in a case called *Vieth v. Jubelirer*, which involved a Pennsylvania redistricting plan. The case split the court five ways, with the bottom line being that the justices could not agree on a test to determine when normal political instincts such as protecting your own turned into an unconstitutional dilution of someone else's vote.

Four justices — only Justice Clarence Thomas remains of the group — said it was not the court's business to make such decisions. Four others — only Ginsburg and Breyer remain — said such challenges could be heard by the court, but they disagreed on the method.

Kennedy was in the middle. He joined the first group in deciding the specific case against the challengers of the Pennsylvania plan, but he left the door open for future cases.

Kennedy said he could envision a successful challenge "where a state enacts a law that has the purpose and effect of subjecting a group of voters or their party to disfavored treatment." What was elusive, Kennedy said, was "a manageable standard by which to measure the

effect of the apportionment and so to conclude that the state did impose a burden or restriction on the rights of a party's voters."

In the Wisconsin case, plaintiffs urged the use of a measure called the "efficiency gap" to determine how Republican mapmakers hurt Democrats with the main tools of gerrymandering: "packing" and "cracking." These refer to packing like-minded voters, such as supporters of the same party, into a limited number of districts or cracking their influence by scattering them across districts in numbers too small to make an impact.

Local Politics Alerts

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

Under the approach, developed by two University of Chicago professors, every voter packed into a district above the threshold needed to elect a candidate from his party creates a "surplus" vote. And someone in a cracked district who votes for a candidate who is unable to win is a "lost" vote. Surplus and lost votes are considered wasted votes.

The efficiency gap measures the difference between the wasted votes of the two parties in an election divided by the total number of votes cast.

The federal court in Wisconsin was not so definitive. It acknowledged the efficiency gap, but only as one of several theories the court said corroborated its findings that the Republican leadership had a discriminatory intent, that its plan had a discriminatory effect and that the state had no legitimate reason for drawing the districts in the way it did.

The state contends that while Wisconsin is a purple state in national elections, its geography favors Republicans in legislative elections. Democratic voters are clustered in cities such as Milwaukee and Madison, while Republican voters are more evenly spread across the state. Any method of drawing districts will favor Republicans, they say.

The case is *Gill v. Whitford*.

Robert Barnes has been a Washington Post reporter and editor since 1987. He has covered the



Editorial : The Supreme Court gives the country some necessary guidance on free speech

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

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

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

June 19 at 7:56 PM

THE UNITED STATES is engaged just now in a freewheeling debate about — freewheeling debate. Or, to put it more precisely, about how freewheeling debate should normally be. The struggle is being waged across various battlegrounds — college campuses, social media, New York theater, even the air-conditioned offices in which federal

employees decide whether to protect trademarks, such as that of Washington's National Football League franchise.

Now comes the Supreme Court with a strong statement in favor of free speech, to include speech that many find offensive. With the support of all eight justices who participated in the case (new Justice Neil M. Gorsuch being the exception), the court struck down a 71-year-old law requiring the Patent and Trademark Office to deny registration to brands that may "disparage" people or bring them "into contempt[] or disrepute." The ruling means that a dance-rock band may henceforth call itself "the Slants" on the same legal basis that, say, Mick Jagger's bunch uses "the Rolling Stones" — even though many Asian Americans find the term derogatory and demeaning.

The justices were obviously, and properly, influenced by the fact that the Asian American members of the Slants took the name in a bid to "reclaim" that slur as something more positive and prideful. To apply the existing disparagement proviso in the statute despite the band's

expressive intent would not merely have exercised government control over government expression, implicit in trademark registration, as the Obama administration argued when the court heard the case shortly before Inauguration Day this year. It would, as the justices ruled, have put the government in the business of picking and choosing among points of view, a role that the court has repeatedly forbidden it to perform.

National News Alerts

Major national and political news as it breaks.

To be sure, the opinion for the court by Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr., a staunch conservative, came accompanied by a concurring opinion in which Justice Anthony M. Kennedy and three liberal colleagues, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor, set out doctrinal nuances. But what was striking about all the opinions Monday was the strength with which every member of the court embraced the First Amendment, strongly enough to protect even speech that many people

legitimately find hateful or offensive. "The proudest boast of our free speech jurisprudence is that we protect the freedom to express 'the thought that we hate,'" Mr. Alito wrote. The concurring opinion followed with the rationale underlying that jurisprudence: "A law that can be directed against speech found offensive to some portion of the public can be turned against minority and dissenting views to the detriment of all."

This is strong medicine, both in terms of the support it offers free speech and in terms of what it requires of those who do take offense at expressions likely to enjoy court protection as a result of this opinion — specifically the Washington football team's name, which was also the subject of a suit against its trademark. The answer, in our view, is to redouble all lawful efforts to get that name changed, even if a federal lawsuit probably can't be one of them. As the court's decision reminds us, constitutional and decent are not the same thing.



Editorial : Free Speech at the Supreme Court

The Editorial Board

5-6 minutes

Erik Carter

The Supreme Court reaffirmed core free-speech principles in two cases on Monday, both decided without dissent. It also took on a major case about partisan gerrymandering.

FREE SPEECH In *Matal v. Tam*, the justices ruled that the government can't pick and choose which trademarks it registers based on whether they offend certain people or groups. The case was brought by the Slants, an Asian-American dance-rock band that had chosen its name — a familiar slur against people of Asian descent — to defuse its negative power. The Patent and Trademark Office rejected the name under a provision in a 70-year-old federal law prohibiting the registration of trademarks that "disparage" any "persons, living or dead, institutions, beliefs, or national symbols."

Writing for the majority, Justice Samuel Alito said the law violates a "bedrock First Amendment principle:

Speech may not be banned on the ground that it expresses ideas that offend." That's the right call. The First Amendment bars the government from discriminating among speakers based on their viewpoints. In this case, the Trademark Office did that by blocking only registrations for trademarks it determined to have negative connotations. The free-speech clause doesn't apply to the government's own speech, but registered trademarks can't be put in that category — otherwise the government would have to argue that it endorses each of the more than two million trademarks it has already registered.

The decision is likely to help the Washington Redskins, who lost their trademark protections in 2014 after years of complaints from Native American groups. At the time, this page supported the Trademark Office's decision, and we still regard the Redskins name as offensive. Based on this case, however, we've since reconsidered our underlying position.

In *Packingham v. North Carolina*, the court struck down a North Carolina law that prohibited registered sex offenders from

visiting social-networking websites that allow minors to become members of those websites or to create personal web pages. This would include sites like Facebook, Twitter, WebMD and The New York Times — online locations visited regularly by billions of people.

One of those people was Lester Gerard Packingham, who was prosecuted under the law after he posted a Facebook message in 2010 giving thanks for the dismissal of a parking ticket. Mr. Packingham had been convicted eight years earlier for having sex with a minor. The state did not argue that he had used Facebook or any other site to seek out sex with minors or for any illegal activity at all; the fact that he'd visited a prohibited site as a registered sex offender was enough to convict him.

The justices rightly reversed the State Supreme Court's decision upholding that conviction. States have a compelling interest in protecting children from sexual abuse, Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in his opinion for the majority, but the law went far beyond what was needed to achieve that goal — barring access to "what for many are the principal sources for

knowing current events, checking ads for employment, speaking and listening in the modern public square, and otherwise exploring the vast realms of human thought and knowledge."

GERRYMANDERING On Monday the court also agreed to hear a case involving partisan gerrymandering, or the skewed drawing of legislative district lines to benefit one political party. The court's decision, which would be issued in the first half of 2018, could transform American politics.

The case comes from Wisconsin, where Republicans won control of the state government in 2010, just in time to draw new maps following the decennial census. They were extremely efficient: In 2012, Republican assembly candidates received less than half the statewide vote and yet won 60 of 99 assembly seats. They took even more seats in 2014, while winning just a bare majority of the vote.

This distortion of the voters' will is one of the oldest and dirtiest practices in American politics, and while both major parties are guilty of it, the benefits over the past decade

have flowed overwhelmingly to Republicans.

The court has agreed that partisan gerrymandering could in theory become so extreme that it violates the Constitution, but it has never

settled on who should make that determination or on what standards to use.

In the meantime, because the court voted to stay the lower-court decision ordering Wisconsin to

redraw its district lines before the 2018 elections, the state's Republican-friendly maps are likely to remain for at least one more cycle. The stay also raises doubts about whether a majority believes

the court should ever resolve partisan gerrymandering claims. If not, voters will remain at the mercy of self-interested politicians, with no help in sight.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

How a Dispute Over Costs Threatens Plan to Track Foreigners

Laura Meckler and Susan Carey

7-9 minutes

June 19, 2017 5:30 a.m. ET

After years of delay, the federal government says it has developed a way to reliably track foreigners when they depart the U.S., at least by airplane, and plans to install cameras that would photograph all passengers just before they board international flights.

But there's a big hitch: The government wants airlines to operate the cameras, saying the cost would be "astronomical" if border agents had to staff every international departure gate. Airline officials argue this is a national security function that should be shouldered by the government, not private companies.

"Right now, there is no benefit to us. We're not interested in adding another 10 minutes to the boarding process," one airline official said.

Disputes such as this one help explain why it has taken more than two decades for the federal government to create a system to track and eventually catch people who enter the U.S. legally and then stay past their dates of departure. Congress has repeatedly ordered an exit-tracking system, and President Donald Trump included a fresh mandate to get the system running in an executive order.

It's a rare immigration initiative with bipartisan support. A biometric system would serve as a defense against terrorism, making it harder for someone to leave or remain in the country without detection. It also draws attention to people who have overstayed their visas and remain in the country illegally.

"We're out of time and we're out of excuses," John Wagner, who runs the program for the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection agency, told a House committee last month. "I

understand your frustration with this."

The idea for a tracking system took on urgency after the 2001 terror attacks, when it was discovered that several of the terrorists were living in the U.S. on expired visas. Since 2004, Congress has directed use of biometric data—unique physical identifiers such as fingerprints or photos—to ensure people are who they say they are.

The government succeeded in creating a biometric system for people entering the U.S., with foreigners fingerprinted and photographed upon entry. The exit part has proved much tougher.

Administration officials say they still have no plan for tracking people who leave the country by simply driving into Mexico or Canada, which represents the vast majority of visitor exits.

DHS does track departures by air and sea, using biographic information off manifests supplied by airlines and shipping lines. For the past two years, the agency has used this information to report that hundreds of thousands of visitors have overstayed their visas.

But that system doesn't guard against someone who remains in the country but wants authorities to think he has left, and has someone falsely exit using his passport, or someone who leaves using another person's passport.

U.S. airports aren't set up for someone to "check out" of the country. Since security checkpoints are located well before a person boards a plane, it would be easy for a traveler to be counted as departing and then simply walk out of the airport. Airport gates are crowded spots, and building a new checkpoint at every gate was long seen as a daunting task.

DHS ran several pilot programs at large airports. A breakthrough occurred when the agency realized it could use a small, mounted camera to scan people's faces quickly at the boarding gate, Mr.

Wagner said. Those images are then compared with photos in a database of travelers airlines expect to be on a given flight. If there's a match, the government can be confident that person has left the U.S.

Mr. Wagner told a congressional committee last month that the government will need airlines to actually run the cameras. If the Customs and Border Protection agency has to station an agent at every gate, he said, the cost would be "astronomical" because it would require hiring thousands of new agents.

He didn't offer a cost estimate but said in an interview that it would run well over the \$100 million generated in fees each year that are earmarked for this program.

"We can't do this without the airlines," he said.

He argued that this doesn't impose a burden on airlines because the photographs provide a higher degree of certainty of one's identity than passports do, so gate agents won't have to check passports anymore.

Airline officials dispute that, saying agents will still need to check passports because they are responsible for ensuring that people aren't flown to other countries without proper identification. Having gate agents take the photos also could slow down boarding, they added.

But industry officials say airlines have been willing to help when it benefits both sides, pointing to industry funding for passport-reading kiosks in 49 airports that speed passengers as they arrive into the U.S.

Mr. Wagner replied that the agency hopes to persuade airlines that this program is also in their interest. But even if they remain unconvinced, DHS has to put the system in place. "Congress has been pretty clear about the requirement," he said.

And he said DHS could compel airlines to cooperate. If his agency has to run the cameras, Mr. Wagner said, it might have to restrict the number of airports or gates that may be used for international flights to keep costs reasonable.

"That's an option that is out there," he said. "We have the authority to do that."

Airline officials declined to comment on that assertion. But several privately dismissed the threat as unrealistic and politically untenable.

Despite these tensions, the major carriers say they support the agency's commitment to technology and innovation and are participating in test programs for the new cameras this summer. Some carriers, particularly Delta Air Lines Inc., are experimenting with their own biometric solutions to ease passengers' gauntlet of check-in steps.

American Airlines Group Inc., plans a test at one gate at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago. Delta has been running a pilot for more than a year in Atlanta and recently launched another at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport. United Continental Holdings Inc. is expected to run a pilot at one of its hubs as well. Customs officials are running the cameras during these tests.

JetBlue Airways Corp., which just launched a trial in Boston, for one, appears enthusiastic about the potential for biometric identification replacing existing systems.

"Longer term you could create a seamless experience for the customer," said Joanna Geraghty, JetBlue executive vice president of customer experience. The goal: passengers could drop their bags, go through security without showing identification or a boarding pass and then board the plane.

Write to Laura Meckler at laura.meckler@wsj.com and Susan Carey at susan.carey@wsj.com

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Trump Calls for Overhaul of Government's Outdated Computer Systems

Michael C. Bender

3 minutes

June 19, 2017 7:19 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Saying the federal government is lagging behind the “technology revolution,” President Donald Trump called for more than \$1 trillion in savings during the next 10 years by overhauling outdated computer systems and improving information technology.

“Our goal is to lead a sweeping transformation of the federal government’s technology that will deliver dramatically better services for citizens, stronger protection from cyberattacks,” Mr. Trump said Monday at the White House during a meeting with more than a dozen executives from some of the nation’s top technology companies.

“That’s a big problem, no question about it,” he added. “We’re going to be working on it,

and we’re going to solve the problem.”

Mr. Trump didn’t lay out specific plans to reach those savings, instead pointing to a recent announcement that the Veterans Affairs Department would be updating its electronic health records. He said similar announcement would be coming soon.

Heading the White House effort are Jared Kushner, the president’s son-in-law and senior adviser who leads the newly created White House Office of American Innovation; and Chris Liddell, a former Microsoft MSFT 1.24% executive and now an assistant to the president.

Federal agencies maintain about 6,100 data centers that can be consolidated, Mr. Kushner told the executives during the summit. He said that the 10 oldest systems are between 39 and 56 years old, adding that the Pentagon uses floppy disks in some cases.

“We are here to improve the day-to-day lives of the average citizen,” Mr. Kushner said. “That’s a core promise, and we are keeping it.”

Mr. Liddell said in an interview that he was pleased with the ideas the executives suggested. “Our job is now to collate those and decide which ones we want to pursue,” he said.

Apple AAPL 2.86% CEO Tim Cook praised the White House for

focusing on improving its technology, which he said would be an investment that would quickly pay off.

“The U.S. should have the most modern government in the world,” Mr. Cook told the president during the start of a meeting reporters were allowed to observe. “The government should be focused on its citizens, and the services of the government should be measured on how its citizens are receiving those services.”

—Peter Nicholas contributed to this article.

Write to Michael C. Bender at Mike.Bender@wsj.com

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

5-6 minutes

McGurn: Democrats March on Georgia

William McGurn

Republican candidates (all but one of them men) in the initial April 18 election. Mrs. Handel is a fairly standard-issue Southern conservative well known in the district from her prior runs, including unsuccessful recent bids in GOP senate and gubernatorial primaries.

Against Mr. Ossoff her greatest liability has less to do with her than with President Trump. Special elections frequently become referendums on the incumbent party. That’s exactly what Mrs. Handel is now facing from a Democratic rival who got his initial boost from an online campaign based on the pitch “Make Trump Furious.”

Mrs. Handel has tried to steer a middle course on Mr. Trump. Unlike some of her GOP rivals, who fully embraced him in the April contest (and lost handily), she’s been more measured. Although Mr. Trump held that fundraiser for her and recently tweeted his support for her campaign, she tries to avoid mentioning his name on the stump. During a debate with her opponent earlier this month, she insisted she isn’t “an extension of the White House.”

With all this Mrs. Handel’s biggest disadvantage isn’t Mr. Trump but the lack of GOP legislative accomplishments in Washington. The result is that she hasn’t been able to point to legislation as a way of contrasting her agenda with her opponent’s. That leaves her tied to

President Trump the Personality rather than President Trump the Leader pushing through a GOP agenda making life better for the American people.

Mr. Trump inadvertently alluded to this dynamic in his own tweet on Monday supporting Mrs. Handel: “The Dems want to stop tax cuts, good health care and Border Security. Their ObamaCare is dead with 100% increases in P’s. Vote now for Karen H.” In fairness, Mr. Trump has been in office only five months, so it’s early days. But if Republicans do not make good on promises like the ones Mr. Trump put in his tweet, in 2018 they will find themselves in a fix worse than Mrs. Handel’s.

But Democrats have their issues too. For one thing, Mr. Ossoff doesn’t even live in the Sixth District. For another, the redness of this district is more complicated than has been presented. In November, Hillary Clinton came within 1.5 percentage points of Mr. Trump. Mr. Ossoff himself came within 1.9 points of winning 50% of the vote in April, which would have spared him a runoff.

The 30-year-old Mr. Ossoff has been changing his tune as well. Making life hell for Mr. Trump may be an excellent slogan for riling up the Democratic base and attracting notice from the national press. But in affluent Republican suburbs where the Democrat will need some GOP votes to push him over the

top, the full Bernie probably won’t do it.

So more recently Mr. Ossoff has been playing down the anti-Trump resistance in favor of a more centrist campaign that emphasizes bipartisanship and fiscal restraint. His advantage here is that he’s never held office, so he doesn’t have a record that can be used against him. Meanwhile, the Handel camp is running ads claiming that however moderate Mr. Ossoff may sound in Atlanta, once in Washington he’d be a Nancy Pelosi Democrat.

Plainly the voters are impassioned. Early voting has set a record. In an election hinging on turnout, and at a time when anti-Trump sentiment is at fever pitch, this would appear to be an advantage for Mr. Ossoff.

If he pulls it out on Tuesday, Mr. Ossoff’s victory will no doubt be celebrated from coast to coast as the first clear sign that Republicans are in real danger of losing their House majority in 2018.

But if Mr. Ossoff—with all his millions, with all his volunteers, with all the free media—still manages to lose, will all those telling us the race is a harbinger of things to come ask what *that* means for the Democratic Party?

Write to mcgurn@wsj.com.

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition.

June 19, 2017 6:43 p.m. ET

Get ready for an outbreak of headlines tomorrow about how Donald Trump portends the crackup of the Republican Party. Many of the stories have already been written. They await only a successful effort by Democrat Jon Ossoff to take the seat for Georgia’s Sixth Congressional District that Republicans have held since Newt Gingrich won it back in 1978.

In a special election that has spawned a thousand lessons for our politics, the most obvious goes unmentioned: You can make any House seat competitive if you’re willing to make the race for it the most expensive in American history. Yet somehow the scolds who are always moaning about the corrosive effect of money in politics have gone silent about the \$23 million Mr. Ossoff raised—most of it from donors outside the state.

Certainly a Democratic capture of a seat held by a Republican, Tom Price, who now serves in Mr. Trump’s cabinet, would lift Democratic spirits. Still, the race has been overhyped. While it does offer lessons for both Republicans and Democrats, in general these are not the ones getting all the ink.

Start with the Republicans. Back in April, Karen Handel beat 10 other

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

6-8 minutes

Furman and Kumar: Don’t Raise the Debt Limit—Repeal It

Jason Furman and Rohit Kumar

June 19, 2017 7:03 p.m. ET

Over the past eight years, high-stakes negotiations in Congress over the federal debt limit have repeatedly brought Washington to

the verge of default. We were on opposite sides of these debates, as senior policy advisers to President Obama and Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, and we continue to disagree about taxes

and the proper size of government. Yet we both believe that the statutory debt limit has outlived its usefulness as a mechanism for restraining the size of the national debt. Or, put more precisely, we

think that whatever residual value the debt limit may have is far outweighed by the risk that a potential U.S. default poses to the global economic order.

Now the debate is heating up again: The Treasury Department is already taking “extraordinary measures” to avoid going above the debt ceiling, but that can last only a matter of months. Congress will have to act. But this time instead of merely raising the debt limit, lawmakers should abolish it altogether—for the good of President Trump, all his successors and the American people.

The Constitution assigns Congress the power to tax and spend, which determines the annual budget deficit and, therefore, the debt. Separately, the Constitution authorizes Congress to “borrow Money on the credit of the United States.” But what if lawmakers approve spending, and then later refuse to borrow the money needed to satisfy the obligation? The result would be a default: Washington either would stop paying bondholders or would fall short on its other commitments—for example, to disabled veterans or defense contractors or even taxpayers who are owed refunds.

Fortunately, this has never happened. Congress has always met its responsibility to authorize the borrowing needed to pay America’s bills. Over the past several decades, however, lawmakers have made an increasingly regular practice of using the debt limit as leverage, flirting with default as a way to get concessions from the other side.

Until World War I, Congress authorized debt on a case-by-case basis, approving individual bond issues or allowing borrowing for a specific purpose. In 1917, in an effort to make the process more efficient, Congress granted the Treasury the authority to borrow up to a certain limit.

For decades, this system worked effectively. But skirmishes over the debt limit began as early as 1953, when President Eisenhower asked lawmakers to raise the figure. Sen. Harry F. Byrd Sr., a Democrat from Virginia, led the upper chamber’s Finance Committee to reject the president’s request. Then in 1967 the House, controlled by Democrats, rejected in a floor vote a debt-ceiling increase requested by President Lyndon Johnson.

The challenge of raising the debt limit became even more difficult over the following decades. In 1985 Treasury Secretary James Baker became the first to use “extraordinary measures” to prevent

borrowing from hitting the cap. An expanding set of such measures were deployed in 1995-96, 2002, 2003, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017. Now that these measures are used almost annually, it is hard to justify calling them “extraordinary.”

Although the measures mostly involve inconsequential reshuffling in the federal ledger, they can have real-world costs. For example, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, like several of his predecessors, has suspended the sale of state and local government series bonds. This allows the Treasury to stay below the debt ceiling for longer but can make it more costly for states and cities to manage their finances.

As the debt limit nears, costs mount. In the past, the Treasury has operated with a smaller cash cushion against unforeseen contingencies, has rejiggered bond maturities in ways that interfere with liquidity in the financial system, and has paid higher yields to borrowers worried about timely repayment. At the same time, brinkmanship over the debt limit erodes consumer and business confidence and increases market volatility.

Note that these costs are incurred simply by approaching the debt limit without actually reaching it. In a 1985 letter, President Reagan discussed what would happen if the government did someday teeter over the edge: “The full consequences of a default—or even the serious prospect of default—by the United States are impossible to predict and awesome to contemplate.” During the debt negotiations of 2011, President Obama similarly warned that hitting the limit “would risk sparking a deep economic crisis—this one caused almost entirely by Washington.”

While many countries have limits on the policies that drive debts and deficits, none of them have a history of using the threat of default as a negotiating tool once spending and taxing decisions have been made. Denmark is the only other country with a debt limit on the books, but it is set so high as to be irrelevant.

To meet the obligations set out by Congress, the U.S. will have to raise the debt limit by about \$3 trillion over the next four years—and another projected \$1 trillion, give or take, each year thereafter. At this pace, the risk is high that negotiations to raise the debt ceiling may fail, with unimaginably severe consequences.

Lawmakers are right to be concerned about steep increases in the debt. But those worries should be expressed when the policies that actually increase the debt are voted

on. Once new policies become law, defaulting on interest payments or veterans’ benefits is hardly productive. A new mechanism is necessary to tackle the debt issue—and it must be one that does not prejudice the question of revenue increases versus spending cuts, which is for future Congresses to resolve.

For now, the right move is to eliminate the debt limit permanently. That would let the Treasury focus on the most efficient and effective ways to manage the federal government’s cash flow, giving future presidents, both Democratic and Republican, a freer hand. No matter which party holds the White House, all Americans would benefit from taking the threat of a U.S. default off the table.

Mr. Furman, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, was chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, 2013-17. Mr. Kumar, a principal at PwC, was policy director and deputy chief of staff to Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, 2007-13.

Appeared in the June 20, 2017, print edition.

Gerson : The GOP’s hard, messy options for destroying Trumpism

By Michael Gerson

5-7 minutes

Nearly 150 days into the Trump era, no non-delusional conservative can be happy with the direction of events or pleased with the options going forward.

President Trump is remarkably unpopular, particularly with the young (among whom his approval is underwater by a remarkable 48 percentage points in one poll). And the reasons have little to do with elitism or media bias.

Trump has been ruled by compulsions, obsessions and vindictiveness, expressed nearly daily on Twitter. He has demonstrated an egotism that borders on solipsism. His political skills as president have been close to nonexistent. His White House is divided, incompetent and chaotic, and key administration jobs remain unfilled. His legislative agenda has gone nowhere. He has told constant, childish, refuted, uncorrected lies, and demanded and habituated deception among his underlings. He has humiliated and undercut his staff while requiring and rewarding flattery. He has promoted self-serving conspiracy theories. He has displayed pathetic, even frightening,

ignorance on policy matters foreign and domestic. He has inflicted his ethically challenged associates on the nation. He is dead to the poetry of language and to the nobility of the political enterprise, viewing politics as conquest rather than as service.

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Trump has made consistent appeals to prejudice based on religion and ethnicity, and associated the Republican Party with bias. He has stoked tribal hostilities. He has carelessly fractured our national unity. He has attempted to undermine respect for any institution that opposes or limits him — be it the responsible press, the courts or the intelligence community. He has invited criminal investigation through his secrecy and carelessness. He has publicly attempted to intimidate law enforcement. He has systematically alarmed our allies and given comfort to authoritarians. He promised to emancipate the world from American moral leadership — and has kept that pledge.

For many Republicans and conservatives, there is apparently no last straw, with offenses mounting bale by bale. The argument goes: Trump is still superior to Democratic rule — which would deliver apocalyptic harm — and thus anything that hurts Trump is bad for the republic. He is the general, so shut up and salute. What, after all, is the conservative endgame other than Trump’s success?

The 2020 election is years away, but speculation about potential candidates has already started. The 2020 election is years away, but speculation about potential candidates has already started. (Victoria Walker/The Washington Post)

(Victoria Walker/The Washington Post)

This is the recommendation of sycophancy based on hysteria. At some point, hope for a new and improved Trump deteriorates into unreason. The idea that an alliance with Trump will end anywhere but disaster is a delusion. Both individuals and parties have long-term interests that are served by integrity, honor and sanity. Both individuals and the Republican Party are being corrupted and stained by their embrace of Trump. The endgame of accommodation is to be morally and politically discredited. Those committed to this approach warn of national decline — and are practically assisting it.

They warn of decadence — and provide refreshments at the orgy.

So what is the proper objective for Republicans and conservatives? It is the defeat of Trumpism, preferably without the destruction of the GOP itself. And how does that happen?

Creating a conservative third party — as some have proposed — would have the effect of delivering national victories to a uniformly liberal and unreformed Democratic Party. A bad idea.

The New York Times

David Leonhardt

4-5 minutes

Their candidate, Jon Ossoff, has a real chance to win partly because he isn't suffering from the gap in voter passion and commitment that usually bedevils Democrats, especially in off-year races. It would be a big deal if Democrats could more often close their passion-and-commitment gap. Even modestly higher turnout could help them at every level of politics and hasten the policy changes that liberals dream about.

The Turnout Gap

Demographic groups that lean Republican generally have higher voter turnout than Democratic-leaning groups.

After all, polls show that a majority of Americans support progressive positions on most big issues. Yet Republicans dominate state and federal government.

Turnout is a big reason. Last year, Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 voted for Clinton over Trump in a landslide. Only 43 percent of citizens in that age group voted,

A primary challenge to Trump in the 2020 presidential election is more attractive, but very much an outside shot. An unlikely idea.

It is possible — if Democrats take the House in 2018 — that impeachment will ripen into a serious movement, which thoughtful Republicans might join (as they eventually did against Richard Nixon). But this depends on matters of fact and law that are currently hidden from view. A theoretical idea.

A Democratic victory in the 2020 election would represent the defeat

Leonhardt: If Liberals Voted ...

however. By contrast, Americans over age 65 supported Trump — and 71 percent of them voted. Similarly, Americans in their 30s were more likely to support Clinton, and less likely to vote, than those in their 50s.

The pattern also exists across ethnic groups. Asian and Hispanic voters went for Clinton in a bigger landslide than millennials, but most Asian and Hispanic citizens didn't vote.

And the gaps grow even larger in midterm elections. A mere 17 percent — 17 percent! — of Americans between 18 and 24 voted in 2014, compared with 59 percent of seniors.

If you're liberal and frustrated by these statistics, you should be. But you shouldn't be defeatist.

What can be done? First, don't make the mistake of blaming everything on nefarious Republicans. Yes, Republicans have gerrymandered districts and shamefully suppressed votes (and Democrats should keep pushing for laws that make voting easier). But the turnout gap is bigger than any Republican scheme.

of Trumpism and might be a prelude to Republican reform. But Democrats seem to be viewing Trump's troubles as an opportunity to plunge leftward with a more frankly socialistic and culturally liberal message. That is hardly attractive to Republican reformers. A heretical idea.

Or Republicans and conservatives could just try to outlast Trump — closing the shutters and waiting for the hurricane to pass — while rooting for the success of a strong bench of rising 40-something leaders (Marco Rubio, Mike Lee, Nikki Haley, Tom Cotton, Ben

Second, keep in mind that turnout is a human-behavior problem. It involves persuading people to change long-established habits. And there is a powerful force uprooting all kinds of habits today: digital technology.

More specifically, smartphones are changing how people interact with information. I'd encourage progressives in Silicon Valley to think of voting as a giant realm ripe for disruption. Academic research by Alan Gerber, Donald Green and others has shown that peer pressure can lift turnout. Smartphones are the most efficient peer-pressure device ever invented, but no one has figured out how social media or texting can get a lot more people to the polls — yet.

Finally, remember that the political left has had some recent successes in raising turnout, and they involved old-fashioned political excitement. Obama won partly through higher turnout among younger and nonwhite voters. Black turnout even exceeded white turnout in 2012, before slipping last year.

This month's British election is also intriguing. The Labour Party did better than expected, helped by a surge of younger voters angry about

Sasse). This may be the most practical approach but risks eight years of ideological entrenchment by Trumpism, along with massive damage to the Republican brand. A complacent idea.

Whatever option is chosen, it will not be easy or pretty. And any comfort for Republicans will be cold because they brought this fate on themselves and the country.

Brexit. But Britain also offers a caution to anyone who thinks higher turnout depends on far-left candidates, like Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader. Corbyn didn't win, and he didn't come very close.

My instinct is that the answer for Democrats involves a passionate message of fairness — of providing jobs, lifting wages, protecting rights and fighting Trump's plutocracy. It can be bolder than Democrats have been in decades. But it should not resemble a complete progressive wish list, which could turn off swing voters without even raising turnout.

People who don't vote regularly aren't progressive activists in disguise. They tend not to follow politics closely. Although most lean left, they are not doctrinaire, and they're not looking for white papers. They are looking to be inspired.

Obviously, these are tough times for Democrats. They haven't had much electoral cheer since 2012 — and it's unclear whether Ossoff will win. But Democrats should remember that they still have one enormous advantage.

The country's real silent majority prefers Democrats, if only that majority could be stirred to vote.

The New York Times

7-9 minutes

Bill Gates in February. Michael Gottschalk/Photothek, via Getty Images

Last year, as Kalamazoo, Mich., struggled with a budget deficit and other economic woes, two local philanthropists stepped forward, pledging \$70 million to improve the city's fortunes. Earlier in 2016, a group of foundations put up even more money to help another troubled Michigan city, Flint, recover

Callahan: As Government Retrenches, Philanthropy Booms

David Callahan

from the contamination of its water supply. And a few years before that, foundations helped to rescue Detroit from bankruptcy.

These episodes, coming after years of cuts in state aid to Michigan's cities, may offer a glimpse of America's future.

In Washington, D.C., where it's already difficult to get things done, governing is likely to get exponentially harder in coming decades as the baby boomers retire and fiscal pressures mount sharply. More states and localities will also face budgetary crises as pension

bills come due and as fiscal conservatives prioritize tax cuts over public investment.

So where will the leadership and money come from to take on urgent challenges?

In Michigan and beyond, we're already seeing an answer: Philanthropy will increasingly slide into the driver's seat of public life, with private funders tackling problems that government can't or won't.

This is hopeful in many ways, and most of these donors have the best of intentions. But make no mistake:

Their influence is growing in tandem with their largess, shifting power away from democratic institutions.

Look in any area — the arts, education, science, health, urban development — and you'll find a growing array of wealthy donors giving record sums. Philanthropists have helped fund thousands of charter schools across the country, creating a parallel education system in many cities. The most ambitious urban parks in decades are being built with financing from billionaires. Some of the boldest research to attack diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's is funded by

philanthropy. Private funders, led by the Gates Foundation, play a growing role in promoting global health and development.

More big league givers keep emerging as the vast fortunes of a second Gilded Age are harnessed to philanthropy. The most recent: The Amazon founder, Jeff Bezos, worth more than \$80 billion, last week posted on Twitter a “request for ideas” for a philanthropy strategy he should pursue. Among a Forbes 400 with a combined net worth of at least \$2.4 trillion are numerous billionaires who plan to give away much of their wealth. All told, over \$20 trillion is likely to find its way to philanthropy in the next half century.

It's true that philanthropy doesn't have anything close to the resources of government and can't replace vital functions of the public sector. But the giving power of private funders has grown more significant as federal spending has flatlined, especially funds that can be used flexibly. Nondefense discretionary spending totaled \$518 billion in 2016, compared with charitable giving of \$390 billion last year. This gap is likely to keep narrowing as budget cuts hit harder and the wealthy step up their giving. Donors are also using for-profit social investments on a much larger scale — like when Bill Gates recently organized a slew of

billionaires to invest in clean energy research.

It's not just their money that makes the givers so powerful in public life; it's also their nimbleness. Answering to neither voters nor shareholders, philanthropists and foundations can move boldly. This freedom sounds like a good thing, and often is. But it can produce actions disruptive to communities, as we saw in Newark, where donors led by Mark Zuckerberg backed a school reform effort that lacked local support. When things go wrong with big philanthropy, citizens have little recourse. The givers are accountable to no one.

Most Americans have yet to consider what the power shift away from government means for United States democracy. When people think of philanthropy, they tend to imagine giving for museums or hospitals. Yet today's biggest donors aren't much interested in such old-style charity, aiming instead to make “systemic” changes in society.

Today's mega-givers keep charging forward. Although the push for charter schools has created both enormous controversy and mixed results, top philanthropists in this field are doubling down. The Walton family is spending \$1 billion to promote school choice over the next five years — almost as much as it spent in the previous two decades.

A group of funders in Los Angeles are advancing a plan to move half of all K-12 students in that city into charter schools, stirring fierce debate.

In New York City, a proposed island park in the Hudson River financed by the billionaire Barry Diller and his wife, Diane von Furstenberg, has faced strong legal challenges that underscore a growing uneasiness about the role of private money in public spaces. Other big urban park projects have raised similar concerns, and in Baltimore, alarm bells went off when philanthropists funded an aerial surveillance project by the city's police department.

Surveys show that most Americans feel that their voice doesn't count in public life and want to reduce the influence of the wealthy. But today's big philanthropy is moving us in the opposite direction, at a time when inequality stands at record levels.

It's time to look harder at how the wealthy wield clout through philanthropy — and to update oversight rules for a new era of megagiving.

For starters, there should be more transparency in the reporting of charitable gifts, which increasingly flow through opaque entities like donor-advised funds that allow givers to remain anonymous, even when their donations seek to influence government policy. Such

funds should have to reveal where their money is coming from. More timely reporting of gifts is important, too.

There should also be stricter limits on tax-deductible giving, to discourage gifts by wealth holders that amplify their preferences in public debates. In an earlier era, when America had less inequality and stronger mass-member organizations, nonprofits advocating on policy issues typically spoke for lots of ordinary people — not a handful of private funders, as is now often the case. One way to rebalance civic life would be to restrict the size of allowable tax-deductible gifts to policy groups, while encouraging gifts by smaller donors. Another step might be to narrow which nonprofits qualify for tax-deductible gifts, with an eye toward reducing giving to influence public policy.

Ultimately, efforts to level the playing field of civic life won't get very far as long as economic inequality remains so high, putting outside resources in the hands of a sliver of supercitizens. Critics of today's income and wealth gaps tend to focus on who gets what. Yet as a deluge of new wealth pours into civil society, which Alexis de Tocqueville once saw as the realm of the Everyman, we should also be asking who gets heard.