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FRANCE - EUROPE

Boston Globe : Macron trolls Trump to establish international role, win votes

Gregory Viscusi and Margaret Talev

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron has found a way to establish himself on the international scene: give President Trump a taste of his own trolling. Oh, and it's not bad for domestic politics either.

It began with a bone-crunching handshake with Trump at the NATO summit in Brussels on May 25, followed by an interview in which Macron boasted that the macho display was meant to send the message that he'll hold his ground against Trump.

After Trump announced last week that the US is withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on carbon emissions, Macron — in English — invited US climate scientists to work in France and hijacked Trump's signature slogan with a call to "make our planet great again."

The French foreign ministry got into the act by posting a video that, by scribbling in English on top of the White House's own video, refutes point-by-point what it said were incorrect Trump statements about the Paris accord, all with a #MakeThePlanetGreatAgain hashtag. The video was viewed 11 million times, had 179,000 shares on Facebook, and was re-tweeted on Twitter 49,000 times.

"Macron wants to send a message that he's playing on the same playing field as Trump," said Philippe Moreau Defarges, adviser at the Paris-based French Institute for International Affairs. "He thinks that if Trump is going to use Twitter

and video messages in an aggressive way, then so am I. Macron has made a bet that he's going to be as modern as possible in his communication, and to a degree that also means trolling."

Like Trump, 70, Macron is betting that his approach will pay off at home, in next week's parliamentary elections.

"He really needs a majority in Parliament to run the country properly," said Philippe Le Corre, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution's Center on the United States and Europe. "Trump is unpopular, and in Europe everybody is in favor of this deal."

There's some risk in an approach that Heather Conley, director of the Europe Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, called "more playful" than that of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. The German leader made headlines a week ago by suggesting that Trump's disdain for international organizations means Europeans can no longer rely on the trans-Atlantic relationship.

After all, Macron is taking on a thin-skinned president who runs a country that shares crucial intelligence and is France's second biggest export market, behind Germany.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said no disrespect was meant by "correcting" the White House's video.

"We are not insulting anyone, we are engaging in a substantive debate," Nadal said. "We have

made social media a key part of our communication. So does President Trump. That's how it is now, so it's normal that the debate is played out across social media."

A White House official speaking on condition of anonymity said there were no hard feelings about Macron's actions or comments, and no concerns they'll harm the relationship. "They had a great meeting and we think they will only grow stronger," said White House press secretary Sean Spicer.

Macron, 39, didn't focus much on foreign policy during the campaign that led to his May 7 electoral victory, instead running on a platform of loosening economic regulations and intensifying European integration. When he did, he tended to take a hawkish stance on relations with Vladimir Putin's Russia and stress his attachment to Western institutions such as NATO.

Putin also came in for some of Macron's steeliness when, during a joint May 29 press conference at Versailles, Macron accused two media outlets close to the Kremlin of being "propaganda organs" that spread false news during the French election. A stone-faced Putin didn't react.

"He's not afraid of Putin or Trump," said Moreau Defarges. "He wants to be a General De Gaulle style president who knows that France is small, but still speaks as an equal to the big powers. De Gaulle used to say his only model was Tintin, the little guy who stands up to the big guys," referring to the cartoon character who's actually Belgian but is read by most French children.

Le Corre, of Brookings, and others said they didn't think the back-and-forth over climate would hurt close cooperation between the US and France in other domains, such as joint military operations against Islamic militants across the Sahara, and in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

"The military cooperation is very important to both countries, above all in the combat against jihadist terrorism, and the relationship between the two countries seems to have started on the right foot on this front," said Frederic Bozo, a professor of contemporary history at Sorbonne Nouvelle University.

The Macron-Trump jousting is also minor compared to earlier crises in French-American relations. The US strongly opposed France's 1956 military seizure of the Suez Canal, and relations hit a nadir when President Charles De Gaulle in 1966 ordered US military forces to leave France. Closer relations followed, particularly under Socialist President Francois Mitterrand in the 1980s, but then came another falling out when President Jacques Chirac opposed George W. Bush's 2003 Iraq invasion, famously leading to "freedom fries." Relations then rapidly improved under the next two French presidents, and as US public opinion turned against the Iraq War.

If there's a risk to Macron, it's that sparring over social media isn't how many French imagine their president. "This type of conduct could hurt the presidential image, because it does chip away the regal status that he wanted to give it," the Sorbonne's Bozo said.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Weiss : Yes, Pittsburgh Trumps Paris

Lou Weiss

My hometown has been basking in glory since President Trump said last week that he'd rather look after Pittsburgh than Paris. No need for concern, Mr. President. I have been to Paris for a few days and can authoritatively state that Steel City holds up quite well.

Paris may be lovely, but there is no truer beauty than being able to make it from your house to Heinz Field in under 15 minutes thanks to the hundreds of bridges that cross our three rivers—triple the rivers of

Paris. And can you spell Monongahela?

The Louvre—not to mention Paris's impressive museums devoted to Rodin and Picasso—is world-class. Pittsburgh has the Andy Warhol and Roberto Clemente museums, the latter dedicated to the greatest artist ever to play right field. We can't help it if our greatest (robber?) barons, Frick and Mellon, plunked their artistic booty into facilities in New York and Washington. Advantage: Paris.

The City of Light is famous for its cuisine, but how do you really feel after all that heavy sauce? Meanwhile, Pittsburgh won Zagat's 2015 award for the No. 1 food city in America. The Big Mac was invented here, too. We may not confit our ducks, but we do put french fries on the inside of our sandwiches. Throw in Heinz ketchup and it's not even close. Pittsburgh.

Paris ended up with Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde and many more famous expats. But only Pittsburgh can claim the geniuses of Gene Kelly, August Wilson and Christina

Aguilera. Gertrude Stein, hostess of famous Parisian artistic salons, was born in Allegheny County. Call this a draw.

Paris has a few historical sites, but from my backyard I can look down the river to the battlefield where Gen. Edward Braddock and George Washington fought the French and their Indian allies. France won in a rout, but made it up to us a bit in the Revolutionary War. All right, give this one to Paris.

Sports? No contest. The Penguins are now on the verge of their fifth

Stanley Cup. How many Super Bowls has Paris won?

When it comes to fashion, we could be in trouble. Cargo shorts may not have the same cachet as Yves St Laurent, Dior, Chanel and Givenchy, but at least we can hold a lot of stuff in our pockets.

The Paris Metro is comprehensive and famous for the beauty of some

of its stations. Pittsburgh has a ridiculous and expensive three-hole subway that runs under a river to a casino. Thanks to Uber and Ford, we are pioneers in self-driving cars, which one needs to navigate our gridless street layout. Advantage: Paris.

Anyone who has ever been to Pittsburgh remarks about the

fabulous friendliness of the people. Parisians are notoriously snobby, although I must say that the two I have met have been nice. While folks in the 'Burgh speak what to outsiders seems like a foreign language, to us yinzers it is the language of love.

Sure, France is exquisite—even if it is populated by cheese-eating

surrender monkeys. But what can compare to living in the land of the free and home of the brave?

So, Mr. President, thanks for looking out for us here in Pittsburgh—but on the whole we're doing quite well already.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

ECB's Path to Unwinding Easy Monetary Policies Proves Thorny

Tom Fairless

FRANKFURT—As the eurozone economy gathers pace, European Central Bank officials are plotting a route back to normality from an era of exceptionally easy money policies.

It could be a complicated path.

The ECB has indicated it will follow the U.S. Federal Reserve's game plan for unwinding its policies, first by phasing out a €60 billion-a-month bond-purchase program known as quantitative easing and then turning to increase short-term interest rates, which have been negative since 2014.

But a debate has broken out inside the central bank about whether that sequence is right. Some officials suggested at their March meeting starting to raise rates first, to get them out of negative territory, before ending bond purchases, a person familiar with the matter said. Other officials, notably the bank's chief economist, Peter Praet, believe the Fed's sequence has a strong logic and are wary of shifting from that approach.

It might sound esoteric, but the path the central bank chooses could have big consequences for bank stocks and lending, market volatility and the outlook for the euro. The two policies are different in part because they affect different kinds of interest rates. The negative rate policies impact short-term rates, while bond purchases hit long-term rates.

The distinction matters in markets. The euro jumped and eurozone bonds tumbled in March on reports that ECB policy makers had considered raising interest rates

before ending the bond purchases.

ECB officials will meet in Estonia on Wednesday and Thursday to consider their next moves. Mario Draghi, the bank's president, is expected to express greater confidence in the economy after the meeting. He could announce a review into different exit strategies.

Officials meet amid signs of an economic pickup. Growth in the 19-nation bloc outpaced that in the U.S. in the first quarter, unemployment has fallen to an eight-year low of 9.3%, and inflation has risen from less than zero to 1.4% over the past 12 months, approaching the ECB's target of just below 2%.

Some eurozone bank executives have chafed under negative interest rates and would like the ECB to end its policy of negative interest rates as soon as possible, even before bond purchases end. They complain negative rates undermine their profits—because they aren't able to pass the costs on to customers in the form of deposit fees—and thus also curb their ability to lend.

That is crucial in an economy where businesses depend on banks for around 80% of their borrowing, compared with just 20% in the U.S. Some economists suggest negative rates also encourage people to save money rather than spending it, thereby stunting economic growth.

"I think the damage being done by negative rates is worth reflecting on," said Huw van Steenis, global head of strategy at Schroders in London.

ECB officials are weighing mixed evidence as they consider whether to raise rates first. Despite bank

complaints about the impact of negative rates, bank lending to eurozone companies grew at the fastest pace in almost eight years in April, rising by 2.4% year-to-year.

Still, some officials worry about the longer-running effects. "We see the negative impact being accumulated over time...in terms of reducing the interest margin of banks," ECB board member Benoît Coeuré said in New York in April.

In Germany, negative rates have become an object of scorn in some political and media circles, which refer to them as "Strafzinsen," or "penalty rates."

"Removing negative rates would be a good, cheap way to improve the ECB's public image," said Frederik Ducrozet, an economist with Pictet in Geneva.

Crucially, though, Germany's influential central bank takes a different view. The Bundesbank is much less worried by negative rates than by bond purchases, which it argues reduce pressure on eurozone governments to carry out economic reforms.

To compensate for an early rate increase, the ECB might decide to extend its bond purchases. That would likely win favor among central-bank governors from southern Europe because the ECB's purchases of government debt hold down their borrowing costs. But it would displease Bundesbank President Jens Weidmann, who voted in favor of cutting rates below zero in June 2014, but has never voted for government bond purchases.

Nor is it clear how much longer the ECB can continue bond purchases, under which it has already amassed around €2 trillion of bonds. The bond program is due to run through at least December, but constraints on its design mean the ECB could struggle to find enough bonds to buy next year, particularly German bunds.

Within the ECB, the debate is likely to hinge on the overall impact of negative rates on the economy.

Late last year, top ECB officials appeared to cool toward the policy, warning that it could, over time, cause banks to reduce lending.

More recently, though, ECB officials have appeared to change tack, arguing that the effects of negative rates have been mostly positive. The change in tone coincides with a recovery in eurozone bank stocks, which have risen by about 40% since October.

"We've seen the initial impact of our negative-rate policy being clearly positive," Mr. Coeuré said. The policy anchors short-term borrowing costs at low levels, stabilizes financial conditions and encourages banks to lend rather than leave excess funds at the central bank, he said.

"At some point we might change our conclusion," Mr. Coeuré said. "We're not there."

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Bloomberg

Editorial : Europe Needs More Than a Bundle of Bonds

The European Commission has been thinking about ways to strengthen the euro zone, and is proposing a plan for a new "sovereign bond-backed security." Give the commission credit for putting its finger on an important defect of the euro-zone system. Unfortunately, its remedy falls far short.

The defect is the so-called "doom loop" between governments and banks. Banks in Europe have preferred to buy bonds issued by their own national governments. As a result, alarm over government finances (typically caused by earlier overborrowing) can infect national banking systems. The new security takes aim at this dangerous concentration of risk by bundling

sovereign bonds from different eurozone countries into a single instrument. The idea is to encourage banks to diversify their bond holdings, so that a fiscal crisis won't automatically turn into a banking crisis.

QuickTake Europe's Banking Union

Crucially, however, the proposed new securities wouldn't be jointly

guaranteed by the euro-zone governments. That's a step too far for members such as Germany: They're reluctant to stand behind the borrowing of their less-fastidious partners. Without the joint guarantee, the new instrument is largely pointless. It wouldn't help banks do anything they can't already do. There's currently nothing to stop them buying a portfolio of bonds

issued by different governments. The new security would be no safer than a bundle structured the same way.

True, the regulatory system could be tilted to make the new bonds more appealing, but that isn't part of the plan. The commission proposes to treat them as riskless for the purpose of calculating the capital that banks have to raise -- but ordinary sovereign bonds are

already treated that way, so the bundle confers no advantage.

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What if in future the bonds of some heavily indebted countries were treated as risky for capital-adequacy purposes, as indeed they should be? In that case, there'd be an

incentive to buy the new, officially "safe" security -- but without the joint guarantee, that zero risk-weight for the bundle would be questionable, to put it mildly, because the new security would include bonds the regulators elsewhere deem risky.

The innovation would have symbolic value, always much prized in EU affairs. And it could serve as a prelude to deeper forms of integration. But the point is, those

deeper forms of integration are what's really needed. Without a fully fledged banking union and at least some elements of a fiscal union -- including jointly guaranteed euro-bonds -- the euro zone is bound to relapse into another crisis. One hopes the commission's proposal is indeed a prelude, and not an excuse for going no further.

**The
New York
Times**

Editorial : Another Terrorist Attack, and More Agony, in Britain

These are trying times for Britain.

Two grotesque terror attacks within two weeks. An important and unexpectedly close election Thursday on how to exit Europe. The issues involved -- stopping terrorism without sacrificing democratic values, ending a long relationship with the least damage to both sides -- would be enough for any nation, much less one as emotionally battered as this one.

The latest outrage, the attack in central London, provoked strong reactions from both candidates. "Enough is enough," said Prime Minister Theresa May, adding that there had been "far too much tolerance of extremism" in Britain. "All communities must come together," declared the Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn. Both said that the election should proceed and

that the attacks could not be allowed to disrupt the democratic process.

Though different in tone, these were grown-up responses that contrasted sharply with President Trump's bizarre Twitter barrage in which he variously scorned the mayor of London for seeking to reassure his people, blamed political correctness for what he said was the world's weak response to terrorism, claimed that the attacks bolstered his case for a travel ban on Muslims and argued that gun control was pointless, because terrorists in this case had used knives and a truck.

That both Mrs. May and Mr. Corbyn have not similarly politicized these horrible events is reassuring. Surely the temptation to do so is there. Whatever their path to suicidal violence, whatever their political motives, the Manchester bomber and the three London attackers shared, as Mrs. May put it, "an evil

ideology of Islamist extremism" that perversely justifies slaughtering the innocent and vulnerable in the name of the Islamic State and its purported caliphate.

Yet despite the provocation, it is essential that neither candidate succumb to the temptation of pledging or imposing the sorts of draconian measures suggested by some commentators, such as locking up Muslims. Disrupting democracy and undermining its values is surrendering to just what the terrorists want.

The political fallout for Thursday remains to be seen. The prevailing wisdom when Mrs. May called the election on April 18, reversing her earlier insistence that she would not, was that she would win by a landslide over a disjointed Labour Party. And whatever the outcome, there is little likelihood that Britain will reverse position and stay in the

European Union. But her lackluster campaign, a flip-flop on social policy and failure to participate in a political debate, combined with a better-than-expected performance by Mr. Corbyn (of whom awfully little was expected, to be sure) have steadily trimmed her party's margin in the polls.

The Tories are still expected to come out ahead, though the failure of so many pundits to anticipate the victories of Brexit or Donald Trump have made many people understandably chary of predictions.

Add to these uncertainties a new wild card -- terrorism, and a shaken citizenry. One week ago Mrs. May's prospects looked certain. But as a former prime minister, Harold Wilson, once famously noted, a week is a long time in politics.

**The
Washington
Post**

London attack spawns political controversy as May and Corbyn trade barbs ahead of vote (UNE)

LONDON — Less than 24 hours after terrorists killed seven people and injured dozens more in the heart of London, the latest attack to hit Britain this spring became a campaign issue Sunday, with just four days before an unpredictable national election.

Rival party leaders lashed out at one another as police raided homes and carried out a dozen arrests, and as the nation mourned. Tens of thousands attended an Ariana Grande benefit concert that was originally intended to honor the dead from last month's suicide bombing in Manchester but was expanded to recognize the newest victims in London.

Following the May 22 attack in Manchester, Saturday night's van-and-knife rampage was the second mass-casualty attack to intrude on the homestretch of a parliamentary campaign that was once thought certain to end in a landslide for Prime Minister Theresa May and the

Conservatives. The race has tightened in recent weeks, and terrorism has introduced an unexpected variable.

With her premiership on the line, May took an aggressive and combative tone Sunday, telling the nation that "enough is enough" and insisting there is "far too much tolerance for extremism in our country."

"Things need to change," May said in a speech outside the prime minister's residence at 10 Downing Street.

She blamed the attack on the "evil ideology of Islamist extremism," called for a thorough review of the nation's counterterrorism policies and suggested she will take a much tougher line if she wins Thursday's vote.

The speech was criticized by the opposition Labour Party as a thinly veiled jab at their far-left leader, Jeremy Corbyn, whom May has

often accused of coddling anti-Western militants. May, Corbyn's backers said, had politicized the attack.

But by evening, Corbyn had hit back with his own political response to the killing, accusing May and her Conservative allies of weakening security services through years of austerity.

"You cannot protect the public on the cheap," Corbyn said in a speech in the northern English city of Carlisle that ended a brief pause in formal campaigning. "The police and security services must get the resources they need, not 20,000 police cuts."

Corbyn also derided President Trump, accusing him of lacking both "grace" and "sense" after the U.S. leader twisted a quote from London Mayor Sadiq Khan in order to launch an attack on the West's most prominent Muslim politician.

May, who has gone to great lengths to cultivate ties with Trump, had earlier defended Khan while carefully avoiding any criticism of the U.S. president.

The multilayered controversy came as investigators were just beginning to unravel details of the assailants and the plot behind the killings, which jolted the country Saturday night.

At just after 10 p.m. that night, three men plowed a rented Renault van into a crowd of pedestrians on London Bridge, then got out and used knives to slash bar and restaurant patrons at the nearby Borough Market.

The attackers were fatally shot by police within eight minutes of the first emergency call, with eight officers firing a total of 50 rounds at men who had donned camouflage and fake suicide vests to carry out the carnage.

British authorities did not identify the victims. But Canada's prime minister and France's foreign minister confirmed that their nationals were among the dead.

Mark Rowley, assistant commissioner of London's Metropolitan Police, said in a late afternoon news conference on Sunday that investigators were still trying to confirm the identities of the attackers and that they were "increasingly confident" there were no other perpetrators. He said police had "more to do" to determine whether the assailants had help in planning the attack.

Rowley praised the performance of officers in responding to the attack — a view that was echoed almost universally Sunday — and described the number of shots fired as "unprecedented" in a country where most officers do not carry a firearm and those who do rarely, if ever, use it.

The fusillade, Rowley said, was necessary "to be completely confident [officers] had neutralized the threat that those men posed."

[Attack leaves several dead in "terrorist incidents" on London Bridge]

At least 48 people were injured in the attack — including one bystander who was shot by an errant police bullet and was expected to recover. Four officers were among the injured. Rowley said Sunday that 21 of those injured are in critical condition.

As doctors and nurses tended to the wounded, police carried out raids in the East London neighborhood of Barking in a signal that authorities are probing at least the possibility that others may have been involved in the planning of the attack. A dozen people were arrested, police said.

In Barking, neighbors said police had taken at least five people away early Sunday from a mixed-income,

10-story building believed to have been home to one of the attackers. Neighbors said that they heard loud bangs during the raid and that one of the men who was ultimately arrested had tried to flee.

Even as the investigation intensified, authorities did not raise the nation's threat level, as they had after the bombing in Manchester last month. The decision suggested authorities did not believe another attack is imminent, though under the existing "severe" rating, one is considered highly likely.

Investigators were focused on the likelihood that the attack had been inspired, if not directed, by the Islamic State, which claimed responsibility Sunday (although similar claims in the past have been shown to be unreliable). The militant group has called on its followers to carry out attacks in the West, especially during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

On Sunday night, the SITE Intelligence Group said in a news release that "the pro-Islamic State (IS) Nashir News Agency called for additional revenge attacks against Western states involved in the coalition." It added that the group "distributed a poster bearing a message in Arabic, English, and French across its Telegram channels on June 4, stating, 'Revenge – No compromise ... in the security of Muslims,' and showing London Bridge, a lorry, and the silhouette of a fighter bearing a knife."

Saturday's killings follow both the Manchester attack and a March attack that was eerily similar in style to the one that unfolded at and around London Bridge. In March, an attacker rammed pedestrians on a different Thames River crossing and stabbed to death a police officer at the gates of Parliament.

The three recent attacks were not connected, May said. But she described it as "a new trend" in

which terrorists are "copying one another and often using the crudest means of attack."

May did not detail her plans for confronting the threat. But she floated the idea of tougher prison sentences for less serious terrorism-related offenses and called on tech companies to do more to crack down on extremist content online.

Facebook responded with a statement calling for "strong partnerships" between tech firms and policymakers.

May also seemed to acknowledge Sunday that British security services are struggling to keep up as the scale of the threat grows. The services say they have disrupted at least 18 plots in recent years. But they have about 3,000 suspected extremists on watch lists — far too many to actively monitor at all times.

Previous attacks have been carried out by people who had been flagged to the security services for concern but had been judged to be peripheral to any active plots.

May had returned from the campaign trail to 10 Downing Street late Saturday for emergency meetings with security officials. On Sunday morning, all the major parties, including May's Conservatives, suspended campaigning.

[Vehicle and knife assault near British Parliament kills 4, injures 40]

Amid speculation that the election could be postponed, May quickly announced that it would go ahead as scheduled, a position that was endorsed by her rivals. Corbyn told Sky News that "democracy must prevail. If we allow these attacks to disrupt our democratic process, then we all lose."

Adding to the growing political debate over the attack were Sunday morning tweets by Trump, who took aim at political correctness, the push

in the United States for tougher gun laws and Khan, London's mayor. Trump chided Khan for attempting to calm the public by assuring that there was "no need to be alarmed."

Khan's comments were in reference to an escalated police presence on London streets. But Trump incorrectly implied they were a comment on the attack itself.

Khan's office released a statement saying the mayor "has more important things to do than respond to Donald Trump's ill-informed tweet."

Trump's tweets were widely mocked in Britain, where the overwhelming mood was one of unity against terrorism and praise for security services.

Sports Daily newsletter

Sports news with a focus on D.C. area teams.

The police cordon around London Bridge and Borough Market was gradually reduced Sunday as forensics teams continued to secure evidence and heavily armed officers guarded empty streets. On several streets leading toward Borough Market, tourists and London residents had dropped flowers. Signs reading "ISIS will lose. #Love will win" were attached to street signs.

On Sunday evening, Grande, the pop star who performed in Manchester on the night of the concert attack, sang again in a charity concert to benefit the victims.

"I love you guys so much," an emotional Grande told the crowd of 50,000 that had packed into a cricket ground amid extraordinary security. "This night is the kind of thing the world really needs right now."

William Booth and Rick Noack contributed to this report.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Jenny Gross and Stephen Fidler

LONDON—As British intelligence officers piece together how three attackers carried out Saturday's deadly rampage at London Bridge, counterterrorism chiefs will be trying to establish what went wrong with their strategy.

After escaping mass-casualty attacks for 12 years, the U.K. has suffered three in quick succession, suggesting the authorities aren't able to stop low-tech improvised

assaults carried out by individuals or small groups.

Prime Minister Theresa May said the U.K. would review its strategy in light of the changing threat.

The recent attacks in London, as well as in Stockholm and Nice, where perpetrators used vehicles to mow people down, illustrate the challenge of preventing relatively unsophisticated attacks, even when security services succeed in thwarting higher-level ones.

Raffaello Pantucci, director of International Security Studies at the Royal United Services Institute, said it is too early to say what exact signs police and officials missed.

In both the Manchester and the Westminster attacks, the perpetrators were known to intelligence agencies but deemed not a serious enough threat to warrant high-level monitoring, underscoring the difficulty for agencies in determining whom to

monitor amid a growing pool of extremists, he said.

"The number of people who are featuring on the fringes is only going to be bigger," Mr. Pantucci said. "Clearly, resources are getting stretched." He said policy makers must rethink what they do with extremists. Should those convicted of lesser terrorism-related offenses be kept in jail for longer? What quantity of resources should be dedicated to focusing on them?

London Terror Strike Shows Low-Tech Attacks Are Harder to Thwart (UNE)

Britain's domestic intelligence agency, MI5, has monitored 20,000 extremists in the past, a security official said after the Manchester attack last month.

Keeping tabs on this many people is a struggle even for the U.K., which has one of the most sophisticated intelligence agencies in the world. Intelligence agents and police have disrupted five credible plots since the Westminster attack in March, Mrs. May said.

There is some evidence that terrorists have regarded the U.K. as a harder target than continental European countries.

Mohamed Abrini, one of the attackers involved in the Brussels bombings last year, when questioned by Belgian prosecutors said his network hadn't planned an attack in the U.K. England is "more difficult to attack," than other European countries, he said.

"I think England has a more developed secret service, better observation techniques, etc.," he told investigators in April, according

to a transcript read in court late last year.

Unlike most other members of the European Union, which don't usually check people moving from one country to another, the U.K. also maintains border checks. Together with strict gun controls, that makes it harder for terrorists to buy undetected the kind of weaponry used in the November 2015 Paris attacks.

But these advantages are less relevant to thwart self-starting individuals or small groups carrying out less sophisticated operations with everyday materials such as vehicles and knives.

Such people don't need to communicate with coordinators in the Middle East and are harder for the security services to flag, even if they are aware of their existence.

Among the questions counterterrorism chiefs will be asking therefore will be how to widen their surveillance net—and how to reduce the numbers of people at risk of carrying out attacks.

Mrs. May said the solution requires more than strengthening the capabilities of intelligence agencies. She said a review would examine whether police and intelligence agencies had sufficient powers to deal with the threat and whether prison sentences should be extended for apparently less serious terrorism offenses.

The U.K. must also become better at identifying and stamping out extremist Islamist ideology across society, she said.

"That will require some difficult and often embarrassing conversations, but the whole of our country needs to come together to take on this extremism—and we need to live our lives not in a series of separated, segregated communities but as one truly United Kingdom," she said.

Some analysts said the government should invest more into Prevent, its flagship program aimed at combating extremism. After the Manchester attack, the government said it would go ahead with plans to double down on Prevent, which has faced criticism from Muslim and human-rights groups for alienating

Muslims and from teachers for inhibiting a dialogue between teachers and pupils.

The program legally requires teachers, health-care workers and other government employees to identify people they believe are vulnerable to radicalization so counselors can intervene.

Alan Mendoza, executive director of the Henry Jackson Society, a think tank focused on countering terrorism, said the public sector in Britain needs to proactively embrace Prevent and stop allowing others to undermine it.

"All communities and sections of British society will need to play their part in challenging extremism, and speaking out against those engaged in the bad-faith campaign to undermine counter-extremism efforts," he said.

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Editorial : Jihad Returns to Britain

Saturday's terror attack in the heart of London, Britain's third murderous assault in 72 days, poses a difficult choice for free societies: Do more to contain this internal Islamist insurgency now, or risk a political backlash that will result in even more draconian limits on civil liberties.

Islamic State claimed responsibility late Sunday, and the operation that killed seven and wounded 48 bore the hallmarks of recent jihadist atrocities. The London Bridge area and nearby Borough Market are packed with bars and restaurants popular with tourists and young people. The three alleged perpetrators rammed a van into pedestrians, then began stabbing people before police shot them.

Prime Minister Theresa May said Saturday's attack wasn't directly linked to the suicide bombing committed by Salman Abedi at a pop concert in Manchester last month. But the three attacks in

succession show why governments must target the threat at its roots, in self-isolating Muslim communities that reject mainstream values and create homegrown or Islamic State-inspired radicals like Abedi.

On this front, Mrs. May is well ahead of many of her European counterparts. The Prime Minister in a speech Sunday morning outlined a new counterterror strategy that puts ideology and Muslim integration at the forefront. The trio of recent attacks in Britain, she said, were "bound together by the single evil ideology of Islamist extremism."

Mrs. May went on to call for a battle of ideas against Islamism and tough love for British Muslims who have failed to confront radicals in their mosques and community centers. Said the Prime Minister: "We need to live our lives not in a series of separated, segregated communities, but as one truly United Kingdom."

Mrs. May suggested this would involve "difficult and often

embarrassing conversations" with the Muslim community, and she is right. This has to include an end to political coddling of so-called soft Islamist groups and imams who treat candor about the Islamist threat as anti-Muslim or refuse to identify radicals in their midst.

The one misstep in an otherwise clear-eyed speech is Mrs. May's suggestion to outsource surveillance of jihadist online speech to social-media platforms. This line is popular among Western leaders because it provides an excuse for their failure to defend the need for Big Data surveillance and threat analysis following Edward Snowden's National Security Agency thefts.

Silicon Valley companies such as Facebook and Google bear some of the blame because they joined the fashionable campaign against the NSA's metadata collection. And by all means Facebook, Twitter and other social media need to police their sites against the promotion of violence and jihad. If they refuse,

politicians will eventually do it for them because Western publics will not allow mass murder to become a new normal.

But that's all the more reason for governments to revive the use of Big Data and surveillance to prevent attacks to avoid even worse intrusions on civil liberties. As attacks continue, so will political pressure for measures such as quarantines and mass preventive arrests of people on terror watch lists.

On that score the U.S. is no exception. President Trump responded to the London attack in a typically heavy-handed way with a tweet urging "the courts" to restore his travel ban. But the anti-antiterror left needs to realize that hostility to surveillance and honest debate about jihad will make such bans inevitable if attacks continue—and Mr. Trump won't be the only politician pushing them.

The New York Times

After London Attack, Prime Minister Says, 'Enough Is Enough' (UNE)

Analysts said the Islamic State considers anyone whose actions were inspired by the group to essentially be a member.

"This is how ISIS decentralizes its terrorism," said Laith Alkhouri, a

director at Flashpoint, a business risk intelligence company in New York that tracks militant threats and cyberthreats. "As of now, there's no indication that ISIS orchestrated or directed these attacks."

On Sunday morning, Mrs. May's Conservative Party and the

opposition Labour Party announced that they were suspending campaigning for the parliamentary elections — for less than a full day, in the case of Labour — out of respect for the victims. However, the right-wing, populist U.K. Independence Party said it would

continue with its scheduled campaign events.

Mrs. May said the election would go ahead on Thursday as planned.

The prime minister led an emergency meeting of her security cabinet on Sunday morning. In a

statement afterward, she said the government would intensify its counterterrorism efforts to deal with Islamist radicalism at home and to try to restrict “the safe spaces it needs to breed,” both on the internet and in British communities.

“Everybody needs to go about their lives as they normally would,” she said. “Our society should continue to function in accordance with our values. But when it comes to taking on extremism and terrorism, things need to change.”

Mrs. May said that the government might extend the duration of custodial sentences for terrorism suspects, but that more needed to be done in binding communities together to combat what she called “a perversion of Islam,” adding, “There is, to be frank, far too much tolerance of extremism in our country.”

Mrs. May, who was home secretary for six years before becoming prime minister, has been pressing for a tougher line against Islamist extremism for some time. By stating on Sunday that police and security measures were insufficient, she was announcing a new effort, if re-elected, to break down what she sees as self-segregated communities and to be less delicate in confronting them.

Legally, she has been stymied by the difficulty of finding a definition of extremism that would hold up in court when challenged on the grounds of free speech.

A good example of the challenge is the case of Anjem Choudary, who spent nearly two decades preaching jihad and radicalizing youths. While some of his organizations were banned, Mr. Choudary, a lawyer, managed to avoid breaking the law while being credited with helping to recruit hundreds of British Muslims to fight for Al Qaeda and the Islamic State.

Mr. Choudary was convicted in 2016 of inviting support for a terrorist organization after film emerged of him pledging allegiance to the Islamic State’s self-styled caliphate. He was sentenced to five years and six months in prison.

Mrs. May also called for a global effort to “regulate cyberspace,” something that is likely to prove difficult, and said the London attack was not connected to the suicide bombing at a pop concert in Manchester, England, last month that killed 22 people.

While none of the assailants in Saturday’s attack were identified,

the counterterrorism police conducted a raid Sunday in Barking, in east London, and arrested 12 people — seven women and five men — ages 19 to 60. The police said searches there continued, suggesting that they had identified at least one assailant.

Britain’s home secretary, Amber Rudd, said on Sunday that the government was confident the attackers were “radical Islamist terrorists.” Speaking on ITV television, Ms. Rudd said, “As the prime minister said, we are confident about the fact that they were radical Islamist terrorists, the way they were inspired, and we need to find out more about where this radicalization came from.”

She refused to say whether the attackers had been known to the authorities before Saturday.

Ken Chigbo, a resident of the neighborhood on King’s Road in Barking where the apartment was raided, said he knew the man who lived in the apartment. He said the neighbor lived with his wife and two young children, looked to be in his mid-20s and was known in the community by his nickname, “Abs.”

“He would always be in a religious gown to his shins, with tracksuit bottoms and trainers underneath,” Mr. Chigbo, 26, said about his neighbor, with whom he played table tennis. “I trusted him. We got on.”

Mr. Chigbo added that a group of three to four men would visit his neighbor’s apartment every week or so. “They were always in religious robes and wearing red-and-white checkered scarves wrapped around their heads,” he said.

The man named Abs had expressed interest in a van that Mr. Chigbo rented recently for a move. “He said, ‘Look, Ken, where did you get your van from, how much did you pay, do they do it in automatic?’” Mr. Chigbo recalled. “Then he said he and his family are thinking of moving too.”

With the general election days away, several polls have shown Mrs. May’s lead over Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader, to be narrowing.

Mr. Corbyn issued his own strong condemnation of the attacks. “We are all shocked and horrified by the brutal attacks in London,” he said in a statement. “My thoughts are with the families and friends of those who have died and the many who have been injured. Today, we will all grieve for their loss.”

Using different methods, pollsters are divided about the extent of the

Conservative lead, but they all show the gap with Labour shrinking, making the landslide Mrs. May hoped for unlikely and even, for at least one polling company, raising the possibility of a hung Parliament.

It is too early to say how the attack will affect the vote, if at all. In general, crises tend to help the incumbent. However, Mrs. May did not seem to receive much of a polling bounce after the Manchester attack, partly because of some campaign mistakes. And as the former home secretary, she might receive some blame for perceived security failings.

Campaigning had already been suspended once, after the Manchester attack. That happened while Mrs. May was on the defensive, having had to change the position on home care policy announced just days earlier in her party’s manifesto.

Mayor Sadiq Khan of London said that the police had been dispersed across the city and that security would remain heightened throughout the week.

Mr. Khan, who described the assault as a “deliberate and cowardly attack on innocent Londoners,” said that some of the injured were in critical condition, raising the possibility that the death toll would rise. “We will never let these cowards win, and we will never be cowed by terrorism,” he said.

The Muslim Council of Britain also condemned the attack and praised the emergency services.

“Muslims everywhere are outraged and disgusted at these cowards who once again have destroyed the lives of our fellow Britons,” said the council’s secretary general, Harun Khan. “That this should happen in this month of Ramadan, when many Muslims were praying and fasting, only goes to show that these people respect neither life nor faith.”

The attack hit a nation still recovering from the shock of the bombing in Manchester almost two weeks ago, when a suicide bomber blew himself up outside the doors of an Ariana Grande concert. Many of those killed were children, and 116 people were injured.

Ms. Grande returned to Manchester with a star-powered lineup on Sunday night to perform in a charity concert and pay tribute to the victims.

Saturday’s attack was reminiscent of another on Westminster Bridge on March 22, when Khalid Masood, 52, drove a car into pedestrians, killing

four people. He then stabbed a police officer to death before being shot and killed near Parliament. The police treated that attack, in which 50 were injured, as “Islamist-related terrorism.”

The mood in London veered from shock to anger in the aftermath of Saturday’s attack.

Expressions of support poured in from Europe, the United States and beyond. In a news media communiqué, President Emmanuel Macron of France expressed solidarity with the British people and described the attack as “horrendous and cowardly.”

“French citizens are among the victims,” he said. “France is doing everything it can to provide them with assistance.” As none of the victims were immediately identified, it was not clear if any were French.

In a statement, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada said that a Canadian citizen was among those killed in the attack. The premier of British Columbia, Christy Clark, confirmed the death of Chrissy Archibald, who was from the province.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull of Australia said citizens of his nation, too, were among the injured.

Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany said, “We are united beyond all borders in horror and sorrow, but also in determination.”

And President Trump said on Twitter: “Whatever the United States can do to help out in London and the UK, we will be there — WE ARE WITH YOU. GOD BLESS!”

But then the president took aim at “political correctness” and Mr. Khan. “We must stop being politically correct and get down to the business of security for our people,” he posted. “If we don’t get smart it will only get worse.”

Mr. Trump then accused Mr. Khan, inaccurately, of saying there was nothing for Londoners to be concerned about. “At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is ‘no reason to be alarmed!’” he wrote.

In fact, Mr. Khan wrote in a statement about the need to remain “calm and vigilant,” and was speaking about the enlarged police presence in the capital when he said there was no reason to be alarmed.

Islamic State Claims London Attack (UNE)

Jason Douglas,
Stu Woo and

LONDON—The third terror attack in Britain in as many months laid bare a growing challenge to Europe's police and intelligence agencies and prompted Prime Minister Theresa May to say tolerance of Islamist extremism in the country had gone too far.

The attack, which killed seven people and was claimed by Islamic State, interrupted the campaigning for national elections for a second time and shook confidence in the country's counterterrorism strategy, which Mrs. May said would be reviewed.

"Since the emergence of the threat from Islamist-inspired terrorism, our country has made significant progress in disrupting plots and protecting the public. But it is time to say enough is enough," Mrs. May said on Sunday.

Mrs. May warned that more must be done to stop people from becoming radicalized, pointing out that attackers have been inspired by those that have come before, often using unsophisticated means.

She added that in the U.K. there is "too much tolerance" of extremism and more must be done to stamp it out, saying the government will consider lengthier prison sentences for extremist-related offenses.

She took aim at internet companies for what she said was allowing extremism—a "perversion" of the Islamic faith—to flourish online.

"We cannot allow this ideology the safe space it needs to breed. Yet that is precisely what the internet and the big companies that provide internet based services provide," Mrs. May said.

With voting set for Thursday, campaigning will resume on Monday, with security issues likely to take center stage. For Mrs. May, the issue is a double-edged sword: As a former Home Secretary from 2010 to 2016, she knows the issue inside out. But any lapses that emerge from investigations of possible failings by the police or security services could also be laid at her door.

Three knife-wielding men carried out the deadly rampage in the capital Saturday night, plowing a rented white van into pedestrians on London Bridge and then indiscriminately stabbing people in a lively area of pubs and restaurants nearby. In addition to those killed,

dozens were injured, with 21 of them in critical condition on Sunday.

One of the victims was identified as 30-year-old Christine Archibald of British Columbia, who worked in a homeless shelter in Calgary before moving several months ago to the Netherlands to be with her fiancé, Tyler Ferguson, said his sister, Cassie Ferguson.

Ms. Archibald and Mr. Ferguson were visiting London for the weekend when a van plowed into pedestrians on London Bridge, Ms. Ferguson said.

Police ended the violence by shooting and killing the assailants just eight minutes after they received the first reports of the bridge incident.

Islamic State on Sunday said on its official Amaq news agency that a "covert unit" had carried out the attack.

Police haven't released the identities of the three men. At least one of the men was born in Pakistan, a Western security official said. It wasn't clear when the man came to Britain or whether he had acquired British citizenship.

Twelve people were arrested Sunday in Barking, East London, in connection with the attacks, and authorities were carrying out raids in a nearby neighborhood.

I.J. Johnson, a neighbor who lives across the street from an apartment building in Barking that was raided, said he saw a white van rushing out of the complex around 9 p.m. Saturday.

On Monday morning, the Metropolitan Police Service said officers entered two new addresses in Newham and Barking in East London and said a number of people were detained.

The attack brought to 34 the number of people killed in three terrorist incidents in the U.K. since March 22, when a car driver killed four people on Westminster Bridge and then stabbed a policeman to death. In May, 22 people were killed and more than 100 injured by a lone suicide bomber at a pop concert in Manchester.

Ariana Grande and other pop stars performed on Sunday before a sold-out crowd at a Manchester concert to benefit the victims of the May 22 attack after Ms. Grande's concert at Manchester Arena.

The assault suggests a growing tempo of attacks that represents a particular challenge to authorities in

Britain and across the West: relatively unsophisticated plots by small groups or individuals using easily obtainable materials. They can be very difficult for the authorities to track because the plotters often have few links with known suspects.

"As the nature of the threat we face becomes more complex, more fragmented, more hidden, especially online, the strategy needs to keep up," Mrs. May said following an emergency meeting with senior officials Sunday morning. She announced a review to see if police and security services had sufficient powers and to examine whether prison sentences for even less-serious offenses should be increased.

"In terms of their planning and execution, the three recent British attacks are not connected," she said. "But we believe we are experiencing a new trend in the threat we face, as terrorism breeds terrorism."

MI5, Britain's domestic security service, has tracked 20,000 individuals in the past in connection with extremism and is currently managing about 500 active investigations, a U.K. security official said in May.

Only a small percentage of the growing number of known Islamist extremists—a British intelligence official said they now number more than 3,000, almost double a decade ago—are tracked full time, given limited resources.

In the Westminster and Manchester attacks, the suspects were known to security officials, but they had appeared to be on the periphery of investigations.

The authorities will be looking to widen their surveillance net now that it is clear more of these individuals have the wherewithal to mount deadly strikes on short notice.

"Low-tech attacks involving vehicles and knives have been on the increase recently as they are easily accessible and the most difficult for security services to stop," said Alan Mendoza, executive director of the Henry Jackson Society, a think tank based in London that works to combat extremism.

The government left the country's terrorism threat rating at severe—the fourth rung of five—implying investigators didn't see a threat of an imminent further attack.

Mrs. May said that since the Westminster attack, the security

services had uncovered five other credible plots.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, the U.K.'s top counterterrorism police officer, said eight officers confronted the three assailants in the Borough Market area and fired around 50 rounds to kill them, believing they were equipped with suicide vests. Police have since said the vests were hoaxes.

He said one civilian suffered a gunshot wound when police opened fire and is in the hospital, though the injuries weren't believed to be critical.

In Barking, neighbors said they heard bangs and then saw a phalanx of police vehicles during the raid early Sunday at an apartment complex.

They said it appeared a woman who wore a niqab was among those arrested, and that she and her husband lived in a lower-floor apartment with two children.

Later Sunday, police descended on East Ham, another east London neighborhood. One witness, who works at a chicken shop, said she saw a half-dozen people being arrested, including some who were customers at the shop.

Malik Rouf was shopping on a busy street in East Ham when he saw police descend on the Paddy Power sports-betting shop. He saw one man, whom he described as around 30 years old, wearing a gray vest and bluejeans, trying to escape through a window above the shop.

"Police with rifles shouted at him 'get back in, get back in,'" he said. "There was another armed officer inside who grabbed him."

Shortly after, he said he saw another man, around the same age, with a shaved head and a beard, and dressed in a white robe, dragged out in handcuffs.

President Donald Trump spoke to Mrs. May, offering "the full support of the United States government in investigating and bringing those responsible for these heinous acts to justice." He also tweeted that U.S. courts should unblock his proposed travel restrictions to provide greater safety to Americans. "We need to be smart, vigilant and tough."

—Benoit Faucon,
Max Colchester, Riva Gold,
Laurence Fletcher, Margot Patrick,
Georgi Kantchev, Philip Georgiadis
and Robert Wall
contributed to this article.

Trump reacts to London terror by stoking fear and renewing feud with mayor (UNE)

A traditional president would have reacted carefully to the London Bridge terrorist attack by instilling calm, being judicious about facts and appealing to the country's better angels.

But Donald Trump is no traditional president. He reacted impulsively to Saturday night's carnage by stoking panic and fear, being indiscreet with details of the event and capitalizing on it to advocate for one of his more polarizing policies and to advance a personal feud.

Before British authorities detailed exactly what happened on the London Bridge, before they blamed Islamist extremism and even before they publicly concluded it was an act of terrorism, President Trump fired off a tweet to his 31 million followers: An unconfirmed bulletin from the Drudge Report.

"Fears of new terror attack after van 'mows down 20 people' on London Bridge . . .," read the Drudge tweet, which Trump retweeted.

Before offering his condolences to the British people, the victims of three gruesome attacks in as many months, Trump pecked out a second tweet. "We need to be smart, vigilant and tough," the president wrote, calling on U.S. courts to affirm his administration's travel ban on people from six majority-Muslim nations.

Later that evening, Trump spoke with British Prime Minister Theresa May and extended his support for America's closest ally. He tweeted, "Whatever the United States can do to help out in London and the U. K., we will be there — WE ARE WITH YOU. GOD BLESS!"

On Sunday morning, however, once the breadth of the horror in London was clear, Trump was back on Twitter. He criticized the city's mayor — Sadiq Khan, a liberal Muslim and an old Trump foil — for not being tough enough protecting his citizens.

"At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is 'no reason to be alarmed!' " Trump tweeted.

Trump took Khan's quote out of context. The mayor had urged

Londoners, in a BBC interview that was replayed, not to be "alarmed" by an increased police presence in the city. He said that after condemning the "deliberate and cowardly attack" as "barbaric."

A Khan representative swatted away Trump's taunt, saying in a statement that the mayor "has more important things to do than respond to Donald Trump's ill-informed tweet that deliberately takes out of context his remarks urging Londoners not to be alarmed when they saw more police — including armed officers — on the streets."

Trump also stoked the long-running and emotionally charged national debate over gun laws by pointing out that the London attackers did not use firearms. "Do you notice we are not having a gun debate right now? That's because they used knives and a truck!" Trump tweeted.

Britain has some of the world's strictest laws on gun purchases. The death toll in London might have been higher had the attackers used the kind of semiautomatic weapons that are more easily attainable in the United States.

White House officials did not respond to questions about Trump's comments on Sunday.

With Trump spending another day at his private golf club in Sterling, Va., the White House's social media director, Dan Scavino, revived an old Trump-Khan feud on Twitter and scolded the mayor to "WAKE UP!!!!"

Chris Lu, who served as White House Cabinet secretary under President Barack Obama, was aghast.

"The fact that the White House social media director is commenting before the national security leadership has spoken is yet another example of Trump's 'shoot first, ask questions later' attitude towards handling international incidents," Lu said.

Historian Robert Dallek said Trump is exhibiting an entirely new style of presidential leadership. "Trump rubs everything raw," he said. "He makes it more acerbic, more contentious."

Dallek, who has studied former president Franklin D. Roosevelt, who steered the country through Pearl Harbor, was unsparing in his critique of Trump's response to the London attack.

"There's something so petty about this man," Dallek said. "What we're dealing with is someone who is, and I think this is the best term, an egomaniac. Everything has to revolve around him — he knows better, he's right, he one-ups everything."

Trump's supporters are likely to see his swift flurry of commentary as evidence of strength and unwavering resolve — a leader dispatching with political correctness and caution to deliver an assessment that is authentic and immediate.

This is just how Trump behaved on the campaign trail. He was quick to pounce on terrorist incidents in Paris and Brussels, as well as Orlando and San Bernardino, Calif., with tough vows, even if he was loose with his facts.

Last month, after a suicide bomber killed 22 others and injured scores more at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, Trump labeled terrorists "evil losers" and vowed to obliterate "this wicked ideology."

Trump last week also prematurely called a deadly attack in a casino in the Philippines a "terrorist attack." Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte later said it was not the work of terrorists but a "crazy" gunman.

Trump's response to this weekend's London Bridge incident won praise Sunday morning from friend Nigel Farage, who as head of the UK Independence Party led last year's Brexit movement, which Trump supported and saw as a precursor to his own election.

In an interview on Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends," a show Trump is known to watch frequently, Farage sharply criticized Khan and May's responses to the London attack as too timid and politically correct. He also lamented that the city had become, in his assessment, a safe harbor for Muslim "radicals."

"We don't just want speeches given outside 10 Downing Street," Farage said. "We want genuine action. And if there's not action, then the calls for internment will grow."

Trump echoed Farage's broad sentiment, assailing political correctness in the United States as well. "We must stop being politically correct and get down to the business of security for our people. If we don't get smart it will only get worse," Trump said on Twitter.

Although Trump and May have a relationship that both countries describe as positive and productive, Trump has long tangled with Khan, a member of the Labour Party who was elected mayor last year, London's first Muslim chief executive.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

Khan has positioned himself as a moral and ideological foil to Trump. During last year's U.S. presidential campaign, Trump proposed banning all Muslims from entering the United States, but suggested he would make an exception for London's mayor. Khan responded by saying Trump had an "ignorant view of Islam."

In January, Khan criticized Trump's travel ban on people from seven majority-Muslim countries — it was later revised to six. The mayor called it "shameful and cruel," saying that the policy "flies in the face of the values of freedom and tolerance."

And just last week, Khan joined the chorus of foreign leaders denouncing Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the landmark Paris climate agreement.

After the London attack, Trump's critics chastised him for continuing his feud with Khan.

"I don't think that a major terrorist attack like this is the time to be divisive and to criticize a mayor who's trying to organize his city's response to this attack," former vice president Al Gore said Sunday on CNN. "The terrorists want us to live in a state of constant fear."



Theresa May's Self-Inflicted Election

Ian Dunt

At best, the

British snap election was always going to be a pointless exercise. Now it's looking more likely to wind

up as an unnecessary act of self-inflicted humiliation.

When Theresa May stepped out of Downing Street in mid-April and announced that she would hold a

surprise general election, this was not the way she thought it would go. At the time, polls showed a healthy Tory lead, with most commentators expecting the Conservatives to secure an astronomical majority of something like 150 seats. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was seen as weak, uncharismatic, and politically deranged. (He had proposed, for instance, that Britain spend billions to update its nuclear submarines — but that it should remove the nukes.) Even worse, he was viewed as hopelessly inept at the cut-and-thrust of politics. His own members of Parliament said they got “more and more depressed” every time he stood up. The prime minister, on the other hand, had never been more popular and was viewed as ruthless, canny, and above all competent. May saw weakness and made her move. And why not? It seemed like a sure thing.

It hasn't quite worked out the way she expected. A catastrophic series of unforced errors on the part of the prime minister has raised the prospect that May could, absurdly, end up in exactly the same position she started in when she called the vote — or possibly lose her majority altogether. The campaign has almost taken on the air of a Shakespearean tragedy. The election that was supposed to allow May to cast herself as Britain's determined and resolute leader has seen her rebranded as cowardly and inept. In the words of former Labour advisor Tom Baldwin: “The prime minister is disintegrating in front of the public.”

Two things got us here. First, May failed to make the campaign about the country's pending exit from the European Union, despite proclaiming this the Brexit election. Second, she has conducted herself with a staggering degree of incompetence, which has not contrasted well with her repeated declaration that she is the “strong and stable” candidate.

May wanted to make this the Brexit election, because she thought that if voters asked themselves who they would rather see in the negotiating room — her or Corbyn — she would come out on top. This might be true, but it turns out that it is hard to keep voters focused on an issue when you are unwilling to provide any details about it.

The effect of Brexit on the British economy is impossible to overstate. It risks the return of a hard border in Ireland, billions of lost revenue from trade with Europe, countrywide regulatory chaos, travel obstacles, and countless other issues, including aircraft flight paths and animal rights. It is arguably the biggest policy decision taken by a

British government in the postwar era. May still refuses to discuss any of it, instead relying on her absurdist mantra that “Brexit means Brexit” and she intends “to make a success of it.” Brexit secretary David Davis recently reduced critics to laughter when he insisted the government had “over 100 pages of detail” about the process — barely even a prologue. He admits to having done no studies on the consequences of falling out of the European Union without a deal, even though that is the default outcome of the coming negotiations.

May has asked voters to trust her judgment on Brexit issues without being prepared to divulge any details. Her election strategy has resembled a religious demand more than an intellectual proposition.

May has asked voters to trust her judgment on Brexit issues without being prepared to divulge any details. Her election strategy has resembled a religious demand more than an intellectual proposition. Nearly a year on, Brexit remains an absence wrapped in a mystery.

This tactic has made it easier to avoid the difficult questions around Brexit and how, exactly, to make a success of it — but it appears to have had one major pitfall. May couldn't hold the national conversation down on the topic of exiting the European Union because she refused to talk about it — and attention duly wandered onto domestic issues, where detail is available. And this is where things started to fall apart.

The release of a party manifesto in British politics is a crucial moment in the election cycle. They can break political parties, as they did Labour in 1983, when Michael Foot's effort — which called for mass nationalization of industries, unilateral nuclear disarmament, and high taxes on the rich — was branded “the longest suicide note in history.” Or they can frame the debate around the election and put rocket-boosters on a campaign. The release of the Tory manifesto this year was a disaster. It included a proposal for a new social care policy designed to put help for the elderly on a more sustainable level. People requiring care at the end of their life would pay for it with their assets after their death, up to their last \$129,000. The irony is that this policy is not altogether unreasonable — it taxed those who could afford to pay to help share the burden of an elderly population. But it was translated, in tabloid-speak, as a “dementia tax” — a state effort to stop you from passing your home on to your children if you were unlucky enough to get a debilitating and drawn-out illness. It was of

particular concern to the over 65s, who happen to be the group that most reliably votes Tory.

The reaction was instant and entirely predictable. The press hated it. Tory voters hated it. Tory MPs hated it. What was most telling, however, was how surprised May seemed to be about all this hate. Even the most cursory stress-testing of the policy would have established that this response was likely. But one thing we've learned about May since she's become leader is that she has an obsession with control. She purged the old guard of the party, who had worked under David Cameron and former Chancellor George Osborne. She brought her cabinet to heel. Those members like Chancellor Philip Hammond and Home Secretary Amber Rudd, who may have once shown flickers of independence, have long since submitted. By most accounts, the only people making decisions in Britain these days are May and two of her closest advisors. The result was this manifesto, the product of a team deciding on policies with too little scrutiny, tucked away and insulated from criticism.

Within days there was a U-turn, with the promise of a cap on the amount that would be paid. It was an extraordinary climb-down — possibly the first time a party had reversed a policy before it had been put to voters in an election. Even the U-turn itself was handled badly. May took to the stage at a ferocious news conference and insisted repeatedly that “nothing has changed,” which was plainly nonsense and caused journalists to hound her for days. A quick reversal can limit the damage of a bad policy. But the manner in which May executed it only served to stretch out the humiliation.

The moment seemed to break May's confidence. She's never been the most reliable of public speakers; she has the twitching facial expressions of a shy person forced to attend a party. That alone is hardly a crime, but if you run for government on the slogan “strong and stable” you really do need to be able to look it. Instead, May developed a nervous tic where she would laugh maniacally at critical questions from journalists and then instantly start grimacing. It looked terrible.

The polls started shifting. Her Everest-like lead was chipped away to almost nothing in some surveys. The volatility in the polls is at least partly to do with changes in methodology following the failures to predict the 2015 election result, or Brexit. But clearly there's something going on beyond that. People are reappraising their vote — and the party leaders.

Corbyn suddenly seems to have the wind in his sails. A prime-time interview with seasoned journalist Jeremy Paxman saw the Labour leader appear relaxed, human, and witty. It stood in stark difference to the increasingly robotic and unlikable prime minister. (One local journalist from the *Plymouth Herald* was so infuriated by the experience of questioning May that he blogged about it. “Before 8:30 a.m. today, I had never interviewed a prime minister,” he wrote. “Heading back to the office to transcribe my encounter with Theresa May I couldn't be certain that had changed.”)

Then, at the end of May, Corbyn made the surprise announcement that he'd be attending a TV debate of opposition leaders and dared May to come along too. She refused, accusing him of wanting to go on television rather than talk to voters — a rather absurd claim given that she was delivering the accusation on television. Instead, Rudd, the home secretary, was sent to face the other leaders despite being in mourning for her father, who had passed away days earlier.

May's seeming refusal to face scrutiny at the end of a bad few weeks helped seal the impression that she wasn't half as good as she'd been made out to be by a supportive press.

May's seeming refusal to face scrutiny at the end of a bad few weeks helped seal the impression that she wasn't half as good as she'd been made out to be by a supportive press. The party leaders who did attend the TV debate piled on the absent prime minister. “The first rule of leadership is to show up,” Green Party leader Caroline Lucas said. “Make yourself a brew,” Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron told viewers, using a British colloquial term for tea. “You are not worth Theresa May's time. Don't give her yours.” The following day, even the *Sun*, an indefatigably loyal right-wing tabloid, started to question the prime minister's judgment. “The time has come for Theresa May to spell out why her optimistic vision for Britain is worth voting for,” it demanded.

Despite all this, the smart money is still on a Tory victory. A recent YouGov forecast of a hung Parliament sent shudders through the Conservative Party, but many commentators have questioned its methodology. May's campaign can also be expected to gather itself for a final week of disciplined messaging. The expectation is that she'll still win and secure an enlarged majority — although nowhere near as large as was expected.

And yet victory alone is not enough. When she triggered Article 50 in March, May set the clock ticking; Britain now has two years to secure a deal that allows it to exit the European Union without catastrophe. Negotiations are supposed to begin in earnest just 11 days after the June 8 vote. May has used up two crucial months of preparation time with this election.

Countless hours have been spent by MPs pacing their constituencies and journalists going up and down the country covering interminable campaign events. The civil service has been effectively switched off for the duration of the campaign — a process known as *purdah*. This time was urgently needed to hire and prepare trade experts and negotiators for the work ahead. Britain needs to be coordinating

simultaneous talks in Brussels and the World Trade Organization, where it must establish an independent presence outside the EU umbrella. It needs to set up staff and legally rubber-stamp countless domestic regulators to take on tasks previously handled by Europe. It is as enormous a task as any British government has undertaken in generations. The two years provided by the Article 50 process are nowhere near enough. May has now wasted two months of it on a cynical, self-serving exercise that has blown up in her face. Worse, the British public, after all this, still has no idea how she plans to pursue the most important issue facing the country.

If current polls are anything to go by, she will win the election, but do so with possibly as few seats as she

had going into it. That would leave her mortally wounded, not just in the eyes of many in her party and outside it. She will have been humiliated on the national stage. The prime minister who modeled herself after the Iron Lady will instead look ineffective and foolhardy. Or, as Channel 4 News reporter Michael Crick put it to her during a particularly bruising news conference recently, she will no longer be considered "strong and stable," but "weak and wobbly."

And personal embarrassment aside, this will have direct consequences for the Brexit negotiations. May could reasonably be seen as damaged goods, who cannot necessarily get agreements she makes in Brussels past Parliament. And her choice of language during the campaign, including one

hopelessly misjudged speech in which she claimed European leaders were trying to subvert the British election, has helped to poison opinion against her on the continent.

It is still possible that May performs better than downcast expectations. The polls are confused, the public mood is volatile, and Corbyn remains a shambolic public presence. She is likely to be returned with an increased majority. But even then, something fundamental will have changed as a result of the election she called. May's indomitable image has been tarnished. Her adversaries, at home and abroad, have smelled blood. They're unlikely to forget the scent.



Bergen : 7 questions about the London terror attacks

Peter Bergen is CNN's national security analyst, a vice president at New America and a professor of practice at Arizona State University. He is the author of "United States of Jihad: Investigating America's Homegrown Terrorists."

(CNN)The first question after the deadly London terror attacks Saturday is, of course: Who is responsible? British police have killed three suspects, but as yet there is no credible claim of responsibility for the attacks.

The vast majority of attacks and plots in the West in the past three years have been directed or inspired by ISIS.

That doesn't entirely preclude an al Qaeda-inspired plot. Three weeks ago Hamza bin Laden, one of Osama bin Laden's sons who has been playing a more prominent role in al Qaeda of late, issued a call for attacks on Westerners saying, "If you are able to pick up a firearm, well and good; if not, the options are many."

But, al Qaeda has not shown much ability to inspire or direct attacks in the West in recent years.

Second, if indeed it was an ISIS-related attack, was this ISIS-inspired, like the attack last year at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, by US citizen Omar Mateen in which he killed 49 people?

Or was it an ISIS-enabled operation, as was the unsuccessful attempt in 2015 to attack a Prophet Mohammad cartoon contest in

Garland, Texas? The two American terrorists in that attack were in encrypted communication with an ISIS militant in the Middle East who directed their efforts.

Or was it an operation in which ISIS had trained the terrorists, like the case of the 2015 Paris attacks that killed 130?

The low-tech nature of the London attacks on Saturday, in which the terrorists used a vehicle as a weapon and also wielded large knives, suggests it was ISIS-inspired rather than an attack in which ISIS had trained the perpetrators.

Third, how large is the conspiracy? From what we know so far there were three suspects involved. Were they part of a larger network or were they a self-contained cell?

Fourth, did the Muslim holy month of Ramadan play some role in sparking the London attacks? As I noted on Wednesday, the Ramadan period that began just over a week ago, could see a surge in terrorist attacks, including in the West, because ISIS has specifically called for such attacks during this Ramadan and the group has, unfortunately, had a track record of inspiring such attacks.

Last year, for instance, ISIS called for attacks during Ramadan and one of those who answered that call was Omar Mateen who pledged allegiance to ISIS as he carried out the most lethal terrorist attack in the United States since 9/11 at the Orlando nightclub almost exactly a year ago.

Fifth, once the suspects are identified in the London attacks will they be known in some way to law enforcement? That is quite often the case. For instance, the suicide bomber who struck two weeks ago at the Ariana Grande concert in Manchester in northern England killing 22 was known to the British security services.

So too was the terrorist who rammed his car into pedestrians walking across London's Westminster bridge in March, killing 4.

Which raises the sixth question: After the third significant terrorist attack in three months in the United Kingdom, what will the political fallout be on the British general election to be held on Thursday, in particular if British voters feel that the government has failed in its primary duty to keep them safe?

Typically terrorist attacks produce a rally-around-the flag effect as was the case after 9/11 and the huge outpouring of public support that then-President George W. Bush garnered.

But in this case the British public may be concerned that there is an ongoing campaign of terror which their government has not adequately prevented. Will there be a political backlash against British Prime Minister Theresa May, whose ruling Conservative Party is traditionally seen as "stronger" on terrorism than its main rival, the Labour Party?

You only have to recall the terrorist attacks in Madrid, Spain, in 2004 -- in which 191 were killed only three

days before the Spanish election -- to understand that an attack very late in an electoral cycle can have unexpected consequences. The sitting prime minister, Jose Aznar, who had strongly backed the US-led Iraq War, was unseated by a challenger who then pulled Spanish troops out of Iraq. The Madrid terrorist attacks are generally regarded as being the key to why Aznar, who had been leading in the polls, was defeated.

Seventh: What to do? President Donald Trump tweeted shortly after the London attacks that his administration's proposed temporary travel ban aimed at six Muslim-majority countries should be instituted.

Right now, of course, that proposed ban is being held up in the courts. But the travel ban is a solution in search of a problem that doesn't exist. The perpetrators of these terrorist attacks in the West are largely second-generation homegrown terrorists, not recent immigrants or refugees.

The hard reality is that attacks by vehicles in public places are very hard to defend against in a free and open society.

The best defense against such attacks is good intelligence, and that often comes from inside the Muslim community. To gather that intelligence requires not alienating Muslims but encouraging them to flag to authorities those they see who are radicalizing or seem to be preparing some kind of an attack.



Era of Tolerance Could Be Over as Britain Fights Back Against Jihad

Nico Hines

LONDON—Londoners fought back against a gang of jihadi killers on Saturday night with whatever they could lay their hands on—including bottles, chairs and tables—one taxi driver said he had even tried to run down a marauding terrorist with his car.

These members of the public, and a police officer armed only with a baton, helped limit the fatalities to seven during a rampage that lasted just eight minutes before heavily armed specialist officers took out the attackers in a hail of around 50 bullets.

In a speech from Downing Street on Sunday, Prime Minister Theresa May vowed her own fightback with new counter-terrorism measures and a crackdown on extremism, which she said had been tolerated for too long.

This time, the message on the morning after a terrorist attack was not simply, 'Keep calm and carry on.'

May's criticism of the current counter-terror strategy surprised sections of the law enforcement community, however, since she was largely responsible for the crafting and implementation of the strategy during six years in charge of the police and security services as Home Secretary.

"Enough is enough," she said. "When it comes to taking on extremism and terrorism, things need to change."

No specific policy changes were detailed but May said it was time to crackdown on Islamist extremism and internet freedom after a third devastating attack on Britain in three months.

"There is—to be frank—far too much tolerance of extremism in our country. So we need to become far more robust in identifying it and stamping it out," she said. "United we will take on and defeat our

enemies."

On Saturday, there were less than ten minutes between the first emergency services call and the moment eight Metropolitan Police officers discharged 50 rounds—an unprecedented number of bullets fired by British law enforcement officers—to take out three men they believed were wearing explosive devices. The suicide vests proved to be hoaxes.

Seven people who were out partying on a Saturday night were killed by the gang, who have not yet been publicly identified. A further 21 people remain in a critical condition in hospitals across London.

A Blue Thunder special forces unit was deployed for its first live mission on the streets of London during the rampage—signaling a new era of increased British military response to the terror threat.

The SAS commando units, who are able to rappel from unmarked helicopters directly into areas under attack, have direct experience of carrying out similar kill missions in conflict zones in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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In the latest incident, civilian police officers trained by their SAS colleagues were able to extinguish the threat before the military was required to intervene.

Members of the security community said the armed response on Saturday had been exemplary but called for an increase in the number of police and intelligence officers. Drastic cuts to the police funding during May's time at the Home Office mean there are now fewer armed officers than there were in 2010.

A former Northern Ireland police intelligence officer, who has helped the Pentagon train new police forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, told the Daily Beast that the fightback against terrorists should begin with restoring investment in the police. "Recruiting more police officers works, it's as simple as that," said William Matchett.

He said intelligence officers would like to see increased powers, particularly to circumvent privacy laws and allow further monitoring with less bureaucracy. "Intelligence needs a bit more clout," he said. "The trick is getting the intelligence system working to be more proactive."

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson followed May's intervention with an apparent call for more radical intrusion into Britain's Muslim communities. "To those who sympathize or encourage or harbor or aid or abet these killers—in any way—we say enough is enough," he wrote. "Your time is up. The wells of tolerance are running empty."

Professor Anthony Glees, the director of the Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies at the University of Buckingham who contributed to the parliamentary Homeland Security Group, said the Conservative government's sudden appetite for tougher measures had not been matched by their record in office.

He said there should be an increase in intelligence officers within the police and that MI5 should be doubled in size, from fewer than 4,000 officers, in order to deal with a

secret army of 23,000 jihadi extremists living in Britain.

On Sunday, May repeated the Tory election pledge to attempt to control pro-jihadi content on the internet. "We need to work with allied, democratic governments to reach international agreements that regulate cyberspace to prevent the spread of extremism and terrorist planning," she said.

After claiming that campaigning for this week's general election had been suspended, May was criticized for including her policy offer in her first speech after London's most deadly terror attack since 2005.

Glees is more concerned about her ability to enact the policy. "There are plenty of good ideas, but they don't know how to deliver these ideas," he said. "How can Theresa May deliver on taking down toxic websites when the internet countries are not subject to British law?"

Glees has long advocated for a more comprehensive counter-extremist strategy. For example, he criticized May's decision to end the control order system, which was introduced under Tony Blair's Labour government. These orders allowed individuals to be closely monitored and forcibly relocated within Britain if the authorities believed they were a threat to the public.

"A lot of people are surprised that we don't have control orders. Well, we don't have them because Theresa May abolished them," Glees told The Daily Beast. "She said we've got to recalibrate the balance between liberty and security towards liberty."

After three major attacks in the first year of May's premiership, that might be about to change.



Editorial : The U.S. can learn from Germany's economic model

France, it would seem, is no longer the chief villain among America's so-called European allies. That honor now goes to Germany.

At least that is the message President Trump sent last week by blasting Germany for its perennial trade surpluses and its reluctance to spend more on defense, prompting German Chancellor Angela Merkel to declare that Europe can no longer rely on others and "really must take our fate into our own hands."

Picking a needless fight with a key European partner has serious downsides. German intelligence is important in fighting terror. German support is vital in containing Russia, a key objective of the now-weakened NATO alliance. And European-wide backing for the United States could play a key role in the Middle East and the Korean peninsula.

While Trump does have a point that Germany underspends on defense and consistently maintains a trade surplus with the United States (\$65 billion last year), his griping — followed by his wrong-headed

decision to pull out of the Paris climate change accord — accomplishes little.

This is particularly true in the economic arena, where Germany is one of the few advanced nations that has maintained much of its manufacturing base. In fact, a strong case can be made that the United States should learn from Germany, not complain about it.

Germany's success has two key components, one of which is common to a number of countries that maintain trade surpluses with

the United States, and one of which is uniquely German:

- The first is a tax code that encourages savings and investment, in contrast to a U.S. code that encourages borrowing and consumption. Germany's corporate income tax, for instance is just 15%, compared to the 35% in the United States. The German tax rate benefits investors, as well as companies that can reinvest more of their

profits and have an easier time raising capital from the outside. To make up for the lost revenue of a low corporate tax, Germany has a national consumption tax that runs as high as 19% on some consumer items. Trump has endorsed slashing the U.S. corporate tax rate but hasn't come up with a credible way to pay for it.

- The second advantage Germany has is its national commitment to manufacturing. This includes massive public support for job training and retraining, and penalties on companies for laying off workers. The German unemployment system is less generous to those who don't have a job while

giving more incentive for those willing and able to work. For example, unemployed workers who take a job that doesn't pay very well can continue to receive part of their jobless benefits.

As the result of its access to capital and the many incentives it has to keep jobs at home, manufacturing makes up a quarter of the German

economy. It is just 12% in the United States.

If Trump wants to keep his promises to Rust Belt voters who helped put him in office, he'd be better off studying Germany's economic policies rather than lashing out at them.

INTERNATIONAL

**The
New York
Times**

On Mosul's Front Line: A Grueling Battle on Civilian Streets (UNE)

Ivor Prickett

MOSUL, Iraq — The Islamic State's grip on Mosul has shrunk to a tighter circle of neighborhoods in the western part of the city. But many civilians are still trapped in those areas, and the militants are giving no ground easily.

As we traveled with Iraqi forces through the Rifai neighborhood last month, evidence of a brutal street fight was all around. The destruction was immense, and it seemed not a single house was free of bullet holes — or worse.

While clashes still raged in the last remaining pockets of Islamic State control in Rifai, displaced people began to trickle out at dusk. The number of people managing to flee appeared much lower than in earlier parts of the battle for the west.

Other than the occasional group of hushed and worn-out people who would suddenly file out from the front line, the streets were almost devoid of a human presence. Another exception was the Iraqi forces stationed there. But yet there are many civilians in the area, most sticking to their houses out of fear of crossfire, or of being seized by Islamic State fighters.

On one street corner, opposite an Iraqi special forces base near the front line, five dead Islamic State fighters lay rotting in the summer heat — a rare concentration of militants, who have increasingly fought in smaller teams of two or three men. Some Iraqi soldiers said the fighters had probably been

caught by cannon fire from a helicopter or plane.

The bodies were bloated and covered in the flies that seem to flourish in the debris-strewn streets of Mosul.

Special forces soldiers took up defensive positions on the edge of Rifai after it was recaptured, and they waited for their next orders.

Then came the Islamic State's counterattack. Under the cover of a sudden sandstorm, the jihadists fought the troops for hours before being driven off. The militants seldom seem to pass up the chance to use storms or other heavy weather, when coalition aircraft can't target them, to press the fight.

On the front line the next morning, soldiers told how the intense gunfire during the storm battle had set their sandbag walls on fire. They appeared amazed that the Islamic State remained well equipped and capable, and described how the militants were disciplined about using vehicles and medics to retrieve their wounded.

On May 29, a Monday morning, four battalions of Iraqi special forces soldiers moved into what seemed to be a very small part of the western district of Al Saha to try to clear it of any remaining Islamic State fighters.

Setting out early, the men split into teams and moved into the area in stages. The second team had time to rest and eat breakfast before being called to join the operation.

The work for Iraqi troops has already been grueling as they have tried to clear neighborhoods north of the Old City, often within gunshot of militants holed up there.

Al Saha is one of the close-in areas, and the Iraqi special forces there took care to use the rat holes that the militants had cut through the walls of homes in order to move more securely.

At one junction on the edge of Rifai, an Islamic State sniper had taken up position and was shooting at vehicles as they crossed the road. He fired at a large group of fleeing civilians, narrowly missing. His shot flew over their heads and hit an upturned car behind them. The gunfire split the crowd, with half running back to where they had come from.

There was no other way for them to get to safety, so they waited for a military vehicle to cross the road and used the dust it kicked up as cover to make a run for it. Women carrying children, family members carrying the infirm — all moved as quickly as they could to reach safety. Somehow, they made it out unhurt.

Little has been left unscathed in these neighborhoods, where a tremendous amount of firepower from the sky and on the ground has been brought to bear.

Coalition airstrikes are still being called in frequently in the middle of densely populated neighborhoods, and the civilian toll has been immense. But the Iraqi forces have seemed reluctant to advance at all

without the air support. Here, they treated a girl who was wounded when her house was hit in an airstrike.

When asked why the men didn't just engage the Islamic State fighters more directly themselves rather than risk more civilian lives by using airstrikes, one young soldier said they wanted to finish the fight with no casualties on their side.

Maybe this way of thinking points to the high rate of attrition the Iraqi forces have had over the last few years of fighting the militants, including a huge toll on the elite counterterrorism forces over the past few months of urban fighting in Mosul. Or maybe it's an indication of a fight so bitter that utter destruction is acceptable as long as the enemy is beaten.

Ahead lies Mosul's Old City, and perhaps the worst fight yet. As the battle has drawn closer to that area's tight and jagged streets, the number of fleeing civilians has dropped sharply.

Some of the soldiers here, as well as one resident who had managed to flee, spoke of the Islamic State fighters' trying to round up anyone still living in the area and forcing them to retreat with them toward the Old City.

It's a chilling thought, horrifyingly consistent with how the Islamic State has fought this battle for months. The militants' last stand may well take place behind a wall of civilians.

**The
New York
Times**

Iraqi Forces Disrupt Islamic State Supply Route

Ben Kesling

MOSUL, Iraq—Iraqi paramilitary forces captured a hub on a key Islamic State supply route between

Syria and Iraq, further disrupting the flow of fighters and goods between the terror group's major urban

strongholds, Iraq's defense ministry said.

Units from Iraq's predominantly Shiite Muslim militias on Sunday

retook the northwest town of Baaj, about 100 miles from Mosul, where Islamic State has lost substantial ground to U.S.-backed Iraqi forces.

Baaj served as a staging ground for the extremists during a lightning advance that saw them seize about one-third of Iraq in 2014.

The town and the surrounding district, much of which sits on the Iraq-Syria border and which Iraqi forces also captured, have since been a main way station between Mosul and Raqqa, the Syrian city that is the group's de facto capital in Syria.

"It's a fatal blow to Daesh there since the liberation of the Baaj district means cutting off the connection between the Syrian Daesh in Raqqa and Iraqi Daesh in Mosul," said Brigadier Tahseen al-Khafaji, spokesman for the defense ministry, using the Arabic acronym for Islamic State.

In 2015, Islamic State officials declared Baaj one of a few fallback cities in the event of the loss of a major stronghold like Mosul, said Hisham al-Hashimi, a Baghdad-based expert studying Iraqi extremism.

Much of the border area is sparsely populated and porous, allowing Islamic State to ferry goods and fighters. But as key roads and towns come under Iraqi control, options for Islamic State to resupply are diminishing.

Iraq's army and allied paramilitary forces have since 2015 dealt the Sunni Muslim terror group a series of key battlefield defeats, greatly reducing the amount of territory under its control. The battle for Mosul, its remaining major urban stronghold in the country, kicked off in October.

Iraqi forces drove the extremists from east Mosul in late January, and have since February fought a grinding battle for the city's west side. Victory in Baaj came as Iraqi troops continued a slow final advance in Mosul, marked by difficulties in using air power or heavy artillery in the densely populated area and Islamic State's use of civilians as human shields.

At an operations center close to the front lines in Mosul, Iraqi army Col. Hussein Mustafa sat on Sunday with American advisers in a dark room with large monitors, watching aerial surveillance of the front lines.

Some 300 to 400 civilian families were still trapped in his sector, just outside of Mosul's Old City. The sector is only a fraction of what remains under Islamic State control in the city.

Elsewhere, closer to the fighting, the sound of gunfire sounded a few hundred yards away from a stream

of civilians as they hurried away from the front lines, many weeping and praising God that they had finally escaped Islamic State occupation.

Col. Mustafa's men know they have made gains against the remaining militants whenever a wave of civilians flows toward them from a cleared neighborhood, he said, because it means Islamic State has retreated. Medical stations and aid workers get inundated with the sick and wounded.

A fleeing resident who gave his name as Abu Zakariah said Islamic State fighters were the only people eating and drinking with regularity in west Mosul, with civilians subsisting mainly on coarse bread and foul-smelling water. He pulled up his shirt to show a sunken stomach and bony hips, his three sons similarly emaciated.

In the Zinjili neighborhood near the Old City, streets and buildings have been destroyed and hulks of cars piled on the sides of the street. Islamic State forced everyone to move their cars into the streets to serve as roadblocks, residents and Iraqi forces said, and some have been booby-trapped.

Advancing on one street controlled by Islamic State, Iraqi forces and aid

workers found dozens of civilians lying dead or wounded by the group's snipers, shot as they tried to flee, according to military officials and witnesses.

Some 30 families were shot, according to Iraq's defense ministry. A spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition backing Iraqi forces in the battle against Islamic State said troops had used artillery to fire smoke-dispersing rounds to block snipers' view of civilians and allow residents to reach safety.

At an aid station near the front lines, a man who gave his name only as Shamel looked on as a doctor stitched up a gash in his sister's scalp. The siblings had run for their lives after their house collapsed in an explosion, whose cause they didn't know. Much of his family was still in the house when they left, he said as he wept.

When asked about the family's plight, Col. Mustafa said he knew the house belonging to Shamel.

"It will take a day or two to get to it," he said. "It's still controlled by Daesh."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

When Syrian forces launched a chemical attack on the town of Khan Sheikhou two months ago, no one was watching more closely than Israel's military elite. Of all the existential threats their country fears, chemical weapons rank high on the list. In 1967 Israeli fear of a chemical attack helped spark the Six Day War, the most transformative conflict in the modern history of the Middle East. Continued use of chemical weapons in Syria poses a similar threat to Israeli security—and may foreshadow another regional war.

The first country to use chemical weapons in the Middle East was Egypt. During the 1960s, President Gamal Abdel Nasser deployed poison-gas bombs during the North Yemen Civil War. Unknown to the Egyptians, Israel had obtained a front-row seat to study their military capabilities.

The conflict involved the Yemen Arab Republic, founded in 1962 after a coup d'état deposed the country's religious monarch, Imam Muhammad al-Badr. Egypt took the republican side, sending mechanized and heavily armed battalions to aid the revolutionaries.

The monarchist northern tribal militias, aided by a cadre of British and French mercenaries, took shelter in the country's mountainous highlands. The problem was finding a way to resupply their position. After concluding that an air resupply was vital, the mercenaries began searching for an ally willing to orchestrate airlifts into hostile and unfamiliar territory. In the end they turned to Israel, the only country with something substantial to gain from an extended guerrilla war against Egypt.

Between 1964 and 1966, the Israeli Air Force flew 14 missions to Yemen, airlifting vital weapons and supplies to beleaguered tribal outposts. Although the identity of the supplier was a closely guarded secret, these airlifts constituted an important physical and psychological lift for the tribal militias.

In exchange, Israel received well-informed intelligence from its own pilots and British mercenaries on the ground. The Israelis' main contact was Neil McLean, a former Special Air Service soldier and member of the British Parliament. McLean passed to Israel details of Egypt's military activity, even samples of its chemical weapons.

The Egyptian Air Force had been dropping the poison-gas bombs, targeting militias hiding in a network of caves, with increasing frequency and precision. This news alarmed Israelis, many of whom had lost family and friends to Hitler's poison-gas chambers only two decades earlier. They were haunted by the prospect of a similar fate befalling them in a gas attack on Tel Aviv or another Israeli city. A sense of looming existential threat pervaded Israeli society, down to the local school district. In one emergency meeting in May 1967, teachers debated security protocols. In the event of an air-raid siren, should students be ushered into the basement bunkers? Or would climbing to the rooftops be better for escaping poison gas?

The fear of a chemical attack undoubtedly factored into Israel's decision to attack Egypt's air force pre-emptively on June 5, 1967. Over five hours Israel destroyed 300 Egyptian planes and disabled 18 airfields, eliminating the short-term threat of chemical warfare. But the long-term danger has remained.

There is a clear parallel to the current conflict in Syria. What made the 1960s crisis in Yemen so dangerous was that the international

community did not respond to Egypt's use of chemical weapons. The Yemeni civil war was waved off as merely an intra-Arab conflict. Without visible international assurances that chemical warfare would not be tolerated, Israel in 1967 felt compelled to eliminate the threat before it arrived.

In the barrage of Tomahawk missiles President Trump launched against Syria in April, the U.S. provided some response to the latest chemical attack. Failure to follow up this show of force with collective international action—making clear to Israel that further chemical warfare is off the table—may push the Middle East toward another destructive regional war.

Mr. Orkaby, a research fellow at Harvard's Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Department, is the author of "Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68," out next month from Oxford University Press.

Orkaby : Syria's Chemical Weapons Might Start a New Six Day War

Asher Orkaby

If Trump Wants a Fight in the Middle East, Iran Will Give Him One

Afshon Ostovar

President Donald Trump's recent Middle East tour demonstrated, the one thing uniting the United States, Israel, and much of the Arab world is opposition to Iran's regional activities. Whereas the Obama administration seemed to acknowledge that coercion alone was unlikely to change Iran's behavior, and thus favored a carrot-and-stick approach, the Trump administration appears inclined to seek ways of tightening the screws on Iran.

The basic logic of that approach is clear. The goal is to pressure Iran with increased regional isolation and the threat of sanctions and, more assertively, confront Iranian-backed groups in Syria and Yemen, thus compelling the Islamic Republic to draw back or abandon its regional footprint. There's just one small problem: Iran is unlikely to back down.

Iran's regional clients — especially in Iraq, but also in Syria and Yemen — are the key to its fundamental strategic objective of ending the U.S. military role in the Persian Gulf and competing with its Arab neighbors for regional preeminence. Rather than back down from threats, Tehran will continue to use its clients to create leverage with the United States and its allies wherever it thinks it can.

Trump's Middle East tour came on the heels of the reelection of Iran's reformist president, Hassan Rouhani, who has now been placed in a difficult position. He ran on a campaign of hope, and was buoyed by his success at reaching compromise with the West. Assuming Rouhani wants to temper tensions with Iran's neighbors and adversaries, he would have to somehow reverse the direction of Iran's regional behavior. That is unlikely to happen, however, because Rouhani's government does not hold ultimate authority in foreign policy and strategic decision-making. Such authority resides with the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, and Khamenei has long endorsed the strategic agenda of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Iran's most powerful military institution.

As a result of the IRGC's

preeminence,

Iran is more alienated from its region than at any time since the Iran-Iraq War during the 1980s.

Iran is more alienated from its region than at any time since the Iran-Iraq War during the 1980s. Iran's supreme leader and the IRGC want the United States out of the region altogether. Iran's neighbors, however, see the United States as the only effective check on the Islamic Republic's influence.

These competing visions have fueled the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, where Iran and its adversaries back opposite sides and strive for opposite outcomes. The IRGC sees those wars — and the war in Iraq — as the product of an American-led cabal (which includes Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Jordan, the Islamic State, and other Sunni extremists) aimed at destroying the Islamic Republic and its faithful allies (notably Lebanese Hezbollah, the Bashar al-Assad regime, the Houthis in Yemen, and the Shiite-led government in Iraq).

The IRGC's most dangerous weapons, in the eyes of its neighbors, are its foreign militant clients. They have become increasingly effective in recent years. Before the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the IRGC's client program was focused on providing Iran with a credible strategic deterrent, primarily through the sponsorship of groups such as Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad that could target Israel with rocket strikes or terrorist attacks. But after the toppling of Saddam Hussein, the IRGC's special forces division, known as the Quds Force, developed Iraqi militant clients that could be used for more offensive aims.

Under the leadership of Quds Force chief Qasem Soleimani, these military clients became the cornerstone of Iranian efforts to transform Iraq from an erstwhile foe into a friendly neighbor. More recently, the IRGC has deployed them to great effect in Syria's civil war, where it likely controls more troops than the Syrian government, and in the war against the Islamic State in Iraq. It has also developed close ties with the Houthis in Yemen, and has supported that

group's attempt to secure control over the Yemeni state.

In each of those countries, Iran's political influence has grown along with its military reach. Through these efforts, the IRGC has established a transnational, pro-Iranian military alliance — one that has proved formidable in war and that embraces the ideological tenets of Iran's theocratic regime. The cultivation of like-minded allies has been a foundational goal of the IRGC since its establishment. After almost four decades, it has begun to realize success in that effort.

Thus, the issue of Iran's extraterritorial activities is no small matter. Suggestions that Rouhani has other diplomatic priorities deserve to be taken with a grain of salt.

It remains unclear if Rouhani's approach to the Middle East differs much from the IRGC.

It remains unclear if Rouhani's approach to the Middle East differs much from the IRGC. The IRGC is said to have objected to Rouhani's reelection in part because he had worked to restrain its hand in Yemen during the nuclear deal negotiations. But publicly, his government stands behind Iran's overt actions in the region and denies the existence of all its covert operations.

Even if Rouhani wanted to, it would be almost impossible for him to persuade the supreme leader to abandon or temper support for the IRGC's program. To do so, he would have to make a convincing case that the IRGC's activities no longer served, or were inimical to, the regime's interests. A neutral observer could make a persuasive case that the IRGC's activities have had a severely negative impact on Iran's economy and international standing, and have contributed to the insecurity of the Middle East. But from the standpoint of Khamenei's broadly defined anti-American objectives, the IRGC's efforts advance the core mission of the Islamic Republic. Client groups have become an extension of Iran's military power and not something that the IRGC and Khamenei will easily part with.

Indeed, in the battle for control of the Middle East, the IRGC's militant clients have been the great

equalizer. While Iran's neighbors have poured billions of dollars into conventional weaponry, Iran has invested in comparatively cheap proxy forces that have proven effective in numerous theaters. They have prevented Iraq from becoming an American puppet, saved Syria from being dominated by American- and Saudi-backed Sunni extremists, and redirected the attention and resources of Saudi Arabia and the UAE away from Syria by igniting war in Yemen. Iran's influence in each of those countries has grown as a result, as has its influence in the region.

Foreign clients enable Iran to keep its adversaries at arm's length, but they put Iran at risk of escalation with its regional adversaries and the United States. The conflict has so far remained beyond Iran's borders, but the risk of miscalculation always lurks in the background. For now, Iraq is Iran's main point of leverage with the United States. While Tehran and Washington are nominally on the same side in support of the government of Iraq, Iranian-backed groups routinely threaten to target U.S. forces. Should the United States intervene more heavily against Assad in Syria or the Houthis in Yemen, those groups might be given the green light from Tehran to renew such attacks. That's one way the conflict could spiral out of control. Iran doesn't want a fight with the United States — the IRGC can contend with adversaries by proxy, but it would have much less success in a direct war with the U.S. military — but if the situation spirals out of control in Iraq, a military escalation might be the result.

The ability to influence events outside its borders through proxy groups is both the central factor of Iran's alienation and its most vital strategic asset. Solving that paradox would require a shift in the Islamic Republic's overarching political and ideological agenda. But so long as anti-Americanism remains the prevailing tenet of the Iranian regime's aspirations, and so long as those aspirations are promoted through foreign military adventures, Iranians will not know the peace and stability they so richly deserve.

for greater democracy on the Caribbean island.

Soon after his election, Mr. Trump declared, vaguely but ominously, that if Cuba did not "make a better deal" he would "terminate deal." He gave no specifics and no decisions have been announced. But details of what a policy reversal could look like are emerging.

The aim generally would be to reimpose limits on travel and commerce, supposedly to punish Cuba's despotic government, now led by Raúl Castro, brother of the revolutionary leader Fidel Castro. Among the measures being considered are blocking transactions by American companies with firms that have ties to the Cuban military, which is deeply enmeshed in the economy, and tightening restrictions on Americans traveling to Cuba that Mr. Obama eased last year before his historic trip to Havana.

This hard-line sanctions-based approach was in place for more than 50 years after the 1959 revolution

and never produced what anti-Castro activists hoped would be the result, the ouster of Cuba's Communist government in favor of democracy. Isolating Cuba has become increasingly indefensible.

Mr. Obama's opening to Havana has enabled the freer flow of people, goods and information between the two countries, even as significant differences remain over human rights. It has produced bilateral agreements on health care cooperation, joint planning to mitigate oil spills, coordination on counternarcotics efforts and intelligence-sharing. In April, Google's servers went live in Cuba and thus it became the first foreign internet company to host content in one of the most unplugged nations on earth. Mr. Obama's approach also encouraged Latin American countries to be more receptive to the United States as a partner in regional problem-solving.

A large pro-engagement coalition that includes lawmakers from both parties, businesses and young

Cuban-Americans is pushing the White House to build on the foundation of engagement it inherited from Mr. Obama, not tear it down. Engage Cuba, representing business groups, economists and leading Cuba experts, has estimated that a reversal of Mr. Obama's policies would cost the American economy \$6.6 billion and affect more than 12,000 American jobs.

The group predicts that the hardest-hit areas will be rural communities that rely on agriculture, manufacturing and shipping industries, as well as Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi, all of which supported Mr. Trump in the 2016 election. Among the deals that could be squashed is one struck by Starwood Hotels and Resorts last year to manage hotels in Cuba; future ones would effectively be frozen.

The White House and its allies argue that the Cuban government remains despotic and must be pressured to reform. But pressure

has had a minimal impact and the human rights concerns are disingenuous, given Mr. Trump's effusive embrace of authoritarian leaders from President Vladimir Putin in Russia to President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt. He also pointedly told Sunni Arab leaders in Saudi Arabia last month that he has no intention of lecturing them on their repressive behavior toward their citizens.

As with his decision to withdraw from the global climate agreement, Mr. Trump's approach to Cuba reflects a craven desire to curry favor with his political base, in this case conservative Republicans from Florida who are viscerally anti-Castro. That might help him get re-elected in 2020, but it would help no one else.

Strengthening ties with Cuba cannot guarantee Cuban reforms, but it is the best bet.



Editorial : Goldman Sachs makes an irresponsible deal with the corrupt Venezuela regime

AT THE firm's highest levels, Goldman Sachs personnel are not indifferent to important ethical and public policy concerns, whether that necessarily helps or hurts the Wall Street bank's bottom line. We know this because chief executive Lloyd Blankfein took to Twitter for the first time ever to repudiate President Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris accord on climate change. "Today's decision is a setback for the environment and for the U.S.'s leadership position in the world," Mr. Blankfein declared. Previously, he had gone public in opposition to the president's proposed ban on travel to the United States from certain Muslim-majority nations.

What, then, are we to make of Goldman Sachs fund managers' recent secondary-market purchase, at a steep discount, of \$2.8 billion worth of bonds issued by the state-

owned oil company of Venezuela; that is to say, the same government that guns down pro-democracy protesters on a near-daily basis and otherwise subjects its people to vast corruption and economic privation?

Well, the first thing to be said is that the transaction was a really sweet deal for Goldman and its clients. The firm paid only \$865 million for the securities, a near-70 percent markdown from face value reflective of Venezuela's parlous finances. Of course, Goldman's fund will be entitled to \$2.8 billion in 2022, when the bonds mature, and meanwhile gets 19 percent annual interest, a cool \$756 million. The second thing to say, though, is what a terrible deal this is for the people of Venezuela, since on the other end of the transaction, ultimately, stands the Venezuelan central bank — which held the bonds and sold them to Goldman via a little-known intermediary.

PostEverything newsletter

Sharp commentary by outside contributors.

The cash Caracas reaped will help President Nicolás Maduro survive the (very) short-term, or even remain in power long enough to pay back Goldman in 2022, necessarily by imposing more brutal austerity on his people. Yes, the opposition might be in power by then; leaders pledged to stiff Goldman if it is. But the firm would probably break even under any scenario short of total debt repudiation, which would not be in a future democracy's own interest.

No wonder former Venezuelan planning minister Ricardo Hausmann, now teaching at Harvard University, calls them "hunger bonds." To be sure, Goldman was trying to keep pace in the emerging market bond market — to meet such standards as the JPMorgan Chase

Emerging Market Bond Index, of which Venezuela's official debt is a highly remunerative component. But that simply shows Wall Street as a whole needs to rethink dealing in this utterly illegitimate regime's obligations the same way it deals in, say, democratic Chile's, or even the debt of more responsible undemocratic countries.

Even among the world's odious regimes, Venezuela is a special case; Mr. Hausmann has suggested the financial community could collectively curb incentives to do deals such as Goldman's by removing Venezuelan bonds from market indexes. If Goldman Sachs and the rest of Wall Street really want a reputation for social responsibility, they will eagerly seek alternatives to business as usual with Caracas.



Mohamed A. El-Erian : The Venezuela Debt Dilemmas

To hold or not to hold? That is the dilemma facing holders of debt issued by the Venezuelan government and its sovereign and quasi-sovereign entities, including the national oil company PDVSA. The issue has been labeled a "moral quandary" by the Wall Street Journal, put Goldman Sachs in the headlines and prompted a Harvard professor to call on index providers

to exclude Venezuela from benchmarks used widely by investors.

Defined very narrowly, the question is whether to hold a bond that trades at a very high yield, has been the best performer this year in emerging markets, but whose default risk is considerable given that Venezuela is increasingly a failing state that already faces huge shortages,

runaway inflation, growing poverty, hunger and socio-political unrest.

At one level, this is no more than the calculus facing emerging market and high-yield bond investors when considering opportunities offered by low-rated issuers. In such cases, there are three types of strategies for holders of the debt, and they need not be mutually exclusive:

The first is motivated by the view that the marketplace has priced in an excessive sovereign default risk. This consideration is often embraced by those who believe that, being an oil producer that needs to maintain critical international linkages, Venezuela will go to huge lengths to make its debt service payments on the global bonds it has issued.

The second has to do with confidence in trading abilities -- that is, the belief that the holders will be able to capture the high yields and exit their investment before default becomes even more likely.

The third is driven by the desire to hold the bonds through a default, comforted both by the implicit and explicit securitization and confident that a good post-default deal will be struck.

But these considerations fail to capture the broader issues, whose basic elements speak to what rightly motivates socially responsible investments. As an illustration, consider some of the recent press coverage of Venezuelan bonds.

In noting the "moral quandary" facing holders of the bonds debt, particularly Venezuelan citizens, the Wall Street Journal wrote, "many of the Venezuelan investors profit from their country's bonds" but "are also acutely aware" that the country "is gripped by an economic crisis so deep that some of its citizens, including children, are starving."

In commenting on Goldman Sachs' purchase, Bloomberg Markets noted that the campaign by the Venezuelan "Hunger Bonds

movement" has "suddenly gained a surge of momentum."

Advocating for Venezuela's exclusion from the EM index, a Harvard professor, Ricardo Hausmann, argued that, because Venezuela accounts for 5 percent of the index and 20 percent of its yield, "investing in the EMBI+ means that you will rejoice when Wall Street analysts inform you that the country is literally starving its people in order to avoid restructuring your bonds."

The argument here is no longer about credit quality and sustainability. Instead, non-commercial considerations are added to commercial ones in judging the appropriateness of an investment. And in the extreme, such concerns could compel investors to avoid a certain investment, even though they believe it will be remunerative and viable; and they could push index providers to exclude a set of bonds, even when they qualify on widely-accepted commercial criteria (such as market capitalization).

When such a decision is left to individual portfolio managers, the results tend to be a mix of good, bad and ugly, potentially opening the door to controversies and even legal

threats -- a phenomenon that has played out to different degrees when it comes to environmental issues, including investments in coal, tobacco, and arms manufacturers. A better approach is to urgently improve the governance over this issue through transparent decisions by the boards of mutual funds, foundations and endowments, pension and retirement plans, other institutional investors, and index providers. It is at that level that the trade-off between financial and non-commercial factors should be struck, rather than by portfolio managers.

While a greater effort on this is already overdue, we are unlikely to see sufficient progress any time soon. In the meantime, there are three simple things that portfolio managers investing in emerging markets may wish to consider:

First, be open and upfront with your clients in the periodic updates about how you are combining financial and non-commercial considerations, including what this implies for your approach to Venezuela.

Second, place greater pressures on industry groups, advisory bodies and index providers to move toward a common view and collective approach.

Third, should you still feel compelled to increase your Venezuelan holdings after all that -- and you would need really strong reasoning to do so -- avoid to the maximum extent possible buying bonds where the resulting dollar proceeds could be used to pursue socially-repressive behavior in that country.

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Share the View

Over the longer-term, most socially-responsible investing is likely to translate into profitable ones, too. But in the short-term, deviations do occur. Venezuela is a case in point. And the resulting dilemmas, as important as they are, should not be left to portfolio managers alone who then find themselves torn between a narrow definition of fiduciary responsibility and legitimately consequential broader issues. It is high time to make governance structures more responsive, assertive and transparent on these issues.

**The
New York
Times**

In Mexican Election, Governing Party Is Poised for a Narrow Win

Kirk Semple and
Marina Franco

"Delfina won, and we will prove it," he declared. "We will not accept any sort of electoral fraud."

The close count did not come as a surprise. Weeks of polling had suggested a potential tossup in the race for the post, Mexico's most coveted state governorship.

The last polls before Election Day showed Mr. del Mazo and Ms. Gómez locked in a statistical dead heat, an extraordinary predicament for the P.R.I., which has held the governor's office uninterrupted for nearly 90 years, often winning elections by wide margins.

Even Mr. del Mazo, in one of his final campaign rallies last week, acknowledged that his party was "facing a challenge like never before."

"The future of the P.R.I., the future of this country, depends on our victory," he said.

A victory for the P.R.I. was considered critical to the party's chances of retaining control of the presidency and holding off the rise of Morena and Mr. López Obrador, a former mayor of Mexico City and a two-time presidential candidate, who

is considered a top contender in the presidential election next year.

The contest, which was scarred by accusations of fraud and malfeasance, boiled down to a fight between two main political forces and the distinct futures they promised.

Would voters support a deeply flawed but familiar centrist status quo — the P.R.I. — or seek a leftward shift with the upstart, three-year-old Morena party, which promised to break from establishment, patronage politics?

Should the electoral officials' math hold up, the hairbreadth victory is likely to provide only limited comfort to Mr. del Mazo's party. The state has served as the political redoubt of the party for decades, and the governor's office has been an electoral slam-dunk.

In the previous election for governor, in 2011, the P.R.I. candidate prevailed with more than 61 percent of the vote.

But the campaign and the election exposed the P.R.I.'s deep and widespread unpopularity in the state. In a poll published last week in the Reforma newspaper, about 75 percent of respondents said it was time for another party to run the state, and nearly half said they

would "never" vote for Mr. del Mazo, a former congressman and mayor.

The state wraps around Mexico City and, with more than 16 million inhabitants, has absorbed most of the region's population growth in recent decades. In some ways, it is a microcosm of the country, embodying its extreme socioeconomic inequality, soaring corruption and rampant crime.

These problems weighed on Mr. del Mazo's campaign, which was also burdened by the deeply unpopular performance of President Enrique Peña Nieto.

During the campaign, Ms. Gómez and the other opposition candidates repeatedly sought to cast the election as a referendum as much on the P.R.I.'s leadership as on the party's regional governance.

They urged voters to break the P.R.I.'s dynastic control as the only solution for ridding the state — and by extension, the nation — of its chronic corruption and impunity, and finally curbing the violence. Mr. del Mazo is a scion of P.R.I. royalty: His father and grandfather were governors of the state, and Mr. Peña Nieto, who previously served as the state's governor, is his cousin.

"Today there is hope. I think there really is a chance, because people

are fed up," said Salvador Albino, 47, a chauffeur for an affluent family who was on his way to vote in the municipality of Naucalpan on Sunday. "We need something different. We need something new."

But optimism among opposition supporters was severely tempered by the hard experience of having lived through so many decades of P.R.I. dominance, cemented by the party's formidable campaign machinery and its ability to muster votes through patronage jobs, handouts and other techniques.

"I think the people want another party," said Juan Hernández, 48, an airport employee, who was sitting in a square in the town of Ocoyoacac on Sunday after voting for one of the opposition candidates. "But the P.R.I. has all the power and the money and is putting all that money in the campaign."

Mr. del Mazo also stood to benefit from the fractured nature of the opposition, which counted, in addition to Ms. Gómez, several other challengers including Josefina Vázquez Mota, of the conservative National Action Party, and Juan Zepeda, of the leftist Democratic Revolution Party. Efforts to form opposition coalitions repeatedly failed.

Still, for P.R.I. supporters in the State of Mexico, Sunday was a day of unusual tension and nervousness.

"I'm afraid," said Dolores Alvarado, 67, a school cafeteria worker in the municipality of Ecatepec, who was planning to vote for Mr. del Mazo. "It's better to stick with the devil you know than an unfamiliar one."

Voters also cast ballots on Sunday in governors' races in the states of Coahuila and Nayarit, but national and international attention was focused on the State of Mexico where the implications were far greater.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Brazil's Superior Electoral Court is expected to rule Tuesday on whether illegal campaign donations, made during Brazil's 2014 presidential race, invalidate the re-election victory of former President Dilma Rousseff and her vice president, Michel Temer.

Ms. Rousseff, of the hard-left Workers' Party, was impeached and removed from office by Congress in 2016 on charges of violating the constitution. Mr. Temer, of the more centrist Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), is now president. He had his own finance committee for his vice-presidential campaign so he could be judged independently of Ms. Rousseff. But if the court were to rule against the ticket, he would have to step down.

In that case, the constitution stipulates, the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, the legislature's lower house, becomes president for a 30-day period. During that time Congress would elect a successor to finish the term, which runs through 2018.

But forces on the left have mounted a public campaign in favor of holding a general election. The threat to the constitution is so serious that the Brazilian daily O Estadão de São Paulo editorialized on the issue on May 31: "It would be a fraud to the

Regardless of the final vote tally, Mr. López Obrador, who has fashioned himself as the candidate best equipped to battle with President Trump, stands to benefit greatly from the close results.

The strong showing by Ms. Gómez, the former director of an elementary school who entered politics in 2012, will help establish Mr. López Obrador's young party as a legitimate national force.

The P.R.I.'s challenges in the state were perhaps foretold last year, when the party lost control of four governorships it had also held uninterrupted since 1929.

But the State of Mexico held the crown jewel of governorships and served as a major engine of the party's nationwide success. The party has been accused for years of rerouting funds from the state till into crucial regional and national campaigns.

The P.R.I. poured lots of money and attention into the contest for governor, knowing that a victory was essential for its sustenance as the nation's dominant party.

If history is any indicator, however, the election may still be far from over.

In the 2006 presidential election, Mr. López Obrador lost to Felipe Calderón by less than a percentage point and disputed the results for months, including rallying his supporters to the streets of the capital, where they set up blockades lasting weeks to demand a recount.

In 2012, he was again the runner-up in the presidential election, by about seven percentage points, and challenged the outcome in court, saying unsuccessfully that the winner, President Peña Nieto, had engaged in widespread vote-buying and campaign overspending.

O'Grady : Brazil's President Temer Teeters

Mary Anastasia O'Grady

democratic state of law if a particular political group or social stratum could, under certain circumstances, change the rules of the game simply because they are now unappetizing." All true. Brazilians are right to resist.

The world's 9th largest economy grew 0.5% in 2014; in 2015 it contracted 3.8% and last year lost another 3.6%. Despite his close association with the leftist Ms. Rousseff, Mr. Temer is now trying to put Brazil back on the market-oriented trajectory launched under Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who was president from 1995 through 2002.

Yet Mr. Temer's tenure is tenuous. Even if the electoral court validates his 2014 re-election as Ms. Rousseff's vice president, it is far from certain that he can survive as president for the remaining 19 months of the term.

That challenge was made more difficult on May 19 when Brazil's Supreme Federal Court released plea-bargain testimony from executives of the giant meatpacking company JBS, alleging that they had bribed Ms. Rousseff, Mr. Temer, former president Lula da Silva and more than 1,800 other politicians.

Shortly thereafter an audio tape of Mr. Temer talking to JBS chairman Joesley Batista was leaked to the press. Mr. Temer's opponents said

that the tape, secretly recorded by Mr. Batista, proved the politician's complicity in a bribery and influence-peddling scandal. Corruption charges had already sent lower-house speaker Eduardo Cunha, also of the PMDB, to jail in March.

But the opposition celebrated too early. The 76-year-old Mr. Temer did not resign as rumors said he would. Instead he asserted his innocence and vowed to fight the allegations.

There are credible claims that the Batista tape was tampered with. Even if it was not, some of the president's responses to Mr. Batista's statements on the recording are subject to interpretation, at least in a court of law.

The more immediate question, providing he gets a favorable ruling from the electoral court, is whether Mr. Temer can survive politically. To do that, he has to prevail in the court of public opinion, where the anemic economy and a barrage of corruption scandals have worn down patience with the political class.

Mr. Temer is betting that he can revive growth. But he has to shrink the state and rein in a far-too-generous public-sector pension system. Government-employee unions are among the country's most powerful special interests. Plenty of other corporatists,

including some business interests, also have their hands out. Rent-seekers are not about to let Mr. Temer take away the gravy train without a fight.

Still, getting rid of Mr. Temer may be easier than derailing reform. His coalition in Congress seems to have held together, and it will be under pressure to rally around a market-friendly successor. The left knows this too, which is why it wants to ignore the constitutional mandate and hold a direct election for a new president.

If that were to happen, Mr. da Silva, who remains a popular figure with his base, would likely be a candidate. He has been indicted for his alleged role in a corruption scheme involving the state-owned oil company Petrobras. If he is found guilty, he will be barred from holding public office. But if he were to win a snap election to replace Mr. Temer, any prosecution against him as president could be carried out only by the Supreme Federal Court and would probably drag on.

That would be a double gut-punch for a country that needs to show that it has graduated from using the rule of *bananalândia* to using the rule of law. It has made great strides. But this is a crucial test.



Minter : To Lead on Climate Change, China Should Think Small

Adam Minter

It's a common sight in rural China: rows and rows of low-rise apartment buildings, often topped by solar water heaters the size of kitchen tables. By one estimate, 30 million Chinese households rely upon the devices for hot water. They're served by 3,000 companies that sell around one million of the devices annually. Neither subsidies nor

environmental guilt account for the sales, or for China's place as the renewable hot-water capital of the world. Folks in rural areas have been buying them for two decades because they're cheap to own and operate.

Ever since U.S. President Donald Trump announced the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris climate treaty, there's been lots of

overheated talk about how China will now seize leadership of the global fight against climate change. It's easy to see why: Chinese leaders face pressure to address rampant pollution and have the resources to implement massive clean-energy projects, such as the world's largest floating solar array, launched on a Chinese lake last week.

But if China truly is to lead the world in promoting renewables, it's going to have to think small as well as big. The real opportunity is in pushing innovative greentech -- especially the type that fits on a rooftop.

In fact, while China's now the world's biggest producer of renewable energy, its giant, utility-scale wind and solar installations have started to run up against

serious problems. Thanks to the remote locations needed for such massive projects and the lack of sufficient transmission infrastructure to get the power back to major cities, as much as 17 percent of all wind power and 20 percent of all solar power generated in China goes to waste -- enough to power Beijing for a year.

The problem has become so acute that in February, China banned the construction of new wind power projects in six provinces for the rest of the year, lest more wasted capacity be added to the system. Worse, some utility-scale generators are being forced to curb power production.

Moving major wind and solar projects closer to China's biggest cities is virtually impossible. Given the rapid growth in the size of urban populations and ensuing sprawl, the vast acreages necessary simply don't exist anymore. What land is available is far too expensive to justify devoting to windmills.



Holmes

Otto von Bismarck once reportedly quipped that Providence favors "fools, drunkards, and the United States of America." Exhibit A: the Battle of Midway. That's the June 1942 high-seas clash in the Pacific Ocean where the U.S. Navy reversed the six months of disaster that followed the Imperial Japanese Navy's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.

There's nothing wrong with ballyhooing the 75th anniversary of Midway. An inferior American force steamed into battle and won big, preparing the way for ultimate victory. But make no mistake: The U.S. Navy was both fortunate in its Japanese foe during World War II and the beneficiary of farsighted political leadership at home.

Neither condition holds today. If America were to be involved in a major naval battle in the Pacific today, it would likely be with a decaying fleet, against a more evenly matched opponent such as China, and the result could easily turn out differently. Midway thus represents a warning as well as a cause for celebration.

A quick recap: The battle took place northeast of the Midway Islands, about halfway in the Pacific between Asia and North America. It culminated six months to the day after the Japanese sent the same fleet to pummel the American battle line at Pearl Harbor. At a critical

Developers would rather invest in glossy condos.

Yet other opportunities abound. At the end of 2014, for instance, rooftop solar accounted for just 17 percent of China's installed solar capacity. In Germany, by contrast, rooftop accounts for at least 70 percent. That gap should soon start to close: Bloomberg New Energy Finance forecasts that China will install 7 to 8 gigawatts of rooftop solar in 2017 -- an amount equal to the cumulative installed rooftop solar base up to 2016.

Anywhere but China, that would seem an over-ambitious target. But the same resources China's brought to bear on megaprojects will help with smaller ones as well. For example, China's National Energy Administration is piloting a program in rural areas to boost the incomes of two million poor Chinese, using rooftop solar. Villagers will become shareholders in cooperatives that manage local power substations and sell any excess power to the grid.

Making the scheme work will require overcoming some steep technical challenges, including developing the infrastructure to transmit energy from often remote villages to the grid.

Fortunately, State Grid Corporation of China, a power monopoly that dominates 26 of China's 32 provinces, has awakened to the business opportunity that rooftop solar presents and is working to make it technically and financially feasible for households and businesses. In April, the company announced the launch of a cloud platform to serve the emerging rooftop market. It has several components, including an online marketplace where prospective users can purchase custom turnkey rooftop solar arrays and obtain the financing and subsidies to pay for them.

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Most critically, State Grid is developing a system to meter and collect payments on behalf of customers with rooftop arrays. That shouldn't be too hard: Nearly 96 percent of State Grid's customers already have smart meters. As China moves forward on planned utility deregulation measures in coming years, those systems will enable peer-to-peer sales of solar power -- and further encourage investments in small-scale renewable energy projects.

It can't happen too soon. China is rapidly urbanizing, and each new building offers an opportunity to deepen its commitment to clean energy. If it really wants to be a leader in the fight against climate change, it should start on those roofs.

China Won't Hand the U.S. Navy Victory Like Japan Did

• By James

moment, dive bombers flying from the USS *Enterprise*, *Yorktown*, and *Hornet* swooped from Pacific skies on the morning of June 4, raining death on Japan's Kido Butai, or carrier strike force. Aviators set three of four Imperial Japanese Navy, or IJN, carriers ablaze within a span of eight minutes. The fourth was a smoking ruin before the day was through. None survived.

Japanese naval aviation suffered a hammer blow from which it never fully recovered. Midway hurt the IJN far worse than Pearl Harbor hurt the U.S. Navy. After all, the Japanese raid struck mainly at American battleships — platforms in the process of being superseded by carriers as the core of naval warfare. (The attack missed the U.S. carriers, which were at sea on Dec. 7, 1941.) By contrast, the Kido Butai was the principal striking arm of the IJN, with an unblemished combat record.

Midway gutted Japanese sea power, and the island state's industrial capacity was too sparse to permit swift construction of new carriers. The battle thus doomed Japan's campaign of Pacific conquest, forcing it onto the defensive. If you map Pacific military actions up to June 1942, the arrows all point outward from Japan — but they turn inward after Midway, pointing back at the heart of Japan's doomed empire.

So we should rejoice in the naval aviators' heroics and celebrate the tactical artistry of Adm. Ray Spruance, the cerebral commander of Task Force 16, and on and on.

But it's tough to imagine any future foe displaying the same strategic and operational indiscipline as Imperial Japan, which frittered away scarce military resources all over the map.

By the spring of 1942, in the months leading up to the fateful battle, the leadership of the IJN was debating what to do next, having already accomplished all its previous goals. One faction pushed for the Midway gambit, which envisioned luring out and destroying the carriers that had struck at Tokyo during the Doolittle Raid that April. Another wanted to grab parts of the Aleutian Islands. Still another clamored to go after Port Moresby, a harbor in New Guinea. As my new colleague Craig Symonds points out, rather than choose among these courses of action, the leadership opted to do everything nearly simultaneously.

It started off on the Australian coast. An IJN detachment fought the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942 and saw one of the Kido Butai's fleet carriers damaged. That carrier, *Shokaku*, retired to Japan to refit — reducing the carrier fleet's strength for Midway. The Kido Butai went into Midway with a 4-3 carrier advantage rather than the 5-3 advantage it might have commanded had the leadership exercised some operational prudence. At the same time as the Kido Butai was headed for Midway, another IJN naval force was headed to seize the Aleutian Islands near Alaska, further dividing Japan's strength.

And if that wasn't enough, Japanese commanders broke the Midway fleet into four separate forces and positioned those forces too far from one another to render mutual support. Worse, the "Main Body" of battleships and its retinue of lesser warships maintained radio silence throughout the encounter. Far from the fighting in the super-dreadnought *Yamato*, the Main Body's centerpiece, Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto couldn't even issue orders to the fleet he was commanding. In short, Japanese commanders were culpable for disaster — and should have seen it coming.

Such a conflict is conceivable once again. China is mounting a challenge to the U.S.-led international order put in place after the overthrow of Imperial Japan in 1945.

Such a conflict is conceivable once again. China is mounting a challenge to the U.S.-led international order put in place after the overthrow of Imperial Japan in 1945. Beijing claims sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, the same expanse Japan coveted for its natural resources. Under the law of the sea — of which the United States is the chief guarantor despite lawmakers' refusal to consent to it — no one is sovereign over waters and skies beyond 12 nautical miles from coastal states' shorelines. This air and sea space represents a commons; it belongs to everyone and no one.

China, moreover, is contesting Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands, which it calls the Diaoyu Islands, in the East China Sea. It wants to upend a status quo dating to Tokyo's annexation of the archipelago in 1895. In brief, China sees a vital interest in overturning the international order while the United States sees a vital interest in preserving that order — presumably by force of arms.

Still, it's doubtful that China — the most probable candidate to play the part of Imperial Japan today — would succumb to the strategic overreach of the IJN. Beijing has exercised impressive restraint amid its rise in recent decades, keeping its foreign-policy ambitions within its military and economic means. While its navy has made tentative forays into the Indian Ocean and other waterways, China has mostly kept its naval forces concentrated in the China seas, where it sees vital interests at stake. It deploys distinct superiority over fellow Asian states as a result of its self-restraint. Yet it has refrained from directly challenging the U.S.-Japan alliance, which operates a powerful combined fleet and enjoys a backstop in the form of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, based in Guam, Hawaii, and West Coast seaports.

But if a battle were to break out, there's no telling how it would turn out. It would depend on whether China fragmented its navy into small detachments that attempted to fulfill every commitment Beijing has undertaken, all at the same time, or stayed focused and did one thing at a time — devoting the bulk of available resources to doing that one thing before moving on to the next. If the People's Liberation Army leadership does the latter, it could be hard to beat; if the former, the Chinese challenge ought to prove manageable, much as it was in the case of Imperial Japan.

It is certainly possible that the leadership would act unwisely, breaking up its naval resources in an effort to do everything, everywhere, more or less concurrently. China divides the People's Liberation Army Navy into three fleets scattered up and down the Asian seaboard in peacetime. (It also backs up those fleets with shore-based firepower in the form of aircraft and missiles. That's an equalizer that was unavailable to IJN forces fighting in the Central Pacific, thousands of miles from home.) Chinese commanders might keep the navy divided in wartime, and they too might yield to the temptation to try to do everything at once. But it would be imprudent for U.S. naval commanders to bank on it. Better to assume opponents will

fight wisely and chart strategy accordingly.

That will require political leadership — specifically, congressional leadership — of the sort the U.S. Navy benefitted from enormously at Midway. By 1940, long before the United States entered World War II, lawmakers like Rep. Carl Vinson pushed through the Two-Ocean Navy Act. What that means, in effect, is that shipbuilders commenced bolting together a second — not to mention bigger and badder — U.S. Navy before the outbreak of war. The republic deployed what amounted to one complete U.S. Navy in the Atlantic Ocean and another in the Pacific.

In short, Vinson & Co. gave the Navy a head start on World War II. The two-ocean Navy was destined to arrive in the Pacific theater starting in 1943. It would arrive in overwhelming numbers and capability — and the masterminds of the Midway operation knew the shiny new fleet was on its way. Consequently, Adms. Spruance, Frank Jack Fletcher, and Chester Nimitz could afford to be venturesome with the battered fleet left to them after Pearl Harbor. It's easy to gamble with a tool when you have a spare.

Today's U.S. Navy enjoys no such luxury. Washington infighting has left the U.S. Navy a force in decay. Midway was an aircraft carrier battle. How well positioned is today's carrier fleet to fight such an action? Well, delays in routine upkeep and overhauls have struck hard at the Navy's 10 nuclear-powered carriers. Most of the fighter jets that operate from their flight decks are grounded at present for want of maintenance.

The Navy's margins have gotten mighty thin, with just 275 ships in the inventory, commitments across the globe to fulfill, and "near-peer" troublemakers such as Russia and China to stare down. Each asset appears precious when you have so few. That's doubly true of carriers, where the latest model, the USS *Gerald R. Ford*, will set taxpayers back almost \$13 billion — not counting airplanes, stores, and everything else an aircraft carrier requires to do its work.

Commanders might find it tough to hazard such a vessel in combat, knowing they could lose such a pricey asset — and 10 percent of the nation's carriers — in an afternoon. America, it seems, will go to war with the Navy it has — and might prove risk-averse about fighting it.

Nor has the nation's political leadership acted to fix the shortfall. The Navy leadership has gone on

record favoring a 355-ship fleet, the Donald Trump administration espouses 350, and think tanks have compiled "fleet architecture" studies bumping the figure as high as 414. As yet, though, little has happened on the shipbuilding front. No counterpart to the Two-Ocean Navy Act of 1940 is in the works. The administration's 2018 budget proposal keeps procurement rates flat.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates the soonest a 355-ship fleet could be at sea would be 2035 — and that's if resources start flowing this year. This makes for a pale imitation of the World War II buildup. Where's Carl Vinson when you need him?

Midway was a damned close-run thing as it stood. Seventy-five years on — with a leaner U.S. Navy facing more formidable foes — a Pacific encounter could go another way altogether. Some introspection should quiet the chest-thumping about U.S. naval prowess that has been heard of late. Taking competitors lightly is no way to prepare for serious strategic competition. It's also slipshod politics. Could Vinson have rammed the Two-Ocean Navy Act through Congress after disparaging the Japanese and German menaces?

Doubtful. Tell elected representatives China or Russia remains a second-rate competitor and they'll fund a second-rate U.S. Navy to handle the challenge.

China may remain the weaker antagonist in the Pacific, but look at the U.S.-China competition in relative terms. Japan had to slay a giant to prevail in the Pacific War. China merely needs to outface a somewhat stronger adversary operating thousands of miles from home while operating in Beijing's own backyard. Its strategic and operational predicament, then, is far more manageable than Imperial Japan's. As a great man once counseled, don't do stupid shit and you may go far.

So Bismarck may have been correct. Providence may smile on America. But dour commentators such as yours truly might append a corollary to his wisecrack. Namely, that Providence helps those who help themselves. And the United States has done precious little to help itself in naval affairs.

Midway represented a sensational triumph, and all honor to the warriors who brought it about. Now let's start re-creating the industrial and military preconditions that made victory possible. Let's help ourselves — and win back fortune's favor.

ABUJA, Nigeria — For the second time in seven years, the political stability of Africa's most populous nation hinges on the health of one man. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is once again in Britain for medical treatment because of an undisclosed illness. He was there for almost two months earlier this year, and in June 2016 he spent nearly two weeks abroad being treated for an ear infection. In the past month, he missed three straight cabinet meetings due to sickness, and perhaps more tellingly for a devout Muslim, he missed Friday mosque prayers in Abuja, where he usually attends without fail.

Buhari's unwillingness to disclose the nature or extent of his illness fuels rumors that he is terminally ill or, periodically, that he has already died. Last month, Garba Shehu, a spokesman for the president, was forced to issue a series of tweets denying that anything unpleasant happened to the president. He added that reports of Buhari's ill health are "plain lies spread by vested interests to create panic." Buhari's wife recently tweeted that his health is "not as bad as it's being perceived."

Regardless of the severity of his illness, Buhari's extended absence risks igniting an ugly power struggle that would threaten not just the political fortunes of his ruling party but also a long observed gentleman's agreement that has been critical to maintaining the stability of the country.

The unwritten power-sharing agreement obliges the country's major parties to alternate the presidency between northern and southern officeholders every eight years. It was consolidated during Nigeria's first two democratic transfers of power — in 1999 and 2007 — and it alleviated the southern secessionist pressures that had festered under decades of military rule by dictators from the north. For a time, this mechanism for alternating power helped keep the peace in a country with hundreds of different ethnic groups and more than 500 different languages. But it was never intended to be permanent, and as Buhari's illness demonstrates, it has increasingly become a source of tension rather than consensus.

If Buhari, a northerner, doesn't finish his term of office, and power passes to Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, a Christian from the south, it will be the second time in seven years that the north's "turn" in the presidency has been cut short. In late 2009, then-President Umaru Yar'Adua, who like Buhari was a Muslim from the north, traveled abroad for

treatment for an undisclosed illness. When Yar'Adua died in office the following year, his southern Christian vice president, Goodluck Jonathan, succeeded him, setting the stage for an acrimonious split within the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) over whether Jonathan should merely finish out Yar'Adua's term or run to retain the office in the 2011 election.

In the end, Jonathan ran and won in 2011. But not before 800 people were killed in riots in the north after the PDP allowed Jonathan to contest the election. The anti-Jonathan faction later resigned in protest and defected to the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) party. Buhari led the APC to victory over the PDP in 2015.

An eerily similar scenario is now playing out in Buhari's APC party. If Buhari dies, resigns, or is declared medically incapacitated by the cabinet, it would likely ignite a similar struggle within the APC over whether Vice President Osinbajo

should permanently succeed him as president. A group of prominent northerners has already stated that Osinbajo should serve merely as an interim president and that he cannot replace Buhari on the ticket in the 2019 presidential election.

Should Osinbajo succeed Buhari, win the 2019 election, and serve a full term, a Christian southerner will have been president for 18 of the 24 years since Nigeria transitioned to democracy in 1999.

Should Osinbajo succeed Buhari, win the 2019 election, and serve a full term, a Christian southerner will have been president for 18 of the 24 years since Nigeria transitioned to democracy in 1999.

There is a chance that APC leaders will convince — or force — Osinbajo to stand down in favor of another Muslim candidate from the north. But sidelining Osinbajo would pose other sectarian risks. He was chosen as Buhari's running mate in part to counter southern accusations that the APC is a Muslim party. And although he is seen as a technocrat,

Osinbajo is a powerful political force in his own right — too powerful, perhaps, to be sidelined in 2019 without alienating millions of voters. He is a pastor in the country's largest evangelical church, which has some 6 million members, and his wife is the granddaughter of Obafemi Awolowo, one of Nigeria's early independence politicians who is beloved in southwest Nigeria.

Yet if the north's "turn" in power is interrupted again, it will further alienate the region — already home to the bloody Boko Haram insurgency, which has thrived in part because of government neglect — and make north-south cooperation on security, development, and a host of other critical issues more difficult. It could easily lead to another round of deadly riots, as it did in 2011. But there is a way out.

Nigeria should abandon the convention of north-south presidential power rotation now that it has outlived its purpose. At the same time, it should deepen power sharing in state and local

governments, which have steadily gained influence relative to the national government since 1999. Many of the country's 36 states and 774 local governments already practice some form of power rotation among politicians from different ethnic, religious, and geographic groups. The key will be to frame the abolition of power rotation at the presidential level as an opportunity to strengthen these norms at the state and local levels — not a chance to terminate them everywhere at once.

The reality is that most Nigerians experience government at the local level anyway. Regardless of whether Buhari or Osinbajo is in the presidential palace, state and local officials have the most purchase on the lives of ordinary citizens. Letting go of a dangerous convention at the national level while devolving more power to inclusive governance structures at the local level offers a way out of the current impasse.

The New York Times Filipinos Flee Duterte's Violent Drug Crackdown

Aurora Almendral

Residents are cobbling together strategies to hide and survive. Many young men are staying indoors, out of sight. Others have fled the urban slums, where most of the killings occur, and are camping out on farms or lying low in villages in the countryside.

The Roman Catholic Church has vocally opposed Mr. Duterte's deadly campaign, and an underground network of churches and safe houses is offering sanctuary — quietly, to avoid the attention of the vigilantes responsible for much of the killing.

In the most heavily targeted slums, neighbors are wary of talking to each other, unsure who among them are police informers. Most try not to get involved if they hear someone is in trouble, not wanting to be blamed if the person ends up dead. One man said that just talking to the wrong person could be fatal.

"What we're seeing here is the rule of law being replaced by a system of fear and violence," said Jose Manuel Diokno, a human rights lawyer in Manila.

According to a recent survey by Social Weather Stations, a local polling firm, 73 percent of Filipinos are either "very worried" or "somewhat worried" that they or someone they know will be killed in the antidrug campaign.

Those who have gone into hiding are often people who think their

names are on government watch lists of drug users. The lists are compiled by local officials using information supplied by the police and by informers, and include people who have surrendered to the authorities. They are not public, and it is unclear how some on them are marked for death.

Many on the lists are past or current users of shabu, the local name for the methamphetamine at the heart of Mr. Duterte's antidrug campaign. Many others are not.

Ms. Perez, for instance, says that two of her sons have never used drugs but that the third once did. He surrendered to the police, hoping that he would be spared, and she has required all of them to take drug tests and has shared the results with neighborhood officials.

Still, she has been told that all three of their names are on a watch list, and a photo of her home has circulated with it. "With just a name and a photo, they'll kill you," she said.

The death threats are often passed along in whispered warnings between neighbors, anonymous text messages or handwritten notes.

Most people hiding from the police or vigilantes are reluctant to talk because they are afraid of disclosing their location and being killed. But several dozen people spoke to The New York Times about their lives on the run, or those of their neighbors

or loved ones, on the condition of anonymity.

One young man who was picked up by the police, beaten and then released after a month and a half in detention said he had moved to his grandmother's house in a different district of Manila to hide.

When he returned to visit his neighborhood, one of his friends told him that vigilante gangs were looking for him. It was a warning he took seriously. One of his friends had already been killed.

"I was afraid," he said, adding that he has had trouble sleeping at night. "I thought they were going to kill me."

His mother worried that if he stayed in Manila, he would be shot, so she made him move again, to a rural village of bamboo huts, dirt roads and banana trees in the northern Philippines. He texts with his friends, but tells them that he is in a different part of the country, just to be safe.

His mother said she had voted for Mr. Duterte, but now wishes she could take her vote back.

The clergy providing sanctuary, part of a coalition called Rise Up, operate in secret, fearing the church's protection will not be enough to keep vigilantes from coming after them.

"The most vulnerable are always an easy target, even if they are under our sanctuary," said Jun Santiago, a lay brother of the Congregation of

the Most Holy Redeemer and a member of Rise Up. "We don't know who the killers are."

One recent evening, at a convent at the edge of Manila, a teenager who was the only surviving witness to a massacre that left seven people dead slept on a narrow bed on the rooftop under clotheslines and a tattered plastic tarp.

A priest, the Rev. Gilbert Ballena, said the boy had been hiding in the convent for four months, using an assumed name, keeping busy by painting small canvases of the baby Jesus and the Virgin Mary and by grinding turmeric, which Rise Up sells for extra cash.

The teenager texts with his girlfriend, but he is afraid to go see her or his family. For his safety, and for a change of scenery, he recently moved to a different church, where he changed his name again.

At another church in Manila, most people seeking sanctuary spend a few nights on spare mattresses before they are moved to safe houses or helped to leave Manila, staff members said.

This church has sheltered more than 30 people so far, they said: people under immediate threat, witnesses to a family member's death and others who have filed complaints against the police.

Mr. Santiago said he had received threats for his work with survivors. "That will not be the reason to

silence us," he said. "It is our mission to help the needy."

Another person who believes he is on a death list is a skinny young man with crude tattoos on both arms. He said he had used drugs and had surrendered to the police in November.

Since then, he said, he has lived in fear that he will be killed. Whenever the police or men in balaclavas walk his neighborhood, he climbs a tree and hides in the branches until they leave.

He would not say whether he still used drugs. Whether you quit or not, he said, "they'll still kill you."

In the single-room, concrete-block home she shares with her husband and two granddaughters, Ms. Perez catches sight of a news clip on a muted television playing in the background. Another killing: the thin, loose limbs of a young man zipped into a body bag, a woman collapsed against a vehicle, crying hysterically.

Her eyes well up with tears, and her voice trembles. "That's what I don't want to happen to my sons," she said.

The New York Times Bank at Center of U.S. Inquiry Projects Russian 'Soft Power' (UNE)

Ben Protess, Andrew E. Kramer and Mike McIntire

That moment appeared to be nearing with Mr. Trump's victory. And so the bank's chief, Sergey N. Gorkov, traveled to New York in December for what he described as a "roadshow" promoting the bank that was largely hinged on the prospect of improved diplomatic and business relationships between the United States and Russia.

During that trip, The New York Times has found, Mr. Gorkov met with bankers at JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and another, unidentified American financial institution. Goldman Sachs bankers also tried to arrange a meeting but ultimately had a scheduling conflict. The meetings, which are not prohibited by sanctions, were confirmed by three people briefed on the discussions but unauthorized to speak publicly about them.

None of the American banks were new to VEB. Citi and JPMorgan had long, established relationships clearing financial transactions for VEB in the United States, activities not affected by the sanctions. And before the sanctions, securities filings show, Goldman and others had helped the Russian bank issue bonds, activity that was blocked by the sanctions and that VEB was eager to resume.

After a few painful years, continuing Western borrowing had become a pressing priority for Moscow. The Russian Finance Ministry has spent about \$10 billion to prop up the bank over the past three years, according to banking analysts.

On that same trip, Mr. Gorkov met with Mr. Kushner. The nature of the meeting, which remains in dispute, followed a session between Mr. Kushner and the Russian ambassador, Sergey I. Kislyak, about opening a communications channel with Russian officials during the presidential transition, according to current and former American officials.

The F.B.I. and congressional investigators are now scrutinizing whether Mr. Kushner may have met with Mr. Gorkov to help establish a

direct line to Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, or for other reasons not cited by the White House.

The White House and VEB have issued contradictory statements about the purpose of the Gorkov meeting.

The White House has said that Mr. Kislyak requested the meeting and that "Mr. Kushner was acting in his capacity as a transition official." But VEB said Mr. Gorkov had met with Mr. Kushner, who was still running his family's real estate company, to discuss business. The statement said VEB's management had met with "a number of representatives of the largest banks and business circles of the U.S.," a claim supported by the Times's reporting about Mr. Gorkov's meetings with banks in New York.

VEB has not disclosed specifics of the conversation with Mr. Kushner, which is of keen interest to investigators.

Mr. Kushner's hunt for overseas investors for his company's financially troubled Manhattan office tower on Fifth Avenue has been documented by The Times. While such an investment would not fit the profile of VEB's past lending, it would have been possible for Mr. Gorkov to relay such information to other Russian banks. It is not known, however, whether the subject was raised in the meeting.

The subject of sanctions was also freshly topical in December. The rolling back of sanctions was an essential part of Mr. Gorkov's strategy in visiting New York, and was central to the health of his bank. The next month, during Mr. Trump's first week in office, administration officials signaled they were considering lifting the sanctions that stemmed from the conflict in Ukraine.

Separately, Michael T. Flynn, the former national security adviser, had several phone conversations late last year with Mr. Kislyak, the Russian ambassador. In one, the two men discussed additional sanctions imposed by the Obama administration in response to the Russian government's efforts to

disrupt the 2016 presidential election.

The meeting with Mr. Kushner was not VEB's only connection to Mr. Trump's campaign or associates.

A banker who pleaded guilty last year to spying for Russia out of VEB's office in New York was part of an unsuccessful Russian scheme to recruit Carter Page, an American businessman who later became a Trump campaign adviser, as a spy. VEB also obtained shares in a Ukrainian steel smelter when it was sold by a business partner of Mr. Trump's who built a Trump hotel in Toronto, according to previously undisclosed documents from the vast leak known as the Panama Papers. The VEB involvement in the smelter deal was first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

These interactions have stirred concerns over whether the bank, which few Americans have heard of despite its ties to Wall Street and big companies like Boeing, has been spreading Russian influence along with its financial footprint.

A representative for the bank would not comment.

'This Is Not a Bank'

VEB and Mr. Putin are inextricably linked.

The bank stepped up lending after 2008 when Mr. Putin, then prime minister, became chairman of the board. And during the oil boom, VEB was seen as embodying Russia's new financial might.

Under a 2007 law, VEB's mandate was to lend to important but underfinanced sectors of the Russian economy, including infrastructure and businesses that help diversify the economy beyond oil dependence.

There are other government-controlled banks in Russia, Sberbank and VTB, but they are primarily retail banks. VEB serves a very different role, lending mostly to large borrowers, many of them politically connected.

To that end, VEB over the last decade has lent freely in ways that dovetail with government priorities and make it a tool of Russian soft

power. The purse strings opened for two influential groups in particular: oligarchs building Olympic sites in Sochi and companies in Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine.

"This is not a bank," said Karen Vartapetov, a public finance analyst at Standard & Poor's. "We should rather treat this bank as a government agency. It is used by the government as a tool to invest in politically and socially important but not always financially viable projects."

VEB's role as a projector of state influence was on display in 2010 with a deal that potentially affected a Trump hotel in Toronto.

At the time, Alex Shnaider, a Russian-Canadian businessman developing the hotel, was looking to sell a steel plant in Ukraine. His Midland Resources Holding Ltd., which owned the Zaporizhstal steel factory, sold at least half its stake to a collection of five offshore companies that received funding from VEB, according to documents in the trove of files from the law firm Mossack Fonseca that were obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

The documents show that one year after acquiring the Zaporizhstal stake, the five companies — based in Cyprus and the British Virgin Islands — transferred it to Russian control.

In each case, the companies' shares were "charged in favor of" VEB, meaning the bank effectively took ownership of them in exchange for financing the steel plant acquisition.

Court papers in Canada show that Mr. Shnaider's deal to sell the steel plant coincided with his need to cover cost overruns in the Trump deal. His lawyer initially told The Wall Street Journal last month that about \$15 million from the Ukraine sale went into the \$500 million Toronto project, but he later backtracked.

Nothing in the Panama Papers linked VEB's financing to the Trump project, which Mr. Trump did not own. Rather, the deal underscored VEB's strategy to venture into

Ukraine at the behest of the Russian government.

More broadly, the bank's plan had been to tap capital markets in New York to help finance the Ukraine lending, but the plan collapsed with the imposition of sanctions in 2014.

The bank today, not unlike Mr. Putin's government, expanded its sway abroad in a way that appears unsustainable. Weighed down by sanctions and the oil price collapse, the Russian economy has slipped to 12th in the world, below South Korea's, according to a World Bank ranking.

At the time sanctions were imposed, the bank's total debt ran about \$20 billion. It has since been reduced to \$17 billion, according to financial disclosures at the end of last year. But the Ukraine lending in particular is affecting the balance sheet, with outstanding Ukraine debt totaling \$14.2 billion at the current exchange rate, banking analysts say.

Last week, the Russian business newspaper Vedomosti reported that about 40 percent of VEB's loans were at risk of default.

Mr. Gorkov, who previously worked at the Yukos oil company and was a senior executive at Sberbank, became director of VEB in February 2016, partly with a mandate to find market solutions to the bank's financial woes.

For Mr. Gorkov, fixing VEB would require a new focus, and that, according to the bank's statement, became the reason for a meeting with Mr. Kushner.

The two met as Mr. Gorkov traveled to gather ideas for a new strategy for the bank, published a month after the meeting with Mr. Kushner in a document called "Strategy 2021." It called for shifting some risks directly to the Russian budget, selling assets not considered central to the bank and trying to resume borrowing in places like the United States.

The document suggested that the bank was expecting some relief from sanctions. "The

forecasts for the term of the strategy predict certain decrease of geopolitical risks and gradual weakening of the restricted access to global capital markets," it said.

Robert Amsterdam, a lawyer who has represented Mr. Gorkov's former boss at Yukos, Mikhail B. Khodorkovsky, said it was essential that sanctions be lifted for the VEB turnaround to succeed.

"Putin doesn't have to worry about what the voters think of him," Mr. Amsterdam said. "Putin has to think about the top 100. And the top 100 are those who are sanctioned."

American Ties

Long before VEB became saddled with sanctions, it had deep ties to Washington and Wall Street.

In 2010, Mr. Gorkov's predecessor appeared at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington to unveil a pact with the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the federal agency that supports American exports. Under the deal, the two institutions agreed "to cooperate in financing U.S. exports to Russia."

The arrangement was followed by two little-noticed deals. In 2013, the Export-Import Bank guaranteed a loan of about \$500 million so that, in effect, a VEB subsidiary could acquire a number of Boeing 777 aircraft — planes that VEB then leased to Aeroflot Russian Airlines. A year later, shortly before the sanctions hit, the American agency guaranteed another loan of about \$700 million for a similar deal.

In a statement, a spokeswoman for the Export-Import Bank said, "These transactions all supported the sale of U.S. exports and thus supported American jobs."

Since the sanctions took effect, the spokeswoman said, there have been no new VEB transactions, and deals involving any Russian entities have been placed on "administrative hold."

The sanctions also limited VEB's relationship with American banks. The sanctions prohibit United States

banks and companies from "transacting in, providing financing for or otherwise dealing" in new long-term debt.

For years, issuing debt was a good business for both Wall Street and VEB. Between 2006 and 2013, Goldman, Citi and Morgan Stanley helped the Russian bank issue one bond deal after another, according to data from S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Now, American banks can work for VEB only in more limited roles.

JPMorgan, Citi and BNY Mellon, for example, remain registered to clear VEB's transactions through the United States, clearinghouse records show, though such transactions have waned since the sanctions were imposed. Many major American banks and investment firms also continue to include VEB debt in mutual funds, including those of Fidelity and Pimco, securities filings show.

It would not be out of the ordinary, then, for a VEB official to have brief courtesy meetings with New York bankers about continuing business, though they would not be allowed to discuss new bond deals, said Aaron Wolfson, a partner at Lewis Baach who previously worked at JPMorgan and prosecuted banks for skirting sanctions.

Still, Zachary K. Goldman, a former Treasury Department official who worked on financial sanctions issues, said the banks needed to be cautious.

"Just because limited interactions with VEB may be legally permissible doesn't mean that there aren't reputational and other kinds of risks involved," said Mr. Goldman, now the executive director of the Center on Law and Security at the New York University School of Law. "The concern for me with this particular entity would be its reported ties to the Russian security services."

Spies in Suits

Mr. Gorkov, 48, graduated in 1994 from the university of the Federal Security Service, the successor to

the K.G.B. — a school for spies. Like many in his generation of security agents in the early post-Soviet period, he ventured into banking and the oil business.

In fact, say businessmen who have worked in Russia, so many F.S.B. agents are in the upper management of state-owned companies that the roles of spy and executive blend almost seamlessly.

"In Putin's Russia, they don't draw a distinction," said Mr. Amsterdam, the lawyer who represented Mr. Gorkov's former employer.

Highly educated and often speaking foreign languages, former F.S.B. officers include Mr. Putin himself, senior officials throughout his government, and board members and top executives at state-run corporations.

Mr. Gorkov's biography on VEB's website does not suggest he ever served in the F.S.B. The bank did not respond to questions about whether he worked for the agency.

But the bank has been known to employ spies. In 2015, federal prosecutors in Manhattan and Washington announced charges against Evgeny Buryakov, an employee at VEB's New York office, accusing him of acting as a covert agent of the S.V.R., the Russian foreign intelligence agency.

Mr. Buryakov, who was charged alongside two other Russian men accused of trying to recruit Mr. Page, later pleaded guilty, and VEB paid his legal bills.

At the time, the authorities suspected that some VEB managers were aware of Mr. Buryakov's spy activities, according to a person briefed on the investigation. Federal authorities recorded a conversation between the two co-defendants discussing how an S.V.R. official told Mr. Buryakov's supervisor at VEB that Mr. Buryakov was an "employee of the service."



Samuelson : Trump ignores the messy reality of global warming — and makes it all about him

Robert J. Samuelson

There was no need for President Trump to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement to achieve his goal of overturning the Obama administration's global warming policy. This had already occurred through court rulings and executive orders, which effectively halted higher vehicle fuel economy

standards (up to 54.5 miles per gallon) and ended the Clean Power Plan program, which pushed electric utilities to shift away from coal. Moreover, national commitments to slash emissions made in Paris are voluntary. Countries can modify or ignore them. There is no enforcement or penalty for missing targets.

Under the Paris accord, countries made these commitments based on their own circumstances and political judgment. The United States pledged to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 26 percent to 28 percent from 2005 levels by 2025. The European Union promised to reduce emissions by 40 percent from 1990 levels by 2030. China said that its carbon dioxide (CO2)

would peak by 2030 and that, by the same year, renewable fuels would represent about 20 percent of its energy use.

But as noted, none of these goals was binding. There was little, if any, loss of national sovereignty. The Trump administration could have accepted what it liked (presumably, cheap natural gas with lower CO2 emissions) and rejected what it

didn't (say, the tougher vehicle fuel mileage standards). To make the same point slightly differently: Trump's actions were mostly symbolic and political. They were grandstanding, intended to impress his core supporters.

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This distorts the climate debate in a dangerous and deceptive way. It's become all about Trump, when it should be about the inherent difficulty of regulating the global climate. The main practical consequence of Trump's stubborn stance is to offend (needlessly) the nearly 200 other countries that support the Paris accord. Trump's foreign policy seems to be a calculated effort to lose the United States as many friends in the world as possible. It's madness, a new strain of isolationism.

It also sends the wrong message: If only Trump would come to his

senses, we could get on with the serious business of solving climate change. Trump is allegedly the big obstacle — his apparent unwillingness to admit human-induced warming — just as greedy oil companies were before him (most big oil firms now seem to have shifted). The truth is more complicated.

We can't predict the exact degree of warming. Still, the direction is clear. Even if the Paris accord were fully implemented and all countries met their commitments — now impossible outcomes — emission levels would remain high, just lower than they would otherwise be, says Kelly Levin of the World Resources Institute, an environmental group. Although warming would slow, temperatures would continue rising.

Here's why.

Growing concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are the culprits. They increase temperatures by

trapping heat close to the surface. The emissions come mostly from the burning of fossil fuels (oil, coal, natural gas). Even if emission amounts decline, they're still adding to CO2 concentration levels — just at a slower rate. Because concentration levels matter, warming proceeds.

To stop this process requires replacing most fossil fuels — a daunting and perhaps impossible task. People won't surrender their vehicles, air conditioners and computers. It's true that wind and solar have made huge gains, but they started from low bases. With or without Paris, fossil fuels remain the foundation for modern civilization. According to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, fossil fuels accounted for 83 percent of world energy in 2015, down only slightly from 85 percent in 1990.

Based on present technology and knowledge, we don't know how to solve global warming. There is no obvious way to eliminate our

pervasive dependence on fossil fuels without plunging the world into a prolonged depression and inviting widespread civil strife.

This is not an excuse for fatalism — doing nothing — nor an exoneration of Trump's casual dismissal of the Paris accord. Global warming exemplifies what economists call a "collective action" problem: Unless all major nations cooperate, little can be done. A U.S. carbon tax (as often suggested by this writer) would be a good start. It would favor energy efficiency and renewables, as well as reduce chronic budget deficits.

But what we most need is honesty, which is scarce. The right dismisses global warming as a fake problem; the left can't acknowledge that, as yet, there are no viable solutions. We need to keep searching and hope that something turns up.



Fred Hiatt : The faces of Trump's retreat from human rights

One of the privileges of my job is the chance to meet with some of the world's bravest people: dissidents, exiles, relatives of political prisoners who come through Washington from every corner of the world, looking for support in their battles against dictators of every stripe.

Lately, though, there's been something different about these visits.

It used to be that The Post was a stop they made before or after the main event, which would be a meeting with administration officials. Since Donald Trump's inauguration, that has changed. The State Department, where virtually every important office remains unfilled, is a vacuum. The White House often seems on the side of the oppressors, not the oppressed.

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Much has been said in the past week about the U.S. retreat from global leadership, given President Trump's truculence in Europe and his decision to join the Nicaragua-Syria axis in withdrawing from the Paris treaty on climate change.

The retreat from any commitment to democracy and human rights — the failure to stand with people such as Angela Gui, Li Ching-yu or Ali H. Aslan — won't generate as many

headlines. But in the long run, it may do as much harm to U.S. interests and reputation, if not more.

Gui, 23, is a Swedish citizen, a university student in Britain and the daughter of Gui Minhai, a Hong Kong publisher who was apparently kidnapped by Chinese authorities while on vacation in Thailand in 2015. He's been in Chinese captivity ever since. His firm angered authorities by publishing gossip biographies of Communist Party leaders. Angela last heard from her father a year ago, when he telephoned to say she should stop agitating for his freedom.

"I understand you've got to say that," Angela replied. "But until you can tell me there's going to be an end to this, I'm going to continue campaigning."

You might expect Sweden to lead that campaign, because her father, too, is a Swedish citizen. You might expect to hear from Britain, which 20 years ago accepted China's solemn promise that freedoms in Hong Kong would be respected. But both have been pretty quiet, which is why Angela was in Washington.

Li Ching-yu's husband, Li Ming-che, is imprisoned in China, too. He is a Taiwanese human rights activist, but in Taiwan "they've been telling me I should keep quiet," his wife told me during a recent visit.

"That's why I'm here in the United States," she said. "I'm hoping the United States will uphold its values

and use its power to influence China to release a prisoner of conscience."

Ali Aslan has the same wish, though not much hope. He was Washington correspondent for Zaman, a leading Turkish newspaper until the increasingly authoritarian government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan shuttered it. Now, more than 50 of his former Zaman colleagues are in prison.

"[President Barack] Obama was too soft on Erdogan," Aslan said during a visit to The Post last week. "We told him, 'This isn't how you deal with a bully.'"

"But at least Obama was not encouraging or supporting him," he said. "Now we have Trump, who acts like a bully himself. He's getting along better with dictators than with democratic allies."

Aslan's assessment of Obama is a useful reminder that human rights supplicants often departed from Washington disappointed long before Trump. Even when the United States was encouraging democracy overseas, it necessarily balanced that interest against security and commercial concerns.

But it's also true that even a meeting with a deputy assistant secretary or a photo op with a presidential adviser could have major impact, saving one prisoner from torture, winning freedom for another, maybe just boosting the morale of someone else. Trump, in helping two U.S. citizens escape political captivity

(one from Egypt, another from Chinese agents in Thailand), has already seen how much clout he could have if he chose to wield it.

Given this administration's predilections, visitors are putting hope in meetings with members of Congress committed to human rights, such as Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Benjamin L. Cardin (D-Md.). Others look to France or Germany to pick up the slack.

And then there are those such as Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, who optimistically said he believes this administration eventually will pivot because of "the connection between these severe human rights abuses and the instability that occurs as a result."

"I think the evidence is so plentiful that it's only a matter of time before they understand it," Zeid, a Jordanian, said during a visit to The Post last month. "If you want a prevention rather than an intervention agenda, you have to embrace a human rights agenda."

Angela Gui, Li Ching-yu, Ali Aslan and thousands of others can only hope that such a revelation comes sooner rather than later.

Dionne : Trump's diplomacy of narcissism only makes him look weak

The problem with "America First" is that it describes an attitude, not a purpose. It substitutes selfishness for realism.

It implies that nations can go it alone, that we stand for nothing beyond our immediate self-interest, and that we should give little thought to how the rest of humanity thinks or lives. It suggests that if we are strong enough, we can prosper no matter how much chaos, disorder or injustice surrounds us.

America First leads to the diplomacy of narcissism, to use what has become a loaded word in the Trump era. And narcissism is as unhealthy for nations as it is for people.

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Perhaps the best approach to the problem as it affects us both individually and collectively was offered by Rabbi Hillel, who lived in the century before the birth of Christ. Hillel's lesson to us began with two questions: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I?"

Precisely. All of us should be prepared to stand up for ourselves. We are patriots

because we love our own land in a way we can love no other. But we live in a world of more than 7 billion people and nearly 200 countries. Does our nation not stand for something more than its own existence? Can we possibly survive and prosper if we are only for ourselves?

A constricted view of identity encourages destructive ways of thinking and, paradoxically, actions that reduce the United States' long-term influence. Almost as disturbing as the irresponsibility of President Trump's decision to abdicate U.S. global leadership on the environment by pulling out of the Paris climate accord was the language he used to justify it. He cast the United States — our beloved republic — as stupid and easily duped, not the shaper of its own fate but the victim of invidious foreign leaders whom he cast as far shrewder than we are.

"The rest of the world applauded when we signed the Paris agreement — they went wild; they were so happy — for the simple reason that it put our country, the United States of America, which we all love, at a very, very big economic disadvantage," Trump declared. "A cynic would say the obvious reason

for economic competitors and their wish to see us remain in the agreement is so that we continue to suffer this self-inflicted major economic wound."

Really? Our very best friends in the world, starting with Canada, were just trying to scam us? The climate pact was not even a little bit about staving off a catastrophe for the planet we all share? Should we take no pride in helping nudge the environment in a better direction?

And does Trump truly believe that President Barack Obama and the leaders of General Electric, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft, Google, IBM, BP, Disney and Shell are naive idiots? One more question: How could what even Trump had to concede is a "nonbinding" agreement bring about all the horrors he described?

A diplomacy of narcissism is of a piece, to borrow from the historian Richard Hofstadter, with the paranoid style of this president. In his statement, Trump spoke of "foreign lobbyists" who "wish to keep our magnificent country tied up and bound down by this agreement." He painted our nation as a pitiful heap of insecurity. "At what point does America get demeaned?" he asked.

"At what point do they start laughing at us as a country?"

If anyone is laughing after Trump's decision, it is our actual enemies and adversaries. They welcome a U.S. leader who wants to rip up or weaken alliances and other forms of collective security that our own practical visionaries, since the days of Harry Truman, Dean Acheson and George Marshall, put in place to advance our purposes.

Tragically, this choice was partly driven by selfish political motives. This only reinforces how narrow a definition of self-interest is in play here. Trump seems to realize how much trouble he is in from the metastasizing Russia story. So he sought to appeal to his political base, shrunken though it is, by re-embracing his "nationalist" side. He said he'd pull out of the Paris agreement and, by God, he did it! Doesn't that make him look strong?

Quite the opposite. The genuinely strong regularly ponder Hillel's second inquiry, "If I am only for myself, what am I?" I don't expect Trump to be troubled by this question, but as a nation, we cannot give up asking it.

POLITICO Trump National Security Team Blindsided by NATO Speech

By Susan B. Glasser

When President Donald Trump addressed NATO leaders during his debut overseas trip little more than a week ago, he surprised and disappointed European allies who hoped—and expected—he would use his speech to explicitly reaffirm America's commitment to mutual defense of the alliance's members, a one-for-all, all-for-one provision that looks increasingly urgent as Eastern European members worry about the threat from a resurgent Russia on their borders.

Story Continued Below

That part of the Trump visit is known.

What's not is that the president also disappointed—and surprised—his own top national security officials by failing to include the language reaffirming the so-called Article 5 provision in his speech. National security adviser H.R. McMaster, Defense Secretary James Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson all supported Trump doing so and had worked in the weeks leading up to the trip to make sure it was included in the speech, according to

five sources familiar with the episode. They thought it was, and a White House aide even told *The New York Times* the day before the line was definitely included.

It was not until the next day, Thursday, May 25, when Trump started talking at an opening ceremony for NATO's new Brussels headquarters, that the president's national security team realized their boss had made a decision with major consequences—without consulting or even informing them in advance of the change.

"They had the right speech and it was cleared through McMaster," said a source briefed by National Security Council officials in the immediate aftermath of the NATO meeting. "As late as that same morning, it was the right one."

Added a senior White House official, "There was a fully coordinated other speech everybody else had worked on"—and it wasn't the one Trump gave. "They didn't know it had been removed," said a third source of the Trump national security officials on hand for the ceremony. "It was only upon delivery."

The president appears to have deleted it himself, according to one version making the rounds inside the government, reflecting his personal skepticism about NATO and insistence on lecturing NATO allies about spending more on defense rather than offering reassurances of any sort; another version relayed to others by several White House aides is that Trump's nationalist chief strategist Steve Bannon and policy aide Stephen Miller played a role in the deletion. (According to NSC spokesman Michael Anton, who did not dispute this account, "The president attended the summit to show his support for the NATO alliance, including Article 5. His continued effort to secure greater defense commitments from other nations is making our alliance stronger.")

Either way, the episode suggests that what has been portrayed—correctly—as a major rift within the 70-year-old Atlantic alliance is also a significant moment of rupture inside the Trump administration, with the president withholding crucial information from his top national security officials—and then embarrassing them by forcing them to go out in public with awkward,

unconvincing, after-the-fact claims that the speech really did amount to a commitment they knew it did not make.

The frantic, last-minute maneuvering over the speech, I'm told, included "MM&T," as some now refer to the trio of Mattis, McMaster and Tillerson, lobbying in the days leading up to it to get a copy of the president's planned remarks and then pushing hard once they obtained the draft to get the Article 5 language in it, only to see it removed again. All of which further confirms a level of White House dysfunction that veterans of both parties I've talked with in recent months say is beyond anything they can recall.

And it suggests Trump's impulsive instincts on foreign policy are not necessarily going to be contained by the team of experienced leaders he's hired for Defense, the NSC and State. "We're all seeing the fallout from it—and all the fallout was anticipated," the White House official told me.

They may be the "adults in the room," as the saying going around Washington these past few months had it. But Trump—and the NATO

case shows this all too clearly—isn't in the room with them.

No one would find this episode more disturbing than Strobe Talbott, the Washington wise man who as much as anyone could be considered an architect of the modern NATO. As Bill Clinton's deputy secretary of state, Talbott oversaw the successful push to redefine the alliance for the post-Cold War, expanding to the same countries in Eastern Europe and the Baltics now so urgently looking for American reaffirmation of the commitment Clinton and Talbott gave them in the 1990s.

I spoke with Talbott, the president of the Brookings Institution and a Russia watcher going back to the 1960s when he translated Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs as a Rhodes Scholar classmate of Clinton's, for this week's Global Politico podcast, and he warned at length about the consequences of Trump's seeming disregard for NATO at the same time he's touted his affinity with Russian leader Vladimir Putin. Trump's rebuff of America's European allies on his recent trip—combined with his decision last week to withdraw from the Paris climate-change agreement—is not merely some rhetorical lapse, Talbott argued, but one with real consequences.

"The failure to say something has had a very dangerous and damaging effect on the most successful

military alliance in history," Talbott told me. Given that all of Trump's top officials like McMaster and Mattis had spent months promising that the president didn't really mean it when he called NATO "obsolete" and insisting the Article 5 commitment from the U.S. was unshakable, Talbott noted, "all we needed was for the commander in chief to say it, and he didn't say it"—an omission that "from that day forward ... [means] the Atlantic community was less safe, and less together."

Compared with his volatile management style and struggles on domestic policy, some have argued in recent months that Trump's foreign policy is a relative outpost of competence, with strong hands like McMaster and Mattis on board to avoid major failures. But Talbott and others with whom I've spoken since Trump's trip believe the NATO incident really overturns that assumption. It's destroyed the credibility of Trump's advisers when they offer reassurances for allies to discount the president's inflammatory rhetoric—and cast into doubt the kind of certainties necessary for an uncertain world to function.

"I had a very high-placed Asian official from a major ally in Asia not long ago, where you're sitting, who shook his head with sorrow, and said, 'Washington, D.C. is now the epicenter of instability in the world,'" Talbott recounted. "What it means is something that our friends and allies around the world have taken for

granted for 70 years is no longer something that they can take for granted."

And in fact, we're already seeing the ripple effects from the Trump NATO speech—that wasn't—and what several of the sources told me was an even worse rift with the allies during the private dinner that followed. In the days immediately after, European leaders like Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron went public with unusually frank criticisms. Meantime, Trump's rebuffed national security leaders have been left in increasingly awkward positions. "Are these people going to steer Trump," one former senior U.S. official asked, "or are they simply going to be made enablers?"

McMaster, a widely respected three-star general before he took the job, had been presumed by the Trump-war foreign policy establishment to be a smart pick because of his track record of being unafraid to speak truth to power (and a book on Vietnam in which he specifically argued that LBJ's generals had failed by not doing so). But he's now being pilloried by some early supporters for his very public efforts to spin Trump's trip as a success—and claim the president supported the Article 5 clause he never explicitly mentioned.

Mattis, meanwhile, has taken a different route.

Not only has the defense secretary, a former top general at NATO, not joined in the administration's

spinning, he set Twitter abuzz over the weekend with an appearance at an Asian security forum in Singapore. In his speech, he praised the international institutions and alliances sustained by American leadership, seeking to reassure allies once again that the U.S. was not really pulling back from the world despite Trump's "America First" rhetoric.

But when asked about Trump moves like withdrawing from the Paris accord and whether they meant America was abandoning the very global order that Mattis was busy touting, the secretary responded with an allusion to Winston Churchill's famous quote about the dysfunctions of democracy.

"To quote a British observer of us from some years back, bear with us," Mattis told the questioner. "Once we have exhausted all possible alternatives, the Americans will do the right thing."

"So," he added: "we will still be there, and we will be there with you."

The audience chuckled, one attendee told me, because "it was an elegant way out of an awkward question."

But the awkward question remains: Should we believe James Mattis, or Donald Trump?

The New York Times

Peter Baker

Trump's Off-the-Cuff Tweets Strain Foreign Ties (UNE)

Mr. Trump either misunderstood what Mr. Khan had said or distorted it. During an interview shown on the BBC, the mayor said he was "appalled and furious that these cowardly terrorists would target" innocent civilians and vowed that "we will never let them win, nor will we allow them to cower our city."

He went on to say that residents should not worry as they encounter more police officers patrolling the streets.

"Londoners will see an increased police presence today and over the course of the next few days," Mr. Khan said. "No reason to be alarmed. One of the things the police, all of us, need to do is make sure we're as safe as we possibly can be. I'm reassured that we are one of the safest global cities in the world, if not the safest global city in the world, but we always evolve and review ways to make sure that we remain as safe as we possibly can."

Mr. Khan's office later dismissed Mr. Trump's post, saying the mayor was too busy to reply. "He has more important things to do than respond to Donald Trump's ill-informed tweet that deliberately takes out of context his remarks urging Londoners not to be alarmed when they saw more police—including armed officers—on the streets," his office said in a statement.

The exchange reflected the tensions between Mr. Trump and the United States' close allies in Europe. The president returned a little more than a week ago from Belgium and Italy, where he questioned the role of NATO. Then, once home, he followed up by criticizing Germany on trade and pulling the United States out of the Paris climate change accord.

The friction has been especially acute for more than a year between Mr. Trump and Mr. Khan, the first Muslim to serve as mayor of a major Western European capital. During last year's presidential race, Mr. Khan criticized Mr. Trump's proposal

to temporarily ban all Muslims from entering the United States and endorsed Hillary Clinton, prompting an exchange with Mr. Trump's campaign.

Critics of Mr. Trump in Britain and the United States faulted him for his acrimonious response to the Saturday assault. "I don't think that a major terrorist attack like this is the time to be divisive and to criticize a mayor who's trying to organize his city's response to this attack," former Vice President Al Gore said on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday.

Damon Wilson, who was President George W. Bush's top Europe adviser and is now the executive vice president of the Atlantic Council, lamented that the spat only undercut a relationship that mattered to the United States. "America is safer when we rally our friends and allies against the bad guys rather than pick fights with the good guys," he said.

But the White House showed no signs of backing down, and a top aide to Mr. Trump amplified the attack shortly afterward. Dan Scavino Jr., the president's director of social media, posted a message referring to Mr. Khan's criticism of Mr. Trump a year ago for his "ignorant view of Muslims."

Addressing Mr. Khan, Mr. Scavino referred to his "tweet 13 months ago, after you criticized ... now President @realDonaldTrump—and WAKE UP!!!!"

Other American officials sought to smooth over the dispute. "I commend the strong leadership of the @MayorofLondon as he leads the city forward after this heinous attack," Lewis Lukens, a career diplomat serving as acting American ambassador to London, wrote on Twitter hours later.

This is just the latest time the American Embassy in London has had to manage turbulence in the relationship since Mr. Trump took office. The London government

complained vociferously after the White House aired a conspiracy theory that British intelligence helped President Barack Obama secretly spy on Mr. Trump during last year's campaign, which Britain denied. London complained again when American officials leaked details of the investigation into last month's terrorist bombing in Manchester.

Mr. Trump's initial arguments about the meaning of Saturday night's terrorist attack stirred debate both at home and abroad.

"We need the courts to give us back our rights. We need the Travel Ban

as an extra level of safety!" he wrote in one message Saturday night.

"We must stop being politically correct and get down to the business of security for our people," he wrote in another on Sunday morning. "If we don't get smart it will only get worse."

"Do you notice we are not having a gun debate right now?" he added. "That's because they used knives and a truck!"

Mr. Trump first tussled with Mr. Khan publicly last year shortly after Mr. Khan was elected. At the time, Mr. Trump's proposed Muslim ban applied to all Muslims from all

countries who were not American citizens, but Mr. Trump said he welcomed Mr. Khan's election and would make an exception for him.

Mr. Khan replied that he wanted no exception and accused Mr. Trump of harboring "ignorant views about Islam." Mr. Khan said Mr. Trump would only encourage Muslim alienation from the West. "He's playing into the hands of extremists," he said.

Mr. Scavino, at the time, fired back on Mr. Trump's behalf, writing on Twitter that it was not ignorance: "It's called not being 'politically correct.'" @realDonaldTrump will

MAKE AMERICA SAFE & GREAT AGAIN!"

The feud continued after Mr. Trump's election. In March, after a terrorist attack in London, Donald Trump Jr. posted a link suggesting that Mr. Khan had said terrorist attacks were just "part of living in big city." In fact, what Mr. Khan had said was that "part and parcel of living in a great global city" was being vigilant against terrorism and supporting the police.



Rubin : With his London tweets, Trump embarrasses himself — and America — once again

By Jennifer Rubin

The stoic determination and decency of the British people and their leaders were on full display in the hours after the latest horrific terrorist rampage. The Brits fought back, launching drinking glasses and chairs at the savages who attacked them. The police acted with lightning-fast precision, killing the three assailants within eight minutes of the emergency call. And, God Bless him, a man returned to the bar where he experienced Saturday's horror — to pay his bill and tip. Civilization is not going to be driven out of Britain by three or three hundred killers.

Meanwhile — and it pains me to write this — our president acted like a clod, a heartless and dull-witted thug in sending out a series of tweets. He — commander in chief and leader of the Free World — first retweeted an unverified, unofficial *Drudge headline about the unfolding terrorist attack*. Then he aimed to bolster his Muslim travel ban (which is not supposed to be a Muslim travel ban). "We need to be smart, vigilant and tough," he tweeted. "We need the courts to give us back our rights. We need the Travel Ban as an extra level of safety!" (Aside from the inappropriateness of President Trump's tweet, he fails to grasp that the courts in these cases are reaffirming our rights against an overreaching, discriminatory edict.)

Republicans and Democrats on June 4 commented on President Trump's tweets calling for a travel ban and criticizing the mayor of London after an attack in Britain's capital left seven people dead the day before. Republicans and Democrats on June 4 commented on President Trump's tweets about an attack in London that left seven people dead. (Video: Bastien Inzaurrealde/Photo: Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

Republicans and Democrats on June 4 commented on President Trump's tweets calling for a travel ban and criticizing the mayor of London after an attack in Britain's capital left seven people dead the day before. (Bastien Inzaurrealde/The Washington Post)

After receiving blowback for that obnoxious missive, he tweeted out, "Whatever the United States can do to help out in London and the U. K., we will be there — WE ARE WITH YOU. GOD BLESS!" But then he decided to slam the **mayor of the city attacked**, who had calmly warned his fellow Londoners: "Londoners will see an increased police presence today and over the course of the next few days. There's no reason to be alarmed." Trump took the second part out of context and responded viciously, "At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is 'no reason to be alarmed!'" (The mayor, of course, was telling

them not to be alarmed by the heightened police presence.) Trump was not done, however, inanely tweeting, "Do you notice we are not having a gun debate right now? That's because they used knives and a truck!"

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London Mayor Sadiq Khan has said he is "appalled" and "furious" after the attack on London Bridge on Saturday, June 3. London Mayor Sadiq Khan has said he is "appalled" and "furious" after the attack on London Bridge on Saturday, June 3. (Reuters)

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has said he is "appalled" and "furious" after the attack on London Bridge on Saturday, June 3. (Reuters)

One is prompted to ask if he is off his rocker. But this is vintage Trump — impulsive and cruel, without an ounce of class or human decency. His behavior no longer surprises us, but it should offend and disturb us, first, that he remains the face and voice of America in the world and, second, that his fans hoot and holler, seeing this as inconsequential or acceptable conduct. We wound up with this president because millions of Republicans could not prioritize character, decency and overall fitness to serve over their mundane

and frankly petty partisan wish list (28 percent top marginal tax rate!). Self-appointed religious leaders fail to see that this soullessness — not the dreaded liberal elite who insist on saying "Happy Holidays" or refuse to countenance discrimination against gay customers — is a threat to the moral fiber of a democracy that requires a modicum of common sense and human decency to function.

Sure, Trump's policies and rhetoric are incoherent and based on a tower of lies. Far worse, however, is his appalling character, which accelerates the erosion of democratic norms and social cohesion a diverse democracy requires. In instances like this, those who would lecture us on President Obama's under-appreciation of America's unique place in human history or proclaim that they simply had to vote for Trump because Hillary Clinton was some sort of monster are exposed as fools or hypocrites or both.

The London attacks bring out the best in Britain and in Western leaders on the European continent; it brings out the worst in Trump and his followers. The former protect the soul of Western civilization; the latter drive a stake through the animating ideas that make America special.

ETATS-UNIS

Trump is finding it easier to tear down old policies than to build his own (UNE)

Builder-turned-president Donald Trump has in many ways made good on his promise to be a political wrecking ball.

Last week, he withdrew the United States from the Paris climate accord. He has worked to roll back dozens of health, environment, labor and financial rules put in place by former president Barack Obama, and he scrapped a far-reaching trade deal with Asia as one of his first acts in office.

But he and his fellow Republicans have made little progress in building an affirmative agenda of their own, a dynamic that will be on display when Congress returns this week with few major policies ready to advance.

Voters are still waiting for progress on the \$1 trillion package of infrastructure projects Trump promised, the wall along the Southern border he insisted could be quickly constructed and the massive tax cuts he touted during the campaign. Even debate over health-care reform is largely focused on eliminating key parts of the Affordable Care Act and allowing states to craft policies in their place.

How Trump is rolling back Obama's legacy

After being the "party of no" during the Obama years, Republicans are trying to figure out what they want to achieve in this unexpected Trump era — beyond just rolling back what Obama did.

"We are in an ugly era of people who do not understand what the legislative branch is even for," said Andy Karsner, who served as assistant secretary of energy for efficiency and renewable energy in the George W. Bush administration and is now based in California, working with entrepreneurs as managing partner of the Emerson Collective.

The Trump administration and Republican leadership in Congress, Karsner said, "have no skill set, they have no craftsmanship. They have no connection to the time when people passed legislation."

Trump's aides fervently push back at the idea that the president is not already in building mode. Marc Short, Trump's director of legislative affairs, rattled off a list of things the president has built so far: A better job environment with fewer regulations, relationships with fellow

foreign leaders and U.S. lawmakers, a budget and a plan for overhauling health care, along with nominating Neil M. Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court. The administration plans to roll out a number of infrastructure projects this week and tackle tax reform this fall, along with getting started on building a border wall, he said.

"The American people elected him president, in part, to undo much of the damage that President Obama did to our economy," Short said.

But even some Republicans have raised questions about what the party now stands for, as opposed to what it is against.

Asked during a recent interview for a Politico podcast what the Republican Party stands for now, Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) responded: "I don't know."

Sasse said that both parties are "intellectually exhausted" and too focused on winning the next election, prompting them to get caught up in day-to-day fights instead of looking to the future. Later, Sasse was asked to give one word to describe the Republican Party, and he said: "Question mark."

Short said the Republican Party stands for keeping the country secure and freeing businesses so the economy can boom and taxpayers can keep more of their money. He added that the president has been slowed by congressional Democrats who dragged their feet in approving Cabinet nominees and continue to obstruct Trump's agenda.

Josh Holmes, a former chief of staff to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), said the appearance that Trump and Republicans are only focused on reversing Obama-era executive actions stems from the fact that "there's a lot to do there."

"The one thing that I think is underappreciated is the extent to which the entire Obama agenda in the last term was executed through executive order. Much of what President Trump was elected to do was roll that back," Holmes said. "To the extent that a lot of this is focused on that, that's the way you handle it. Most administrations, there are legacies left by signature legislative accomplishments — and [Obama] had health care and Dodd-Frank, but he basically spent six and a half years doing nothing from a legislative perspective."

Holmes, like many other Republicans, stressed that it's early in Trump's term, and he was encouraged to see the president focus on American taxpayers and improving the economy in announcing his decision to leave the Paris climate agreement on Thursday. That sort of focus will help rally support for tax reform, he said.

"I would be concerned if the trajectory didn't improve. In the next couple of months, you don't need signature accomplishments, but you need progress towards it," Holmes said. "I think tax reform is critically important for this administration — critically important. They've got to get it right."

For many Democrats, all they see in Trump and his fellow Republicans is a bulldozer. Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said in a statement that the past six months have shown that "the hard right, which has enveloped the Trump administration, is seasoned at being negative but can't do anything positive."

Republicans have used the Congressional Review Act to nullify 14 rules enacted by the Obama administration. Before this year, it had only been used successfully once in 20 years. If Trump and Republicans had not reversed these rules, then companies applying for federal contracts would have had to disclose their labor violations; coal mines would have had to reduce the amount of debris dumped into streams; telecommunications companies would have had to take "reasonable measures" to protect their customers' personal information; individuals receiving Social Security payments for disabling mental illnesses would have been added to a list of those not allowed to buy guns; states would have been limited in the drug-testing they could perform on those receiving unemployment insurance benefits; certain hunting practices would not have been allowed on national wildlife refuges in Alaska; and states could have set up retirement savings plans for those who don't have the option at work.

Short said the fact that Trump was able to use the Congressional Review Act more than a dozen times when it had only been used once before is "a pretty significant accomplishment" and one that he says will benefit the economy by billions of dollars each year.

"We look at that as one of the biggest accomplishments," he said.

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) recently touted this rollback of Obama-era regulations while visiting a nuclear power plant in Tonopah, Ariz., bragging that Republicans were able to "reach back into the old administration and pull some of the regulations and start fresh."

Within agencies, the Trump administration has also worked to scrap regulations that it says hindered businesses.

At the Environmental Protection Agency, the administration has revoked several Obama-era policies aimed at reducing pollution and confronting climate change. Trump has signed an executive order to open up oil and gas drilling in the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, while Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has signed a secretarial order to revisit drilling plans in two reserves in Alaska.

Trump has directed the Labor Department to reverse Obama-era rules imposing restrictions on major banks and investment advisers, and the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has also rolled back multiple regulations aimed at fostering worker protections. These include the delay of a rule requiring employers report worker injury and illness records electronically so they can be posted online, and the cancellation of a directive allowing a union official to accompany an OSHA inspector as an employee representative into a nonunion shop.

Multiple agencies have jettisoned or played down policies aimed at fostering LGBT rights. The Department of Housing and Urban Development revoked guidance for a rule requiring that transgender people stay at the sex-segregated shelter of their choice, while the Department of Health and Human Services has removed questions about sexual orientation from two of the surveys it conducts. The Justice and Education departments, moreover, withdrew guidance issued last year that instructed school districts to provide transgender students with access to facilities that accord with their chosen gender identity.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

And while Republicans continue to try to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the Trump administration has begun to unwind aspects of the legislation through executive action, including no longer enforcing a fine for those who do not have health insurance, broadening exemptions for the contraception mandate and encouraging states to file waivers with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Trump has also proposed significant budget cuts, including reducing the State Department budget by 33 percent, the Environmental Protection Agency by 31 percent, the departments of Agriculture and Labor by 21 percent each, the Department of Health and Human Services by 18 percent, the Commerce Department by 16 percent and the Education Department by 14 percent.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) said that career employees at the EPA and departments of Labor and State have told him that Trump's "destroy not build" approach is causing harm that could last for decades.

"They see their life's work crumbling, because they see a president taking a sledgehammer to really complex aspects of policy," he said. "They realize there's pros and

cons and conflicting interests, and they've tried to reach compromises that he just impulsively destroys because it was a good campaign slogan."

Sean Sullivan contributed to this report.



In Twitter barrage, Trump ramps up push for 'TRAVEL BAN!' even as opposition hardens

By Paige Winfield Cunningham and Brian Murphy

Republicans and Democrats on June 4 commented on President Trump's tweets calling for a travel ban and criticizing the mayor of London after an attack in Britain's capital left seven people dead the day before. Republicans and Democrats on June 4 commented on President Trump's tweets about an attack in London that left seven people dead. (Video: Bastien Inzaurrealde/Photo: Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

(Bastien Inzaurrealde/The Washington Post)

President Trump unleashed a fresh barrage of criticism Monday against courts blocking the administration's travel ban, calling for a fast-track Supreme Court hearing and urging the Justice Department to seek even tougher measures on who enters the United States.

In a series of tweets, Trump circled back on his push for the travel ban in the wake of Saturday's terrorist attack in London — even as new opposition emerged from Republican and Democratic lawmakers.

Trump also appeared again to disregard the potential legal problems linked to the term "travel ban." Trump's use of the phrase was cited by several U.S. district court judges in decisions to stop plans to virtually halt U.S. entry for citizens of six Muslim-majority nations.

"People, the lawyers and the courts can call it whatever they want, but I am calling it what we need and what it is, a TRAVEL BAN!" Trump wrote.

Trump also called on the Justice Department to seek an "expedited hearing of the watered down Travel Ban before the Supreme Court," and study options for a "much tougher version" in the meantime.

"The Justice Dept. should ask for an expedited hearing of the watered down Travel Ban before the Supreme Court — & seek much tougher version!" Trump tweeted.

But it was Trump who put forward the revised travel ban provisions — dropping Iraq from the list and making other changes — after the original executive order was blocked by court challenges.

[Trump's London reaction: stoking fears and rekindling feuds]

On Sunday, several lawmakers suggested in TV interviews that Trump's proposed ban is no longer necessary since the administration has had the time it claimed it needed to develop beefed-up vetting procedures to screen people coming to the United States.

"It's been four months since I said they needed four months to put that in place," Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), a member of the Intelligence Committee, said on "Fox News Sunday." "I think you can do that without a travel ban and hopefully we are."

Sen. Mark R. Warner (Va.), the top Democrat on the panel, said Trump's administration has had plenty of time at this point to examine how immigrants are let into the United States and make any improvements that are needed. "If the president wanted 90 days to re-examine how individuals from certain countries would enter the United States, he's had more than

90 days," Warner said on CBS's "Face the Nation."

Trump argued repeatedly on the campaign trail and after his victory that a better system for screening immigrants is imperative to national security. He signed an executive order in mid-March to temporarily suspend the U.S. refugee program and block visas for citizens of Iran, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. He promised to develop more-comprehensive screening that would render the temporary ban unnecessary once in place.

Trump renewed his call for the ban Sunday in response to the Saturday attacks near London Bridge, which left seven dead and dozens injured. The president tweeted: "We need to be smart, vigilant and tough. We need the courts to give us back our rights. We need the Travel Ban as an extra level of safety!"

The travel ban was to last only 90 days, purportedly to buy agencies time to explore new procedures. Federal judges in Maryland and Hawaii have since suspended the ban, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit agreed with the Maryland judge that the order was discriminatory.

The Justice Department interpreted the Hawaii court's decision to mean federal agencies couldn't work on new vetting procedures.

"We have put our pens down," acting U.S. Solicitor General Jeffrey B. Wall told the 4th Circuit last month, when questioned about work on new procedures during a separate hearing about the travel ban. Wall said the administration has "done nothing to review the vetting procedures for these countries."

To get the travel ban reinstated, the Justice Department filed two emergency applications with the Supreme Court last week. If the court allows the development of new vetting procedures to go forward, that could start the clock on another 90 days for the administration to review vetting procedures. But that could also render a Supreme Court decision on the travel ban moot, since the court is not likely to hear that case before October.

The Health 202 newsletter

Your daily guide to the health-care debate.

That time frame has left some legal experts puzzled about the Trump administration's intent.

"The enhanced procedures would be in place by the beginning of October," said Mark Tushnet, a law professor at Harvard University. "By that time, the travel ban would not be in effect."

As more time goes by with no appearance of effort toward stronger vetting, it could undermine the administration's legal justification for a temporary travel ban.

"I think the travel ban is too broad, and that is why it's been rejected by the courts," Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) said Sunday on "Face the Nation." "The president is right, however, that we need to do a better job of vetting individuals who are coming from war-torn countries into our nation ... but I do believe that the very broad ban that he has proposed is not the right way to go."



After London Attack, Trump Again the Center of Partisan Media Combat

Michael M. Grynbaum

The president's retweet of a Drudge headline — "fears of new terror attack," it read, even as the nature

of the assault remained unclear — prompted a rebuke of sorts from NBC Nightly News, whose Twitter account pointedly noted that its

journalists would not relay the president's retweet, "as the info is unconfirmed."

That led to accusations of liberal bias, with the "Fox & Friends" co-host Abby Huntsman asking, "Can we not just come together?"

It was the kind of chain reaction that is increasingly commonplace in a deeply polarized political environment, where news organizations attract tribal followings, and where major events like the London attack can stoke fears and inflame emotions — from Mr. Trump on down.

Mr. Aslan responded with his angry posts after the president, in the immediate wake of the attack on Saturday, wrote on Twitter that his proposed travel ban was needed to prevent terrorism. Mr. Aslan, an Iranian-American writer and religion scholar who hosts a weekly show about faith and society for CNN, also described Mr. Trump as “an embarrassment to humankind.”

That prompted expressions of outrage from right-wing news outlets like Breitbart News and the hosts of “Fox & Friends” on Sunday morning, who lamented his comment. CNN was already mired in an uproar over the comedian

Kathy Griffin, a co-host of the network’s New Year’s Eve coverage, who posted a photograph in which she held a fake severed head meant to look like the president’s; CNN severed ties with Ms. Griffin last week.

“I should have used better language to express my shock and frustration at the president’s lack of decorum and sympathy,” Mr. Aslan wrote in a statement on Sunday. “I apologize for my choice of words.” (A spokeswoman for CNN added: “That kind of discourse is never appropriate.”)

The backlash against Mr. Trump’s tweets, however, went beyond Mr. Aslan. Critics pointed to the president’s criticism of London’s mayor, Sadiq Khan, noting that Mr. Trump had taken a quote from the mayor out of context to suggest that he was unconcerned about terrorism.

There was also some disbelief in online comments that the president,

who has access to up-to-the-minute national intelligence, chose to send a speculative item from The Drudge Report to his 31.5 million Twitter followers on an issue of international import. The Drudge Report, which is hugely popular with conservatives, counts Mr. Trump among its devotees: @Drudge_Report is just one of 45 Twitter accounts that he follows.

On “Fox & Friends,” a reliably Trump-friendly morning show, there was little concern over the president’s tweets, but some criticism of Mr. Aslan’s remark, which the hosts described as evidence of an explicit bias against Mr. Trump in some quarters of the news media.

It was not long until the “Fox & Friends” crew was coping with its own troubles.

One of the show’s guest commentators, Katie Hopkins of The Daily Mail, raised the prospect of rounding up Muslims in the

United Kingdom and placing them in internment camps as a way of preventing future attacks. Another guest — Nigel Farage, the British political figure and “Brexit” advocate who is now a Fox News contributor — also mentioned the idea of internment.

Later in the broadcast, the “Fox & Friends” anchors paused for a formal denunciation of the statements, lest viewers be left with the impression that Fox was endorsing the idea.

“On behalf of the network, I think all of us here find that idea reprehensible here at Fox News Channel, just to be clear,” a co-host, Clayton Morris, told viewers.

Ms. Huntsman added, “It’s important to be said.”



Zelizer : After London, Trump should not let fear dictate policy

Julian Zelizer, a history and public affairs professor at Princeton University and a CNN political analyst, is the author of “The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson, Congress, and the Battle for the Great Society.” He’s co-host of the “Politics & Polls” podcast. The opinions expressed in this commentary are his own.

The United States must not let fear dictate politics or policy. And yet as soon as news broke about the horrific attacks in London, President Donald Trump tweeted out: “We need to be smart, vigilant and tough. We need the courts to give us back our rights. We need the Travel Ban as an extra level of safety!” The President, who is preparing to bring his blocked travel ban to the Supreme Court, has chosen to use this moment of fear as a justification to build public support for his controversial executive order.

He continued with even more tweets connecting his campaign rhetoric with the attacks. “We must stop being politically correct and get down to the business of security for our people.” In another, he went after gun control advocates: “Did you notice we are not having a gun debate right now? That’s because they used knives and a truck!”

These tweets should give members of Congress pause. We have a long history of making bad policy decisions in times of fear. When there are threats to our national security at home or abroad, the government has moved in directions

that are counterproductive -- and often made conditions worse. Capitalizing on the fears of the electorate, politicians have many times implemented policies that undercut our civil liberties, enter us into costly and deadly battles that have little to do with the threat we face, and undermine our standing overseas.

This could easily turn into one of those moments.

The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 started us off on the wrong foot. As the US prepared for the possibility of war against France, President John Adams and the Federalist-controlled Congress enacted a series of laws that tightened citizenship restriction laws for immigrants and empowered the government to imprison and detain citizens who were seen as dangerous. The target of the laws was the opposition party, then called the Democratic-Republican Party, as much as any real or external threat.

During the Civil War, one of President Lincoln’s most controversial decisions was to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, which allowed for the indefinite detention of “disloyal persons” without any trial, in response to unrest in the border states.

During World War I, the federal government and citizen vigilante groups rounded up German immigrants who had come from a country which was then fighting against the United States. On April 4, 1918, a crowd of drunken people

lynched a German American named Robert Prager in Collinsville, Illinois. Congress imposed harsh punishment against mail used to send “treasonous” material, a law that was used against anti-war magazines such as The Nation. Finally, under raids conducted by Attorney General Mitchell Palmer, agents rounded up suspected immigrants and sent them overseas.

In World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt authorized the internment of Japanese-Americans based on fears that they would not be loyal to the nation.

And, during the early Cold War, Sen. Joseph McCarthy went after alleged communists living in the US, destroying the careers and lives of many figures from the left who were caught up in this sweep.

With ongoing attacks on civilians by individuals directly connected or associated with ISIS, we risk making the same mistake once again. The courts have blocked President Trump’s proposed travel ban that targets some Muslim-majority countries on the grounds that it violates First Amendment protections for religious freedom.

Most experts agree that the travel ban would do nothing to stop the kinds of attacks that have been taking place in cities across Europe because most of the attackers are homegrown.

Indeed, the ban does not include countries from which the 9/11 terrorists came. In fact, Saudi

Arabia -- one of the countries where most of the 9/11 attackers were from -- just received a huge assistance package from President Trump.

The ban would also make it much harder for intelligence officials to work with communities where potential threats might reside, by creating an unnecessary barrier between federal agents and the law-abiding and patriotic citizens who are prepared to offer much needed assistance.

Worse yet, the travel ban would fuel extremism by providing the best propaganda possible that the United States is in a war against Muslims.

Rather than tweeting about the travel ban, it would be better for President Trump to focus on measures that would actually work. Cities and suburbs need to ramp up their protective infrastructure with better barriers and check points at vulnerable areas. The federal government needs to provide more funding for improved intelligence-gathering to discover threats before they emerge. And the President needs to strengthen -- not weaken -- relations with our allies in Europe, who are critical in working to counter the terror threat.

We need a State Department that is fully staffed so that it can conduct the needed diplomatic discussions with allies to build alliances against the terrorists. The US also needs to continue to gain ground in Syria and Iraq -- frontlines in the war against ISIS.

We can look to London as an example of how to move forward. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, told his city's residents following these "barbaric" and "cowardly" attacks, that there was "no reason to be alarmed" about the heightened police presence in the city. He has reminded them that London is one of the safest cities in

the world and they need to protect their democratic institutions and values rather than letting the terrorists destroy those. The Mayor said: "We are all shocked and angry today -- but this is our city. We will never let these cowards win and we will never be cowed by terrorism."

Taking the Mayor's statements out of context, Trump this morning

tweeted: "At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is 'no reason to be alarmed!'"

Shortly after the tweet from POTUS went out, Brendan Cox, the husband of the slain MP Jo Cox, who was murdered by a man with extreme far-right views, tweeted to him in response: "You represent the

worst of your country, @SadiqKhan represents some of the best of ours."

The President, who undoubtedly disagrees with the assessment, would benefit from heeding this larger warning.

The New York Times

Blow : Trump's Incredible Shrinking America

From the way Trump has treated America's neighbors — Mexico about immigrants and the financing of his ridiculous wall, Canada over trade practices on energy, lumber and dairy (he called policies surrounding dairy trade "a disgrace") — to the way he has treated our friends in Europe, Trump is singlehandedly ushering in a new era of American decline.

Last month in Europe, Trump was as boorish and belligerent as it was possible to be, lashing out at our NATO allies about their defense spending just after having been gracious and magnanimous to leaders in the Middle East.

Then last week Trump thumbed his nose at the world and the planet by announcing that he would pull America out of the Paris climate accord, even though a Yale survey found the agreement was popular and a majority of Americans in every state — including those that Trump won — wanted the United States to stay in the agreement.

But even beyond whether or not it was popular, staying in was right. More than 190 countries — most of the countries on

the planet — are signatories to the agreement. We have one planet. It is in trouble. The world must band together to save it. How does it look for the world's last remaining superpower to simply walk away?

This is not putting America first, this is putting America on a path of regression and isolationism. This is putting our future and the future of the planet in peril. This is dumb, hazardous and shortsighted.

Trump justified his move using faulty information, citing issues that are not even in the agreement and flat-out lying. What else is new? Perhaps his most memorable line from his speech about the withdrawal was:

"I was elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris. I promised I would exit or renegotiate any deal which fails to serve America's interests."

The problem is that, as PolitiFact pointed out:

"Clinton won almost 60 percent of the vote in Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh. The percentage was even higher in many precincts within the city of Pittsburgh itself.

(Allegheny County includes a range of suburbs in addition to the city.)"

Indeed, the mayor of Pittsburgh, Bill Peduto, told CNN after the speech: "The city of Pittsburgh voted for Hillary Clinton with nearly 80 percent of the vote." Later on CNN, Peduto was asked if he had a message for Trump. Peduto responded: "What you did was not only bad for the economy of this country, but also weakened America in this world."

In fact, mayors, governors and business leaders across the country were quick to rebuke Trump's horrendous decision and to dedicate themselves to the spirit of the agreement.

Then, for me, the icing on the cake was Trump's absolute lack of grace and tact in his response to the London terror attacks over the weekend. His first response was not to express his horror and extend America's condolences and offer American assistance. No, that would have required that he possess a shred of empathy and common decency.

Instead, his first instinct was to use the attacks as political fodder to

advance his own failed domestic agenda to impose a "travel ban."

Shortly after the attacks, while people were still trying to get their minds around what exactly had happened in London, Trump tweeted:

"We need to be smart, vigilant and tough. We need the courts to give us back our rights. We need the Travel Ban as an extra level of safety!"

(Note that Trump again calls it a "ban," although White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer, who retweeted this message, scolded the media in January for calling Trump's ban a ban, saying: "This is not a Muslim ban, it's not a travel ban, it's a vetting system to keep America safe." Trump is killing himself in the courts with his own words.)

Trump is pulling America back and pulling America down. We are now witnessing the incredible shrinking America, and it's a sad sight to behold.

The New York Times

Krugman : Making Ignorance Great Again

So, Mr. Mulvaney, where's your assessment of Trumpcare? You had plenty of resources to do your own study before trying to pass a bill. What did you find? (Actually, the White House did do an internal analysis of an earlier version of Trumpcare, which was leaked to Politico. Its predictions were even more dire than those from the C.B.O.)

But Mulvaney and his party don't study issues, they just decide, and attack the motives of anyone who questions their decisions.

Which brings us back to climate policy.

On climate change, influential conservatives have for years clung to what is basically a crazy conspiracy theory — that the overwhelming scientific consensus

that the earth is warming due to greenhouse-gas emissions is a hoax, somehow coordinated by thousands of researchers around the world. And at this point this is effectively the mainstream Republican position.

Do G.O.P. leaders really think this conspiracy theory is true? The answer, surely, is that they don't care. Truth, as something that exists apart from and in possible opposition to political convenience, is no longer part of their philosophical universe.

The same goes for claims that trying to rein in emissions will do terrible economic damage and destroy millions of jobs. Such claims are, if you think about it, completely inconsistent with everything Republicans supposedly believe about economics.

After all, they insist that the private sector is infinitely flexible and innovative; the magic of the marketplace can solve all problems. But then they claim that these magical markets would roll over and die if we put a modest price on carbon emissions, which is basically what climate policy would do. This doesn't make any sense — but it's not supposed to. Republicans want to keep burning coal, and they'll say whatever helps produce that outcome.

And as health care and climate go, so goes everything else. Can you think of any major policy area where the G.O.P. hasn't gone post-truth? Take budgeting, where leaders like Paul Ryan have always justified tax cuts for the rich by claiming the ability to conjure up trillions in extra revenue and savings in some unspecified way. The Trump-

Mulvaney budget, which not only pulls \$2 trillion out of thin air but counts it twice, takes the game to a new level, but it's not that much of a departure.

But does any of it matter? The president, backed by his party, is talking nonsense, destroying American credibility day by day. But hey, stocks are up, so what's the problem?

Well, bear in mind that so far Trump hasn't faced a single crisis not of his own making. As George Orwell noted many years ago in his essay "In Front of Your Nose," people can indeed talk nonsense for a very long time, without paying an obvious price. But "sooner or later a false belief bumps up against solid reality, usually on a battlefield." Now there's a happy thought.

Summers : After 75 years of progress, was last week a hinge in history?

Lawrence Summers

In economics, as in life, things often take longer to happen than you think they will and then happen faster than you thought they could. So it may turn out with the catastrophic international economic policies of President Trump. It is possible that last week will be remembered as a hinge in history — a moment when the United States and the world started moving on a path away from the peace, prosperity and stability that have defined the past 75 years.

For all that has gone wrong in the past three-quarters of a century, this period has witnessed more human betterment than any time. The rate of fatalities in war has steadily declined, while growing integration has driven global growth and improvement in life expectancy and living standards. Progress is too slow, and not well enough shared, but Americans have never lived so well. This has been driven by remarkable developments in human thought, especially in science and technology, and a relatively stable global order that has been underwritten by the United States.

Will these trends continue? Optimists have suggested that despite the revanchist and often anti-rationalist rhetoric of his campaign, Trump has in the international sphere surrounded

himself with rational establishment advisers and has either retreated or been stymied by Congress on proposals such as launching trade wars and building walls.

Read These Comments

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Until last week, they had a reasonable argument. No longer. We may have our first post-rational president. Trump has rejected the view of modern science on global climate change, embraced economic forecasts and trade theories outside the range of reputable opinion, and relied on the idea of alternative facts rather than evidence-based truth.

Even for conservative statesmen such as Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush and Henry Kissinger, the idea of a community of nations has been a commonplace. Come now H.R. McMaster, national security adviser, and Gary Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, who have been held out as the president's most rational, globally minded advisers. They have taken to the Wall Street Journal to proclaim that "the world is not a global community" and advanced a theory of international relations not unlike the one that animated the British and French at Versailles at the end of World War I. On this view, the objective of international

negotiation is not to establish a stable, peaceful system or to seek cooperation or to advance universal values through compromise, they wrote, but to strike better deals in "an arena where nations, nongovernmental organizations, and businesses compete for advantage."

In service of this theory, the president in the past two weeks renounced any claim to U.S. moral leadership by failing to convincingly reaffirm traditional U.S. security commitments to NATO and abandoning participation in the Paris global climate agreement. The latter is probably our most consequential error since the Iraq War and may well be felt even longer.

There will be consequences to all of this, as there were to the pursuit of short-term advantage rather than systemic stability at Versailles. One does not need to subscribe to pessimistic versions of Graham Allison's "Thucydides Trap" as it relates to worries about how China as a rising power may fill the vacuum left by the United States. How, after the events of the past week, can U.S. adversaries and allies alike not follow German Chancellor Angela Merkel in concluding that the United States is now far less predictable and reliable? How can the responses be other than destabilizing?

It is essential that leaders in U.S. society signal clearly their disapproval of the course the administration is taking. History will judge poorly business leaders who retain positions on Trump administration advisory boards because they hope to be in a position to cut favorable deals. Elon Musk of Tesla and Robert Iger of Disney have taken the correct and principled stand by resigning their presidential appointments. More should follow.

What is to be done? The U.S. president is not America. The world will be watching to see whether Trump's words and deeds represent an irrevocable turn in the nation's approach to the world or a temporary aberration. The more that leading figures in U.S. society can signal their continuing commitment to reason, to common purpose with other nations, and to addressing global challenges, the more the damage can be contained. And, of course, Congress has a central role to play in preventing dangerous and destabilizing steps.

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