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FRANCE - EUROPE

The
Washington
Post

Emmanuel Macron's party headed for absolute majority in French election

By James

McAuley

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron and his party took a commanding lead in the first round of France's legislative elections Sunday, with the potential to win an absolute majority.

In a once-unimaginable scenario, Macron's centrist party — established little more than a year ago — was projected to win between 390 and 430 of the French Parliament's 577 seats, according to an Ipsos-Sopra analysis. In a political landscape defined for decades by the well-oiled machines of traditional center-left and center-right parties, the rise of Macron's Republic on the Move represented a watershed development.

The victory of Macron in May's presidential election was the first time a president who did not belong to either of those traditional parties won the Elysee Palace. If Sunday's parliamentary results hold up after a second and final round of voting next Sunday, France will be run by

both a new president and a new party. Macron, who has long promised a "renewal of political life," will have successfully persuaded voters to give him relatively free rein in the attempt.

But turnout was at a record low level, and that could cloud Macron's mandate. Only 49 percent of registered voters cast their ballots, according to the Ipsos-Sopra analysis. Participation in parliamentary elections has typically been significantly higher, mostly between 60 and 80 percent.

Macron's political opponents were quick to emphasize the unusually high abstention figures.

"I am particularly concerned about the fact that 1 French person out of 2 did not vote," Valérie Pécresse, the president of the center-right Republicans party in the Ile-de-France region, told Le Monde newspaper. "We weaken Parliament, which is a democratic counter-power. And we take the risk of a single party, a single thought, a single program."

The Republicans, one of the two parties that controlled France until 2017, came in second, winning between 85 and 125 seats, according to early projections. But the Socialists, once a bedrock of French and European political life, were projected to win only between 20 and 35 seats. For the historic party of François Mitterrand, that would probably mean a devastating loss of more than 200 seats.

"The tornado was too strong, the two votes too close," Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, the first secretary of the French Socialist party, said in a statement Sunday night. The "tornado" he referred to was that of Macron's victory in the general election, in which some Socialist ministers abandoned their own party and supported instead the newfound party of the outsider candidate, himself a onetime Socialist minister.

When Macron won the French presidency last month in a landslide, it did not necessarily follow that the new leader — the youngest in modern French history, who has

promised a slew of broad, sweeping reforms, many in the notoriously difficult labor sector — would carry any kind of lead in the two rounds of legislative elections now underway.

For one, many who voted for Macron in May said that they were merely voting against his opponent, the far-right extremist Marine Le Pen. In the historic circumstances of 2017, many said, Macron's appeal was merely that he was seen as the last stand against the same populist wave responsible for Britain's Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump in the United States.

But Sunday's vote would suggest that the new president and his promises have gained considerable traction.

The Calais 'Jungle' is gone, but France's migrant crisis is far from over

Politics newsletter

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Emmanuel Macron's Party on Track to Claim Majority in France's Parliament

Alissa J. Rubin

PARIS — French voters resoundingly embraced the still untested party of the newly elected president, Emmanuel Macron, in Sunday's first round of parliamentary elections, dealing another humiliating blow to France's traditional parties.

Based on returns from 97 percent of France's 577 districts, it appeared likely that candidates for Mr. Macron's party, La République en Marche, would receive 28 percent of the votes for the National Assembly, the powerful lower house of Parliament, meaning that it appears on track to win a majority of seats, according to the Interior Ministry website.

The party's commanding lead in the first round of voting completes a remarkable 14 months in which Mr. Macron formed his own party, humbled France's main Socialist and Republican Parties, and repelled the far-right challenge of

Marine Le Pen's National Front at a time of rising right-wing nationalism and populism.

With an apparent majority in Parliament, the 39-year-old president will be in a strong position to enact his pro-business agenda — although nothing is certain until next week's second-round vote.

"France is back," Edouard Philippe, the prime minister for Mr. Macron, said after the strong vote for the president's party, though he lamented the relatively light turnout, about 49 percent of the voting public, according to the Interior Ministry.

"Despite the abstention, the message of the French has no ambiguity: For the third consecutive time, millions of you confirmed your attachment to the president of the republic's project to renew, unite and win back," said Mr. Philippe, whom Mr. Macron brought in from the mainstream, right-leaning Republican Party.

Those candidates garnering 50 percent or more of the votes in their districts will be declared the winners. But given the large number of candidates for each seat, and the low turnout, most of the top vote getters will face a runoff next Sunday. To claim a majority in Parliament, candidates supporting Mr. Macron will need to win at least 289 seats. Failing that, he has formed an alliance with the centrist Democratic Movement to help ensure a majority. However, as things now stand, it appears all but certain that the president will have a majority — and potentially a large one.

Parties on the extreme right and left seemed to be faring poorly, gaining far fewer votes nationwide than they had in the first round of the presidential election, on April 23. Returns showed that the National Front would take about 13.5 percent of the vote, while Jean-Luc Mélenchon's leftist France Unbowed

Party was expected to win just 11 percent.

At the same time, the traditional parties on the left and the right have been weakened, with the Socialists looking particularly feeble. Having controlled Parliament for the last five years, the Socialists were expected to win just 7.4 percent of the vote in the legislative elections this year. The Republicans and their allies fared better, but with just shy of 22 percent of the vote, they were a distant second to Mr. Macron's party.

Other parties' leaders blamed the historically low turnout for their poor showing and said it masked the depth of the divisions in France's political landscape.

"Today, one in every two French people voted, a record abstention rate not seen since 1958," said François Baroin, a senior Republican official. "This testifies to persistent fractures in French society."

Mr. Baroin suggested that voters were so enamored of Mr. Macron that they failed to scrutinize his program. "The French need to know that En Marche wants a fiscal shock," he said, adding that the Republicans would fight efforts to raise taxes.

Many of Ms. Le Pen's and Mr. Mélenchon's voters — both have heavily working-class and pink-collar constituencies — did not go to the polls, suggesting that many will not be represented in the National Assembly.

Because of differences between the districts, nationwide vote totals do not translate into a set number of seats in Parliament. There are frequently runoffs with two, three or four candidates, since anyone taking more than 12.5 percent of the

eligible votes in a district can compete in the second round.

Over all, however, the legislative elections engendered less enthusiasm than the presidential elections a few weeks ago and legislative elections in recent years.

Turnout this year was lower than in the past two legislative elections, 57 percent in 2012 and 60 percent in 2007.

Whatever the outcome, a nation that a year ago seemed to be on the verge of being swept up in an anti-European, anti-immigrant wave has instead rallied behind Mr. Macron, a centrist and unabashed globalist who has called for weakening France's protective labor laws, changing tax laws and reducing retirement benefits for some workers.

If a majority of Mr. Macron's candidates win in the runoff, as it appears they will, the election seems to reflect the voters' readiness to get on with his agenda — at least those who showed up at the polls. The French president needs a majority in the National Assembly to pass legislation. However, France has elected a series of presidents promising to change its labor and pension laws — both Nicolas Sarkozy on the right and François Hollande on the left, for example — only to find their support wane when they tried to follow through.

In the past several elections, there was no question that once the French voted for a president, they would vote for his party in the legislature to ensure him a majority. In 2012, Mr. Hollande's Socialist

Party and its allies won 40 percent of the votes in the first round, and in 2007 Mr. Sarkozy's Republican Party and its allies won 46 percent; they both won majorities in the second round.

Like Mr. Macron, both men had won the presidency for the first time just weeks before the legislative vote. In Mr. Macron's case, however, that was initially in doubt. His République en Marche movement was founded about 14 months ago, and his core idea of combining proposals from the left and the right in pursuit of a common agenda was slow to take off.



France Is on the Verge of an Astonishing Political Transformation

Helene Fouquet

percent represented a "defeat."

President Emmanuel Macron expanded his control of French politics as voters put his party on track to a sweeping majority in the National Assembly in the first round of legislative elections, ousting establishment stalwarts in the process.

The new president's year-old party, Republic on the Move, won 32.3 percent of the vote alongside its centrist ally MoDem, more than 13 percentage points ahead of the Republicans' group, according to the Interior Ministry's final vote count. The first round was marked by record-low turnout with less than half the registered voters casting a ballot. In an alliance with the centrist MoDem party, Macron's group will have between 415 and 455 seats out of 577 in the lower house of parliament, according to projections by Ipsos.

The results -- which need to be confirmed in a final round of voting next Sunday -- would give Macron the biggest majority in the Assembly since 1993. That offers the 39-year-old president the power to push through his recipe for fixing France over the next five years -- and no one else to blame if his plan fails.

"French voters chose renewal," government spokesman Christophe Castaner said on France 2 television on Monday morning. "They are coherent. They elected a president and they voted to give him a majority." He said turnout below 49

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Sunday's result marks the end of an era of dominance for France's mainstream parties. Almost all of the Socialist Party's parliamentary heavyweights were eliminated, including First Secretary Jean-Christophe Cambadélis who had been a member of the Assembly for 19 years. The Republicans are slated for their smallest number of seats in decades while the National Front, despite Marine Le Pen reaching the presidential runoff against Macron, may get between one and five seats, Ipsos said -- though Le Pen herself is well placed to enter parliament for the first time.

France's media reflected Macron's party landslide score. Liberation daily called it "Macron's Take Over," Le Parisien said "A Master Blow," BFM TV said the results could give the president a "Historical Hegemony" and Le Figaro wrote "On the Way to a Crushing Majority."

Labor Reform

One key plank of Macron's vision is the controversial labor-market overhaul that he has promised to deliver by mid-September. With the French economy lagging its peers, the president also wants to change tax rates and fix inequalities in the pension system. He's already started to revamp French intelligence services after terrorists

claimed more than 200 lives since the beginning of 2015.

After campaigning on his plan to simplify France's labor code, the president began a round of initial meetings with union leaders within 10 days of taking office on May 14. Those talks will get under way in earnest after the second-round vote as the government seeks common ground for reworking the country's byzantine labor rules.

Macron wants individual companies to negotiate wages rather than being bound by industry-wide agreements. He has argued that a more flexible labor market would help boost growth and win the trust of France's European partners, above all Germany.

Historic Opportunity

For at least two decades, French unions have opposed such efforts, emphasizing job protection instead, but a week from now, Macron may find himself in a stronger position than any French president for a generation. With a majority in parliament and hundreds of lawmakers who are completely new to politics, the president would hold extensive control over the levers of government.

"This victory will no doubt go down as one of the great electoral achievements in our country's recent history," said Bruno Cautres, a politics professor at Sciences Po who works with pollster BVA.

What's more, the opposition parties who might ordinarily lead the resistance to Macron and his prime minister, Edouard Philippe, are embroiled in extensive rebuilding after each suffered unprecedented defeats during the presidential vote.

"Emmanuel Macron has redrawn the French political map," former Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen said on Twitter. He and his party have "a generational chance to deliver reforms."

Opposition Forces

The Socialists and their allies, who held power under Francois Hollande until just a few weeks ago, were decimated. They'll have between 20 and 30 seats, down from 331, as many of their voters and indeed lawmakers rallied to Macron, Ipsos projected.

The Socialists are also facing a challenge from the left by Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed. The far-left candidate won 19 percent of the vote in the first round of the presidential election and will see his party take between 8 and 18 seats, Ipsos said.

The Republicans, the heirs to Charles de Gaulle who looked set to take power themselves six months ago, will have between 70 and 110 seats amid recriminations over Francois Fillon's failed presidential campaign, Ipsos's projections show.



Macron's Party on Track for Large Majority in French Vote

William Horobin

Emmanuel Macron's upstart centrist party won the first round of parliamentary elections on Sunday,

positioning the new French president to wield an overwhelming

majority at home and push for change on the European stage.

PARIS—

Mr. Macron's La République en Marche and its centrist ally, MoDem, won 32.3% of the vote nationwide, the Interior Ministry said. The center-right Les Républicains and its allies came in second with 21.6% of the vote.

The first-round vote puts Mr. Macron's party and MoDem on track to win a majority of 415 to 455 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly in the second-round vote a week from now, polling firm Ipsos Sopra-Steria said.

The top two vote-getters in each district on Sunday advance to the second-round runoff, as well as candidates who garner support from more than 12.5% of registered voters, though reaching that threshold may be difficult given low turnout on Sunday. The Interior Ministry said 51.3% of registered voters didn't vote, which Ipsos Sopra-Steria said is the highest percentage of abstentions on record for a legislative election in France.

More voters are expected to switch in the second round to candidates from La République en Marche, as a centrist party, than to candidates from parties on the right or the left, polling firms said.

Such a landslide would deliver a coup de grace to France's political establishment, giving Mr. Macron a strong mandate to implement policies he says are needed to stir the sluggish national economy and overhaul the European Union.

"It's the end of a system that French people don't want to see any longer," said Mounir Mahjoubi, the 33-year-old digital economy minister who is running for Mr. Macron's party in a Paris district.

In little more than a year, the 39-year-old Mr. Macron has founded his own political party; populated it mostly with political neophytes; and persuaded voters to hand him what is shaping up to be one of the largest Assembly majorities in French history.

If the party and its ally win 415 to 455 seats, it would be the largest majority since the center-right won a 472-seat majority in 1993.

A commanding legislative victory would also cement Mr. Macron's stature among European leaders. Mr. Macron and his party ran on a pro-Europe message rather than catering to nationalist constituencies.

The French election has been closely watched in Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel is seeking reelection in September. British Prime Minister Theresa May's decision to call an early election in a bid to expand her parliamentary ranks and strengthen her hand in Brexit negotiations badly backfired on Thursday when voters deprived her of a majority.

The National Front of far-right leader Marine Le Pen could increase its number of seats in the Assembly from one to up to 5, according to

projections by Ipsos Sopra-Steria. That is a far cry from the numbers her party was seeking to mount a robust opposition to Mr. Macron.

The National Front needs a minimum of 15 seats to secure posts on parliamentary commissions and earn extra speaking slots at the Assembly. In past elections, voters have coalesced behind mainstream candidates opposing the National Front in the second round.

"Patriotic voters in districts where our candidates qualified for the second round must head to the polls in massive numbers next Sunday," Ms. Le Pen said.

Ms. Le Pen said she had qualified for the runoff in a district in northern France.

The Socialist Party, the outgoing majority at the Assembly, won only 7.4% of the vote, putting it and allies on track to win between 20 and 30 seats, according to the projections. Les Républicains, which formed the largest opposition, was set to win between 70 and 110 seats with its allies, according to the projections.

François Baroin, leader of the campaign for Les Républicains, said his party suffered from the low turnout and called on voters to "wake up" for the second round to elect a large opposition to Mr. Macron.

"Our country wants balanced powers that are not concentrated in one single party," Mr. Baroin said.

Mr. Macron's first order of business is loosening France's rigid labor code. In July, his government will seek the backing of parliament to give companies more power to negotiate working conditions with employees and reduce uncertainty for employers making layoffs.

The French president is betting that such overhauls will strengthen his hand to push Germany and other wealthy Northern European nations to share the burdens of weaker eurozone members.

That kind of deal, Mr. Macron says, is key to "refounding Europe" as a bloc of countries that protects citizens rather than leaving them vulnerable to the competition of global markets.

"We've gotten used to managing Europe. If we continue just managing it, it will fall apart," Mr. Macron said in May on his first trip to Brussels as president.

Germany, Europe's biggest economy, has long been leery of French calls for more sharing of resources in the eurozone, seeing that as a veiled demand for German money. But Ms. Merkel has signaled she wants to work closely with Mr. Macron on deeper European integration, even though proposals that smack too clearly of fiscal transfers are likely to be off limits.



Editorial : What Europe Should Do About Britain

Leaders of the European Union are allowed a moment of joy at the outcome of the U.K. election. Britain's voters have just handed the Conservative Party, author of the country's Brexit disaster, its head. But the EU shouldn't let the cosmic justice of this outcome cloud their judgment about where their own interests lie.

The Brexit decision is unlikely to be reversed, and at this point EU leaders would rather move on anyway. The best outcome for them is an orderly separation that leaves economic links as intact as possible -- and the best way to get that result is to be magnanimous in victory.

To be sure, the EU wants to discourage other restless countries

from imagining life outside the union. On that score, its leaders can relax. Brexit has crushed one British prime minister and crippled another, paralyzed the government, stunned investors, and turned the U.K. into a political war zone. However smooth the separation from here on, the lesson for others so inclined is: Don't even think about it.

Piling on at this point might even undo some of the EU's strategic gain. It could unite Britain in hostility to Europe, rather than in regret of its decision to quit. Also, euroskeptics elsewhere in the union might be cowed, but they wouldn't be reconciled -- and winning the hearts and minds of its citizens should be Europe's larger goal.

Magnanimity in victory means two main things.

First, allow some flexibility on the timing and sequence of the Brexit talks. Europe is impatient to get them started, and has fixed ideas about how they should proceed, but the chaos in Westminster is bound to slow things down. So far as possible, Europe's leaders should be willing to accommodate this. It becomes all the more important to avoid procedural squabbles.

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Share the View

Second, look beyond the Brexit terms and come forward with a proposal for a productive future

relationship with the U.K. Up to now, the EU has said, in effect: This is your mess, and it's up to you to sort it out. That's understandable, but Britain may now be literally incapable of doing so. If the EU chooses to stand there and watch, the likely outcome is no agreement, a disorderly exit as the clock on talks runs down, maximum economic dislocation, and years of bitter recrimination all around -- terrible for the U.K., but no picnic for the EU, either.

No further effort is needed on Europe's part to show Britain the error of its ways. For its own sake, the union needs to turn its attention from punishment to damage control.



New Uncertainties Surround Brussels Meeting on Brexit

Valentina Pop

BRUSSELS—European Union and British officials are scheduled to meet Monday to discuss the timeline of Brexit talks

amid skepticism in the EU capital that a swift deal can be reached given political uncertainty in London.

The meeting, which will be conducted at civil-servant level, is

the first encounter between the EU and U.K. since last week's U.K. election, with British Prime Minister Theresa May failing in her attempt to

bolster her Conservative party's parliamentary majority.

The meeting originally was planned to set the date and topics to be discussed in the first round of formal

negotiations, which EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier had tentatively scheduled for June 19.

Some uncertainties surround the nature of Mrs. May's governing coalition and potentially new negotiating lines emerging from her cabinet. EU officials are wary whether the Monday meeting will bring much clarity beyond the U.K.'s wish to open talks soon.

A spokesman for the U.K. government said that "we have been clear that we want to make a start on negotiations and we continue to engage with official counterparts in the EU and Brussels ahead of the talks commencing."

With a weakened prime minister in London, whose leadership could soon be open to challengers from within her Conservative party, EU

officials wonder how meaningful the talks can be, even if they were to start as planned.

"Uncertainty about how long she will stay in power and whether she can deliver on a compromise is the key question," said one senior EU official dealing with Brexit.

A second official said that while the EU had "no choice" but to negotiate with London, it wasn't under any illusions about the possibility that the entire exercise might be "a waste of time" if there is a change in government.

"The civil servants will have to do the work. But I personally do not see May's signature under the final Article 50 deal," said the second official, in reference to the EU treaty article spelling out the conditions for leaving the bloc.

Mrs. May's negotiating position ahead of the election was that Brexit talks should focus both on the divorce and on the future relationship with the bloc, which she defined as a broad free-trade agreement with provisions for cooperation on security and other issues.

But the EU's position is that talks can turn to the future relationship only after "sufficient progress" on the divorce matters, an assessment that needs the approval of all 27 EU leaders.

While the initial talks are likely to focus on issues where both sides want a deal, such as on the rights of EU citizens living in the U.K. and the rights of British citizens in the EU, there will be considerable reluctance to hammer out final compromises on contentious matters. Why settle, for

instance, on how much money the U.K. still owes the bloc, when a new British government might agree on a higher sum?

And it is the EU that has the upper hand on the timing of negotiations: Under EU rules, the U.K. must have a Brexit deal signed and ratified by March 2019 or face a disorderly exit unless the EU countries agree to extend the deadline.

Dutch foreign minister Bert Koenders said Friday in The Hague that the British election "created uncertainty and uncertainty is not good seeing as the clock is ticking. This requires a clear negotiation mandate."

—Laurence Norman in Brussels contributed to this article.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

U.K. Faces Prolonged Political Uncertainty

Jason Douglas

LONDON—The

U.K. faces the prospect of prolonged political uncertainty after an inconclusive election cast doubt on Prime Minister Theresa May's ability to stay in office or govern effectively.

A weekend of drama cost Mrs. May her two closest aides as criticism mounted over the prime minister's missteps in an election she had hoped would strengthen her parliamentary authority before looming Brexit talks with Brussels.

Her Conservative Party now is trying to form a minority administration propped up by Northern Irish lawmakers.

Senior Conservative Party figures called for a more collegial approach to government after her tightknit inner circle failed to deliver an expected victory.

In a sign of confusion at the very top of government, Mrs. May's office late Saturday had to backtrack on a statement that it had reached a deal with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party over forming a loose alliance to support a new government. The DUP said instead that talks centered on a so-called confidence-and-supply arrangement, a weaker and potentially more unstable partnership than a formal coalition.

All the while, the clock has been counting down toward the start of divorce negotiations with the European Union slated for June 19, which European leaders say they expect will go ahead.

"We're ready to roll," Irish Foreign Minister Charlie Flanagan said on

Sunday in an interview with U.K. broadcaster ITV.

Yet in Brussels, European officials preparing for talks on the timeline of the negotiations with their U.K. counterparts were wondering how meaningful talks can be. Mrs. May's failure to win an outright majority in a national election on Thursday has cast doubt on her future as prime minister.

Boris Johnson, the flamboyant, pro-Brexit foreign secretary beloved by party activists, on Saturday dismissed as "tripe" newspaper reports that he was already planning a bid to unseat Mrs. May. A survey of more than 1,000 U.K. adults by polling firm Survation published Sunday found 49% thought Mrs. May should quit.

Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, said he is ready to fight another election and expects one to be called this year or in early 2018.

In broadcast interviews on Sunday, senior Conservative lawmakers said now isn't the right time for a leadership challenge, given the added uncertainty it would cause as Brexit talks get under way.

"The last thing we need is further political upheaval," said Transport Secretary Chris Grayling, an ally of Mrs. May.

But some said such a contest may need to happen soon. Nicky Morgan, a former education secretary who has clashed with Mrs. May, said she didn't think the prime minister should lead the party into another election and that a leadership contest should be considered this summer, or ahead of

the party's annual conference in October.

"I think Theresa May is ultimately going to take responsibility," she said, referring to the election result. Mrs. Morgan said the party needs a proper contest to select a new leader rather than "a coronation."

Defense Secretary Michael Fallon on Sunday said that, meanwhile, Mrs. May's cabinet expects to have a greater say in government following the resignation of her two top aides, Nick Timothy and Fiona Hill. The two had played a central role in driving government policy and strategy and oversaw the botched election.

"We are going to see I hope much more collective decision-making in government," he said in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corp.

George Osborne, who served as Treasury chief in the administration of Conservative former Prime Minister David Cameron, was highly critical of Mrs. May. "Theresa May is a dead woman walking—it's just how long she's going to remain on death row," he said on the BBC.

As well as calling into question Mrs. May's future, Thursday's election raises doubts about the party's ability to deliver on its legislative platform.

The DUP's 10 seats in Parliament are enough to give the Conservatives, with 318, a slender majority in the 650-seat assembly. But the deal being discussed between the two sides falls short of a formal pact that would allow the Conservatives to rely on DUP support on every vote. That raises the prospect that Parliament could

defeat or amend the Conservatives' plans on everything from Brexit to welfare and education.

A confidence-and-supply arrangement means the DUP at a minimum would pledge to back the government in any future no-confidence motions in Parliament and to support its tax-and-spending plans, delivered in twice-yearly budgets debated by lawmakers. Governments in the U.K. must win such votes to stay in power. It isn't yet clear whether the arrangement will extend to other areas of policy as negotiations are continuing.

A big question mark hangs over the government's Brexit strategy. The DUP says its priority is in preventing Brexit from causing any disruption to trade with EU member Ireland, a stance analysts say is incompatible with Mrs. May's pre-election position that she was prepared to walk away from talks without a deal.

Mr. Corbyn said Conservative plans for a bill to alter or scrap EU legislation are probably also in tatters in the absence of the parliamentary majority needed to swiftly enact such a huge undertaking. He said his party plans to present its own alternative plan for government when Parliament reconvenes on June 19.

Mrs. May on Sunday announced fresh appointments to her cabinet. She had been expected to make more-dramatic changes after the election but almost all senior officials remained in place, underscoring her limited room to maneuver. Damian Green, an ally, was named first secretary of state, her de facto deputy. Michael Gove, a leader of last year's Brexit campaign, was named environment secretary.

Dionne : How the British right went so very wrong

Britain's election was a catastrophe for Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May and a personal vindication for Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Party's left-wing leader.

It was also the revenge of the young, whose voices go unheard because their turnout is usually low. Britain's new generation taught a lesson to their counterparts around the world: Voting confers power.

But the unexpected outcome could produce new forms of conventional wisdom as misleading as the flawed punditry that enticed May to call the election in the first place.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

It didn't need to happen, because May had three years left in her term. Voters clearly resented being called to the polls for opportunistic reasons. May thought that because Corbyn was so unpopular and seemingly out of the mainstream, she could turn a relatively small Conservative Party majority into an overwhelming advantage in Parliament. She also thought she could marshal the nationalism reflected in Britain's vote to leave the European Union by adding the far-right votes of the UK Independence Party to Conservative totals.

May forgot that 48 percent of British voters rejected Brexit and were still not happy about the outcome. They

were looking for ways to strike back, and they did.

She and just about everyone else also underestimated how skilled a campaigner Corbyn would be. For example, Chuka Umunna, one of Corbyn's critics among moderate Labour parliamentarians, acknowledged that Corbyn ran a "positive and dynamic campaign" that emphasized hope. The Economist, no friend of Corbyn's, conceded that he "fought a strong campaign against all expectations." The more sympathetic Observer credited Corbyn with achieving "a sensational result for Labour."

Lord Stewart Wood, who was a top adviser to former Labour Party leader Ed Miliband, saw Corbyn's strong showing as the definitive end of "Blairism," the middle-of-the-road Labour politics associated with former prime minister Tony Blair.

In a telephone interview, Wood noted that Corbyn rode "a tide turning against austerity" after years of Conservative budget cuts. Like Bernie Sanders in 2016, Corbyn had mobilized an energetic grass-roots campaign and sophisticated social media network, Wood said.

And far from working politically in favor of the Conservatives as the traditional party of order, the terrorist attacks before the election hurt May. Corbyn's criticisms of May's cutbacks in the police forces, Wood believes, were particularly resonant because they linked the Labour leader's argument against austerity to the issue of security. He added that many voters he encountered

while campaigning door to door were "absolutely furious" over President Trump's verbal assault on London Mayor Sadiq Khan after the London Bridge attack.

Matt Browne, who was an aide to Blair and is now at the Center for American Progress in Washington, agreed that Corbyn's showing meant that for the "foreseeable future, centrist progressivism is on hold." The more moderate left, he told me from London, needed to learn from "what Corbyn accomplished, especially in mobilizing the young."

But given May's unpopularity, Browne argued, "this is an election we could have won, and could have won handsomely." There is some evidence, particularly in anti-Brexit London, that more moderate Labour candidates such as Umunna ran ahead of the national swing.

Thus the twin caveats to sweeping conclusions on the left: Its more moderate wing needs to acknowledge the mobilizing power of a clear and principled egalitarian politics and the increasingly progressive tilt of younger voters. But fans of Corbyn's approach to politics need to come to terms with the fact that although he outran expectations, he lost the election. Labour still needs a strategy for winning dozens of additional seats.

Britain also defied trends in other Western countries toward the fragmentation of older party systems. This continued on Sunday in France, where President Emmanuel Macron's year-old party

surged past long-established rivals to its left and right in the first round of legislative elections.

In Britain, by contrast, Corbyn boosted the Labour Party vote to 40 percent, 9.5 points higher than it was two years ago. And even though the election was a disaster for May, the Conservative vote rose to 42.4 percent, a 5.5-point increase. It was the highest Labour share since 2001 and the highest Conservative share since 1983. The sharp decline of the Scottish Nationalists — they lost more than a third of their seats — further signaled a return to an earlier political era.

In other words, claims that everything has gone haywire in Western politics since Brexit and Trump's election are exaggerated, as we are also likely to see in the German election this fall. And backlashes to Trump continue to push electorates in Europe toward the center or left. This certainly played a role in Macron's victory in France last month and continued to strengthen his middle-of-the road political movement in Sunday's voting.

As for May, she sought to recast British conservatism in a moderately nationalist way. It might be seen as Trump-lite, with more coherence than the American brand. She hoped to hold the metropolitan professionals while expanding her coalition to a restive working class far from the centers of power. It was a bold bet. But it failed.

British Conservatives complain that May bungled election and is now bungling aftermath

LONDON — Prime Minister Theresa May reshuffled her cabinet a bit Sunday and mostly kept out of the public eye as she worked to strike a deal with a small party of hard-right unionists in Northern Ireland to prop up her government, which lacks a majority in Parliament.

As May and her representatives wrangled with the Democratic Unionist Party, based in Belfast, her fellow Tories were grumbling that the Conservative prime minister had not only bungled the campaign, but also was performing poorly in the days after its surprising conclusion Thursday.

On the Sunday talk shows in Britain, former Tory chancellor George Osborne, now editor of the Evening

Standard and a sharp-tongued critic of the prime minister, called May "a dead woman walking" and suggested that she would be out of office by next year.

It's just a question of, Osborne told Sky News, "how long she is going to remain on death row."

Anna Soubry, a Conservative member of Parliament, said she could not predict when May might go but called the prime minister's position "untenable."

Prime Minister Theresa May lost her majority in Parliament, but the day also provided its fair share of odd-ball moments. Some of the stranger moments of Britain's snap general election (Jason Aldag/The Washington Post)

(Jason Aldag/The Washington Post)

Other Tories, while avoiding such brutal assessments, were more forthright in predicting that the prime minister is unlikely to lead the Conservative Party in any future elections.

Asked how she felt after the election, in which the Tories won the most seats but failed to secure a mandate or a majority, May told British broadcasters, "What I'm feeling is that actually there is a job to be done and I think what the public wants is to ensure that the government is getting on with that job."

It is too early to know what will happen in the coming days to May — and, more important to the global

economy, how the Conservative government will approach negotiations over Britain's exit from the European Union, scheduled to begin in a week.

The disruption of recent weeks has not only created worries in Europe, already antsy on the eve of Brexit negotiations, but also appears to have crossed the Atlantic.

President Trump's plans to visit Britain are now apparently on hold, although that may have more to do with his spat with London's mayor after the recent terrorist attack than with the results of the British election.

Trump recently told May in a phone call that he does not want to go forward with a state visit to Britain

until the public here supports the trip, according to a report first published in the Guardian newspaper.

The White House call was made “in recent weeks,” said a Downing Street adviser who was in the room, the Guardian reported.

Asked whether Trump had spoken to May about postponing his trip to London, which remains unscheduled, White House spokesman Raj Shah said Sunday: “The president has tremendous respect for Prime Minister May. That subject never came up on the call.”

May’s office said the Trump state visit was still on. “The queen extended an invitation to President Trump to visit the U.K., and there is no change to those plans,” a spokeswoman for the prime minister said.

Formal Brexit talks are scheduled to start June 19, the same day as the Queen’s Speech, to be delivered by Queen Elizabeth II from the throne of the House of Lords. The speech, written by May’s ministers, includes a list of the laws the government hopes to get approved by Parliament over the coming year.

Foreign Minister Boris Johnson, who pushed for Britain to leave the E.U. but has been absent from the public stage since the election, denied news accounts that he was maneuvering to replace May.

In a tweet, Johnson called the idea “tripe.”

Johnson said he is backing May. “Let’s get on with

the job,” he tweeted.

Defense Secretary Michael Fallon disagreed Sunday that May was mortally wounded and said he expected the Tory members of Parliament to support her this week.

May’s main opponent, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, appeared on the Sunday talk shows, too, looking either “serene” or “smug” — depending on the commentator’s measure of the man. Labour came out of Thursday’s election with a substantial growth spurt.

Corbyn said it is “quite possible” that there will be another election this year or early next year. “We cannot continue like this,” he said, predicting that even a loose alliance between the Conservatives and the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland cannot endure.

Another top Labour leader, John McDonnell, said Sunday that May’s partnership with the Irish unionists will be a “coalition of chaos.”

On Saturday evening, the prime minister’s office suggested a deal had been struck for a “confidence and supply” agreement with the DUP, a socially conservative and traditionalist movement. Downing Street said the deal would be revealed Monday to the cabinet.

But Arlene Foster, leader of the DUP, said, “Discussions will continue next week to work on the details and to reach agreement on arrangements for the new Parliament.”

One of the prime minister’s representatives was then forced to

put out another statement, explaining that no final deal had been struck and suggesting that talks will drag into this week.

“As and when details are finalized, both parties will put them forward,” an official in May’s office said.

Tories said the deal with DUP should be completed this week and will include an economic aid package for Northern Ireland and the promise that there would be no referendum on the question of unifying Northern Ireland — a part of the United Kingdom along with England, Scotland and Wales — with the Republic of Ireland, a sovereign nation and a member of the European Union.

Shake-ups — and plenty of finger-pointing — began soon after the election results came in.

On Sunday, May named her cabinet. Most of the ministers remained in their seats. A few were demoted; a few rose.

There was one real surprise. May appointed Michael Gove as environment secretary. Gove challenged May for the leadership of the Conservatives in the aftermath of the Brexit vote — and lost.

On Saturday, two top aides of May resigned and a former minister acknowledged that Tories were plotting possible replacements via the messaging service WhatsApp.

The aides who resigned, Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy, May’s fiercely loyal co-chiefs of staff, had been widely blamed within the Conservative Party for the lackluster

campaign that ended with the Tories losing their majority in Parliament.

Supporters of a hard exit from the European Union were watching May this weekend for any sign that she might be steering toward a softer departure from Europe’s trade and governing bloc.

On Saturday evening, the prime minister’s office announced a new chief of staff, former minister Gavin Barwell, who lost his seat in the election.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

The choice did not go down well with Nigel Farage, the former leader of the U.K. Independence Party and a leading force behind Brexit.

Farage on Sunday called Barwell’s selection the “worst possible start” for May, because her new chief of staff opposed leaving the European Union and is viewed as squishy on Brexit.

Worse, during last year’s referendum on the measure, Barwell called Farage a “racist” who “hates modern Britain.”

Jenna Johnson in Branchburg, N.J., contributed to this report.

**The
New York
Times**

Preparing for ‘Brexit,’ Britons Face Economic Pinch at Home

Peter S.
Goodman

LONDON — Right about now, Eddie Stamton, a construction worker, would normally be making preparations to jet off to a sandy stretch of the Mediterranean for a summer holiday. Not this year.

In the year since Britain’s shocking vote to abandon the European Union, the British pound has surrendered 13 percent of its value against the euro, raising the cost of cherished European vacations. Food from other lands — meat, cheese, wine — is more expensive, too. So is gasoline.

Accelerating inflation may help explain the stunning electoral rebuke of Prime Minister Theresa May and her governing Conservative Party as well as the unexpected strengthening of the Labour Party in Thursday’s parliamentary elections. Consumers are grappling with rising prices, and

wages have not kept pace. The economy is weakening.

Mr. Stamton, 51, who lives in northeast London, has traditionally voted for the Conservatives, yet this time he gave his support to the U.K. Independence Party, the fringe party that has long advocated that Britain ditch Europe. Never mind that the consequences of that position, the falling pound, have yielded the indignity at hand — trading the sun-splashed beaches of Greece for the shaded parks of south London.

“Travel is more expensive,” Mr. Stamton said. “I’m just going to stay home.”

Here is the economic backdrop for the tumultuous period of political uncertainty now unfolding. Mrs. May and her party have lost their governing majority just as Britain is set to negotiate terms in its tricky divorce with Europe — “Brexit,” as it is widely known. As the Conservatives try to hang on to

control of the government, a weakening economy is likely to intensify the sense of grievance among ordinary Britons who have not gained the spoils from recent years of growth.

News and opinion about Britain’s exit from the European Union.

The economy expanded by only 0.2 percent over the first three months of the year compared to the previous quarter, far less than the 0.7 percent pace of growth seen at the end of 2016. It grew at an annualized pace of 2 percent during the quarter.

Consumer spending makes up nearly two-thirds of British economic activity, meaning the troubles of ordinary people can have decisive influence over the economy — and politics, for that matter. For the average worker, rising prices for everyday consumer goods are landing atop a decade of stagnating wages.

Few economists expect that Britain will fall into a recession, but the consensus envisions disappointing economic growth ranging between 1.5 percent and 1.75 percent annually over this year and next.

Last year’s Brexit referendum was in part a rejection of the economic elite from millions of working people who have suffered declining wages while watching London transformed into a carnival of wealth for globe-trotting financiers.

The prime minister called for the elections on the strength of polls showing her party capturing an expanded parliamentary majority, aiming to solidify her hand as she negotiates exit terms with Europe. But her miserable showing in Thursday’s polls suggest that the same forces that produced Brexit have assailed the government that is supposed to execute it: Many Britons are dissatisfied with their economic lot.

In the dozen years since Vaidas Zelskis entered Britain from his native Lithuania to pursue work as a carpenter, his wages have grown from about 120 pounds a day (about \$224 dollars at the exchange rates of the time) to about £180 now, or \$233. But over the same time, his usual assortment of groceries have soared from some £50 per week to more like £120.

"The rich people can always afford what they want," Mr. Zelskis said as he took a cigarette break on a recent morning outside his current job at the Shard, an iconic skyscraper south of the River Thames. "But the middle class really feels it."

Workers in a part of Victoria Station under construction in London. Britain's average weekly wages are lower today than they were a decade ago after accounting for inflation. Andrew Testa for The New York Times

Much as in the United States, most working people in Britain have yet to fully recover from the traumatic financial crisis that began in 2008.

Britain's average weekly wages are lower today than they were a decade ago after accounting for inflation, noted Martin Beck, lead British economist at Oxford Economics in London. This, despite the fact that Britain's unemployment rate dropped to 4.6 percent in April, a level last seen in 1975.

"For most people, there hasn't been a real recovery for years," Mr. Beck said.

The New York Times

BRANCHBURG, N.J. — President Trump is considering scrapping or postponing a planned visit to Britain this year amid a billowing backlash over comments he made after the recent terrorist attack in London, two administration officials said.

Over the past week, Mr. Trump has expressed increasing skepticism to aides about the trip after coming under intense criticism for a misleading charge that he leveled against London's mayor, Sadiq Khan. A day after terrorists killed eight people in the British capital, Mr. Trump went after Mr. Khan on Twitter, saying the mayor had played down the danger to citizens in the wake of the assault.

The White House briefly considered including the visit as part of a trip to Europe next month, but the idea was dropped because of scheduling

In years past, low unemployment has tended to push up wages, as employers found themselves forced to pay more to compete for a smaller pool of workers. Why this typically enriching dynamic has failed to emerge now is the subject of considerable debate among economists.

Unions are far weaker than years ago. The gig economy has replaced full-time jobs with part-time and temporary stints, diluting the power of workers to demand higher pay.

A surfeit of global uncertainties — Brexit, President Trump's threats to dismantle institutions at the heart of the global order — have perhaps made companies reluctant to add costs.

The weaker pound has given a boost to British exports, making them lower priced than European and American competitors. British whiskey, salmon and chocolate have been selling in increasing volumes.

But Britain imports more food than it exports. Many of the country's key export industries — automotive, aerospace and medical devices — draw on suppliers in Europe for components. Even as the weak pound makes the prices of their finished wares more competitive, it also raises their costs.

The economy also faces the loss of top-dollar banking jobs as London's status as a leading international financial center confronts the challenges posed by Brexit. Roughly one-third of the industry's business involves handling transactions for clients in Europe. Once Britain is out

issues. Then it was tentatively penciled in for the fall. National Security Council and State Department officials were working on the details but had not undertaken the usual "preadvance" trip to work out the specific logistics of joint appearances, said a person familiar with the situation.

Mr. Trump, who was visiting his golf course in Bedminster, N.J., over the weekend, has not definitively ruled out going, the officials said. They emphasized that it was possible that the president would eventually warm to the idea, and that keeping it off the schedule was the best way to prepare for any eventuality.

But he has told his staff that he wants to avoid a marathon overseas trip like his nine-day trek to the Middle East and Europe, which he found exhausting and overly long.

of the European Union, much of that business may be effectively illegal, requiring that banks satisfy the proclivities of regulators in the 27 remaining members of the bloc.

The financial industry has been lobbying the government to forge a deal with Europe that would maintain the status quo, enabling the money to keep flowing unimpeded. In weakening Mrs. May's stature, the election may have increased the chances she will soften her line and assent to compromises that would preserve Britain's inclusion in the European market.

Even so, global banks cannot afford to wait in the hopes that a useful deal will be struck. They are already drawing up plans to move jobs to cities elsewhere in the European Union as they seek to ensure that — whatever comes — they will be able to execute all trades. Britain could suffer losses of 15,000 to 80,000 jobs over the next two years, according to studies.

Investment continues to grow modestly, because major projects take years to plan and execute. But most economists assume it will slow as Brexit separates the Britain from the rest of the European marketplace, undermining the incentive for multinational companies to use Britain as a regional hub.

"As the outlines of Brexit negotiations begin to take shape, companies are going to be a lot more concerned," said Peter Dixon, a global financial economist at Commerzbank AG in London. "Even if companies don't slash investment,

they are likely to postpone expansions."

For now, scrutiny focuses on the increasingly beleaguered British consumer.

Outstanding credit card balances across Britain were nearly 10 percent higher in April compared with a year earlier, the fastest pace of growth in more than a decade, the Bank of England disclosed. That stoked worries that consumers could soon exhaust their sources of cash as their paychecks are effectively diminished by inflation.

"People have been able to borrow to keep consumer spending growing faster than real incomes," said John Hawksworth, chief economist for PwC UK in London. "There's a question mark as to how much the consumer can keep the economy going on its own."

Jennifer Corbin, a 48-year-old mother of five who lives in Wembley, northwest London, already has an answer to that question: Her family is economizing, forgoing their annual summer trip to the Canary Islands, where sunshine is abundant.

"Food, housing, travel. Everything is more expensive now," she said at the beginning of a recent three-day weekend, as she and her family awaited a train to a coastal destination that was closer at hand — Brighton Beach, at the southern reaches of England.

There, the forecast was for chilly rain, followed by chillier rain.

Trump May Not Visit U.K. This Year as Planned

Glenn Thrush

One other factor leading to his reluctance, said one of the officials, is his preference for having foreign leaders visit him — not the other way around.

But optics and politics are major considerations, too. Mr. Trump is deeply unpopular in Britain, and any visit by him — let alone a state visit with all its pomp — would probably be met with wide-scale protests. Recent polls have found that more than half of the British public views Mr. Trump as a threat to global stability.

At the same time, his poll numbers at home are hitting historic lows. The president has avoided trips to his home in New York City, in part because of the potential for disruptions, several people in his orbit have said.

Mr. Trump has discussed the potential difficulties of a trip to

Britain with Prime Minister Theresa May, who had a stunning setback in parliamentary elections on Thursday, although the subject of a visit was not raised when they spoke on the phone last week, the officials said.

"The president has tremendous respect for Prime Minister May," said Sarah Huckabee Sanders, a spokeswoman for Mr. Trump. "That subject never came up on the call."

Mrs. May's office, responding to a report in The Guardian that Mr. Trump did not want to visit Britain until he had more public support, issued a statement on Sunday saying there had been "no change" to plans for a state visit.

"We aren't going to comment on speculation about the contents of private phone conversations," a spokeswoman for Mrs. May's office said. "The queen extended an

invitation to President Trump to visit the U.K., and there is no change to those plans." Mrs. May extended the invitation to the president around the time of his inauguration.

A postponement of the visit has been seen as a possibility for some time. On Friday, a senior national security official, briefing reporters aboard Air Force One, announced that the president had added a stop in Poland to his early July trip to Hamburg, Germany, for the Group of 20 summit meeting. But the official made a point of not discussing the Britain visit, saying that only the Germany and Poland legs of the trip had been planned.

The Washington Post

Trump's plans for a state visit to the U.K. appear to be up in the air

BRANCBURG, N.J. — President Trump's plans for a state visit to Britain later this year appear to be up in the air, as he faces a backlash from across the pond for his criticism of London Mayor Sadiq Khan in the immediate aftermath of the June 3 terrorist attack in which eight people died.

Due to previous comments Trump was already unpopular in the United Kingdom, and a visit of any sort could prompt large protests. The Guardian newspaper, quoting anonymous individuals, reported that Trump recently told British Prime Minister Theresa May in a phone call that he does not want to go forward with a state visit until the British people support such a visit. The White House call was made "in recent weeks," according to a 10 Downing Street adviser who was in the room, the Guardian wrote. The statement surprised May, according to those present.

[Trump's fight with the London mayor baffles his critics and allies]

The New York Times

For Britain, Political Stability Is a Quaint Relic

Steven Erlanger
LONDON — In a little more than two years, Britain has had two general elections and a nationwide referendum. Each time, the politicians, pollsters, betting markets, political scientists and commentators have gotten it wrong.

Once considered one of the most politically stable countries in the world, regularly turning out majority governments, Britain is increasingly confusing and unpredictable, to both its allies and itself.

Far from settling the fierce divisions exposed by last year's referendum on Britain's exit from the European Union, or Brexit, the election on Thursday only made them worse.

Officials in Mrs. May's government have also avoided publicly discussing Mr. Trump's possible visit. Some senior diplomats, including Peter Ricketts, who was the national security adviser under David Cameron, Mrs. May's predecessor as prime minister in the Conservative government, have said it is too early for a formal state visit. Those are normally granted after several years in office, if at all. But Mr. Ricketts said he had no objection to a governmental visit.

During a joint news conference at the White House in January, Mrs. May said that Queen Elizabeth II had extended the invitation for a

state visit, adding that the monarch was "delighted that the president has accepted that invitation."

In the months since, Mr. Trump has remained a deeply polarizing figure in the United States and in Britain.

A few hours after the London attack on June 3, he resumed a long-running feud with Mr. Khan, the first Muslim mayor of a major Western European capital.

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

While the White House has said a visit would come later this year, the exact schedule remains unannounced. At least publicly, Trump and May are acting as if the trip is still on.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer labeled the Guardian report as "false," without citing specifics, and a White House spokesman, Raj Shah, said Sunday: "The president has tremendous respect for Prime Minister May. That subject never came up on the call." Shah did not specify which call he was referring to.

A spokeswoman for the prime minister said: "The queen extended an invitation to President Trump to visit the U.K., and there is no change to those plans."

May, herself, has her hands full right now, with her party losing its controlling majority in Parliament following a snap election that she called in hopes of solidifying her position. To maintain power, the Conservative Party has to strike a deal with the small Democratic

Unionist Party in Northern Ireland, but there is speculation that even if such a bargain is reached, May could still be forced to resign by members of her own party.

Local Politics Alerts

Breaking news about local government in D.C., Md., Va.

If May is forced out, Trump would lose an international ally. While many of May's European counterparts have forcefully challenged Trump and kept him at a distance, she has tried to foster a productive relationship with the unpopular president — a move that could have contributed to the election losses.

[May's election battering may strain relationship with Trump]

For more than a year, Trump and Khan have publicly debated Trump's calls for a ban that would block Muslims or people from several predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States. Khan, a human rights lawyer and practicing Muslim whose

parents are from Pakistan, has repeatedly accused the president of having an "ignorant view of Islam." Soon after the Saturday night attack on London Bridge, Trump tweeted about the attack and used it to promote his travel ban, which is being blocked by the courts. Trump also accused Khan of not taking the threat of terrorism seriously enough, citing a quote from Khan that had been taken out of context.

The president's decision to lash out at the London mayor as his city attempted to recover from the June 3 attacks was widely questioned. Trump's tweets were widely mocked in Britain, where the overwhelming mood is one of unity against terrorism and praise for security services. At the time, Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the opposition Labour Party, accused the president of lacking "grace" and "sense." May came to Khan's defense, telling journalists that the mayor was "doing a good job, and it's wrong to say anything else."

do it, Britain has a weak government, a likely lame-duck prime minister and no negotiating position that could command a parliamentary majority, let alone national consensus.

European negotiators are ready, the clock is ticking, and a first set of meetings can be easily held around Britain's divorce settlement. But they know, as Mrs. May must know, that she is unlikely to be the prime minister to see the meetings to fruition, and there is the unsettling prospect of another leadership fight and another British election before March 29, 2019, when Britain is out of the bloc, deal or not.

A year after the referendum to leave the European Union and a week before the scheduled start of negotiations with Brussels on how to

"Britain doesn't feel stable anymore," said Tim Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London. "We're a European country, with voters becoming more volatile over time. People don't have the same tribal loyalties that they used to. Voters are more consumerist, much more willing to switch depending on the offer."

Voters must be wooed by programs and personalities, no longer content with the old, predictable divisions of class and regional identity. Robert Tombs, a historian at St. John's College at Cambridge, described the breakdown in tribal loyalty this way: "The electorate is no longer an army. It's a crowd."

At the same time, Professor Bale said, "we don't have the same flexibility in finding governing options as the Europeans do." In most European parliaments, there are various smaller parties to the left and the right of the major ones, eager for coalition. "But here," he added, "the Conservatives are limited to one" plausible option, the hard-line, predominantly Protestant, socially conservative Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland.

Even as traditional party loyalties have fractured, this election showed a surge in support for the two major parties, which increased their share of the vote. The Conservatives, despite losing 13 seats and their majority, won 42.4 percent of the vote, 5.5 percent higher than in 2015, when David Cameron won a surprising majority.

Labour won 40 percent of the vote, having mobilized young people to make a resounding 9.5 percent improvement over 2015, but still remains 64 seats short of a majority.

Many governments have achieved stable majorities with much smaller voting percentages. In every election back to 1970, the Conservative vote share, 42.4

percent, would have guaranteed a clear majority. And so would have Labour's 40.0 percent. In 2005, Tony Blair won a large majority for Labour in the House of Commons with 35 percent of the vote.

But each of Britain's 650 voting constituencies has its own, winner-take-all election, so piling up votes in safe seats is comforting but inefficient. The outcome simply displayed the country's increasing geographic and urban-suburban divisions.

While both parties together received nearly 82 percent of the votes, they are politically further apart now than at almost any time since 1983, when Labour was also more openly socialist. Britain has simply become much more fiercely divided ideologically, with the cross-party consensus of pro-European neoliberalism in tatters, along with the now derided "third way" of Mr. Blair, the last Labour leader to win an election, let alone three in a row.

Mr. Corbyn has pulled the party back to the harder left, promising more state ownership and economic intervention. His passionate campaign consolidated his leadership and the dominance of the "Corbynistas," although many Labour legislators fear that a hard-left party cannot win enough votes across the country to regain power.

But Mr. Corbyn's manifesto was intended to respond to popular dissatisfaction with seven years of Conservative austerity and cuts to social welfare benefits. It made sweeping commitments to more spending on everything from the health service to the police, and promised young people free tuition, a higher minimum wage and another four holidays, while advocating renationalizing the railways and utilities.

It would all be paid for by increased borrowing and sharply higher taxes on corporations and those paid

more than \$104,000 a year. Taxation would have been the highest ever in peacetime Britain, according to the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies.

With the British economy already heading into the doldrums, in part because of looming Brexit costs, low productivity and a national debt approaching 90 percent of gross domestic product, the Labour platform frightened the middle class and businesspeople and was, to some degree, a fantasy, given that even Labour leaders did not expect to win the election.

Still, despite Labour's better performance and its success in denying Mrs. May a majority, the party has lost its third general election in a row. With its strong showing among a newer generation, and normal voter fatigue with any party in power, Labour may eventually find its way back to Downing Street, more likely with a minority government. But as now, the party will have difficulty finding willing coalition partners with enough seats of their own to push it over the top.

Divisions over Brexit — the 2016 referendum vote was 52 percent to 48 percent — were only enhanced by this election. The Conservatives, promising a hard Brexit, with Britain out of the European single market and customs union, garnered votes and some seats in areas like the north and West Midlands, that voted heavily to quit the European Union and gave the U.K. Independence Party large votes in 2015. But that tough stance also put off some who had voted to remain.

Labour, which also committed to Brexit but in a vaguer, softer way that would try to preserve free trade with Europe, did well in big cities and the south, which voted predominantly to remain. And it also kept the votes of some former Labour voters who were more put off by Mrs. May's austerity plans and

poor campaign than by their cultural and political discomfort with Mr. Corbyn.

In the new media culture, said Tony Travers, a professor of government at the London School of Economics, "people are switching loyalties, not tribally, but like consumers."

In the 1950s, some 96 percent of voters chose one of the two main parties, which were class based. About 45 percent always voted Labour or Conservative, and only 6 percent moved back and forth, he said.

The two major parties' vote share fell to about 65 percent in the previous two elections, with the rise (and now the fall) of the Liberal Democrats and UKIP. But the resurgence this time, Mr. Travers argued, "is not just a resuscitation of the two-party system," but also a sense among voters that they need to pick between them to have some hope of voting for a winner.

"People are not tribal, but switch loyalties depending on which of the two parties most represent what I want to achieve," he said, whether the goal be a judgment on Brexit, or foreign policy, or tax or tuition. "That makes it very complicated for political parties, for pollsters and for political scientists — let alone Britain's allies."

But in the next election — which could, given the current chaos, come within the year — "the voters could churn again, back to another majority party or off to a minor party," said Philip Cowley, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London.

"Traditional politics are disrupted," Professor Bale said. "Voters are no longer so easy to please. And we shouldn't see this as an aberration. This is the new normal."



Editorial : U.K. election: Democrats, pay attention

The takeaway for many observers of the United Kingdom's election was the surprisingly strong showing of the Labour Party. In a snap election called by Prime Minister Theresa May to add to her Conservative Party's majority, Labour actually gained 34 seats, robbing May of her majority and forcing her to seek partners for a coalition government.

The poor showing for Conservatives will raise questions both about how Britain will proceed on exiting the European Union and whether May will stay on as prime minister.

But the larger takeaway — at least on this side of the Atlantic — should be that Labour didn't win outright despite a golden opportunity to do so.

May's Conservative Party has been growing long in the tooth, having been in power since 2010, first as the head of a coalition government and then with an outright majority. May is widely seen as aloof and mistake-prone, and she ran on an unappealing platform of Brexit and fiscal austerity, amid a series of terrorist attacks. And yet she, or at least her party, will remain in power.

Members of the Labour Party are busy congratulating themselves for a night that few polls predicted. But they should be asking themselves why they continue to be on the outside looking in.

They should know the answer. They positioned themselves so far to the left that you'd need a telescope to see them.

Long gone is Tony Blair and his optimistic centrism. In his place is the gruff Jeremy Corbyn, whose answer to everything is nationalizing major industries and expanding entitlements with higher taxes.

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Democrats on this side of the pond should be paying attention. With the mess of things that President Trump has made, they have a golden opportunity to win a majority in the House in 2018, and possibly to capture the presidency and the Senate in 2020.

That won't happen if they follow the lead of Labour and adopt far-left policies or get behind people like Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., the 75-year-old self-proclaimed democratic socialist.

Many U.S. voters are desperately searching for a return to normalcy, and they'd richly reward any party that could plausibly claim to speak for mainstream American values.

They are not getting that from Republicans, who at the state level have been pushing a far-right social agenda and at the national level are intent on stripping millions of people

of health coverage.

It remains to be seen whether they can get it from Democrats, who have trouble getting past identity politics or growing their appeal beyond minorities and urban elites. Expanding Social Security or vastly increasing health care spending — ideas pitched by Sanders and others — make them

look even more fiscally irresponsible.

Americans intuitively understand this, even if many will resist changes that directly affect them. They are likely to reward leaders who can solve the problems of social spending and punish those who insist on creating new ones.

In Britain, Theresa May, who articulated no real agenda, survived a narrow election simply because many voters couldn't bring themselves to back Labour. Something very similar could play out here if Democrats don't get their act together.



Will Theresa May's Coalition Bring New Troubles to Northern Ireland?

Simon Jones

Britain woke up this morning to a stunning election result: Theresa May's Conservative Party, which had started the campaign with a double-digit lead, failed to win a majority government, and now requires the support of other parties to stay in power. It didn't take long for the focus to shift to Northern Ireland: With the Liberal Democrats ruling out a partnership, there were few options left. And so, by lunchtime on Friday Theresa May was meeting with the queen to ask her for permission to form a government, consisting of an agreement between the Tories and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which won 10 seats. It's a measure of how disconnected the rest of the United Kingdom is from Northern Ireland that many newspapers in Britain suddenly found themselves having to explain to their readers who the DUP are and what they believe.

Almost 20 years after the Good Friday Agreement brought a formal end to the violent conflict known as "The Troubles," politics in Northern Ireland remains divided along sectarian lines: Protestant unionists on one side, Catholic republicans on the other. Throughout the Troubles, Theresa May's new partners at Westminster were regarded the uncompromising hard core of Protestant unionism in Northern Ireland: pro-life, pro-union, and at times, anti-peace process. Their leadership was closely linked with loyalist paramilitary groups implicated in the murder of civilians. Like many politicians in the North their leader, Arlene Foster, has personal experiences of the Troubles that inform her current politics: Her father, a policeman, was shot in 1979 by the Irish Republican Army. (They later bombed a school bus she was on in an attempt to kill the driver, who they believed was involved in a paramilitary group.) When the Good Friday Agreement was signed, the DUP and other parties involved were more moderate incarnations of themselves; in the years since, however, the hard-liners on all sides have come to the fore as enthusiasm for the peace process

has fallen away. Support for the DUP has boomed with rising disillusionment in Northern Ireland, which is significantly poorer than the rest of the U.K. and still grapples with a raft of social problems — the legacy of decades of violence.

But recently, the DUP have had a torrid time. Arlene Foster, who made up one half of Northern Ireland's power-sharing executive, faced calls from across the political spectrum to resign this winter after she was implicated in a £400 million scandal, which saw the party administering a scheme that handed out money to businesses, ostensibly for renewable fuel purchases, but that frequently turned out to be fraudulent. She refused to step down. Her republican then-counterpart, Martin McGuinness, quit in protest — and the devolved government collapsed. Politics in Belfast has been particularly embittered ever since and looks poised to take a turn for the worse because of May's agreement to form a coalition.

The collapse of the government triggered an election in early March. The vote took place in the shadow of a Brexit campaign that has raised deep-seated fears and divisions in Northern Ireland — about the potential implications of a new, hard border with the Republic of Ireland, but also about the potential loss of funding for community-building projects, much of which necessarily comes from the European Union because money from London or Dublin might be seen as partisan.

Lingering bitterness over the Brexit campaign bled into the March vote: Sinn Fein, the largest nationalist party, had campaigned openly in favor of the U.K. remaining a part of the EU and cast the decision to leave as yet more evidence of England overriding the interests of Northern Ireland. The DUP, for its part, had backed Brexit as a necessity for regaining British sovereignty. Both the DUP and Sinn Fein urged voters from across the North to vote on the basis of being unionists or republicans, and to endorse the two hard-line parties accordingly, rather than their more moderate counterparts (the Ulster

Unionist Party and the Social Democratic and Labour Party, respectively).

During the campaign, Foster infamously likened voting for Sinn Fein to "feeding the crocodile."

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The elections on March 2 saw a Sinn Fein surge: They came within one seat of a majority, the closest result between nationalist and unionist parties in generations. But the negotiations that followed still did not produce a government; the bitterness of the campaign left far fewer moderates to negotiate a compromise. The issue was put on hold for general elections across the United Kingdom and hasn't been resolved since: When power-sharing fails in Belfast, power returns to London. Sinn Fein has been left smarting on the sidelines, despite the party achieving its greatest-ever electoral result. Meanwhile, Foster, as controversial a figure in the province as ever, has been catapulted to the heart of British government.

The relationship between London and Belfast is always a complicated one, and the relationship between the Conservative Party and Northern Ireland particularly so. Within the province, it is still seen almost unanimously as the party of Thatcher, whose tough stance on the IRA and endorsement of measures like internment without trial to defeat the republican cause are remembered as undeniably brutal. But more recently, too, there have been memorable missteps: In March, the Conservative secretary for Northern Ireland, James Brokenshire, remarked that the historical investigations team, a police unit in Northern Ireland focused on investigating unsolved cases of murder during the Troubles, has paid too much attention to the actions of British forces, and not enough to IRA crimes — effectively politicizing the only established effort to unpack the legacy of the Troubles in an area riven with the scars of conflict. There's already an altogether reasonable impression in the North

that London, particularly under a Conservative government, isn't exactly an honest broker — that it openly favors the unionist side and has no real interest in dealing honestly with the opposition. May's decision today will cement this even further.

Meanwhile, the future of the province is looking extremely bleak, even by Northern Ireland standards. Overseas territories notwithstanding, the province is the site of the U.K.'s only land border, a strip which is currently unmarked and unmanned but whose status is under threat as part of Britain's negotiations to leave the EU. Closing the border would mean Northern Ireland's largest trade partner would be behind a closed border or unfavorable trade tariffs. People in the North have gotten used to seeing the open border as one of the few non-politicized issues in the region; though the DUP has said that it isn't in favor of a hard border, it's still hard not to imagine that, at the very least, the border will be politicized in a way it hasn't been before, with potentially dire effects for the economy.

It's not yet clear what the DUP will try to get out of its new role as kingmaker.

The party's decision to enter government with the Conservatives might have been made easier as a result of the presence of Jeremy Corbyn.

The party's decision to enter government with the Conservatives might have been made easier as a result of the presence of Jeremy Corbyn. The Labour Party leader was accused throughout the campaign of sympathizing with the IRA and Sinn Fein. Corbyn was public in his support of a peace process before there was one, and urged not only a dialogue with Sinn Fein but an end to British military involvement in Northern Ireland — at a time when the IRA was still actively killing British soldiers. Twenty-five years on, he has found out for himself that even the idea of associating with Sinn Fein is politically toxic: The association was enough to portray Corbyn as a threat to the U.K. The DUP pointed

out they believed that not having Corbyn at No. 10 Downing Street was enough by itself to make an agreement worthwhile. Now if Brexit negotiations allow for anything other than a closed border, they can claim credit and put Sinn Fein's advance

on ice.

Northern Ireland politics have momentarily devolved from their usual tumultuous mode to a state of deep dysfunction. London's government now relies on the support of a party reviled by large

swathes of the electorate in the North to push forward with an agenda which is, in turn, widely loathed as well. Coupled with the suspension of its political institutions, the linchpin of the peace process, the future of the province

has once again been shaped by events to its south — and is less clear than ever.



Ex-Rebel Leader Is Poised to Win Kosovo Election

Aleksandar Dimishkovski

SKOPJE, Macedonia — For the third time since Kosovo declared its independence in 2008, voters elected a new Parliament on Sunday, likely giving power to a former rebel leader who was twice acquitted of war crimes by an international tribunal.

With around 80 percent of the votes tallied, a coalition of parties featuring the Democratic Party of Kosovo appeared to win the most votes and will seek to establish a government led by Ramush Haradinaj, a former prime minister and once the leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army, which fought a war for independence from Serbia in the late 1990s.

According to preliminary results released by the Kosovo election commission, the Democratic Party of Kosovo, or P.D.K., won 35 percent, beating the ruling Democratic League of Kosovo and the Self-Determination Party, both earning around 25 percent.

Without a clear majority, the leading party must form a coalition to establish a government. There are 20 seats reserved for ethnic minority parties, including 10 seats for Serbs.

Mr. Haradinaj's Alliance for the Future of Kosovo is part of the P.D.K.'s center-right coalition that campaigned against the Democratic League's governing coalition led by Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, who lost a confidence vote in May, prompting snap elections.

There is a lot of work ahead, Mr. Haradinaj told a crowd of his supporters Sunday night in Pristina, the capital, "but all together, we can solve all issues and we will do all important things for Kosovo."

The likely ascension of Mr. Haradinaj is sure to anger Kosovo's neighbor Serbia, which accuses him of torturing and killing Serb civilians while he was a commander of the NATO-backed Kosovo Liberation Army in 1998 and 1999.

Mr. Haradinaj served briefly as Kosovo's prime minister in 2005, when the former Serbian-controlled province was administered by the United Nations, but he was forced to step down to face war crimes accusations at a tribunal in The Hague. He was twice acquitted, in 2008 and 2012, and allowed to return to Kosovo.

In addition to dealing with tensions with Serbia, the new prime minister must also contend with a border

dispute with Montenegro, and Kosovo's daunting economic outlook.

A landlocked Balkan country with a population of 1.8 million, Kosovo has one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe at more than 30 percent, and corruption is rampant. More than half a million Kosovars live abroad and the economy is highly dependent on remittances from those expatriates, accounting for as much as 15 percent of the national economy, according to the World Bank.

Hashim Thaci, a former leader of the P.D.K. who now serves in the ceremonial role of president of Kosovo, emphasized on Sunday the need to for "a pro-European government that will swiftly address immediate priorities."

Though Serbia and its ally Russia refuse to accept Kosovo's independence, the country is recognized by the European Union and the United States. The American ambassador to Kosovo, Greg Delawie, endorsed Sunday's vote.

"Today was an important step in Kosovo's democracy," Mr. Delawie said, adding that no matter the final

count, "the common good, not politics, must be the goal for the country."

The vote was largely conducted in a democratic manner, with only minor irregularities reported by Kosovo's election commission. Before the vote, European Union officials had expressed concerns over reports last week of voter intimidation.

The electoral commission estimated that 41 percent of registered voters participated in the election, down from 43 percent in the last election in 2014.

Once the results are confirmed, Mr. Haradinaj and the coalition will have 45 days to try to form a government.

Political analysts predict the process will be quick, because voters have made clear their desire for change.

"The people are tired of political issues with their neighbors; they want to see them resolved," said Nezir Kraki, a political analyst and professor at the Université Paris-Est Créteil. "They are tired of talking about dealing with corruption. They want to see results in that fight."

INTERNATIONAL



Busloads of forcibly displaced Syrians arrive almost weekly to an

Syria's Assad Presses Offensive on Opposition in Wake of U.S. Strikes

Raja Abdulrahim

increasingly crowded corner of northwest Syria, doubling the local population of Idlib province as the regime systematically empties the

opposition from its former strongholds elsewhere.



Feldman : How to Fix Trump's Saudi-Qatar Blunder

Noah Feldman

The focus on James Comey's Senate testimony last week overshadowed another alarming development connected to Donald Trump's presidency: the breakup between Saudi Arabia and three Arab partners 1 on one side and Qatar, a staunch U.S. ally, on the other.

The trouble was caused by Trump, who got played by the Saudis and then bragged about it on Twitter.

The challenge now is to figure out how to walk back the brewing diplomatic mini-disaster without a public reversal by Trump — a step he has shown no inclination to take.

To understand what's happened — and how to fix it -- you have to start with Qatar, which hosts a huge U.S.

airbase for missions to Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq.

Until now, Qatar has played the role of a modest regional counterbalance against Saudi domination of the Persian Gulf. Crucially, it hosts Al-Jazeera, the leading Arabic satellite news network.

The Saudis' nominal excuse for breaking diplomatic and trade ties with Qatar was its sponsorship of

terror. But the real reason was that Trump's comments on his visit to Saudi Arabia in May gave the kingdom an excuse to take steps against a rival whom it considers a thorn in its side and a dangerous source of critical news.

Trump didn't mean to cause the break — at least not at first. Indeed, it's clear from his comments on Twitter last week that he was outwitted by the Saudis.

QuickTake Qatar's Bets

During his Middle East trip, Trump says he told Arab leaders that he wanted a stop to “funding of radical ideology.”

In ordinary Trumpian discourse, that language presumably referred to the promotion of the rigid Saudi Wahhabi strain of Islam through mosques, preachers, schools and study fellowships. But the leaders present, Trump tweeted, immediately pointed to Qatar.

Trump wasn't quick enough to realize that this was a way of deflecting attention from the Saudis while dangling the possibility of action against Qatar. So he took the bait.

That gave Saudi Arabia enough confidence in Trump's backing to lash out at Qatar – something it had previously refrained from doing because of the close U.S. military alliance with that country.

The Saudi gamble paid off. Instead of expressing dismay at the rift between key regional allies, Trump immediately took credit for the Saudi step.

Proof that this wasn't actually a Trump master plan comes from three places. First, there's Trump's description of Qatar in his Saudi Arabia speech as a “crucial strategic partner.”

Clear thinking from leading voices in business,

**THE WALL
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Federal prosecutors have charged two U.S. citizens with providing material support to Hezbollah and helping the Iranian-backed Lebanese terror group prepare potential attacks in America and Panama. The charges, announced last Thursday after the men were arrested June 1, show that Iran's terror proxies roam far beyond the Middle East.

The FBI and New York Police Department carried out the investigation, which resulted in a raft of terror-related charges for naturalized

**THE WALL
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Aresu Egbali in Tehran, Iran, and Asa Fitch in Dubai

Iran has sent hundreds of tons of food to Qatar in recent days, Iranian officials said Sunday, the first significant sign that the Islamic Republic is trying to insert itself into the worst political break in decades between some of the U.S.'s closest Middle Eastern allies.

economics, politics, foreign affairs, culture, and more.

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Second, there's the worry expressed by U.S. military brass after the Saudi move and Trump's endorsement of it. One spokesman initially said he could not “reconcile” Trump's tweet with U.S. policy. Subsequently, the Pentagon has continued to trumpet Qatar's “enduring commitment to regional security.” Small wonder: More than 11,000 U.S. and allied forces are stationed at Qatar's strategically essential Al Udeid airbase.

Third, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has called on the Arab states to stop blockading Qatar as Trump continues to applaud the move, a contradiction noted acidly on Twitter by Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut.

From this it follows that Trump didn't even see the Qatar development coming. He apparently just didn't understand, either while in Saudi Arabia or afterwards, how important Qatar is to the U.S.

So how can the crisis be resolved?

The U.S. can't actually cut Qatar loose, whatever Trump signaled in his tweet. It isn't some rogue state. It's a necessary regional ally.

Furthermore, if the U.S. pushes Qatar away, other regional actors would be happy to take its place.

The worst scenario would be closer ties between Qatar and Iran and Russia, which are trying to take advantage of Trump's blunder. Turkey, itself a U.S. ally that is growing closer to Russia and Iran, has already tossed Qatar a lifeline in the form of goods to replace those that aren't coming from the gulf.

The Saudis would like to weaken or even replace Qatar's ruler, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. That would also be a terrible result. Tamim has been a stable U.S. ally. Regime change at the Saudis' behest would send the message to the region that Saudi Arabia, not Washington, is calling the shots.

It would be great if Trump would retract his comments. But based on past practice, that's not going to happen.

The least bad outcome would therefore involve some mild concessions from Qatar that would satisfy the Saudis and provide Trump with a face-saving way to reassert U.S. support.

For example, Qatar could agree to rein in Hamas, which it supports alongside other offshoots of the international Muslim Brotherhood.

Qatar has already shown its productive influence on Hamas by

urging the Palestinian group to announce that it would accept a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli impasse. Further restraint by Hamas could help with a U.S.-Saudi peace initiative, if one continues to develop.

Another option for the Qataris would be to cool their relations with Iran, though that could prove difficult because the two countries share a natural gas field.

Finally, there's Al-Jazeera, which the Saudis hate and Qatar hosts and funds. The news network is allowed to criticize and report negative news about anyone it likes in the region – except Qatar. It would be a shame to see the network's freedom further curtailed, but doing so could potentially reduce Saudi-Qatari tensions.

The key point here is that it's a good thing that the Saudis couldn't care less about Qatari funding reaching terrorists. They care about Qatar's regional stance as a gulf counterweight to them – and as a public critic via Al-Jazeera.

The U.S. should now take steps to address the actual differences between its allies. Otherwise, Trump's error could undermine its interests.

Editorial : Hezbollah in the Bronx

citizens Ali Kourani of the Bronx and Samer el Debek of Dearborn, Mich. Prosecutors say Hezbollah recruited the men as “operatives,” provided them with “military-style training,” then gave them a variety of ominous tasks.

Prosecutors in the Southern District of New York say the 32-year-old Mr. Kourani conducted “pre-operational surveillance” of military and law-enforcement sites around New York as well as Kennedy Airport. The feds allege that Mr. Debek, age 37, staked out targets in Panama that included the American and Israeli embassies as well as the Panama

Canal. Attorneys for the two men did not respond to media inquiries.

Mr. Debek's alleged Panamanian operations are consistent with Hezbollah's presence across Latin America that goes back to the bombings of the Israeli embassy and a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, in 1992 and 1994 respectively, killing more than 100 people.

In 2011 U.S. investigators foiled a plot to kill the Saudi ambassador at a Washington restaurant, leading to a guilty plea by the would-be assassin. Hezbollah was also

behind a 2012 bus bombing in Bulgaria that killed five Israeli tourists and their local bus driver.

Iran bankrolls Hezbollah to the tune of \$200 million annually and provides most of the 80,000 missiles the group points at Israel. The latest allegations are a reminder that the Tehran regime still deserves its reputation as the world's leading state sponsor of terror.

Iran Sent Food to Qatar Amid Middle East Rift

The food was meant to help relieve Qatar from its economic isolation after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed diplomatic ties with Doha and closed their air, sea and land borders to the tiny Persian Gulf country, where the U.S. has its largest military base in the Middle East.

Iran has sent at least four paneloads of fruits and vegetables

to Qatar since the Arab nations' rift with Doha last week, a spokesman for Iran Air said, according to the semi-official Fars News Agency. The report couldn't be independently confirmed.

Qatar's only land border is with Saudi Arabia, and it had relied on its larger neighbor for a significant portion of its food, raising concerns of a shortage. Residents initially emptied supermarket shelves of

canned goods and other items after the rupture, but calm was restored after Qatari authorities pointed to the country's large food reserves and ability to import essentials from elsewhere.

The four Arab countries that cut ties accused Qatar of meddling in their affairs and harboring terrorists, touching off the Persian Gulf region's biggest political crisis in years. They see entities that Qatar

hosts and supports, including Islamist movements Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, as terrorist groups.

"The Qatari government has been making deals and looking in the other direction for years, and one is responsible for decisions you make and for the commitments you give, and we're calling them out on that right now," said Reem al-Hashimi, the U.A.E.'s minister of state for international cooperation.

Qatari officials have rejected the four countries' accusations, saying they don't consider Islamist groups terrorists, and that the country has hosted them to act as a mediator.

The split could present a rare opportunity for Iran, the region's main Shiite Muslim power, to drive a wedge between its usually tightly allied Sunni adversaries on the other side of the Persian Gulf, analysts said. Iran and the Gulf states are on opposing sides in a number of

regional battlefields, including in Yemen and Syria.

Qatar is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council, along with Saudi Arabia, the U.A.E., Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman. Most of the GCC countries oppose Iran's regional aims, including its support for Shiite militia Hezbollah in Lebanon and its backing of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad against a long-running challenge by Sunni rebels.

Qatar has supported Syrian rebel groups, but it has been more open than many Gulf neighbors to interaction with Iran, which those neighbors see as their main rival for power and influence. Qatar, which has some of the world's largest gas reserves, shares the gigantic South Pars gas field with Iran.

"I think Iran views this as a huge opportunity, despite Qatari support for rebels in Syria," said Cliff Kupchan, the chairman of political risk consultancy Eurasia Group. "Iran has chance to pick off, with

Turkey, a GCC member. It doesn't get much better."

Turkey is a close Qatari ally and supports some regional Islamist movements that Qatar has hosted, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said Turkey would provide Qatar with food and medicine to address isolation caused by the diplomatic break. Turkey's parliament also recently approved the deployment of troops to a Turkish base in Qatar.

The Trump administration, meanwhile, has sent mixed signals on the crisis. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson urged the four countries to cease their economic siege on Qatar, while President Donald Trump lashed out at Qatar on Twitter for allegedly supporting terror groups.

The Iranian shipments of food went to Qatar from Tehran and the southern city of Shiraz aboard Boeing 747s, the Iran Air

spokesman was quoted as saying, and the airline was ready to increase the volume of deliveries.

About 100 tons of the food were going every day from Shiraz, the semi-official Tasnim News Agency quoted agricultural official Ali Hemmati as saying Sunday. Another official said Iran's southern Fars province could send 45 tons of dairy products daily to Qatar, according to Iranian media.

In another supportive move, Iran has opened its airspace for Qatari flights that used to use Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini airspace. Iran Air chief Farhad Parvaresh said Saturday that about 100 more flights a day were traversing Iranian airspace than before, according to the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

**The
New York
Times**

Iran Kills 'Mastermind' of Terrorist Attacks as Inquiry Focuses on Kurds

Thomas Erdbrink

TEHRAN — In a cross-border strike, Iranian intelligence operatives hunted down and killed the "mastermind" of the terrorist attacks on two landmarks in Tehran last week, a top official said.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks at Iran's Parliament building and the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic republic, which killed 17 people.

The Iranian official, Mahmoud Alavi, the intelligence minister, speaking on state television late Saturday night, described the man who was killed as "the mastermind and commander of the team" that carried out the assaults.

The suspect, whose name was not revealed, fled the country after the attacks, Mr. Alavi said, and was captured and killed with "the help of intelligence services of allied countries."

While the minister did not identify the area where the operation took place, his operatives have concentrated their search on the region around the border with Iraqi Kurdistan. Iran has long had a considerable intelligence presence there, dating to before the Islamic Revolution in 1979, and the Iranians cooperate closely with the two dominant political parties that divide power in the Iraqi Kurdish region.

The man "was sent to hell by the Unknown Soldiers of the Imam of the Age," Mr. Alavi said, using a nickname for his operatives.

Iranian investigations into the attack are increasingly focusing on a group of radicalized Iranian Kurds.

Of the five attackers, all of whom were killed, only one has been officially identified: Serias Sadeghi, an Iranian Kurd from the city of Paveh in the country's west, near the Iraqi border, who was described as a known recruiter for the Islamic State. But security sources said they believed three of the other four attackers were also Iranian Kurds.

Sunni extremists have gained a foothold in Iran's Kurdish areas over the last few years, according to a 2015 research paper by Iran's Interior Ministry.

The report concluded that the ultraconservative Salafi current in Islam had attracted followers in Iranian Kurdistan and that the Islamic State had "stepped up" efforts to recruit members in the region.

The presence of ultraconservative Sunnis in the region has become much more visible, said Jalal Jalalizadeh, a former member of Parliament from Iranian Kurdistan.

"The Salafi groups have been very active in mosques and public places in Iranian Kurdistan, and even they have been socializing with families and the youths," Mr. Jalalizadeh said, adding that the men, some wearing long beards, did not appear to pose any danger. "They were peaceful. As long as the Salafi groups are not taking arms, they must be tolerated," he said.

Mr. Alavi, talking about terrorists in the country, said that "many teams" were under surveillance by the Intelligence Ministry. And dozens of people accused of being potential terrorists have been arrested in recent days, some in connection to the attacks on Wednesday.

On Sunday, six more people who were said to have direct links to terrorist groups were arrested in Iranian Kurdistan, according to Mizan, a publication of Iran's judiciary. A safe house in Iranian Kurdistan was also raided, and suicide vests, weapons and bomb-making equipment were found, the Intelligence Ministry reported.

In Tehran, questions have been raised about the authorities' ability to neutralize terrorist threats. Mr. Alavi said his agents faced similar challenges to security forces in Europe trying to prevent attacks.

"Terrorists do not wear a special uniform," he said. "They are like other people, like other youths. They are not easy to recognize. Sometimes, finding a terrorist in the 14 million population of Tehran is like finding a needle — not in a haystack, but in 10 haystacks."

People in the Kurdistan region say that they have seen an increasing embrace of extremist ideologies but that the government has ignored the problem.

"To us, it feels as if those Salafis can easily roam around in Iranian Kurdistan," said Nikvan Ghaderi, 24, working in his father's tire shop in Baneh, a small city near the border

with Iraq. "I want to get as far away from these people as possible. They give us Kurds a bad name."

Publicly, the Iranian leadership has sought to cast blame for the terrorist attacks on its favorite targets: Saudi Arabia, the United States and Israel.

But with the evidence becoming increasingly clear that the assaults were carried out by Iranian Kurds, there are concerns that ethnic tensions could mount.

On Iranian social media, some messages have singled out the Kurds, accusing them of wanting war and separation.

On Saturday, many in Saudi Arabia posted on Twitter in support of Kurdish independence, a sign to some in Iran that the Saudis are promoting the breakup of their country.

But a flood of social media posts also expressed solidarity, noting that the Kurds have played a major role in fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

The Kurdish region, with about eight million people, is generally poorer than the rest of Iran, lacking jobs and investments, which analysts say could explain why some are attracted to extremism.

The Kurds are present in Parliament and in the Iranian establishment. While there is dissent among some who feel neglected by broader Iranian society, many feel a strong connection to Iran.

"Unlike other countries where Kurds live, in Iran, we are part of the social fabric, share a common history and our languages are very close to each other," said Hiwa Aminnejad, 43, a documentary filmmaker from the Iranian Kurdish city of Sanandaj

who specializes in Kurdish issues. "There is no apartheid for Kurds, like in Turkey, for instance."

But Mr. Aminnejad said there had been increasing strains.

"Over the past 10 years, we have suddenly seen these extremists coming out of nowhere," he said. "I feel that if there was more political openness in Iranian Kurdistan, more dialogue with us, we would not

witness the rise of these extremist groups."

**THE WALL
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Fitch in Dubai

Iranian authorities on Saturday said they killed the alleged planner behind unprecedented Islamic State-claimed terror attacks this week.

"The main planner and commander of the Parliament and Imam Khomeini shrine attacks was, thank God, killed today," Intelligence Minister Mahmoud Alavi told state television.

Mr. Alavi didn't provide the suspect's name or the full details of his death other than to say the intelligence service of one of Iran's allies cooperated with the authorities. He

Iran Says It Has Killed Alleged Planner of Deadly Tehran Attack

Aresu Eqbali in Tehran and Asa

said 42 or 43 alleged terrorists connected to the attacks were arrested as part of a rapidly expanding dragnet following the attacks, in which 17 victims and five assailants were killed.

Also Saturday, authorities detained seven people in the northern Alborz province who allegedly provided support to the attackers, according to a state television website. It wasn't clear whether these arrests—or a number of others announced in recent days—were included in Mr. Alavi's total.

Wednesday's attacks by gunmen and suicide bombers hit two pillars of Iran's ruling system, the parliament complex in Tehran and the shrine to the Islamic Republic's

founding figure, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Islamic State took responsibility through its news agency, Amaq; Iranian officials blamed the group for the assaults the following day.

A Sunni Muslim extremist group, Islamic State views Shiite Muslims as apostates. Most Iranians are Shiites.

The attacks shocked the capital's residents, thousands of whom thronged the streets Friday for a funeral procession and rally for the victims. While Islamic State leaders have long urged followers to attack Iran, the extremists hadn't successfully carried out an operation there until Wednesday.

Efforts to find people connected with the perpetrators kicked off immediately after the attacks and gained steam in subsequent days. A stepped-up security presence was visible in Tehran.

The twin assaults exposed major security gaps for Iran's leaders and could pose political challenges, analysts have said. Iranian leaders have used the need to protect the homeland from terrorist attacks to justify the country's military presence in Iraq and in Syria, where Iranian forces are helping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

**The
New York
Times**

All 6 U.S. Combat Deaths in Afghanistan in 2017 Were in Fight Against ISIS

Rod Nordland

KABUL, Afghanistan — All six of the American soldiers who have died in combat in Afghanistan this year were Special Operations troops involved in the fight against the Islamic State group in its stronghold in a small eastern area of the country.

Five of the six may have been killed by their own side, according to reports from American and Afghan military officials.

The casualty rate shows an increased concentration on fighting the local branch of the extremist group, known here as the Islamic State in Khorasan, which two years ago was dismissed as a small breakaway faction, numbering in the low hundreds, of the much more powerful Taliban.

Since March, the United States military has said that joint Afghan-American forces have killed or captured hundreds of Islamic State fighters.

Last year, one American soldier was killed in combat in Nangarhar Province, the eastern area that includes the Achin District — the Islamic State's stronghold — in mountains close to the Pakistani border. In all, nine American soldiers were killed in 2016, four of them Special Operations forces in combat roles. The others were on bases or in support roles.

The deaths on Saturday of three American Special Operations soldiers — a fourth was wounded and transported out of Afghanistan — were the result of a "green on blue" attack, or insider attack, by an Afghan commando, said Jawed Salim, a spokesman for the Afghan Army Special Forces command.

But Afghan officials were skeptical of a claim by the Taliban that the commando had infiltrated the unit intending to carry out the attack.

"It is part of their propaganda war," said Gen. Mohammad Radmanish, a spokesman for the Ministry of Defense. "We need to investigate what really happened here."

The attacker was killed by the Americans, who returned fire, Afghan officials said.

The United States military has not yet commented in any detail on Saturday's attack, and the victims' names have not been released pending notification of next of kin. The military rarely releases Special Operations details.

Although the United States military is ostensibly on an "advise and assist" mission to aid Afghan forces, the Obama and Trump administrations have granted wide latitude for Special Operations forces to participate in Afghan combat missions.

Afghan officials confirmed that the latest deaths took place in the midst of an operation against the Islamic State, despite the Taliban's claim of responsibility.

Vice President Mike Pence, speaking at an event in Milwaukee on Saturday, said he and President Trump had been briefed on the deaths.

"When heroes fall, Americans grieve, and our thoughts and prayers are with the families of these American heroes," Mr. Pence said.

The first American killed in Afghanistan this year, Staff Sgt. Mark R. De Alencar, 37, of Edgewood, Md., was also involved in an operation against the Islamic State in Nangarhar Province, according to a statement from the Defense Department.

A much-decorated veteran of the Army in Iraq, Sergeant De Alencar earned his Green Beret in 2016, according to Military Times.

He "died April 8 in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, of injuries sustained when his unit came in contact with enemy forces using small-arms fire during combat operations," the Defense Department said.

Just over two weeks later, on April 26, two Army Rangers were killed in

Achin District during a major operation against the Islamic State.

The Pentagon spokesman, Capt. Jeff Davis, said they might have been killed by friendly fire, presumably from close air support during the fight.

"We are investigating the circumstances of the combat deaths of the two Army Rangers in the beginning of what was an intense three-hour firefight," Captain Davis said.

The military identified the men as Sgt. Joshua P. Rodgers, 22, of Bloomington, Ill., and Sgt. Cameron H. Thomas, 23, of Kettering, Ohio.

Ten days later, the American military commander in Afghanistan, Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr., said the operation had also killed the "emir" of the local Islamic State in Khorasan, Sheikh Abdul Hasib.

"This successful joint operation is another important step in our relentless campaign to defeat ISIS-K in 2017," General Nicholson said, using the military's shorthand for the local Islamic State affiliate. "This is the second ISIS-K emir we have killed in nine months, along with dozens of their leaders and hundreds of their fighters."

He said that Sheikh Hasib had been responsible for a deadly attack in March on a military hospital in Kabul, in which militants killed more

than 50 people, many of them patients.

Between the two fatal episodes in April, the United States military dropped a GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast bomb, known as the mother of all bombs, the largest nonnuclear bomb ever deployed, on what it said was an Islamic State tunnel complex in Achin District.

The New York Times

U.S. Strikes Shabab, Likely a First Since Trump Relaxed Rules for Somalia

Charlie Savage, Helene Cooper and Eric Schmitt

WASHINGTON

— The United States military said on Sunday that it had carried out a drone strike in southern Somalia against the Shabab, the Qaeda-linked insurgent group — apparently the first such strike since President Trump relaxed targeting rules for counterterrorism operations in that country in March.

The strike, which the military said targeted a command and logistics portion of a Shabab camp, came two and a half months after Mr. Trump cleared the way for offensive strikes in Somalia, a chaotic nation in the Horn of Africa, without a specific self-defense rationale.

The military said it believed that the strike, which took place around 2:20 a.m. Eastern time about 185 miles southwest of Mogadishu, the capital, had killed eight militants. Military officials said the United States had seen no reports that any civilians were killed.

“The U.S. conducted this operation in coordination with its regional partners as a direct response to al-Shabab actions, including recent attacks on Somali forces,” Dana W. White, the Pentagon’s chief spokeswoman, said in a statement.

The attack was carried out by at least one armed Reaper drone flying from a secretive air base in Djibouti, an American official said. The Reaper dropped multiple Hellfire missiles on the Shabab camp, which American military surveillance aircraft had been monitoring for months.

It was unclear how much damage the 22,000-pound bomb caused, and Afghan officials offered no proof for their assertion that 96 militants had been killed and that buildings had been destroyed in a two-mile radius. Islamic State radio disputed the claims.

The three Special Operations soldiers killed on Saturday were fighting about a mile from where the

The official said that more such strikes should be expected now that American and Somali officials have closely analyzed potential targets that could be attacked using the new authorities that Mr. Trump approved.

In a statement, the United States Africa Command portrayed the camp as part of a broader Shabab stronghold from which the group has launched attacks, including operations over the last eight months in which it overran three African Union bases for peacekeeping soldiers from Burundi, Kenya and Uganda, and seized military weapons.

“The terror organization has taken advantage of safe haven,” the Africa Command statement said. The group, it added, has cemented its control over southern and central Somalia, used the area to plot and direct terrorist attacks, stolen humanitarian aid and sheltered other terrorists.

The Somali government said in a statement that the Shabab command and supply hub had been destroyed, a loss that would “ultimately disrupt the enemy’s ability to conduct new attacks within Somalia.” A government official said that eight militants had been killed.

The United States military has been training and advising African Union and Somali government forces in the country while becoming more directly involved in its civil war for the past several years. Last month, two American Marines were wounded and one was killed while accompanying Somali forces on a raid against Shabab militants, the first American combat death in

bomb had been dropped, Afghan officials said.

While the Islamic State appears to have ousted the Taliban from much of Achin District, there have been only scattered reports of Islamic State activity in other parts of the country, with the Taliban still the dominant insurgent force nationally.

American Special Operations troops are involved in joint operations with

Somalia since the 1993 “Black Hawk Down” battle in Mogadishu.

Toward the end of the Obama administration, the White House signed off on a proposal to deem the Shabab an affiliate of Al Qaeda. That brought the insurgent group — which sprouted up in 2007 after Ethiopia, with American backing, invaded Somalia and overthrew an Islamist council that had briefly taken control of the country — under the congressional authorization to use military force against the perpetrators of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Soon after Mr. Trump took office, the Defense Department proposed a further escalation. It wanted Mr. Trump to declare parts of Somalia to be an area of active hostilities, exempting it from the need to obey special targeting limits, known as the Presidential Policy Guidance, that Mr. Obama imposed in 2013 for counterterrorism strikes outside conventional war zones.

Those limits included an obligation to receive high-level interagency approval before carrying out such a strike; a need for the target, and an individual, to pose a threat to Americans, not just to be part of the enemy force; and a requirement of near certainty that no civilians would be killed.

Aspects of those limits had been eroding in Somalia, because in 2016, the United States military increasingly invoked an exception for airstrikes carried out under the rubric of self-defense — including, sometimes, the defense of Somali government forces even when no American advisers were under threat.

Afghan forces against the Taliban in southern Helmand Province and in northern Kunduz Province, but so far this year, no Americans have died in those areas.

Yet in two episodes in March, according to Afghan officials, a total of 11 American soldiers were wounded by Afghan soldiers in green-on-blue attacks in Helmand.

For instance, in March 2016, American aircraft struck a Shabab training camp, killing around 150 people who American officials said were newly minted fighters assembled for a graduation ceremony. Africa Command officials justified the strike, which they undertook without going through the 2013 process, as a matter of self-defense, saying they believed the militants intended to attack a peacekeeping base.

Late this March, Mr. Trump signed off on the Pentagon’s proposal to exempt much of Somalia from the 2013 limits, clearing the way for the Pentagon to carry out purely offensive strikes, and without going through interagency vetting.

Still, the head of Africa Command, Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser, has said that he is exercising caution in using his new authorities, and that he has decided to keep the standard of near certainty that there will be no civilian deaths. A famine in Somalia has prompted many civilians, often armed, to move around in search of food and water, which has made it harder to identify militants.

Against that backdrop, months passed without Africa Command carrying out strikes under the new authorities — a surprising forbearance that seemingly came to an end on Sunday.

The military’s statements about the strike did not invoke a specific self-defense rationale, instead portraying the operation as part of a broad strategy to degrade the Shabab’s ability to recruit, train and plot terrorist attacks.

The Washington Post

Diehl : China and Saudi Arabia have seduced Trump into being their sweetheart

It’s disappointing but not surprising that in the fifth month of the Trump administration, Germany, Mexico and South Korea are among the big losers in U.S. foreign relations. They may be among America’s closest allies, but President Trump made it clear enough during his campaign that he

considers them conniving freeloaders who snicker at the United States behind its back.

What’s surprising is the big winners so far — not Russia, nor Israel — but two countries Trump has spent decades disparaging: China and Saudi Arabia. So far, Asia’s rising

superpower and the Middle East’s most reactionary autocracy have gotten everything they’ve wanted from the White House, including unconditional public support from the president.

China, which Trump long assailed as a trade cheater and said would

be sanctioned on his first day in office, has seen no such censure. Instead, Trump has lauded President Xi Jinping as someone with whom he has made “tremendous progress” in forging a cooperative relationship. Not only has Trump publicly promised not to label Xi’s government a currency

manipulator, but he has mostly restrained the Pentagon from challenging Beijing's aggressive campaign to consolidate control over the South China Sea.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

Saudi Arabia has been a Trump target since 1987, when he took out full-page newspaper ads accusing it of "taking advantage of the United States" and demanding that it "pay for the protection" Washington provides. Yet since visiting the kingdom last month, the new president has swung so fully behind its ruling family that it felt empowered to launch a diplomatic and military boycott against neighboring Qatar, home of the largest U.S. military base in the Middle East.

Arguably, these flip-flops had some rational basis. Trump says the tack toward Beijing is meant to gain its help in stopping North Korea's accumulation of nuclear weapons. The alignment with Saudi Arabia can be cast as part of a larger

campaign to turn back Iranian aggression in the Middle East — and, perhaps, help Israel broker peace with the Palestinians.

Yet it's possible to seek Beijing's help on North Korea, or Saudi Arabia's on Iran, without uncritically embracing their regimes or offering them *carte blanche* to pursue agendas that threaten vital U.S. strategic interests. Previous U.S. presidents have tried to strike such a balance. What's distinctive about Trump is his black-and-white approach to foreign governments: Either he loves them, or he does not.

Or maybe, the distinction is whether the president perceives that he is held in high enough regard by the regime in question. Those that seem critical, or condition their affection, such as Mexico and Germany, are out; those prepared to hang portraits of him in their capitals and celebrate his arrival with sword dances, such as Saudi Arabia, are in.

Xi's China has not been quite so effusive. But Xi was willing to pay court to Trump at his resort in Mar-

a-Lago. His government has granted Trump dozens of valuable trademarks since his inauguration, along with a bunch given to Ivanka Trump's fashion business on the day of the summit.

China and Saudi Arabia focus their diplomacy on the Trump family. They both used as their prime conduit Jared Kushner, the presidential son-in-law whose evident naivete about foreign affairs is as great as his ambitions. As my colleague Josh Rogin has reported, Henry Kissinger opened a back channel between Kushner and Beijing before the Mar-a-Lago summit — one from which the U.S. government's China hands were excluded.

A similar channel connects Kushner with Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who has emerged as the preeminent figure in a regime headed by his aged father. Before Trump's visit to Riyadh, the two sketched out ambitious — and as yet unrealized — plans for an "Arab NATO" that, bolstered with tens of billions in U.S. weapons sales, would push back against Iran.

The clincher in these sweetheart deals has been the seduction by Xi and Salman of the president himself — which, by Trump's own account, has been all too easy. According to the president, after just a 10-minute lecture from Xi about North Korea, he said "I realized it's not so easy" for China to act. When he spoke about stopping terrorism in Riyadh, Trump tweeted last week that the Saudis "pointed to Qatar" — with which they have been feuding over other issues. The president swallowed their line.

No doubt the Chinese and Saudis are shrewd enough to know their current luck may not last. When China fails to rein in North Korea, or the Saudis fail to deliver the Palestinians for a Mideast peace deal, Trump may suddenly turn on them. For now, though, they have illuminated an embarrassing and somewhat scary truth about this president: When it comes to foreign affairs, he is heedless of history, susceptible to blandishments and supremely gullible.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

China Engages California on Climate After Trump's Paris Snub

Brian Spegele

BEIJING—

China's government is working to keep climate-change cooperation with the U.S. alive after President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate accord, even if that means sidestepping the White House to seek closer ties with U.S. states.

Meetings in Beijing during the past week showed the competing agendas in U.S. energy politics and deep frustration inside China's government over Mr. Trump's decision to abandon what had been a rare platform for unity in the U.S.-China relationship.

China rolled out the red carpet for California Gov. Jerry Brown, a critic of Mr. Trump's decision who arrived in China last weekend to take part in an international clean-energy forum and meet provincial officials. It was Mr. Brown that President Xi Jinping later welcomed to Beijing's Great Hall of the People; U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry, also in town for the forum, was received by a vice premier.

Chinese officials expressed dismay with Mr. Trump's decision. "I am so deeply disappointed," said Xie Zhenhua, China's special envoy for climate change, during a gathering with Mr. Brown.

Since Mr. Trump's decision, a coalition of a dozen U.S. states,

including California, have committed to uphold America's pledge to cut emissions 26% to 28% compared with 2005 levels.

For Beijing, working with U.S. states could burnish the image the country has sought to cultivate as an emerging global leader on climate issues. Some states can also share emissions-cutting expertise that leaders here are eager to acquire.

Mr. Xi sent perhaps the strongest signal that he hopes to see more local-level cooperation by meeting Gov. Brown.

Among the agreements Mr. Brown's office announced during the week included plans to coordinate emission-reduction programs with China's Ministry of Science and Technology and to set up a joint climate research institute between California and China's Tsinghua University.

China is encouraging "all relevant parties to implement the Paris agreement," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Friday when asked about Mr. Brown's visit.

Local U.S.-China cooperation has limits: National governments are needed to negotiate deals keeping world leaders marching in the same direction. Lacking a U.S. commitment, Mr. Xie, the Chinese climate envoy, used a gathering at Tsinghua University to urge U.S.

and Chinese scientists and business leaders to step up cooperation.

Mr. Brown said he hopes more states and cities will join him in opposing Mr. Trump's stance. "With Trump saying no, it's up to states and localities to say yes—and they're doing that," he said.

Mr. Perry said he supported the rights of states to choose their own paths. "My hat's off to Gov. Brown for the work that he does to promote California," he said in Beijing on Friday. He said he faced no pressure from those he met for the U.S. to change its mind about leaving the Paris deal.

Mr. Perry's arrival in China early in the week was preceded by the surprise announcement on Monday by the top U.S. diplomat in China, David Rank, that he was quitting to protest against Mr. Trump's climate position. Mr. Rank, who was chargé d'affaires, had been expected to accompany Mr. Perry in meetings with Chinese officials.

Mr. Perry explained the Trump administration's position on energy as an effort to balance economic growth with cleaning up the environment. He expressed support for fossil fuels, including coal and natural gas—both of which are abundant in the U.S. and could be sold to China in greater quantities.

The Trump administration says the U.S. has done more to reduce

emissions than other top emitters, including China, outside agreements under the Paris accord. The White House didn't respond to a request for comment on the China-California talks.

During the Obama administration, China and the U.S. looked to broad agreement on climate change as a chance to showcase joint purpose in an often fraught relationship. Without the cooperation between the two biggest emitters, the Paris accord is unlikely to have gotten off the ground.

China and other major emitters said they would follow through on their commitments despite Mr. Trump's decision.

How aggressively Beijing moves to cut emission levels after they peak by about 2030—as China has pledged to do—may depend on whether the U.S. is also on board. Reaching the global goal of limiting the increase in global temperatures to 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels would require significant cuts by China.

The dueling messages from Messrs. Perry and Brown contrasted with the united front Chinese officials present on major policy moves.

Zhou Dadi, vice president of the Beijing-backed Energy Research Institute, said China recognizes that the U.S. system allows states and

cities to shape their own positions on the Paris commitments.

"In the United States, local governments can play a more

important role," Mr. Zhou said, drawing a distinction with China's more centralized decision-making.

China's president alluded to that difference in his meeting Tuesday with Mr. Brown, the governor said. Mr. Xi's message, he said: "When we set our minds to something we

mobilize our society and make it happen."

**The
Washington
Post**

Life under martial law in Duterte's home town

By Vincent
Bevins

DAVAO, Philippines — Soon after Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law on Mindanao, soldiers parked a large tank in front of city hall in Davao, the Philippine president's home town and the largest city on the island. It immediately became an attraction, and locals now flock to the symbol of a new, more muscular approach to the country's problems.

All day long, residents smile and pose for selfies in front of the tank. Some ask to take photos with the military men on duty, who happily oblige. Others stretch out their arms and clench one hand into a fist, a symbol of support for the president. They laugh, and instead of saying "Cheese," they chant, "One, two, three — Duterte!"

"We think this is great. I like the security martial law offers. Good civilians will be protected as long as we follow the rules," said Charyien Intong, who works at a local medical clinic.

Behind her, a vendor sold ice cream to children, who chased each other around the tank.

"Martial law is what's needed. Otherwise we're in danger," said Reynold Genoves, a local student. "Duterte is a good man. More importantly, he's a strong man."

All around Davao, the heart of Duterteism, residents gush about martial law. Not everyone is clear about what it means or why it's needed here. Davao is several hours away from where the military

is fighting extremists linked to the Islamic State, which is what prompted the introduction of martial law, but the president's declaration has electrified supporters of his new, aggressive approach.

"The previous presidents could never keep us safe or fight terrorism," said Intong.

The officials in charge of implementing the policy say it has energized operations and means that they have to spend less time on civil procedures and on listening to their critics.

"Martial law has given teeth to the objectives of the military and the police by emboldening them," said retired army Maj. Gen. Benito de Leon, head of the Public Safety and Security Command Center in Davao. Now, he said, they can feel "protected from any harassment from cause-oriented groups, like human rights groups."

De Leon, and other officials here, noted that the 1987 constitution imposes limits on martial law that should make a reprise of the Ferdinand Marcos era impossible. In 1972, Marcos responded to a communist threat by imposing military rule, then ran the country until he was deposed in 1986. The Philippine government is now compensating thousands of victims of human rights abuses suffered during that period, and tens of thousands more have lodged claims.

"We abide by international humanitarian law. I can expect my

people to always abide by that law," said Alexander Camilon Tagum, senior police superintendent in Davao, sitting in his office surrounded by his samurai sword collection. "You won't hear about any abuses."

The government has been unclear whether martial law will be used only in relation to the fight against the Islamist insurgents or be used explicitly to fight drugs, street crime and the ongoing communist rebellion, as well as to further all the other goals of the security state. Duterte has attempted to link the Islamist rebels to drug money, which would give him more leeway to maneuver if he succeeds.

"Martial law is a power that is provided to any president," said Mags Maglana, of a group called Konsensya Dabaw (Conscience Davao), which was originally organized to protest Duterte's decision to give Marcos a hero's burial. "But we're not exactly sure what [Duterte's] agenda is. We question why all of Mindanao is covered. It seems overkill."

Duterte is overwhelmingly popular in Davao. First elected mayor in the 1980s, he pursued the sort of rough justice against drug dealers and communist insurgents — with the "Davao Death Squad" famously operating alongside his government — that he has now taken nationwide with a "war on drugs" that has claimed thousands of lives. Residents say the city is safer thanks to his years in office.

The mayor today is Sara Duterte, his daughter, who has launched an "Iron City" program that includes 900 new auxiliary police officers.

Tagum, the police superintendent, said that operationally, martial law means that officers are allowed to perform full searches at checkpoints and make arrests without civil warrants if justified by intelligence.

"It's primarily about fighting the terrorists," said Brig. Gen. Gilbert I. Gapay, a deputy regional military commander. "But there is a free-rider effect. When you enhance checkpoints, you also contribute to enhancing anti-criminal activities."

Evening Edition newsletter

The day's most important stories.

He acknowledged that some soldiers hate martial law, since it means they lose their rest time and are given new responsibilities.

"We are trained differently," he said. "We're not trained for law enforcement. We've operated together with [the police] for a long time, but being in the lead is a different thing."

At a news conference in Davao the same day Duterte was visiting the city, Gapay asked local journalists if they felt uncomfortable under martial law.

"No, sir. We feel secure!" answered one smiling young reporter.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL**

U.S. Forces Backing Philippine Troops as Battle With Islamic State-Linked Militants Intensifies

Jake Maxwell Watts

U.S. Special Forces are supporting Philippine troops battling a militant group connected to Islamic State that has occupied the southern town of Marawi, where fierce fighting over 19 days has left at least 217 people dead.

The U.S. involvement, made public for the first time Saturday, shows Manila's continued reliance on Washington's military prowess, despite an onslaught of anti-American sentiment from Philippines

President Rodrigo Duterte since he rose to power last year.

The battle in Marawi was triggered when authorities tried to arrest Islamic State's designated leader of a self-styled caliphate in the predominantly Muslim southern Philippines, touching off some of the worst fighting in years. Philippine armed forces are trying to dislodge fighters from the extremist Maute clan from their last defenses in the town and free up to 200 possible hostages.

The U.S. embassy in Manila said in a statement Saturday that U.S. Special Operations Forces are providing support to the Philippine military in Marawi, but wouldn't discuss specifics. "As we have in the past, we routinely consult with our Filipino partners at senior levels to support the Duterte administration's counterterrorism efforts," the embassy said.

A Philippines military spokesman confirmed Saturday that the U.S. is providing technical support and intelligence.

The Associated Press reported that a U.S. Navy P-3 Orion plane was seen flying over Marawi on Friday, above Philippine helicopters firing rockets at militant positions. A Philippine military official told AP that the U.S. was providing "noncombat assistance."

While it is the first time authorities have confirmed U.S. involvement in this battle, U.S. troops have assisted the Philippine military in the south since the early 2000s.

However, the Philippines' relations with the U.S.—a traditional ally and

former colonial power—have been strained since Mr. Duterte took office and began distancing himself from Washington. He says he wants to pursue an independent foreign policy, and has embraced economic investment from China, playing down rival claims in the South China Sea.

Mr. Duterte last year threatened to cancel a longstanding U.S. military deployment in the Philippines, saying it had not helped resolve long-running conflicts. The threats haven't been carried out, but the relationship with Washington remains tense.

Still, a U.S. defense official told The Wall Street Journal this week that, at any time, there are between 300 and 500 American military personnel in the Philippines, of which about 50 to 100 are special forces conducting training and advisory and assistance

missions with a focus on counterterrorism. The official said these forces are "not in the fight."

The fighting in Marawi prompted Mr. Duterte to declare martial law in the main southern island of Mindanao, and is a test of his resolve to tackle separatist and Islamist insurgencies that date back decades. The threat has escalated in the past three years as some groups, such as the Maute and the notorious Abu Sayyaf kidnap-and-terror gang, declared allegiance to Islamic State.

Philippine military spokesman Lt. Col. Jo-Ar Herrera told a news conference Saturday that the Maute brothers—Omar and Mhade, who lead the militant group—may have been killed during the Marawi siege. "We are validating this information, but that is the report," he said.

Information about the brothers has been hard to pin down. However,

authorities say they arrested their parents and several family members in Mindanao in recent days.

The Philippines military is also hunting Isnlon Hapilon, an Abu Sayyaf leader whom Islamic State has declared its "emir" in the Philippines and who is believed to remain in Marawi, officials said. A recent attempt to capture him—after reports of his death earlier this year proved untrue—led to the latest violence. The U.S. has a \$5 million bounty on his head.

So far, 138 Maute fighters, including foreigners from Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Morocco, have been reported killed by the Philippines military in Marawi. Officials say at least 21 civilians have also been killed by Maute fighters, many of them executed.

The military spokesman, Mr. Herrera, said Saturday that 58

government troops have been killed, including 13 marines who had been fighting house-to-house Friday to clear Maute fighters from fortified positions. He said the militants had used high structures to set up defensive positions and been using hostages as "human shields."

Eduardo Año, the Philippine armed forces chief of staff, this week said the military would aim to clear Marawi of militants by Monday, which is independence day.

In a separate statement, presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said the government will implement a 10 billion peso (\$202 million) rehabilitation program to rebuild Marawi, one of the poorest parts of the Philippines. More than 200,000 people have been displaced by the fighting.

The New York Times **Duterte, Focused on Drug Users in Philippines, Ignored Rise of ISIS (UNE)**

Richard C. Paddock

MANILA — It was classic bravado from the Philippines' tough-guy president, Rodrigo Duterte.

The Maute Group, a militant Islamist band fighting government troops near the southern Philippines city of Marawi last year, had asked for a cease-fire.

The president rejected the overture.

"They said that they will go down upon Marawi to burn the place," Mr. Duterte recounted in December. "And I said, 'Go ahead, do it.'"

He got his wish.

Hundreds of militants belonging to the Maute Group and its allies fighting under the black flag of the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, seized Marawi three weeks ago, leading to a battle with the Philippine armed forces and the biggest test yet of Mr. Duterte's leadership during his tumultuous first year in office.

A president who has focused on a deadly antidrug campaign that has claimed the lives of thousands of Filipinos seems to have been caught unprepared for a militant threat that has been festering in the south for years.

"The government has largely been in denial about the growth of ISIS and affiliated groups," said Zachary M. Abuza, a professor at the National War College in Washington who specializes in Southeast Asian security issues. "Duterte has been

preoccupied with his campaign of gutting the rule of law by using police and other security forces for the extrajudicial killing of drug pushers."

Government forces have been unable to dislodge the militants despite deploying ground troops and bombing the city of 200,000 people from the air. More than 200 people have been killed, including 24 civilians, 58 soldiers and police officers and at least 138 militants, according to the Philippine military.

Tens of thousands of civilians have fled, and much of the city center lies in ruins. The military says that it has cleared 90 percent of the city but that militants remain in three neighborhoods in the center, where they are mixed in with hundreds of civilians.

Mr. Duterte has declared 60 days of martial law for the southern island of Mindanao, which includes Marawi and his hometown, Davao City. He has twice set deadlines for troops to retake Marawi, the country's largest predominantly Muslim city, but each deadline has passed with the battle still raging.

On Friday, Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla predicted that the government would retake Marawi by Monday, Philippines Independence Day. On Saturday, 13 Philippine marines were killed in a clash with militants there.

The militants' seizure of the city, a bold attempt to establish an Islamic State caliphate in Southeast Asia, is a significant advance for the Middle East-based terrorist group as well as

an apparent reordering of the militant threat in the southern Philippines.

For the first time, it puts the Philippines on the map with failed states such as Libya and Afghanistan as places where Islamic State allies have sought to seize territory for a caliphate, giving the group another regional flash point in its effort to spread its influence globally.

The Islamic State has urged fighters who cannot reach Syria to join the jihad in the Philippines instead, said Sidney Jones, director of the Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict. Fighters from Indonesia, Malaysia, Chechnya, Yemen and Saudi Arabia were among those killed in the battle for Marawi.

Mindanao has long been a hotbed of insurgencies, with numerous armed groups operating outside government control. Until the siege at Marawi, the best-known internationally was Abu Sayyaf, an ostensibly Islamist group that specialized in kidnapping for ransom, turning Southeast Asia into the world's piracy capital, edging out the Horn of Africa.

The Marawi siege also heralds the rise of Isnlon Hapilon, a longtime leader of Abu Sayyaf who had grown more ideologically minded over the years. Last year, Mr. Hapilon, 51, was named by the Islamic State as its emir in Southeast Asia. Previously based on the island of Basilan, he is on the F.B.I.'s list of most-wanted terrorists, and the United States has offered a \$5 million reward for his capture.

Various factions have come together behind Mr. Hapilon, notably the Maute Group, led by the brothers Omar and Abdullah Maute. Educated in the Middle East, the Mautes are based in the Marawi area and recently accepted Mr. Hapilon's leadership as emir.

The Mautes are believed responsible for bombing a market in Davao City in September that killed 15.

Mr. Duterte is the first president from Mindanao, and he ran last year as the candidate who could bring peace to the region. The bombing of his hometown may have inspired his angry challenge to the Mautes in December.

"It's the usual Duterte brand of bravado," said Roilo Golez, a former national security adviser to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who left office in 2010. "It's a way of intimidating the opposition. It works most of the time."

It hasn't with the Islamists in Mindanao.

After a clash between his military and Abu Sayyaf in April, Mr. Duterte suggested that the way to stop the militants was to eat them. "Make me mad," he taunted. "Get me a terrorist. Give me salt and vinegar. I will eat his liver."

In May, the Philippine military got a tip that Mr. Hapilon had arrived in Marawi to join up with the Maute brothers. When soldiers raided the house where Mr. Hapilon was believed to be, hoping to capture him and claim the \$5 million reward,

they were surprised to find dozens of well-armed militants arrayed against them.

A video later recovered by the military and published by The Associated Press shows the militant leaders plotting their takeover of Marawi days before the military learned of Mr. Hapilon's presence there. Hundreds of fighters who had gathered in preparation for seizing the city quickly put their plan into effect, burning schools and churches, taking hostages and taking over central Marawi.

Mr. Duterte's declaration of martial law helped lead to the capture of Cayamora Maute, the father of the Maute brothers, along with other family members on Tuesday at a military checkpoint in Davao City. Some fear that the temporary martial law order in Mindanao could be expanded nationwide, an idea Mr. Duterte has openly toyed with so that he could use the military in his antidrug campaign.

"There is a sense of dread and fear that this will build support for martial law," said Richard Javad Heydarian,

a political analyst and author of the forthcoming book "Duterte's Rise." "This could strengthen the feeling of isolation by the Muslim minority."

Muslims make up only about 5 percent of the country's population over all but a larger proportion, estimated at 20 to 40 percent, on Mindanao.

Historical grievances among the Muslim Moro people there, widespread poverty and large lawless areas have helped create an opportunity for the Islamic State. A peace process pursued by Mr. Duterte's predecessor, President Benigno S. Aquino III, faltered in 2015 and has remained deadlocked under Mr. Duterte.

"It was not the spread of ISIS in Iraq and Syria that fueled ISIS cells in the Philippines, but the collapse of the peace process," Mr. Abuza, of the National War College, said.

The growing threat in the south is likely to compel Mr. Duterte to improve his relations with the United States, a process that had already

begun with the election of President Trump.

Mr. Duterte has raged against the United States for daring to criticize his antidrug campaign and, when President Barack Obama was in office, called for a "separation" from Washington. But Mr. Trump has shown a willingness to overlook the killings, and has praised Mr. Duterte for doing an "unbelievable job on the drug problem."

Leaders of the Philippine armed forces prevailed on Mr. Duterte not to reduce military cooperation, including a longstanding United States program to provide training, equipment and intelligence to fight terrorism. Since 2001, the United States has maintained a rotating force of 50 to 100 troops in the southern Philippines to combat Abu Sayyaf.

On Sunday, Mr. Duterte said he never asked the United States for help in Marawi, and it was a surprise to him when American Special Forces arrived to assist the Philippine military.

The United States Embassy said on Friday that American personnel were helping as part of a military relationship with the Philippines that "remains robust and multifaceted." Emma Nagy, a spokeswoman for the embassy in Manila, said, "U.S. Special Forces have been providing support and assistance in the southern Philippines for many years, at the request of several different Filipino administrations."

Whether or not the military can retake Marawi by its new deadline, the rebellion in the south is still far from over. The audacity of the rebel takeover, even if it ultimately fails, will probably draw recruits from across the region, including members of other Islamist groups still disaffected and dissatisfied with a moribund peace process.

"If Duterte doesn't deal with that, then this whole problem is going to fester for a very long time," Mr. Abuza said. The "ungoverned space" on Mindanao, he said, "is a regional security threat, not just a Philippine security threat."



Thousands of women were raped during Rwanda's genocide. Now their kids are coming of age. (UNE)

Angel was 11 the last time her mother tried to kill her. She remembers the handful of rat poison pellets, the urging: *Take this*. She screamed until a neighbor rushed over and pulled her away. That was a decade ago, before the counseling, and now Angel's mother is bending over her shoulder, pouring her a cup of black tea. They share a bed, a concrete house without electricity and a history that horrified the world.

Over a hundred days in 1994, genocide devastated Rwanda, an East African country the size of Maryland. The assailants claimed roughly 800,000 lives and raped an estimated 250,000 women, which, according to one charity's count, produced up to 20,000 babies.

Angel is part of this generation in the shadows. These young people are now stepping into adulthood, coming to terms with an identity no parent would wish on a child. Yet they are defying expectations that tragedy would define their lives.

Historically, such children often met an early death. Thousands of Chinese women endured sexual violence during the Rape of Nanking in 1937, for example, but none publicly acknowledged raising a Japanese soldier's child, as far as historians can tell. Reports from the time suggest that victims who became pregnant widely committed infanticide.

A UNICEF study on the "war babies" of Bosnia's 1992-1995 conflict, meanwhile, concluded that many were probably abandoned or killed by their mothers. The number of survivors remains unknown.

In Rwanda, data from support groups provide a clearer picture. The "children of killers," as they are often disparaged, tend to live in poverty, facing higher rates of HIV and domestic abuse than their peers.

But that's not the whole story.

"We hear everyone's lives are destroyed, that they're the walking dead," said Dara Kay Cohen, a Harvard University professor who studies sexual assault in conflict. "Then you talk to people and hear there's this hopeful underbelly."

Researchers are just starting to explore how children overcome such trauma. The Rwandan government, tasked with rebuilding a shattered nation, laid out no formal policy to help those conceived in the mass rape.

Ingwill Mochmann, founder of the International Network for Interdisciplinary Research on Children Born of War, recently published a report summarizing a decade of studies on the effects of war on children.

"Many have coped fairly well with their lives," Mochmann wrote. "The

interesting question is — what makes the difference?"

Interviews with three families, just before the massacre's 23rd anniversary, offer a clue.

Angel's mother tried to kill her twice. Nearly 23 years since Rwanda's genocide, they are still dealing with the repercussions of war and rape. The Washington Post withheld their last names because of the remaining stigma around the issue. Angel's mother tried to kill her twice. Nearly 23 years since Rwanda's genocide, they are still dealing with the repercussions of war and rape. (Video: Whitney Shefte/Photo: Whitney Shefte / The Washington Post/The Washington Post)

(Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

Angel and Jacqueline

Sunlight streams through Angel's window, catching her metallic hoop earrings. She sits at a wooden table next to her mother, Jacqueline. They split a loaf of bread for breakfast and wash it down with tea. Jacqueline sprinkles brown sugar into their cups.

"Murakoze," Angel tells her in Kinyarwanda. Thank you.

They live together under a tin roof in a rural village, where a Catholic church pays their monthly rent, the equivalent of \$5. The cracked walls

are painted turquoise. A mosquito net dangles above their full-size bed. A rooster outside crows.

Angel is 22 now, with a quick grin and braids down her back. She was born HIV positive, so she takes free pills from the government to stay healthy. She has just finished high school and is waiting for the test score that will shape her future.

High marks would net her a scholarship. The results will appear online in a couple of weeks. Angel and her mother will pray before heading to the Internet cafe.

Tourism is her dream career. Her backup plan is selling tomatoes.

"We don't have money," she explains.

Angel learned early how she came to be. Jacqueline would tell her: You're not my real daughter.

"Whenever she would go somewhere, and if I asked her to let me come with her, she always refused and locked me inside," Angel says softly through an interpreter. "She would also not permit me to play with other kids."

Jacqueline tears up when she thinks of this.

Before the genocide, she was someone else's mom. They were in fourth and sixth grade, her girls. They complained about bullies

hounding them for being Tutsis, a minority ethnic group. Jacqueline was on her way to Kigali, the nation's capital, to secure spots for them in a new school when the violence started. Rwandan government leaders had commanded the majority population, the Hutus, to exterminate the Tutsis. Neighbors slaughtered neighbors. Colleagues murdered colleagues. Hutu fighters found Jacqueline hiding in a Catholic school and took turns raping her. She remembers praying to die.

But three months passed, and a Tutsi rebel army overthrew the government, and there she was, following a U.N. soldier out of the rubble. Her husband and children were dead. She now had HIV and a baby on the way.

Jacqueline once poured soap and hair dye into Angel's bottle and decided to drink the toxic mix, too. She wanted everything to go black. But instead they vomited, and Jacqueline reluctantly decided to keep going.

Angel drinks tea and eats bread with her mother, Jacqueline, at their home. (Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

Jacqueline stands on the porch. Her two daughters and husband were killed during the genocide, and she was gang raped by Hutu fighters, becoming pregnant with Angel. (Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

She would hug Angel, then beat her. Affection and rage, affection and rage. This pattern held until they started therapy in 2007, run by an organization called Foundation Rwanda. (The Washington Post agreed to a request from the foundation and the families interviewed for this article to withhold their last names, so they can avoid discrimination and harassment.)

The charity organized weekly support groups, and the other moms inspired Jacqueline to become a Christian. She began to feel that Angel had come from God.

Foundation Rwanda paid Angel's school tuition through graduation. Which has brought her to this point, this limbo.

She mostly hangs around her house, except to buy food or refill her medicine or go to church. She recently broke up with her boyfriend of five years — he wanted to get married, and she didn't want to tell him about her HIV.

Beyond her plank fence, the hills burst with banana trees. Adobe homes dot the horizon — tiny from here, like Monopoly pieces. Men

play checkers outside a shuttered dive bar. Someone's cow moos.

Angel is comfortable in her universe, but she is curious about what else is out there. She waits for the test score.

Albert and Agnes

Albert, 21, stands in his family's field, hacking saplings with a machete. His leather flip-flops sink into the red dirt. His forehead shines with sweat. He graduated last year from a boarding school near Kigali and feels a little out of place here in the rural Mukura sector, with his smooth hands and Puma track pants.

Albert grew up in an orphanage, a four-hour bus ride from home, leaving through French and English dictionaries, dreaming of a future in politics. College pamphlets now litter his concrete room (Michigan State University, St. Leo University in Florida).

For now, he is helping his mom with her 2½ acres of hillside — trying to help, that is. He is gathering sticks to feed her cow. She waits for him in their back yard, knifing pale kernels from corn cobs.

Agnes was a Tutsi teenager when the streets began filling with bodies. A Hutu man from the village offered her shelter. Then, she says, he kept her as his sex slave, threatening to kill her if she tried to leave.

When the war ended and the militants fled Rwanda, the man forced Agnes to join him over the border. She gave birth to two babies in Tanzania, each healthy: Albert and his younger brother.

Agnes finally escaped and returned to her old neighborhood. People asked about the babies: Did they come from the killers?

Agnes put both boys in a - government-run orphanage, where she could afford to visit them once a year. She married an old friend, moved into a cottage beside rows of banana trees and started to rebuild.

Still, the separation broke her heart and confused Albert.

"I told her, 'I want to be with you,'" he recalls in English. And she said, "I'm trying to get money for you."

Albert didn't know he came from rape. He found himself among children who had lost both parents in the genocide. He felt lucky to have one.

Albert rides the bus to Kigali to meet with a company called Globe Education Consult that helps students apply for colleges abroad. (Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

Albert shucks corn with his mother, Agnes, stepfather and half-siblings at the family's home. He says that, because he didn't live at home as a child, he never learned how to be a farmer and sometimes feels out of place in the rural area. (Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

"There were 2,000 of us," he says, "with different backgrounds and different stories. Other people had struggled more than me."

At age 17, he learned about his father.

The man returned to Rwanda years ago and was sentenced to life in the Mpanga prison, about 30 miles north of the family's land. Albert wonders what it would be like to meet him. He hasn't worked up the nerve.

"It shocked my heart, the way my mother met him," he says.

Still, Albert says: "I don't think he is inhuman. I want to see his face."

The orphanage in the northern city of Gisyeni gave Albert an advantage. Public funds covered his educational expenses. He tested into the country's top-ranked high school. He got a perfect score on the Rwanda equivalent of the SAT.

One warm February afternoon, Albert sat across from a college adviser at a Kigali company called Globe Education Consult, which helps Rwandan students get into international schools. Albert had put on his khakis and taken the bus there.

"With your grade, it's going to be much easier," Godfrey Nkurunziza said, grinning. "It gives us a picture of how you would perform in school."

Albert wanted to apply to colleges in the United States and Canada. He had no strong preference, just a desire to explore.

Nkurunziza told Albert to budget between \$10,000 and \$20,000 a year for housing, books and tuition. They would hunt for scholarships, of course.

Just one thing first ...

"To apply with us," Nkurunziza said, "bring in \$200, for the application fees."

Albert slumped forward. He didn't even have the bus fare — about \$5 — to get back home.

But the world had carried him this far. He would nudge a friend to lend him some cash. Then he would return to the house and his glossy pamphlets.

After Ntare found out he is a child born of rape from Rwanda's genocide, he began writing plays

and songs about the topic. After Ntare found out he is a child born of rape from Rwanda's genocide, he began writing plays and songs about the topic. (Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

(Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

Ntare and Assoumpta

When the thoughts start, Ntare writes. He scribbles in a notebook, on stray pieces of paper, whatever he can grab. It's a way to blast gloom from his head and trap it on a page. Lately, it has been turning into more — a song.

He could record it on a computer at his boarding school and send it to a Kigali radio station. A DJ there plays homemade tracks free of charge. The idea excites and scares him.

Right now, Ntare is finishing a construction internship outside the southern city of Gitarama. But inside, he is an artist, a lover of music and film. After work, he ditches his bright orange coveralls, slips into a fuzzy pink robe and watches the American hip-hop series "Empire."

With his creativity, though, comes confession. This song is autobiographical. Many of his friends, including his girlfriend, don't know his story.

On this recent afternoon, Ntare, tall and toned, is practicing in his back yard, next to a rabbit pen he built with chicken wire. He bobs his head and raps in Kinyarwanda:

Some of them on the streets,

others jailed because of their crimes.

But sometimes consequences come over us.

For instance, I am among those called "Interahamwe."

But we don't worry about it.

We look forward.

His biological father belonged to the Interahamwe, the Hutu militants who helped carry out the genocide. Some survivors see him as a child of the killers, including his mother's family. They won't look at him.

Assoumpta, Ntare's mother, bathes a baby boy at her home in the Muhanga district. She was gang raped during the genocide in a school where she was hiding. (Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

Ntare gathers clean water from a spigot near his home. (Whitney Shefte/The Washington Post)

He didn't learn why until he turned 12.

Assoumpta remembers the day she told him. Her son was a troublemaker back then, starting fights with other kids.

Would this revelation make things worse?

She willed herself not to sugarcoat it. She told him about the genocide. The militants who found her in a school and raped her. The relatives who kicked her out of their home once her belly started showing.

That was why she would snap easily and hit him.

Ntare kept quiet. He didn't look her in the eye for a week. Then he started doing extra chores. He

stopped getting into brawls. He brought her fruit, saying she needed the nutrition.

The way Assoumpta tells it, he started acting like the man of the house. He no longer blamed her for the beatings or for the people who called him a bastard.

Ntare recalls feeling relief. So this was what he was. His mother had had no choice.

He practiced swagger. *Am I a bastard? Yes, I'm a bastard.*

Ntare met other kids like him at a camp organized by Foundation Rwanda. He wrote a play about a mother telling her son the truth and

got some of his new friends to help him perform it.

That stayed between them, but his song, it would be public. He might have to tell his girlfriend, an accountant. They've been dating for nearly two years, and he'd like to marry her someday.

He has revealed his secrets to her slowly — "step by step," he says. All she knows now is that he doesn't have a dad.

But he's got to come out at some point. He wants the children of killers to hear his song and feel less alone.

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He's calling it "Son of Rwanda."

Update: Months after taking her exams, Angel received her score. It was not high enough to win a college scholarship. Albert never found the \$200 to apply to schools through Globe Education Consult. He has applied to be "sponsored" by the Rwandan government for international colleges. As for Ntare, he will graduate from high school in November. He is still hoping that his song will be played on the radio.

**The
Washington
Post**

Editorial : Good news: The U.S. and Mexico agreed on a sugar deal. But that's bad news, too.

THERE IS good news and bad news in U.S.-Mexico relations. Unfortunately, they're the same news: The Trump administration and the Mexican government have reached a new agreement on access to the United States for Mexican sugar producers. This is good news because it avoids an impending trade war over the commodity, thus preserving a modicum of good relations leading into negotiations over updating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It's bad news because the whole business perpetuates a system of market manipulations that hurts American consumers of the commodity while benefiting no one but a well-connected few who produce it in the United States.

At the core of those market manipulations for many years has been a series of per-country import quotas that permit

only certain quantities of raw sugar to enter the United States from various nations. NAFTA changed that by granting Mexico's sugar producers free access to the U.S. market, though the access didn't actually kick in until the Obama administration, some 15 years after the agreement's adoption. Nevertheless, by 2014, Mexico had come to supply a large portion of the U.S. market, at which point American refiners lodged a complaint with the Commerce Department, accusing the Mexicans of "dumping" subsidized sugar and sending too much of it in refined form.

In response to the threat of punitive tariffs, Mexico agreed to limit refined sugar shipments and accepted minimum prices; even that wasn't good enough for American industry, however. The latest deal, struck by Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Mexican Economy Minister

Ildelfonso Guajardo, essentially tightens those supply limitations and further increases minimum prices. It's a major concession by Mexico for the sake of good bilateral relations, though American producers say they still aren't completely happy with it.

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If you're wondering how these elaborate protections for sugar producers can possibly benefit the far larger number of sugar consumers, well, we are, too. The truth is that Americans as a whole would be better off if there were global free trade in sugar, not just free trade between the United States and Mexico. Would that cost jobs in the sugar industry? Maybe. But it is certain that the protectionist system kills thousands of jobs in

sugar-using industries, whose costs of production are forced up by these pointless, politically driven market interventions.

Things have come to quite a point when the only way to save a free trade agreement is by enforcing less-free trade. But that is what is happening: Mexico's sugar exporters are being forced to accept a version of the country-by-country quota system they thought they had negotiated their way out of, fair and square, back when everyone signed NAFTA a quarter-century ago. Yet managed trade of that sort appears to be what President Trump means by "fair trade," though we don't understand what's fair about determining market share through haggling among bureaucrats rather than supply and demand.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL**

Thornberry : The Trump Budget Still Shortchanges The Military

Mac Thornberry

Ask anyone who served in the U.S. military in the late 1970s, and he will tell you it was a miserable time. Morale was low. Training was deficient. Weapons and equipment didn't work. Good people left the armed services in droves. At the same time the world was growing more dangerous, with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian revolution and hostage crisis, and multiple nations falling to communism.

A decade later the situation had turned around. How did America go from the hollow military of the 1970s to the strength that helped drive the Soviet Union out of existence? Are there lessons we could apply today?

A few months ago the vice chiefs from each branch of the military appeared before the House Armed Services Committee, which I lead. Their testimony certainly got my attention. Only three of the Army's 58 Brigade Combat Teams are "ready to fight tonight." More than half the Navy's airplanes cannot fly because they are awaiting maintenance and spare parts. The Air Force is short 1,500 pilots and 3,000 mechanics, and its fleet is older and smaller than ever. All that is alarming enough, but what surprised me most was testimony that pilots today get fewer training hours in the cockpit than during the dire days of the 1970s.

How did this happen? Since 2010 the defense budget has been cut by more than 20%, but the world has

not become 20% safer. To get planes, ships and equipment ready to deploy to the Middle East or elsewhere, the military has had to take parts off other planes, ships and units. This cannibalization has diminished American readiness. The military is not prepared to carry out all the missions it may be asked to do in time of war.

What is the answer? Rebuilding the military after the 1970s took serious and sustained effort. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, the Carter administration raised defense spending by 12% in 1979 and 15% in 1980.

Ronald Reagan added even more: 17% in 1981 and 18% in 1982. After that the rate of growth slowed a bit, but in all there were five straight

years of double-digit increases followed by three more of nearly 10%. At that point the defense budget was about 6% of America's gross domestic product. Today it is only 3.1%.

Repairing the damage done to the military in our time will require a similar sort of response. It is wrong to send brave men and women out on missions for which they are not fully prepared or without the best equipment the nation can produce.

President Trump has committed to rebuilding America's military, but his first budget proposal does not follow through on that promise. Admittedly, very few of his Pentagon appointees were in place to help write the budget. Still, the proposal he sent to Congress for next year adds to

defense spending a mere 3% above President Obama's last budget. Although it may stop the bleeding, it won't do much to help the military get well.

At the same time, the Pentagon needs to get better value for the money it spends. Outdated acquisition systems result in wasted dollars and delays in getting our

troops the weapons and equipment they need. That is why defense reform has been, and will continue to be, such a high priority for the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

But fixing the military's planes and ships cannot wait until the budget is balanced. America's military personnel need those tools now.

Few remember how fierce the opposition was to the defense buildup of the 1980s. But looking back President Reagan's policy was obviously the right one—for those who served and for the good of mankind.

I hope that 30 years from now they can say we did the right thing as well.

Mr. Thornberry, a Texas Republican, is chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

ETATS-UNIS

**The
Washington
Post**

Josh Rogin : Trump's national security team could make a comeback

Can the Trump national security team make a comeback?

Over the past month, the foreign policy communities in Washington and capitals around the world have stood aghast as President Trump made several decisions and statements that run counter to the bipartisan U.S. national security consensus that existed before he took office. The takeaway for most is that his senior national security advisers and Cabinet members, who represent that consensus, are losing the battle for the president's heart and mind.

Early on, Trump seemed to be heeding the advice of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Vice President Pence, national security adviser H.R. McMaster and others pushing for more continuity and consistency in U.S. foreign policy.

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The best conversations on The Washington Post

After a campaign in which Trump brutally criticized U.S. partners around the world, Mattis, Tillerson and Pence each traveled to Asia and Europe to reassure allies that Trump would not abandon long-standing U.S. ideals or undermine commitments, such as robust support for NATO. For a time, the allies were reassured — but not anymore.

In the past three weeks, Trump overruled the majority of his national

security advisers by refusing to publicly affirm NATO's Article 5 commitment to mutual defense at NATO headquarters, pulling the United States out of the Paris climate accord and starting new disputes with several allies, including South Korea, Britain, France and Germany.

"All the questions that were raised [by Trump's election], we thought they were answered, and now we have to deal with them again," said Norbert Röttgen, chairman of the German Bundestag's Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Countries such as Germany spent months building relationships with Trump's national security team in the hope that doing so would allow their governments to preserve access and influence while promoting policies they believe those officials agree with. But now they fear the group can't deliver.

"We continue to see them as sensible and rational — but we see more and more that the decisions are not done by them," Röttgen said in a meeting with Post editors and reporters last week. "What we see is that the boss seems to have more influence on the decision than the team."

This week, Trump's top national security officials will have an opportunity to reassert themselves, in a series of hearings with lawmakers who largely support their efforts. The key issue in these hearings will be whether the officials, especially those who

served in uniform, will express support for funding of the non-military tools of U.S. power.

A rare union of 16 former senior military leaders has joined together to submit testimony supporting that notion at a hearing Tuesday of the Senate Armed Services Committee, where Mattis is to appear. They argue that Congress should reject the steep cuts in diplomacy and development funding proposed in the White House's budget.

"Cutting the International Affairs budget unilaterally will have the effect of disarming our country's capability to stop new conflicts from forming, and will place our interests, values, and the lives of our men and women in uniform at risk," according to testimony I previewed.

The retired four-star officers include Gen. James Jones, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Adm. Michael Mullen, Gen. David Petraeus and many others. Jones told me that he is optimistic that national security leaders inside the administration can be successful in saving parts of the budget that represent those American values, including funding for poverty and food aid, global health and good governance abroad.

"The people who have actually worn the uniform and participated in global activities really understand that you cannot simply just have the military tool and use that every time," he said. "It's very important they can be successful at this."

The latest effort by Trump's national security team to steer his thinking failed to move him away from his instincts. After Trump publicly praised and took credit for the Saudi-led blockade of U.S. ally Qatar last week, Tillerson and Mattis sat down with him at the White House on Thursday to argue for a more balanced approach.

The following day, Tillerson made a public statement calling on both sides to deescalate and negotiate an end to their dispute. Shortly after that, Trump held a news conference and doubled down on his criticism of Qatar, seeming to undercut his secretary of state. The president apparently wasn't persuaded.

Looking ahead, several key battles will reveal whether the national security professionals are winning the day, including decisions on whether to commit more U.S. troops to Afghanistan, how to approach the U.S.-South Korea free-trade agreement and whether to staunchly oppose new congressional sanctions on Russia, which are coming soon.

Trump's national security officials don't agree on all of these issues, and they must balance their personal views with their duty to serve their president's agenda. But the more they can assert themselves, harness support from the outside and influence Trump's thinking, the better.

POLITICO Trump gives Priebus until July 4th to clean up White House

President Donald Trump has set a deadline of July 4 for a shakeup of the White House that could include removing Reince Priebus as his chief of staff, according to two administration officials and three outside advisers familiar with the matter.

While Trump has set deadlines for staff changes before, only to let them pass without pulling the trigger, the president is under more scrutiny than ever regarding the sprawling Russia investigation, which is intensifying the pressure on his White House team.

Story Continued Below

Days after his return from his first foreign trip late last month, Trump berated Priebus in the Oval Office in front of his former campaign manager Corey Lewandowski and deputy campaign manager David Bossie for the dysfunction in the

White House, according to multiple sources familiar with the conversation.

Trump had been mulling bringing on Bossie as his deputy White House chief of staff and Lewandowski as a White House senior adviser with a portfolio that includes Russia, but

told the two at that meeting that they would not be joining the White House until Priebus had a fair chance to clean up shop, according to the sources.

"I'm giving you until July 4," Trump said, according to a person with knowledge of the conversation.

"I don't want them to come into this mess. If I'm going to clean house, they will come in as fresh blood."

White House press secretary Sean Spicer, in a statement on Sunday, refuted the idea that Priebus is facing a July 4 deadline. "Whoever is saying that is either a liar or out of the loop," Spicer said.

The Independence Day timeframe is timed with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's deadline for passage of the health care bill through the chamber, which is also the start of the July 4th recess. Priebus took the brunt of the blame for the first failure to get a vote on the bill through the House, though the White House and Speaker Paul Ryan were ultimately able to secure its passage on a second try.

Talk of Trump's July 4th deadline has made the rounds in the White House, but insiders and those close to the president are not holding their breath, given the perpetual talk that Priebus and other senior staffers are on the way out.

Trump's first deadline for the firing of Priebus and many staffers that he brought on from the Republican National Committee was the 100-day mark.

The president then considered the idea of a Memorial Day shakeup when he returned from the foreign trip, and then most recently, July 4.

"It's become comical that every holiday becomes a referendum on Reince," said one adviser to the president.

Sensing his impending doom even before he was criticized for fallout related to the firing of FBI director James Comey, Reince had joked, "I've got one foot on a banana peel and another out the door," according to a person with knowledge of the conversation.

Deadlines haven't been Trump's only tactic for warning Priebus about his possible dismissal from the top of the administration.

Trump has openly floated the idea of other potential chiefs of staff, including former campaign aide David Urban and Wayne Berman, a Blackstone executive and advisor to Blackstone CEO Steve Schwarzman. Shortly after national security adviser Michael Flynn was fired in February, Trump invited New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie to the White House to help brainstorm about a new chief of staff, according to a White House official and outside adviser with knowledge of the situation.

But those who have known Trump for years, like his former campaign adviser Sam Nunberg, says the "You're fired" persona associated with his "Apprentice" fame doesn't match up with the man away from the cameras.

"I don't think he likes to gratuitously fire people," said Nunberg, who was himself fired by Trump. "He wants to give people chances."

Another outside adviser who regularly speaks to the president said that Trump often threatens employees with the prospect of being fired to motivate them to do better, prompt them to resign, or to use them as an example for other staffers of what it can be like to be on his bad side.

"Trump will literally ask anyone who will listen, 'Do you think Reince is doing a good job?' or 'Do you think that I should get rid of him?'" said that adviser, who has been asked that question by Trump.

Trump has yet to allow Priebus to choose a deputy to replace his former deputy chief of staff, Katie Walsh. Walsh, a Priebus ally who worked with him at the RNC, was moved to an outside political group supporting Trump's presidency after the first failure to pass the Obamacare repeal bill in March.

Former communications director Mike Dubke is a recent example of a White House staffer who was likely on the way out, but decided to get ahead of it by offering his own resignation, according to two White House officials. Dubke is now also helping out with the outside political group.

But a former campaign official noted that Priebus has been more effective in recent weeks in bringing order to the White House, despite

the chaos outside, including Comey's dramatic testimony before the Senate last week and Trump's subsequent accusations against him.

"For the first time in the White House there's true structure and discipline and order instilled, despite other distractions that might be out there," the former official said.

"They are getting down to the work of governing and moving the ball forward."

The White House just wrapped up "Infrastructure Week," which provided a more focused message about Trump's legislative agenda — even if it got largely drowned out by Comey's testimony. And Trump is about to launch "Workforce Development Week," in which he'll travel to Wisconsin with his daughter Ivanka on Tuesday before delivering a "major policy speech" at the Department of Labor on Wednesday.

Roger Stone, a long-time confidant of Trump, recalled the firing of former Trump Organization CEO Edward Tracy and Trump Atlantic City Associates CEO Nicholas Ribis as two examples of when Trump made drastic personnel decisions. He likened the firings to Richard Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre" and called it "sudden."

He suggested that if and when Trump removes Priebus, it will be at an opportune time and with a landing pad.

"I think it would be fair to say, that with the entire Comey controversy, that's a pretty good reason not to make a change at this exact moment," Stone said.

"Even when he lets him go, he's not going to fire him. He'll just give him another meaningless post. Because it's politics and it looks better that way. There's no reason to offend [Priebus'] friends in the party, so they'll find a much more important job for him."

Priebus was brought on to the White House as a broker between Trump and the Republican establishment, specifically because of his close relationship with Ryan, who Trump has reportedly been disenchanted with in recent weeks.

Trump has blamed Priebus for leaks out of the White House that he

believes have come from disgruntled RNC staffers whom Priebus brought into the West Wing, two administration officials and three outside advisers said. He also blamed Spicer, who was brought on at Priebus' behest, for the lack of full-throated defense for his firing of Comey.

Many say Trump is unfairly placing the blame on Priebus, who faces an almost impossible task in trying to clean up a White House that has been laden with scandals relating to the Russia probe and the recent firing of Comey. But some point to disorganization even earlier than that, like the botched rollout of the healthcare bill and travel ban.

Trump has weighed the idea of moving Priebus to the role of ambassador to Greece, because of his Greek descent.

Trump told Bossie that Priebus "will enjoy Greece," according to two people with knowledge of the comment.

Another source close to the administration said that Trump is aware of the optics of having a chief of staff leaving the administration too soon, and does not want Priebus to leave with a shorter tenure than any other White House chief of staff in history.

Harry S. Truman was the first president to have a chief of staff. The shortest-serving chief of staff since then was James Baker who served the last five months of the George H.W. Bush administration. Priebus has yet to reach his fifth month.

Nunberg argued that Trump may feel less comfortable shaking up the West Wing than he did making major changes to the Trump Organization.

"The White House is different. You can't make quick changes, it's an institution. Once someone is gone from there, they're gone," Nunberg said.

"With that said, I think Reince will be there for the long haul."

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The New York Times Editorial :Mr. Trump Goes After the Inspectors

Just before the inauguration, Michael Horowitz, chairman of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, was at a hockey game when he began

getting calls from other inspectors general in federal agencies. The inspectors — independent officials who investigate waste, misconduct, mismanagement and criminal activity — were furious. Trump

aides had let them know they might be replaced; for the first time ever, a president might fire them en masse.

The administration later backed down. But it has continued to

undermine the inspectors' role by failing to hire for open positions and planning to slash the offices' budgets, one of the many ways the White House has found to diminish

the oversight functions of the federal government.

Every major federal agency and program has an inspector general, a nonpartisan, independent official whose staff investigates cases of wasteful spending, criminal activity, employee misconduct and plain bad management. These are watchdogs with real teeth.

Mr. Horowitz, who is also the inspector general at the Department of Justice, recently told Congress that in fiscal 2015 alone, the offices identified \$26 billion in potential savings and recovered an additional \$10 billion through criminal and civil cases. That's a return of \$14 for every dollar in the offices' budgets.

The list of good works is long and impressive. In 2008, for instance, the Interior Department's inspector general, Earl Devaney, delivered three reports to Congress detailing widespread corruption and conflicts

of interest in the division overseeing the oil industry, leading eventually to a thorough departmental reorganization. He later reported that President George W. Bush's political appointees had run roughshod over agency scientists who had recommended stronger protections for endangered species.

In a similar vein, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction found weaknesses in planning, executing, and sustaining \$488 million worth of American investments in Afghanistan's extractive industries; inspectors at the Department of Homeland Security unearthed technical problems that resulted in cost overruns of 480 percent while increasing national security risks; and the inspector general for the Social Security Administration discovered \$345 million in underpayments to 50,000 people.

Today nearly one-quarter of inspector general offices have either an acting director or no director at all, including the offices at the C.I.A., the National Security Agency, the Department of Defense and the Social Security Administration. Acting directors can be reluctant to make extensive changes or take bold action, particularly if they hope to be nominated for a permanent appointment.

The inspectors' offices are deeply affected by the current federal hiring freeze and would be further harmed by the administration's proposed budget cuts. The budget takes unexplained specific aim at the Office of the Special Inspector General for the Troubled Asset Relief Program, created in part to monitor the \$700 billion taxpayer bailout for big banks.

That office has gone after 96 bankers; at least 36 went to prison.

In 2015 its investigators helped prosecute General Motors for covering up a defective ignition switch responsible for at least 15 deaths, securing a \$900 million settlement. The administration wants to cut its budget in half, to \$20 million; as a result it has stopped accepting applications to its foreclosure prevention program.

The cuts in staff and budget would force inspectors general to do less, just as a new administration generates new matters to investigate.

Congress has demonstrated bipartisan willingness to step up for inspectors general in the past, and last year it expanded the types and scope of protection offered to government whistle-blowers. Now it needs to protect the watchdogs from an administration that wants to starve them.

**The
Washington
Post**

When a liberal power lawyer represents the Trump family, things can get ugly (UNE)

<http://facebook.com/fisherm>

Four decades ago, soon after a president of the United States interfered in an investigation of his actions, a young lawyer named Jamie Gorelick was assigned her first big case. Gorelick, raised in a liberal Long Island household, would defend Richard Nixon as he fought the government's efforts to control his White House papers.

The work was exhilarating. But there she was, an activist for women's rights working for a president she had fought against, a president her friends considered beyond the pale. When Nixon came to her firm's office and offered to have his picture taken with the attorneys working on his case, Gorelick made herself scarce.

Four decades later, Gorelick, now one of Washington's most prominent lawyers, once again represents famous clients who symbolize much of what she and her friends have spent their lives working against. When Gorelick signed up Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump — the president's close advisers, as well as his son-in-law and daughter — as clients, she knew her friends might raise their collective eyebrows. She didn't know that some of them would call her a turncoat.

For generations, the premier D.C. lawyer-fixers were lions of the bar, permanent power players in a city where influence can vanish in a moment. Men such as Clark

Clifford, A.B. Culvahouse Jr., Edward Bennett Williams, Howard Baker, Lloyd Cutler and Robert Strauss smoothly glided across the great divide, amassing thoroughly bipartisan client rosters.

But now Gorelick, one of the first women to join that elite club of lawyers, finds herself under attack for taking on a share of the Trump family's legal woes. Whether that reflects the cynicism and polarization of the times, or results from the particular antagonism between the Trumps and the city they promised to drain, the reaction has been painful.

In the most public slap, Hilary Rosen, a prominent Democratic strategist and lobbyist, tweeted, "Hey Jamie Gorelick, you've just poured that 'Complicit' perfume on yourself," a reference to a "Saturday Night Live" parody ad that imagined an Ivanka Trump-branded scent. (Rosen declined to elaborate on the tweet, saying only, "It is what it is.")

"Representing Jared and Ivanka is a case of pushing the ethical envelope, helping a wealthy family on the brink of using the presidency to further enrich themselves," said David Halperin, a speechwriter in the Clinton White House and former counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee. "Gorelick is a Clinton supporter embracing the family that wanted to put Hillary Clinton in jail. People in Washington are all too willing to forgive that."

This being Washington, some of Gorelick's critics tuck their attacks

behind the cloak of anonymity. "Do you want to be seen as a fixer available to all or a fixer for principles you believe in?" said a lawyer who has worked with Gorelick on campaigns since the Clinton and Gore era. "One probably pays better than the other, but every step you take has consequences."

In a quintessentially D.C. move, some longtime friends of Gorelick contacted for this article offered complimentary comments about her on the record, and then, after asking if they could make other remarks without attribution, bashed their colleague to smithereens. Those people will not be quoted in this article, by name or anonymously, as one tiny bulwark against outright awfulness.

"For the first time, Jamie's getting irrational criticism from her fellow liberals, who think that if you represent anyone associated with the other side, you must be a Republican in hiding," said Alan Dershowitz, Gorelick's mentor at Harvard Law School and a friend ever since. "Jamie is obviously a liberal Democrat, but this is not a betrayal. Jamie is being patriotic and heroic and consistent with the best traditions of the bar. We have to resist zealotry on both sides."

Ethically, Gorelick has every right to represent Kushner and his wife. The legal profession has celebrated attorneys who take on unpopular clients since the American Revolution. In 1770, when John Adams agreed to defend British

soldiers who shot American rebels in the Boston Massacre, he invited a torrent of criticism. As he later wrote, defending "the Soldiers procured me Anxiety and Obloquy enough. It was, however, one of the most gallant, generous, manly and disinterested Actions of my whole Life."

At 67, Gorelick, who served as deputy attorney general under President Bill Clinton, commands a breathtaking view of the city from her top-floor corner office at WilmerHale, the Pennsylvania Avenue NW firm where a gentle waterfall in the lobby greets power players who've found themselves in rough currents. She worked on Hillary Clinton's campaign, vetting potential Cabinet members, and she was "still mourning" when she got a call from an old colleague, asking if she might take on the ethical questions about whether and how Kushner and his wife could work for Donald Trump's administration.

"The questions seemed most interesting," Gorelick said. "Whoever thinks they're going to opine on the anti-nepotism law? And we are a very consciously bipartisan firm. However, I don't think we had anyone in the firm who was a supporter of Donald Trump."

She now also is advising Kushner as he navigates the media frenzy over the investigations into the Trump campaign's contacts with Russia.

Gorelick, a former head of the D.C. Bar, said she doesn't "put my clients

through a political litmus test." Indeed, people and businesses in serious trouble gravitate to her like flies to a light bulb. BP hired her after the Gulf of Mexico oil disaster. She represented the Clinton Foundation against conservative gadfly Larry Klayman. The student loan industry brought her in to lobby against the Obama administration's drive to overhaul the business.

Through it all, she has continued her work for liberal causes.

"When my clients hired me, they knew who I was," Gorelick said. She has kept Kushner and his wife informed as she continues to handle matters that push back against the Trump administration.

Gorelick's firm charges as much as \$1,250 an hour for its top lawyers' time, but among the clients she represents for free is Tahirih Justice Center, a nonprofit that serves immigrant women who are fleeing from violence. Gorelick recently worked for Tahirih on a challenge against President Trump's plan to strip local governments of their ability to declare themselves "sanctuary cities" for illegal immigrants.

"I sent the brief to Ivanka and Jared just so they would know, this is what your lawyer is doing," Gorelick said.

Her clients were fine with the division between what Gorelick does in her day job and what she does as a political activist. Some of her friends, not so much. And that, Gorelick said, "has been hurtful. I'm not an advocate for the Trump administration; I take hard cases." She said representing members of the Trump family will not hinder her from working for the Democratic cause. She even hosted family and friends who came to Washington earlier this year to march against the new president.

"The Trump administration has made people unusually uneasy, to say the least," she said.

The controversy surrounding Gorelick's decision comes as Washington's legal industry — still huge but in recent years facing severe financial challenges — struggles to adapt to a thin-skinned president with a long history of using the courts

to press grudges. As ever, D.C. lawyers are scrambling to make connections with the new administration, but this time, that effort has caused unusual tensions.

Holland & Knight, one of the city's largest firms, lost the head of its media practice group, Charles Tobin, when he jumped last week to another firm after 16 years because, he said, "I was told in no uncertain terms that I could not sue this president." As an attorney who represents media clients in conflicts with the government, Tobin said he could no longer work at a firm that "wanted to be in a position to help clients do business with the Trump administration and thought that being in an adversarial position with this president would hinder that ability."

Tobin, who will now co-chair the media practice at Ballard Spahr, said Holland & Knight had no such concerns about previous presidents. "I sued President Obama, I sued President Bush, I represented journalists against other administrations without any problem," he said.

Paul Kiernan, executive partner at Holland & Knight's Washington office, said in a statement that the firm "has a long history of representing clients, including media clients, in matters adverse to governmental agencies and officials. ... Contrary to some recent reports, the firm has not adopted a policy limiting our work on specific types of engagements."

Another Washington firm — Morgan, Lewis & Bockius — lost a client because the firm decided to represent Trump in his effort to comply with government ethics requirements.

Scott Wallace, a trustee of the Wallace Global Fund, a nonprofit that had spent about \$400,000 on legal help from Morgan Lewis since 2011, said he terminated the fund's relationship with the firm because by helping Trump handle potential conflicts of interest between his family business and his job as president, the firm had "legitimized a complete non-solution" that "empowers and even encourages impeachable offenses."

The law firm declined to comment; a person familiar with Morgan Lewis's relationship with Wallace said the firm's attorneys also helped Hillary Clinton vet her potential vice presidential candidates and continue to work for clients opposed to Trump policies.

The criticism of Gorelick is a symptom of the nation's sharp political divisions, said Melvyn Fein, a sociologist at Kennesaw State University in Georgia. "When you have more polarization in Washington than in a long, long time, the first reaction of many people is to double down, to insist on purity. Everybody gets so concerned about proving how pure they are that they eat their own," he said.

People in politics need both principle and flexibility, Fein said. "If you're a hired gun, you're being hired for your skill, not your principles. And that's a reasonable thing in this world, to hire yourself out for your skills. That doesn't preclude having principles."

Most objections to Gorelick's decision are less ethical than political. "I know a number of people who have said that anything that helps Trump in any way is heretical to my values," said Ricki Seidman, a veteran of the Clinton White House and a strategic adviser to many Democratic politicians. "But I don't think personalizing the polarization has any value. If you look at it just politically, then let [Kushner and Ivanka Trump] sink. But if you care about the country, look at what Mark Warner and others are doing to bring people together." Warner, the Democratic senator from Virginia, has worked closely with Republican Sen. Richard Burr (N.C.) to craft a bipartisan approach for the Senate Intelligence Committee's investigation into connections between Russia and the Trump campaign.

Many lawyers, even those who have dedicated their careers to political causes, defend Gorelick's work with Kushner, if only because in legal circles, it's gauche to judge lawyers by their clients.

"It wouldn't occur to anyone to criticize someone who goes to work

on behalf of indigent clients," said Judith Lichtman, a longtime friend of Gorelick and for many years president of the National Partnership for Women and Families. "I'm the purest girl around, but what I believe is pure is different from what somebody else does. Jamie is holding her principles near and dear, because she is always honest and ethical and she devotes herself not only to her paying clients, but to people who are unserved by the legal profession."

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

"If you're at a mission-driven nonprofit, you put your principles front and center," said Marcia Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center. "But in a major private law firm, there are different considerations. There's a big difference between 'I wouldn't do that' and 'She shouldn't.'"

Gorelick's only regret is that the political atmosphere has grown so fractious that the kind of bipartisanship that allows her to represent Kushner and still work on cases involving challenges to the Trump administration is now looked on with suspicion in some quarters.

She recalled her time on the 9/11 Commission, when 10 people appointed from both parties tried to determine why the attacks happened and what went wrong. Determined to come up with a unanimous report, the commission avoided nettlesome language.

"We rejected calling what happened a 'clash of civilizations,'" Gorelick said. "We rejected any notion of a 'war on Islam.' That all came from what I would call the sensible middle. How are you ever going to get that in an environment where people insist on a kind of political purity?"

She teared up, reached for a tissue, and, with her voice cracking, she added, "It would be a travesty for this country to go down that road. I believe in the facts. I believe in the law. I believe if you follow that system, you will get to a fair result. I don't see that changing. Even now."

"Despite so many false statements and lies, total and complete vindication ... and WOW, Comey is a leaker!"

That too was a lie.

During a Rose Garden press conference Friday afternoon with the president of Romania, Trump

The New York Times Blow : The Resistance: Impeachment Anxiety

Last week, in highly anticipated Senate testimony, fired F.B.I. Director James Comey delivered a stinging rebuke and strong indictment of Donald Trump as an abuser of power, twister of arms and, above all, a spewer of lies.

No fewer than five times did Comey accuse Trump of lying.

The White House's response as issued from the mouth of spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders: "I can definitely say the president is not a liar, and I think

it's, frankly, insulting that question would be asked."

No, you saying he's not a liar is a lie, and it is the American people who are insulted.

Trump took to Twitter on Friday morning, writing:

answered the question of why he felt “complete vindication” by speaking in a hodgepodge of hashtags:

“No collusion, no obstruction, he’s a leaker.”

If America is confronted with a he-said, he-said standoff between Trump and Comey, the former having a documented history as a pathological liar and the latter not, who one grants the benefit of the doubt to is easily answered: Comey.

And yet, there was something many seemed to find unsatisfying about Comey’s testimony: There was no knockout blow. It wasn’t the penultimate moment that guaranteed impeachment, but rather just another moment in what will likely be a plodding inquiry.

I predict that Comey’s popularity will be short lived. Each day all political attention seems focussed on our liar-in-chief. A continual...

Vesuviano

3 minutes ago

To paraphrase Mr. Trump, he could shoot someone in broad daylight in Lafayette Park, and the Republican House of Representatives would not...

arp

3 minutes ago

Though all this Trump fiasco I hear a little voice which says, “America will never be great again”. We are tumbling downward daily.

- [See All Comments](#)



Role of Trump’s Personal Lawyer Blurs Public and Private Lines (UNE)

Rebecca R. Ruiz and Sharon LaFraniere

WASHINGTON — A new figure has swept through the West Wing lately, a man with silver hair combed back across his head, rimless glasses perched on his nose, a white handkerchief tucked neatly into his suit pocket, a taste for legal pugilism and an uncertain role in a building confronted by a host of political and legal threats.

Marc E. Kasowitz, a New York civil litigator who represented President Trump for 15 years in business and boasts of being called the toughest lawyer on Wall Street, has suddenly become the field marshal for a White House under siege. He is a personal lawyer for the president, not a government employee, but he has been talking about establishing an office in the White House complex where he can run his legal defense.

- [Write a comment](#)

This becomes the critical and increasingly urgent question for many: Will Trump be impeached — or indicted — and when? The anticipation has produced a throbbing anxiety. There is so much emotional investment in Trump’s removal that I fear that it blinds people to the fact that it is a long shot and, in any case, a long way off.

This becomes the critical and increasingly urgent question for many: Will Trump be impeached — or indicted — and when? The anticipation has produced a throbbing anxiety. There is so much emotional investment in Trump’s removal that I fear that it blinds people to the fact that it is a long shot and, in any case, a long way off.

As Adam Liptak wrote last month in The New York Times, about special counsel Robert S. Mueller’s investigation:

“Would the Constitution allow Mr. Mueller to indict Mr. Trump if he finds evidence of criminal conduct? The prevailing view among most legal experts is no. They say the president is immune from prosecution so long as he is in office.”

As to the point of impeachment, the founders made this difficult on purpose.

Only two American presidents — Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton — have ever been impeached by the House of Representatives. The Senate refused to convict in both

His visits to the White House have raised questions about the blurry line between public and private interests for a president facing legal issues. In recent days, Mr. Kasowitz has advised White House aides to discuss the inquiry into Russia’s interference in last year’s election as little as possible, two people involved said. He told aides gathered in one meeting who had asked whether it was time to hire private lawyers that it was not yet necessary, according to another person with direct knowledge.

Such conversations between a private lawyer for the president and the government employees who work for his client are highly unusual, according to veterans of previous administrations. Mr. Kasowitz bypassed the White House Counsel’s Office in having these discussions, according to one person familiar with the talks, who, like others, requested anonymity to

cases, and both men remained in office.

Richard Nixon may well have been impeached, but resigned before the House could vote on his articles of impeachment.

Yes, there is a first time for everything, and this may well be the first time that a president is impeached by the House and convicted by the Senate, or that a president is successfully indicted, but think hard about how remote that possibility is.

At this moment both the House and Senate are led by Republicans who show no inclination to hold Trump accountable and who in fact are now making excuses for his aberrant behavior.

Last week House Speaker Paul Ryan excused Trump’s highly inappropriate contacts with Comey, making the silly argument that Trump is “just new to this.”

Republican Senator Susan Collins on Friday engaged in the outlandish speculation that Comey had set the precedent for one-on-one meetings with Trump when Comey pulled Trump aside to discuss the salacious “pee-tape” dossier.

Sorry folks, ignorance — even the towering ignorance of Trump — is no excuse.

A damning report from Mueller could change Republican reticence, but such a report is likely quite far off. (Fifteen months passed from the time a special prosecutor was appointed in the Watergate investigation and the time Nixon resigned.)

discuss internal matters. And concerns about Mr. Kasowitz’s role led at least two prominent Washington lawyers to turn down offers to join the White House staff.

“The president’s private lawyer is representing only his interests, not the interests of the United States government or the individual interests of the White House staff,” said Robert F. Bauer, who was White House counsel under President Barack Obama.

The administration referred questions to Mr. Kasowitz. A spokesman for Mr. Kasowitz called the characterizations of his conversations with staff members “inaccurate,” but would not specify how. “The lawyers don’t disclose conversations they have had with anyone,” Mark Corallo, the spokesman, wrote in an email. “Of course people are free to hire a lawyer or talk to anyone they want.”

Unfortunately American expectations are tuned to a Netflix sensibility in which we want to binge a complete season in a single sitting. A proper investigation will not indulge our impatience.

The best bet is for Democrats to win a majority in the House in 2018, which is possible and maybe even likely, but winning a majority in the Senate that year is a much steeper climb — not impossible, but improbable.

I know well that the very real obstacles to removal injure the psyche of those worn thin by the relentless onslaught of awfulness erupting from this White House. I know well that impeachment is one of the only rays of hope cutting through these dark times. I’m with you; I too crave some form of political comeuppance.

But, I believe that it’s important to face the very real possibility that removal may not come, and if it does, it won’t come swiftly. And even a Trump impeachment would leave America with a President Pence, a nightmare of a different stripe but no less a nightmare.

In the end, the Resistance must be bigger than impeachment; it must be about political realignment. It must be built upon solid rock of principle and not hang solely on the slender hope of expulsion. This is a long game and will not come to an abrupt conclusion. Perseverance must be the precept; lifelong commitment must be the motto.

Mr. Kasowitz is not the first personal lawyer to represent a president facing legal issues. President Bill Clinton retained Robert S. Bennett to defend him in a sexual harassment lawsuit filed by Paula Jones, and David E. Kendall and Nicole K. Seligman to represent him in the Whitewater and Monica S. Lewinsky investigations.

The line between government lawyers representing the administration and private lawyers representing the president was always somewhat vague. But one important difference was that the president’s conversations with private lawyers were protected by attorney-client privilege, while those with his White House lawyers were not.

To many Washington hands, Mr. Kasowitz, 64 — who represented Mr. Trump during his Atlantic City casino financial troubles and represents other clients like Bill

O'Reilly, the former Fox News host — seems an unusual choice for the mission. While he is widely respected as a fierce and successful lawyer, he has little experience in high-profile criminal cases or politically charged Washington investigations.

Mr. Kasowitz has been central to Mr. Trump's recent legal battles, helping his client keep divorce records sealed and representing him in the Trump University fraud lawsuit, in which Mr. Trump ultimately agreed to pay \$25 million to settle claims from former students that the institution had cheated them out of tuition money.

In the final weeks of the presidential campaign, Mr. Kasowitz threatened to sue The New York Times for libel on Mr. Trump's behalf over a story in which two women accused Mr. Trump of inappropriate touching years earlier. No lawsuit has been filed. A decade earlier, however, Mr. Kasowitz followed through on a similar threat, suing Timothy O'Brien, a Trump biographer and former reporter and editor for The Times, for libel and alleging that he had understated Mr. Trump's net worth. That suit was dismissed by a New Jersey Superior Court judge.

Also raising eyebrows are two of Mr. Kasowitz's other clients — Sberbank, the largest state-owned bank in Russia, on which the Obama administration imposed sanctions, and Oleg Deripaska, a Russian tycoon who is close to President Vladimir V. Putin and had business dealings with Paul Manafort, once Mr. Trump's campaign chairman.

While Mr. Trump is not known to be under investigation over potential collusion with Russia, the special counsel now leading the Russia inquiry, Robert S. Mueller III, has the authority to investigate obstruction of justice. Some in Congress have said that Mr. Trump's firing of James B. Comey as F.B.I. director, coupled with his own statements about Mr. Comey, could be seen as evidence of attempted obstruction of justice.

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

Laura Meckler and Jeffrey Sparshott

WASHINGTON—Attorney General Jeff Sessions will testify Tuesday before the same Senate committee that heard from former FBI Director James Comey last week, keeping national attention on a Russia investigation that White House officials have been trying to push to the background.

Whether Mr. Kasowitz is having an effect on his client is unclear. He advised Mr. Trump to ease up on his use of Twitter, and when Mr. Trump's account was quiet for nearly 48 hours last week around the time of Mr. Comey's Senate hearing, some speculated that Mr. Kasowitz was responsible. But Mr. Trump began attacking Mr. Comey's testimony on Friday morning, and he has defiantly told friends that despite his lawyer's instructions, he has not changed his behavior.

As for Mr. Kasowitz's conversations with presidential aides, the White House Counsel's Office typically supervises such discussions to make sure the aides understand their rights and do not feel pressured to help a lawyer who does not represent their interests, legal experts said. The counsel's involvement is all the more critical in this case, they said, because many of the aides — potential witnesses in the government's inquiry — do not currently have personal lawyers.

Mr. Kasowitz's advice to administration staff may benefit the president more than the aides themselves, the experts said. The conversations he has with aides could shape their testimony before Mr. Mueller has a chance to interview them, should they be called as witnesses.

Mr. Bauer said that the current White House counsel, Donald F. McGahn II, should know Mr. Kasowitz's schedule of conversations so that he could inform the special counsel. "He does not want Kasowitz to do anything that could be interpreted as an act of obstruction, a means of dissuading the witnesses from cooperating in the investigation," Mr. Bauer said.

Since asserting influence in the White House in recent weeks, Mr. Kasowitz has discussed establishing an office on White House grounds — in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, where much of the president's staff works — according to multiple people familiar with the

deliberations. Such an arrangement would have Mr. Kasowitz and his team frequently crossing paths with potential witnesses.

Mr. Corallo, the spokesman for Mr. Kasowitz, said the team was working in private space. "The lawyers do not have an office in the E.E.O.B. and are working out of their offices in D.C.," he said. "They come to the White House to meet with their client, President Trump."

Partly because of concerns that Mr. Kasowitz is undermining the White House Counsel's Office, at least two veteran Washington lawyers — Emmet Flood, a partner at Williams & Connolly, and William A. Burck, a partner at Quinn Emanuel — rejected offers to join the counsel's office to help represent the administration in the Russia inquiry, according to people familiar with the hiring discussions, although they may yet represent individual White House officials.

Other noted criminal defense lawyers have similarly rejected offers to join Mr. Trump's private legal team because of a range of uncertainties, including how much control Mr. Kasowitz exercises over his client, whether their advice would be secondary to his and whether Mr. Trump would pay legal bills. Besides Mr. Kasowitz, Mr. Trump's personal legal team includes his partner, Michael J. Bowe, and Jay Sekulow, a Washington lawyer who specializes in free speech and religious liberties.

"Kasowitz is looking for at least one criminal expert, but the problem is Trump is a difficult client notorious for not following legal advice and for not paying his bills," said Norman Eisen, the White House ethics lawyer under Mr. Obama and a frequent critic of Mr. Trump.

Previous administrations tried to coordinate the activities of private lawyers before letting them interact with aides. Jane Sherburne, a White House special counsel who managed ethics issues during Mr. Clinton's first term, said Mr. Kendall was not allowed to meet with White

House staff members until "we had gone through a whole exercise of having conversations with employees ourselves, talking to them about whether they wanted to retain their own counsel and telling them they didn't have to talk to Kendall."

Under ethics rules, Mr. Kasowitz cannot interview any official who has hired a lawyer without that lawyer's permission, meaning it would be in his interest if administration aides did not hire their own lawyers, experts said. "It is probably easier for him to represent Trump if he doesn't have to deal with a bunch of other lawyers," Ms. Sherburne said, adding that she believed it was inappropriate for Mr. Kasowitz to discourage aides from hiring their own counsel.

Richard Painter, the White House ethics lawyer under President George W. Bush who now teaches at the University of Minnesota's law school, said that in a worst-case scenario, a staff member might listen to Mr. Kasowitz's advice and "end up thrown under the bus."

Some major figures in the Trump administration have personal counsel. Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, is represented by Jamie Gorelick, a former deputy attorney general under Mr. Clinton.

If the special counsel does explore obstruction, said Julie Rose O'Sullivan, who worked on the Whitewater investigation during the Clinton administration, the net cast by investigators will be wide and the list of witnesses long. "You'd have to find out what the president was thinking," said Ms. O'Sullivan, now a professor of criminal law at Georgetown University. "That means calling everyone he talked to at the time before a grand jury, and none of those people should go near a grand jury without a good lawyer with Washington savvy."

Jeff Sessions's Testimony to Keep Russia Probe in Focus (UNE)

Mr. Sessions earlier this year was forced to recuse himself from the Justice Department's investigation of Russian efforts to tilt the 2016 election after he belatedly disclosed two meetings with the Russian ambassador to the U.S. Mr. Comey, during his testimony last week, raised the possibility of other concerns about Mr. Sessions's dealings with Russia during the campaign, saying Federal Bureau of Investigation leadership before the

recusal was "aware of facts that I can't discuss in an open setting that would make his continued engagement in a Russia-related investigation problematic."

In a weekend letter, Mr. Sessions canceled previously planned public testimony before House and Senate appropriations panels. He said that the testimony by Mr. Comey, whom Mr. Trump fired in early May, made it "important that I have an

opportunity to address these matters in the appropriate forum," which he said was the Senate Intelligence Committee.

It is unclear whether the intelligence committee hearing will be held in public.

The Comey appearance dominated a week in which the administration said it had hoped to highlight its stated goal to improve the nation's infrastructure. This week, President

Donald Trump will make expansion of apprenticeship programs the center of his labor policy, aimed at filling a record level of open jobs and drawing back Americans who have left the workforce.

The president's schedule includes a visit to Wisconsin on Tuesday, where he will stop by a technical college—the same day Mr. Sessions is on Capitol Hill.

But Mr. Trump is helping to keep the Russia probe front and center. Last Friday, he blasted Mr. Comey in a joint news conference with the Romanian president.

In a tweet Sunday morning, Mr. Trump called Mr. Comey "cowardly" for asking a friend to tell reporters about conversations he had with the president. During those conversations, Mr. Comey said Mr. Trump had talked about the investigation of former national security adviser Mike Flynn's ties to Russia and had said, "I hope you can let this go." The president denies having done that.

"I believe the James Comey leaks will be far more prevalent than anyone ever thought possible," Mr. Trump said Sunday morning. "Totally illegal? Very 'cowardly!'"

Many legal experts say there was nothing illegal about Mr. Comey's actions, given that the material wasn't classified and that he was no longer a government employee. Mr. Comey testified last week that he asked his friend to share the content of the conversations so it might prompt the appointment of a special counsel, which it did, when former FBI Director Robert Mueller

was named to the post.

Mr. Trump's tweets are drawing rebukes even from people in his own party.

"I think the worst problem this president has in this instance is the president himself," former Rep. Mike Rogers (R., Mich.) said Sunday on CNN. "If he would stop talking about the small-ball individual tweets, attacking Director Comey personally, I think we could get beyond this."

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.), speaking on CBS, said Mr. Trump was obstructing his own agenda. Addressing Mr. Trump directly, Mr. Graham said: "You may be the first president in history to go down because you can't stop inappropriately talking about an investigation that if you just were quiet, would clear you."

But part of the Trump legal strategy is to call into question Mr. Comey's credibility. Jay Sekulow, a member of Mr. Trump's legal team, pointed to statements regarding the FBI investigation of Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state.

"James Comey's credibility has been brought into question on multiple occasions during the Clinton investigation, and here ultimately the special counsel has to weigh that as he does his investigation," Mr. Sekulow said Sunday on ABC. Mr. Comey has defended his handling of the Clinton email probe.

Beyond his contacts with Russian officials, Mr. Sessions also may face questions about why he didn't

do more to shield Mr. Comey, who worked for him, from Mr. Trump's private outreach.

Mr. Comey told the Senate panel that the president had Mr. Sessions and others leave the room so he could talk to Mr. Comey alone, and that is when Mr. Trump allegedly pressured him on the Flynn investigation.

Mr. Comey also said he later appealed to Mr. Sessions to ensure that he would not again be left alone with Mr. Trump, but that Mr. Sessions didn't respond. A Justice Department spokesman rejected that characterization and said Mr. Sessions told Mr. Comey the agency needed to be careful about "following appropriate policies" regarding such contacts.

Mr. Sessions was a vocal advocate for Mr. Trump during the 2016 campaign, and his staffers and former aides have taken jobs in the White House and across the administration. Still, Mr. Trump was upset after Mr. Sessions recused himself from the Russia probe, one White House official said. The president, who has denied any involvement with Russia election hacking, viewed Mr. Sessions's decision as a sign of weakness, the official said.

Mr. Sessions is also expected to face Senate questioning about why he was involved in firing Mr. Comey given that he had recused himself from questions related to Russia. As FBI director, Mr. Comey was overseeing that investigation.

In an interview with NBC News last month, Mr. Trump said he was

thinking about "this Russia thing" when he decided to fire Mr. Comey, but the White House initially cited a recommendation for termination by Mr. Sessions and a deputy attorney general based on Mr. Comey's broader job performance.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D., N.Y.) said Sunday that this is one of several questions Mr. Sessions should be asked to answer and said it should be done in a public session.

"The president said Comey was fired because of Russia. How does that fit in with his recusal? It doesn't seem to stand up well to me," Mr. Schumer said on CBS.

The attorney general also drew some criticism from Democrats for the en masse firings of U.S. attorneys, including Preet Bharara in Manhattan, earlier this year. Mr. Bharara said Sunday on ABC that Mr. Trump called him three times following his election and fired him less than a day after he refused to return the third call from the newly elected president.

"It appeared to be that he was trying to cultivate some kind of relationship," Mr. Bharara said in the TV interview.

The White House didn't comment on Mr. Bharara's account.

—Michael C. Bender and Aruna Viswanatha contributed to this article.

**The
New York
Times**

Senate Democrats Call for Sessions's Russia Testimony to Be Public

Emmarie Huetteman

WASHINGTON — A day after Attorney General Jeff Sessions said he would testify this week before the Senate Intelligence Committee, Democratic senators on Sunday urged the panel to question him about the Trump campaign's ties to Russia in a public hearing, rather than behind closed doors.

It was unclear on Sunday whether the committee planned to question the attorney general on Tuesday in an open or closed session. Either way, senators said he would face pointed questions not only about his contacts with Russian officials, but also about his conversations with James B. Comey, the ousted F.B.I. director.

Members of the Intelligence Committee said they wanted Mr. Sessions to recount what happened during and after the Feb. 14 Oval

Office meeting where, according to Mr. Comey, President Trump pressured him to drop the F.B.I. investigation into Michael T. Flynn, the former national security adviser. Mr. Sessions was among those Mr. Trump asked to leave the meeting so he could speak privately with Mr. Comey.

"We've had a lot of unnamed sources in the media come out and make statements about Jeff Sessions," Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma, a Republican who is on the committee, said on CBS's "Face the Nation." "It'd be very good to get it directly from him."

Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon, a Democrat who also sits on that panel, said the American public had the right to hear the attorney general's answers.

In a letter to the top Republican and Democrat on the committee, Senators Richard M. Burr of North

Carolina and Mark Warner of Virginia, Mr. Wyden said: "These matters, which are directly related to threats to our democratic institutions, are of the utmost public interest. I believe we owe the American people transparency."

Mr. Sessions's appearance before the committee as it investigates Russian interference in the 2016 election is expected to offer critical details as lawmakers debate whether Mr. Trump's reported comments to Mr. Comey — that Mr. Trump hoped, in reference to the Flynn investigation, that Mr. Comey could "let this go" — amount to obstruction of justice.

Several Republicans said on Sunday that while Mr. Trump's request was troubling, it was not criminal.

"If this is trying to interfere in a process of any investigation, it doesn't seem like it was, No. 1, very

effective, and, No. 2, came up more than once in a conversation," Mr. Lankford said. "So this looks more like an inappropriate conversation than obstruction."

Senator Susan Collins of Maine, another Republican on the Intelligence Committee, said it was wrong of Mr. Trump to even raise the subject, whether he intended to give an order or not.

"Whether it's illegal is a whole 'nother issue, and that's up to the independent counsel," she said on CNN's "State of the Union," referring to Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel leading the F.B.I. investigation.

Senators are also looking at whether Mr. Sessions violated his recusal from the Justice Department's Russia investigation by writing a memo recommending Mr. Comey's firing. Mr. Sessions removed himself from the inquiry

after it emerged that he had met at least twice with the Russian ambassador in 2016, though he had testified at his confirmation hearing that he had not had contact with Russians.

Appearing on CBS's "Face the Nation," Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, said Mr. Sessions would need to answer questions about his recommendation that Mr. Comey be fired in light of Mr. Trump's admission that his decision was linked to the Russia investigation.

"How does that fit in with his refusal?" Mr. Schumer said. "It doesn't seem to stand up well to me."

Mr. Schumer also invited the president to testify before the Senate under oath, as Mr. Trump has said he would do.

Mr. Sessions had originally been scheduled to testify Tuesday before the House and Senate Appropriations Committees about

the Justice Department's budget. He said he would send in his place Rod J. Rosenstein, the deputy attorney general.

Senator Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont on Sunday criticized Mr. Sessions for canceling his appearance before the Appropriations Committees for a second time. Mr. Leahy is the senior Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, as well as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which oversees the Justice Department.

"You need to testify before both in public," Mr. Leahy said in a tweet. "You can't run forever."

Senators Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Dianne Feinstein of California, the Republican chairman and the top Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, also called on Mr. Sessions to appear before their committee.

Mr. Graham also called for Loretta Lynch, who served as attorney general during the Obama

administration, to appear before the committee, citing Mr. Comey's testimony to the Intelligence Committee on Thursday that she had asked him to publicly call the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server a "matter" rather than an "investigation."

"If the attorney general's office has become a political office, that's bad for us all," Mr. Graham said on "Face the Nation." "So I want to get to the bottom of that, and it should be in Judiciary."

But Mr. Graham also reserved some criticism for Mr. Trump, who on Sunday morning took his harshest shot yet at Mr. Comey, calling him "very cowardly" in a tweet.

"You may be the first president in history to go down because you can't stop inappropriately talking about an investigation that, if you just were quiet, would clear you," Mr. Graham said.

In an appearance on ABC's "This Week," Preet Bharara, the former United States attorney in Manhattan, described what he also called inappropriate actions by the president directed at him, saying that "it appeared to be that he was trying to cultivate some kind of relationship," similar to Mr. Trump's behavior that Mr. Comey described last week.

"It's a very weird and peculiar thing for a one-on-one conversation without the attorney general, without warning, between the president and me or any United States attorney who has been asked to investigate various things and is in a position hypothetically to investigate business interests and associates of the president," said Mr. Bharara, who was fired by the president hours after he refused to return a call from him.



'Total and Complete Vindication'? No Way.

- By Max Boot

That Donald Trump and his defenders are breathing a sigh of relief after former FBI Director James Comey's blockbuster Senate testimony shows how low the bar has been set for the president. Sure, he lied and behaved unethically — but, hey, at least he's not personally under investigation for colluding with Russia to alter the 2016 election. Trump claimed "total and complete vindication."

What total and complete chutzpah. Not only is Comey's testimony damning on its own, but the situation is far worse for the president than the testimony, taken in isolation, would suggest. What Comey said, in his calm, just-the-facts-ma'am manner, is only one piece of the Kremingate jigsaw puzzle. You have to look at it in totality to see how damning the whole picture actually is. There's a good reason why Sen. John McCain recently said this scandal is reaching "Watergate size and scale." There are three parts of this puzzle: collusion, quid pro quo, and cover-up.

Very little of the Comey testimony touched on collusion, because he regards it as too sensitive to discuss in open session — itself a damning fact.

Very little of the Comey testimony touched on collusion, because he regards it as too sensitive to discuss in open session — itself a damning fact. If this were "fake news," as

Trump alleges, there would be no classified information to protect.

That there was public collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians, while the Kremlin was interfering in the U.S. election, is undisputed. Trump, after all, publicly called on July 27, 2016, for the Russians to hack Hillary Clinton's emails ("Russia, if you're listening ..."). He then celebrated the resulting leaks from WikiLeaks ("I love WikiLeaks"), which his own CIA director has identified as "a nonstate hostile intelligence service often abetted by state actors like Russia."

The only question is whether there was private collusion, too. A lot of evidence points that way. During his testimony, Comey disputed a *New York Times* article on contacts between the Trump campaign and the Russians, saying that "in the main, it was not true." But he did not say *what* was untrue, and numerous other news articles have reported that the Trump campaign had numerous interactions with influential Russian representatives. Reuters, for example, reports that there were at least 18 contacts during the final seven months of the campaign.

There are myriad financial and other links to the Kremlin involving Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign manager, and Carter Page, his former foreign policy advisor. There's a good reason that the FBI obtained a Foreign Intelligence Act warrant for Page — it means the FBI had good cause to believe he's

a Russian agent, or connected in some fashion. Even Mike Flynn, Trump's first national security advisor, received more than \$45,000 from the Kremlin that he did not disclose. Oh, and longtime confidant Roger Stone seemed to have suspicious advance knowledge of what WikiLeaks would reveal. According to Comey, Trump, while insisting "that he hadn't done anything wrong," tacitly conceded that "some 'satellite' associates of his" may have done "something wrong."

In truth, suspicious contacts with the Russians were not limited to "satellite associates," but involved Trump's nearest and dearest. Comey told senators in a closed session that there was a third meeting between Attorney General Jeff Sessions and the Russians that was previously undisclosed on top of two previous meetings that Sessions did not disclose in his confirmation hearings. Jared Kushner, son-in-law and senior advisor to Trump, left off his Russian contacts from his security clearance form. Flynn was fired for lying about his talks with the Russian ambassador. Why would they lie if there was nothing to hide? And what possibly innocent explanation can there be for their conduct? None has been offered by the Trump team.

It's particularly hard to explain what Kushner, now a focus of the FBI probe, was up to. He reportedly tried to set up a secret back channel with the Russians using communications equipment

provided by them. He also met with Sergei Gorkov, a trained Russian spy and close associate of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who runs a Kremlin-affiliated bank that has been sanctioned by the U.S. government. Intriguingly, Kushner was head of data analytics for the Trump campaign, even as the Russians were using bots to covertly boost Trump on Facebook and Twitter.

None of this amounts to proof of collusion, but there is certainly copious evidence of it.

None of this amounts to proof of collusion, but there is certainly copious evidence of it. There is also evidence of a possible quid pro quo between Trump and the Russians.

NBC News reported recently that "the Trump administration was gearing up to lift sanctions on Russia when the president took office, but career diplomats ginned up pressure in Congress to block the move." Sanctions might well have been lifted were it not for Flynn getting fired. While the growing Kremingate scandal made it politically impossible for Trump to reward Putin for election interference by lifting sanctions, he hasn't punished Putin either. Now, the *Washington Post* reports, Trump is considering giving back to the Russians two diplomatic compounds seized by President Barack Obama in retaliation for Russia's meddling in our election.

Trump still talks tougher about Germany than he does about

Russia, and he yukked it up with Russia's foreign minister and ambassador in an Oval Office meeting where he shared code-word secrets with the Russians. Perhaps the greatest gift Trump has given the Russians is his refusal to affirm NATO's Article 5, thus casting the future of the Atlantic alliance into question. All of this makes a mockery of Eric Trump's claim that his father's cruise-missile strike against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Russia's ally, somehow shows "that there is no Russia tie." In fact, the one-off strike (of which the Russians were forewarned) does not change Trump's policy of leaving Assad in power.

In Trump's defense, it may be said that evidence of private — as opposed to public — collusion involving him personally has not surfaced, and that the indications of a quid pro quo in return for Russia's election help are far from definitive. All of that is true. But Trump's real problem, from a legal standpoint, is the cover-up — or rather what appears to be an attempted cover-up. The president's Republican defenders act as if the fact that his attempts to quash the Russia probe

were unsuccessful somehow exonerates him. But Richard Nixon wasn't successful in obstructing justice, either — and he was still forced to resign.

Comey has now testified under oath that Trump tried to secure a pledge of "loyalty" from him in return for remaining the FBI director, and that Trump tried to pressure him into "letting Flynn go" while Flynn was under FBI investigation. The cover story of Trump defenders that the president was only offering a nonbinding suggestion won't wash. When the president tells a subordinate he "hopes" that something will occur, that is, in effect, an order — and Comey interpreted it as such, even if he did not carry it out.

Why wasn't Trump more explicit in ordering Comey to drop the Flynn probe? Because he knew that doing so would be improper. In fact, he knew that even talking to Comey about it was wrong, which is why he cleared the room on Feb. 14 before doing so. Trump clearly hoped that, with a wink and a nudge, he would get the FBI director to drop the investigation into his former national

security advisor, who may well have damning information that he could reveal if pressed. (In fact, Flynn has offered to testify in return for immunity.)

Want more evidence of a cover up? The *Washington Post* reported that Trump asked Dan Coats, the director of national intelligence, and Mike Pompeo, the CIA director, to pressure Comey to back off the Flynn probe. This request, which Coats and Pompeo do not deny, is all too reminiscent of one of the articles of impeachment against Nixon, who also tried to use the CIA to stop an FBI investigation of executive branch misconduct.

The final and most convincing evidence of obstruction of justice involves Comey's firing on May 9. The reasons Trump initially gave were, as Comey noted, "lies, plain and simple." Initially Trump claimed that he was firing Comey because the FBI was in "disarray" and the director was a "showboat." But within days, Trump admitted to NBC's Lester Holt that the real reason was because he wanted to end the investigation into the "Russia thing." Trump then told the

Russian foreign minister and ambassador that before he fired Comey ("a real nut job"), "I faced great pressure because of Russia." Now, "that's taken off. I'm not under investigation."

Trump's defenders make much of the fact that Comey said he wasn't under investigation for collusion. But they ignore the likelihood that Trump is now under investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller for obstruction of justice — and for good reason: He all but confessed to the crime. As former Watergate prosecutor Philip Allen Lacovara writes: "Any experienced prosecutor would see these facts as establishing a prima facie case of obstruction of justice."

In short, the White House has no cause to breathe easy after Comey's testimony. The only thing standing between Trump and impeachment is the new partisanship of the Republican majority on Capitol Hill. But if Democrats win the 2018 midterm elections, we are likely to see the most serious impeachment proceedings since Watergate.



Zelizer : Democrats, take your cues from Bernie Sanders

Julian Zelizer

(CNN)Senator Bernie Sanders still thinks that the Democrats don't get it. Speaking Saturday in Chicago, Sanders offered some blistering rhetoric, calling on his supporters to take down President Trump, who he believes to be a threat to the nation.

But he also told a packed auditorium that targeting Trump was not enough.

"I am often asked by the media and others, 'How did it come about that Donald Trump, the most unpopular presidential candidate in the modern history of our country, won the election?'" Sanders said. "My answer is that Trump didn't win the election -- the Democratic Party lost the election."

The senator's warning to Democrats is extraordinarily important at this moment. While Republicans control the White House and Congress, Democrats are in a surprisingly good position. They face a Republican President whose term has been consumed by an ongoing scandal that keeps getting worse. His approval numbers are

in the 30s

and continue to fall.

Congressional Republicans have had trouble moving any signature legislation, and the bills they have

managed to get through one chamber, such as health care, have made the party and president

less popular.

Midterm elections almost always go poorly for the party in power, and polls suggest that the 2018 midterms might fit the pattern.

Yet the danger for Democrats is that they lose sight of a basic problem the party has faced: the need for a stronger message to energize their base and broaden their reach. The risk for Democrats is that, like the rest of the nation, they become so consumed by the chaos in Washington that they don't devote any attention to cleaning up their own house and preparing for the next set of elections.

As

Frank Bruni asks in *The New York Times*

in looking at the town of Halcottsville in the 19th Congressional District of New York, "Will Democrats put forward the right candidate for a largely working-class region whose barns need paint, whose town centers want for bustle and whose manufacturing plants are too few and far between?"

So far President Trump's term has given Democrats a massive

opening. The choices that he has made about public policy -- deregulating energy and financial markets, draconian health care changes that would leave millions of Americans with less health care coverage, a supply-side tax cut that would most benefit upper income Americans and the utter absence of a serious jobs policy -- have exposed the weaknesses and limitations of "conservative populism."

President Trump's fiery rhetoric belied the history of Republican politics in recent decades, which has not done much to benefit middle- and working-class Americans. Although Trump promised to be different, he is not.

Democrats, though, can't just say that President Trump is no good. In his most

recent tweet

, Trump said, "The Democrats have no message, not on economics, not on taxes, not on jobs, not on failing #Obamacare."

In response to this kind of attack that Republicans are likely to level against them in the years to come, Democrats must make a convincing case that their party actually has something to say about the ongoing economic insecurity that afflicts middle-class communities in a moment of low unemployment.

Some Democrats, such as New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, have tried to build on Sanders' appeal with new policy initiatives such as free higher education.

But state initiatives are not enough. National Democrats need to do more to outline and promote a robust domestic agenda that will reframe the midterm campaigns of 2018 and the presidential campaign of 2020. They have to demonstrate that they are a party that is not, in fact, beholden to big interests, as Sanders has argued, and has a vision that will translate into real economic gains for all Americans.

It will be vital that Democrats take these steps without dismissing the important issues that the party has embraced since the 1960s. Too many critics of the party reflexively blamed "identity" issues such as feminism and civil rights as the reason that Democrats like Hillary Clinton lost. That too would be a big mistake.

Rather than downplay questions such as criminal justice reform or equal pay, Democrats need to work harder to explain to voters why these are not "base" issues and why their agenda better responds to the concerns of the electorate living in red and blue states. They also need to make a more compelling case that only by dealing with issues such as sexism in the

workplace or racism in policing can the nation actually craft policies that make all middle- and working-class Americans feel more secure about their futures.

Nor can Democrats leave foreign policy and national security on the sidelines. The problems that existed during President Obama's term -- the growth of ISIS, the expansion of Russian cyber and military aggression, and the turmoil in Syria -- have cost the party considerable support among voters who fear for the stability of the international order. The ease of criticizing President Trump's inchoate and stumbling moves around the globe do not excuse Democrats from

coming up with a doctrine of their own.

President Trump has an ability to take up all the oxygen in the room. By the time his era of scandal, controversy and bombast comes to an end, many politicians in both parties won't even remember what they were planning to do when they went to work. The newsrooms are likewise so obsessed with Trump that it becomes extraordinarily difficult to give airtime to anything else.

A majority of Americans probably are

not aware

, for instance, that several trials will take place over the next few weeks of police officers who were caught on tape killing African Americans. These were videotaped acts that shook the nation's conscience last year but today barely receive a second of notice.

Democrats can't fell prey to this trap. Otherwise they won't be able to capitalize on this situation and navigate the political and policy challenges that will arise once President Trump is gone.

Historically, political parties thrive when they go through a process of self-examination and learn to better address policies they had ignored at a cost. In the 1930s, Franklin

Roosevelt and congressional Democrats put forth a robust vision of using government in response to economic depression that revolutionized the role of the state in American life.

Democrats now face a similar kind of political crossroads. Whether they learn from 2016 and develop a more exciting set of policies, rather than coasting through 2018 on an anti-Trump message, will have as much impact on the party's future as Trump's fate in the months ahead.

The New York Times Democrats in Split-Screen: The Base Wants It All. The Party Wants to Win. (UNE)

Alexander Burns and Jonathan Martin

DUNWOODY, Ga. — Democrats are facing a widening breach in their party, as liberal activists dream of transforming the health care system and impeaching President Trump, while candidates in hard-fought elections ask wary voters merely for a fresh chance at governing.

The growing tension between the party's ascendant militant wing and Democrats competing in conservative-leaning terrain, was on vivid, split-screen display over the weekend. In Chicago, Senator Bernie Sanders led a revival-style meeting of his progressive devotees, while in Atlanta, Democrats made a final push to seize a traditionally Republican congressional district.

It may be essential for Democrats to reconcile the party's two clashing impulses if they are to retake the House of Representatives in 2018. In a promising political environment, a drawn-out struggle over Democratic strategy and ideology could spill into primary elections and disrupt the party's path to a majority.

On the one hand, progressives are more emboldened than they have been in decades, galvanized by Mr. Sanders's unexpected successes in 2016 and empowered by the surge of grass-roots energy dedicated to confronting an unpopular president and pushing the party leftward.

Mr. Sanders rallied his youthful, often-raucous coalition Saturday night at a gathering named the "People's Summit," where supporters hailed him in worshipful language. One Colorado couple hauled a small banner through the hangar-size McCormick Place, pleading with Mr. Sanders, a still-

independent Vermont senator, to create a new "People's Party."

Mr. Sanders and many attendees enthused over the surprise showing of the British Labour Party, under the left-wing leader Jeremy Corbyn, in last week's election. Democrats can electrify voters, they warned, only by embracing the Sanders agenda of universal health care, free college tuition and full employment.

Speaking for just under an hour, Mr. Sanders — who was met with chants of "Bernie, Bernie" and pleas of "2020!" — crowed that while he may have lost the 2016 primary, "we have won the battle of ideas and we are continuing to win that battle."

He assailed President Trump in blistering terms, but earned some of his loudest cheers for attacking the party whose nomination he sought last year. "The current model and the current strategy of the Democratic Party is an absolute failure," Mr. Sanders said to booming applause, arguing that Democrats need "fundamental change."

"The Democratic Party must finally understand which side it is on," he said.

Yet the party's elected leaders, and many of its candidates, are far more dispassionate, sharing a cold-eyed recognition of the need to scrounge for votes in forbidding precincts. They have taken as a model the Democratic campaign of 2006, when the party won control of Congress in part by competing for conservative corners of the country and recruiting challengers who broke with liberal orthodoxy.

Outside Atlanta on Friday, Jon Ossoff offered a decidedly un-

Sanders-like vision of the future in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District, a conservative-leaning patchwork of office plazas and upscale malls, where voters attended his campaign events wearing golf shirts and designer eyewear.

In a special election that has become the most expensive House race in history, Mr. Ossoff, a 30-year-old former congressional aide, presented himself as essentially anti-ideological. Greeting suburban parents near a playground and giving a pep talk to volunteers, he stressed broadly popular policies like fighting air and water pollution and preserving insurance coverage for people with pre-existing conditions.

Bucking the left, Mr. Ossoff said in an interview that he would not support raising income taxes, even for the wealthy, and opposed "any move" toward a single-payer health care system. Attacked by Republicans for his ties to national liberals, Mr. Ossoff said he had not yet given "an ounce of thought" to whether he would vote for Nancy Pelosi, the House Democratic leader, in a future ballot for speaker.

His own race, Mr. Ossoff told supporters, was about "sending a message to Washington." But that message, he said, was about "decency and respect and unity, rather than division."

"There's a coalition of folks here in Georgia who want representation that's focused on local economic development and on accountability," Mr. Ossoff said in the interview, "and not on the partisan circus in Washington."

The tension between Mr. Ossoff's message and the appetites of the national Democratic base has not

appeared to hinder his bid for Congress. He has raised more than \$23 million, an astonishing sum, largely in small online donations from Democrats seeking to put a dent in the Republicans' House majority. Several polls over the last week showed Mr. Ossoff leading his Republican opponent, Karen Handel, though both parties agree that the race remains a tossup.

Winning over Republican voters remains a critical task. Though he started his campaign pledging to "make Trump furious," Mr. Ossoff did not bring up the president in his campaign events, and he has called talk of impeachment premature.

Stephanie Runyan, a business consultant who is a precinct captain for Mr. Ossoff, said he had recognized the limits of a liberal message in the affluent Atlanta suburbs.

"A lot of us are not true-blue liberals," said Ms. Runyan, 46, who is a Democrat.

It is unclear, however, whether Democratic activists across the country will tolerate an army of Ossoff-type candidates in 2018, when party leaders believe the path to capturing the House runs through purple-hued suburban districts that are somewhat less Republican than Georgia's Sixth.

Friction has already flared between Democrats heavily invested in Mr. Ossoff's race and activists closely aligned with Mr. Sanders. In April, Mr. Sanders declined to say if he considered Mr. Ossoff a progressive, causing an uproar that he calmed by urging Mr. Ossoff's election.

Nina Turner, a former Ohio state senator who is on the board of Mr. Sanders's political organization,

suggested in Chicago that Democrats risked slumbering through the revolution, offering an unofficial slogan for the party: "Hashtag, 'Not Woke Yet.'"

"Unity for unity's sake," she warned, "is not going to happen."

Party strategists say they have taken steps to build a relationship with Mr. Sanders and his organization, and a top Sanders lieutenant, Jeff Weaver, attended a recent briefing hosted by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, along with representatives from Planned Parenthood, the liberal group Swing Left and the centrist think tank Third Way, according to a person involved in planning the meeting.

But Mr. Sanders and his supporters have continued to seek out victory on their own terms — so far with little success — by venturing into party leadership races, primaries and long-shot special elections that

establishment Democrats have avoided. The biggest test so far of Mr. Sanders's clout may come on Tuesday in Virginia, where he has backed Tom Perriello, a liberal former congressman, in a contested primary for governor.

Still, even some Democrats competing in difficult elections have taken up ideas once associated with the hard left. Doug Applegate, a retired Marine colonel who narrowly lost a race last year to Representative Darrell Issa, Republican of California, said he would endorse single-payer health care in a new bid for Mr. Issa's affluent coastal district.

"Single payer has become a moral issue," Mr. Applegate said, adding he would be delighted to campaign with Mr. Sanders.

Others are warier: Representative Emanuel Cleaver, a Missouri Democrat and former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus,

said the party should give "some leeway" to candidates to match the politics of their districts. Mr. Cleaver said he recently ran into former Representative John Barrow of Georgia, one of the last moderate white Democrats elected from the South, and recalled telling him, "We'll know that we're on the winning track when you can get back to Congress."

"We are going to lose every possible winnable seat, in a year where there are many winnable seats, if we come across as inflexible left-wingers," Mr. Cleaver said. "I respect Bernie — I just don't think we can become the party of Bernie."

In Mr. Ossoff's district, there was little evidence that voters yearned for a harder-edged liberal message. At an early-vote rally on Friday, Paul Flexner, an educator and Democratic activist in Dunwoody, said Mr. Ossoff had been wise to avoid Sanders-style politics.

Though Mr. Flexner, 71, called himself "the liberal guy" among his neighbors, he said that political approach simply did not work in the district.

"People are tired of the ideologues," he said. "A lot of people, particularly in this area, did not like Bernie Sanders because of that kind of attitude. They didn't like Hillary Clinton."

Anne Easterly, a consultant who attended an Ossoff event in a well-tended park, said she hoped Democrats would take a lesson from Georgia about how to channel partisan energy into difficult races.

"It's our only hope to find moderates — who can appeal to moderates and Republicans who are not Trumpians — just because of the way the districts are drawn now," she said.

The Washington Post Trump looms over Georgia special election, a proxy battle for 2018 (UNE)

SANDY SPRINGS, Ga. — As the most expensive House race in history heads into its final full week, there is one name that is rarely mentioned by the two people who are running.

But President Trump looms over everything.

As Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff was making his way through a retirement community here on a recent weekday, a woman named B.J. Mix gripped his hand and told him: "When you get there, give Trump hell."

Later that afternoon, in Republican contender Karen Handel's home precinct in Roswell, Dominick Scartz opened his front door to the latest in a parade of election canvassers to show up on his porch.

"The Republicans don't want to lose a seat and start a trend," Scartz said. "But Trump gives everybody an opening. We all know that, even though we voted for him."

Under normal circumstances, this special election to replace Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price in Congress should not even be competitive. Once represented by House Speaker Newt Gingrich, the affluent district on the northern outskirts of Atlanta has been in Republican hands for nearly four decades.

Even more unlikely is the situation today: Political newcomer Ossoff, a 30-year-old former congressional

staffer and documentary filmmaker, nearly won outright a 16-candidate primary April 18. Now, he is locked in a runoff with former secretary of state Handel, 55, the June 20 outcome of which is anyone's guess.

A poll published Friday by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution showed Ossoff with a seven-point lead, but other recent surveys suggest a dead heat.

The closeness of the contest in the 6th Congressional District reflects, to some extent, the changing demographics of this fast-growing area, which Trump barely won over Hillary Clinton in last year's presidential election.

But what is really driving things is a national proxy battle between energized Democratic forces on the left and a GOP mobilized by fear of what may be to come in next year's midterm battle for control of Congress.

Special elections earlier this year in Kansas and Montana have already revved up Democrats in ruby-red districts; Georgia's is a contest they might win. After several near-misses, it's also a race they must win to demonstrate that Trump is the liability they say he is — and to make progress toward their goal of winning a House majority in 2018.

[Amid Trump's unpopularity, Democrats face criticism for not investing more in special elections]

(Bastien Inzaurrede/The Washington Post)

It is an arms race of money and organization. The latest fundraising report, filed Thursday, showed Ossoff raising an additional \$15 million in the past two months, nearly quadruple what Handel brought in. With outside groups weighing in, the race has thus far cost more than \$40 million — far outpacing the previous record for a congressional race of nearly \$30 million for a Florida contest in 2012.

Polls indicate there are few voters still undecided. "The next 10 days are about turning out the base. There are more of us than them in the district. The more people who vote, the better," said Corry Bliss, who heads the Congressional Leadership Fund, a super PAC affiliated with House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.). That organization alone plans to spend about \$7 million in the race.

Another factor, however, may be working in the Democrats' favor: After a federal judge ordered that voter registration be reopened for the runoff, more than 8,000 were added to the rolls in the 6th District.

And in the first round of voting, Ossoff won what analysts on both sides believe to have been at least 10 percent of voters who generally cast their ballots for Republicans. (Georgia does not identify voters by party.)

Early voting suggests that turnout will indeed reach new heights, at least for a special election. Both sides are closely analyzing the numbers, which indicate more Republican votes than normal in early voting, though it is unclear how much of that is driven by sheer fatigue with the bombardment of ads and phone calls and a desire to just get the whole thing over with.

So saturated is television that one local station has temporarily replaced reruns of "The Andy Griffith Show" with a 7 p.m. newscast, just to accommodate the demand for slots to spend ad dollars.

There are some who now deem the subject off-limits. "I don't talk to people about the race, quite frankly," said Eric Clarkson, mayor of Chamblee, a town that Ossoff won easily in the first round of voting.

For others, however, this election represents a political awakening.

Nadine Becker, a gynecologist, had never even gone on Facebook. Now, three times a week, she spends several hours volunteering for Ossoff.

"After November, I pretty much came alive with regard to politics. The fact is, here in the 6th, we have something to do," she said. "It's Trump, but it's more for the first time in my life, I feel that things that I value, that are important to me, have been threatened."

Neither of the candidates is particularly dynamic. Both stick closely to their talking points, and Handel in particular has few publicly announced events.

In their two debates last week, Ossoff was the more polished.

[Did Georgia congressional candidate Jon Ossoff really get roasted by his opponent? Depends on how you cut the video.]

During the first one, while discussing her opposition to raising the minimum wage, Handel committed a gaffe with her pronouncement: "I do not support a livable wage."

Pressed during the second debate on whether she believes human activity is a cause of climate change, Handel demurred, saying: "I am not a scientist."

Ossoff shot back: "Well, neither of us are scientists. That's why we have scientists. And 97 percent of scientists, as well as the military and the intelligence community, agree that climate change is a threat to our security and prosperity and that it's driven in part by human activity."

But Trump's presence looms over both of them.

After Handel made it to the runoff, Trump came to Atlanta to raise

\$750,000 for her. "You better win," he told her.

With the appointment of a special counsel to investigate the questions surrounding Trump and Russian interference in the 2016 election, Handel has said she wants to "let the facts really drive where we go and what action we take."

She also allowed that she wishes Trump would make "some Twitter policy changes. Sometimes you should just put down the computer, the phone, and walk away."

Ossoff said Russia's actions merit a "firm response and a transparent, independent investigation" but added that "we're still not there yet" on the question of whether Trump should be impeached.

Handel insisted Trump should not be the main issue for voters.

"This race is not about the president. It is about who is most equipped and has the best experience," Handel said during a debate Thursday. "I am not an extension of the White House. I am an extension of the people of the 6th District."

That doesn't stop Handel from constantly arguing that Ossoff would be a puppet of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) — whose name Handel invoked more than 10 times during

a debate two days earlier. Pelosi is also featured prominently in ads that are running against the Democrat.

While Ossoff used to describe himself during the primary as the "make Trump furious" candidate, he now talks about finding bipartisan solutions on issues such as health care, and emphasizes cutting federal spending and "independent-minded leadership."

When Ossoff declined to participate in a nationally televised debate on CNN, Republicans said it was to avoid letting his fan base of liberal funders across the country hear the moderate message he is sounding in the district.

He frequently reminds voters of Handel's past role as a top official at Susan G. Komen, the breast-cancer research foundation, during the controversy over the charity's 2012 decision, quickly reversed, to eliminate grants to Planned Parenthood for breast-cancer screening and education programs.

The Health 202 newsletter

Your daily guide to the health-care debate.

In addition to the fact that he has drawn so much support from out-of-state liberals, Ossoff's own greatest vulnerability may be his youth, and lack of experience. One

Congressional Leadership Fund attack ad features an old video of Ossoff as a college student dressed up as the "Star Wars" character Han Solo. Ossoff also lives just outside the district lines, though he has said he plans to move there.

"He's just a sham. He's nothing. He's got no experience," said Scartz, the voter interviewed at his front door in Roswell.

That was pretty much the same thing many were saying last year, when a real estate mogul with no background in government was on the ballot for the highest office in the land.

Trump won because voters were looking for an antidote to what they saw as wrong in Washington. Now, the question being tested in Georgia by another political newcomer is whether Democrats have found their antidote to the antidote.

Dem