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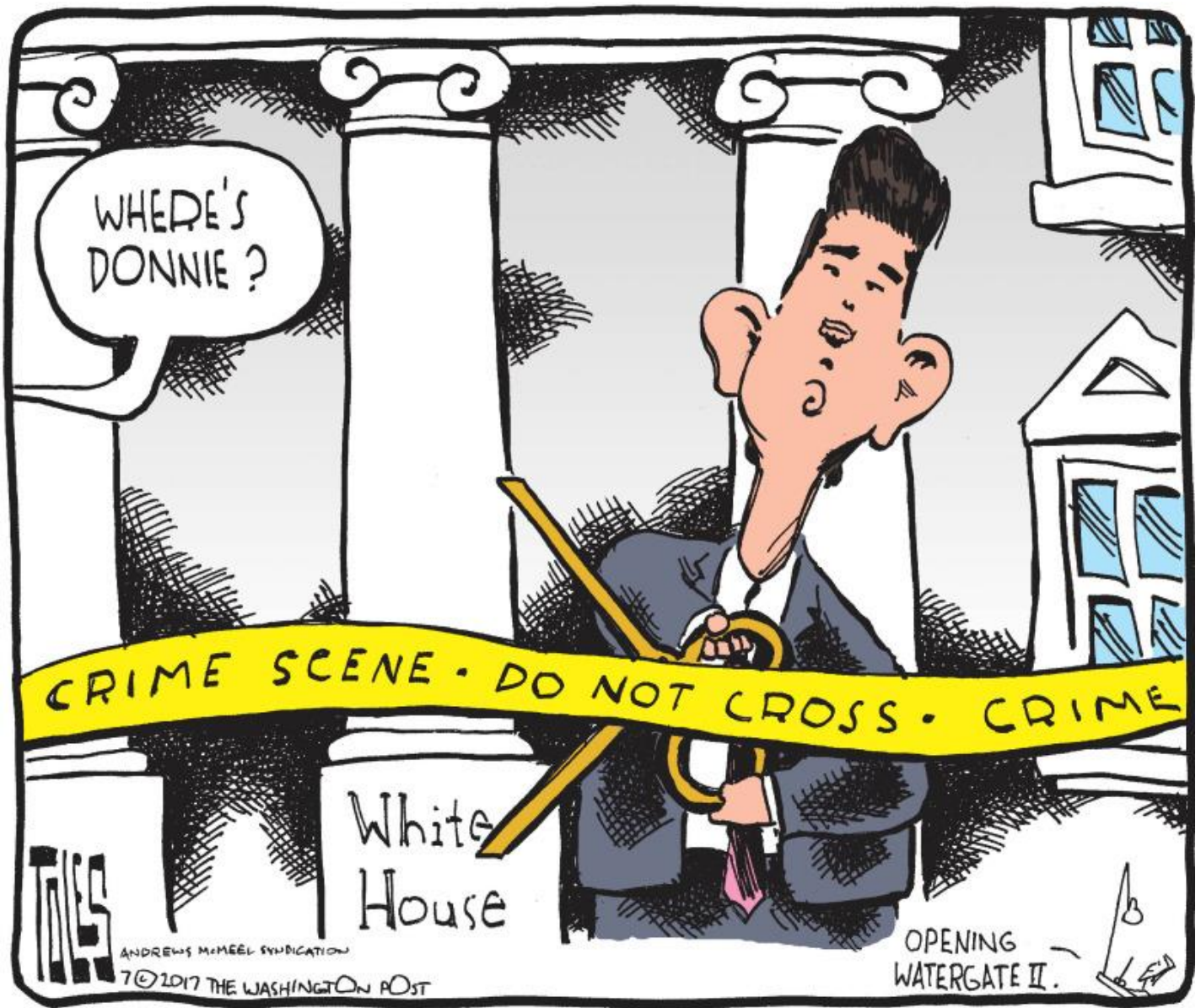
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FRANCE – EUROPE



Editorial : The Trump-Macron partnership

The Christian Science Monitor

3 minutes

July 13, 2017 —Just six months in office, President Trump has made no less than three trips to Europe, a place he calls a “blessing to the world” – that is, if it remains “strong.” During his travels he found a kindred spirit in another new and mold-breaking president, France’s Emmanuel Macron, who warned this month that Europe has “lost its way” and needs new leaders to revive it.

No wonder then that the two presidents met in

Paris this week to celebrate two key anniversaries in the history of Western civilization: Bastille Day, which marks the French Revolution, and the centennial of the entry of the United States into World War I – and the start of its long defense of transatlantic values. In their joint press conference July 13, they spoke of a shared vision on security threats, trade, and economic reform.

In a little-noticed speech in Poland on July 6, Mr. Trump seemed to defy the nationalist rhetoric of his 2016 campaign and his tweets by offering a full-throated affirmation of the Western tradition. He called on the West to assert “the great civilized ideas: individual liberty,

representative government, and the rule of law under God.” The Western alliance must also adapt to confront “powers” – implying Russia and the so-called Islamic State – that seek to test the confidence of Western democracies and “to erase the bonds of culture, faith and tradition that make us who we are.”

In particular, Trump finally affirmed his support of NATO’s Article 5, which requires mutual defense of nations in that alliance, and demanded that Russia stop its destabilizing actions in Ukraine.

For his part, Mr. Macron affirmed in a recent speech that he does not accept all the doubts within Europe

about its future. “I believe firmly in Europe,” he said, but it has been “weakened by the spread of bureaucracy.”

Both men, who are relatively new to politics, have found that their respective offices as president demand they look beyond narrow nationalist interests. Defending Western civilization, at least for now in either speeches or meetings, is a good start. The bonds of history between the US and Europe, especially France, run deep. Many new leaders in the West have had to learn not to ignore the



Invernizzi-Accetti and Ronchi : The Dangers of the Macron Model (online)

Carlo Invernizzi-Accetti and Francesco Ronchi

6-7 minutes

July 13, 2017 3:24 p.m. ET

In the wake of Emmanuel Macron’s stunning electoral victories, many in Europe believe they have found in France the defensive strategy they need to fight back against the onslaught of nationalist populism sweeping across the Continent. It’s not so simple.

The core of this strategy is an enormous concentration of power in a charismatic leader willing to move beyond the traditional Left-Right opposition and incorporate elements from both in an embrace of economic liberalization and European integration. The theory is that voters crave strong leaders who can steamroll opposition; if the mainstream can’t provide this sort of leadership, the fringe movements on the left or right will.

On constitutional reforms, Mr. Macron proposes to diminish the influence of Parliament by introducing an element of proportional representation into the National Assembly. This would weaken the institution by fragmenting the opposition without giving it real powers. It’s more a

“divide and conquer” strategy than a genuine effort to bolster democracy, and it opens up the country for the president to rule by decree.

There are, however, good reasons to believe that the Macron model will be difficult to export and may end up exacerbating the very problems it is meant to solve.

First, this strategy is dependent upon the peculiarities of the French electoral system. Mr. Macron and his party only won around 24% of the vote during the first round of presidential elections, and around 30% during the first round of the Parliamentary election. Factoring in the high rate of abstention in both cases, that’s consistently less than 20% of the electorate. Even with that meager level of popular support, Mr. Macron was able to secure complete control over the country’s executive branch and an absolute majority in Parliament.

Experience elsewhere shows mainstream parties and candidates require broader support to win power. In Britain, the Labour party won more than 40% of the vote in June’s election and yet fell short of the Conservatives in parliamentary seats. In Spain, a vote percentage similar to Mr. Macron’s for the Socialist party has triggered a profound crisis for the party.

By electing Mr. Macron, the French electoral system is doing exactly what it was designed by Charles de Gaulle to do: buying strong leadership at the expense of democratic representation and removing conflict from governing institutions in the name of national unity. This strategy of concentration may have been effective when French politics was characterized by strong ideological conflict and resilient political parties. Faced with the inefficiencies and indecisiveness of the Fourth Republic, strong leadership was widely held to be necessary to break the logjams of ideological polarization.

Today, however, both ideologies and parties are in crisis. Trust in the old mainstream parties has plummeted. Membership is declining, and both the Socialist and center-right Republican parties appear ideologically confused.

That leaves them increasingly dependent on mechanisms such as state funding to hobble along on the strength of the party structures they built in better times. The parties have a structure—officers and offices, bank accounts, funding, and a certain cachet in the media. But they lack a clear ideological point in terms of either a fully formed governing program or supporters on whose behalf to advance that program.

As a result, Mr. Macron now faces the prospect of virtually unimpeded government. While this might sound appealing both to him and to other mainstream politicians across Europe, it’s a major risk for both France and its new president.

If there is one consistent result across all the recent elections throughout Europe, it’s the increasing volatility and fragmentation of the electorate. In the face of such a landscape, a leadership that aims to unite everyone behind a single, overwhelmingly popular leader such as Mr. Macron means that certain social groups and interests will inevitably be left out. Simmering social conflicts will be exacerbated.

Without adequate expression at the institutional level, these tensions are bound to be transferred into opposition against the institutions themselves. Antiestablishment populism thrives when there is a lack of open, institutional and adversarial politics. Democratic representation isn’t just a matter of high-minded principle. It’s an effective way to contain and manage social conflict. As Friedrich Engels famously put it, it serves to “convert stones into paper ballots.”

A unilateral or insufficiently representative leadership is often too rigid to adapt to a changing

political environment and is therefore bound to foster antidemocratic opposition. Dialogue and conflict with a thriving opposition, in contrast, can benefit majorities by making them more responsive and reactive.

Effective government requires a

strong opposition. For this, fair, democratic representation and conflict are pragmatically useful. By channeling political opposition into the governmental process, majorities can correct and adjust their positions. The decision-making process may be messier and lengthier as a result, but the

outcomes will be more legitimate, credible and widely appealing.

Instead of fantasizing about a decisive yet establishment-friendly leadership to stem the tide of nationalist populism, Europe ought to foster fair, democratic

representation and vigorous institutionalized opposition.

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Robertson : Can Macron guide Trump back to center stage?

By Nic Robertson, CNN

Updated 8:23 AM ET, Fri July 14, 2017

Trump meets French President Macron 01:19

Nic Robertson is CNN's international diplomatic editor. The opinions in this article belong to the author.

(CNN)The problem with being at the top is that everyone wants to knock you down.

America has for decades been the poster boy for all that is good and all that is possible. It is the shining city on a hill.

President Donald Trump's trip to Paris -- at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron -- to attend the Bastille Day celebrations may have come at an opportune moment for those who value America's moral leadership. If Trump is willing to listen, a quiet word in his ear from America's oldest ally might wake him up to the fact that less friendly nations are trying to steal his clothes and take America's place.

France puts on military show as Trump marks Bastille Day in Paris

Take last week's G20 summit in Germany. By the estimation of many -- but admittedly not his faithful base -- the US President was outplayed by Russia, stonewalled by China, outflanked by Germany on trade before being isolated by everyone else on climate change.

The leader of the world's greatest superpower, it seems, no longer sets the course on world affairs.

This may all be part of Trump's "America First" policy. It may turn out fine: Ultimately the world could still bend to his will. But if the G20 was a test, some recalibration may be required -- urgently.

After Trump's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin last week, the only other American diplomat in the room, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson,

conceded that Trump recognized the Russian position on North Korea had different "tactics and pace" to his own. "I would say the Russians see it a little differently than we do, so we are going to continue those discussions and ask them to do more."

Eschewing allies -- and in the case of the Putin meeting even eschewing his own skilled Russia experts -- minimized Trump's ability to maneuver. And at this level of international diplomacy, the pitfalls are massive -- especially when dealing with a man accused of meddling in your elections.

The next day when meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Trump ran in to another impasse. Back in April when hosting the Chinese leader at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, he said the two countries have made "tremendous progress" and have an "outstanding relationship."

In Germany, the President's tone was less optimistic: "As far as North Korea is concerned, we will have, eventually, success. It may take longer than I'd like."

The harsh reality is that America -- despite Trump's varied Twitter proclamations to the contrary -- is being shoved aside.

None of this damage is necessarily irreparable, but it must also be worth considering at this point what can be done to shore up the US position as global guardian of much that is good.

In Paris, the French leader had a unique opportunity to explain how America's allies are seeing the Trump administration.

Macron, it seems, believes he can influence Trump and guide him back to center stage.

At a press conference Thursday in Paris, Macron said the two leaders had discussed counterterrorism and security. But the meeting was in essence about the allies getting to know each other as much as it was

about setting out substantive relations.

Macron, France's youngest President, and Trump, America's oldest, make an unlikely couple. If their handshake wars don't adequately reveal the tone of their relationship, then Trump's rejection of the Paris climate accord -- which was embraced by every other nation at the G20 -- has highlighted their significant differences.

"Make our planet great again," Macron tweeted shortly afterward. This is a meeting of egos, ambitions and controlling the media narrative.

At Bastille Day celebrations, Macron got to position the French military and its potent symbolism of strength right under Trump's nose.

Meanwhile, Trump gets to grandstand and recall the two countries' shared history: It's been 100 years since US troops came to France's aid in World War I. And when, during Thursday's joint press conference, he invoked last year's Nice attack, he was able to restate his message of Western values being under threat -- a message we heard in Poland only last week. But if Trump is able to contain himself, the prize could be huge. Macron, a rising star in European and global politics, is fresh from electoral triumph and has political capital to spend.

Trump knows that for all his talk of a fast trade deal with the UK, the European Union -- at least in the short term -- remains a juicier opportunity for the United States and might help Trump create some of those jobs he keeps talking about.

At a stroke, he can acquire the new poster boy of Western liberalism as an ally, make progress on an important trade deal for the country and, most importantly, show European allies that though America may look different, it's still at the table.

As ever with Trump, it won't be until after the visit that we learn how intently he has listened to Macron or

how likely he is to take anything he has said on board.

Both leaders already know only too well where their differences lie. But their short time together will give them a chance to sense where cooperation might become possible.

Donald Trump is not the only unpredictable leader in Paris today

Macron has called for another climate change conference for Paris in December, following on from the famous accord summit two years ago. Trump hinted he might now be ready to reconsider his isolationist anti-agreement position.

If Trump can escape his Washington trench warfare -- be it the encirclement of Russia's election meddling or the pressure to deliver on health care -- he may find in Macron a leader willing to engage where he can. As we heard Thursday, Syria and counterterrorism are good areas for Trump.

Both presidents agree that Syria's Bashar al-Assad can stay for now. Both view ISIS as a threat to national -- and international -- security.

An agreement between the two without further pitfalls could paper over some of the gaps that Trump is opening up between himself and America's traditional European partners. Agreement with Macron, a would-be modern-day Bismarck, would likely burnish Trump's not insubstantial sense of self and buy him some much needed international credibility.

Trump's visit to Paris will likely leave the young political star feeling that his valuable political capital, for now at least, has been wisely invested. Even he, the darling of the modern European dream, is like Trump beset by his own modest hubris. The difference is that Trump's, unlike Macron's, has a diminishing orbit.



Zaretsky : July 14 is a much more complicated holiday than the term 'Bastille Day' suggests

Robert Zaretsky

6-8 minutes

Today, Paris is fluttering with blue-white-and-red, tricolored flags, vibrating to the cadenced steps of French soldiers and echoing to renditions of “La Marseillaise.” It’s the 14th of July, a date as iconic as our own Fourth of July. But while Americans have marked and celebrated the Fourth almost from the very beginning, France needed nearly a century to settle on the 14th as their national holiday.

What accounts for this delay? The story of the 14th is more complicated, its significance more complex than is commonly understood.

What the French call *le quatorze juillet*, we know as Bastille Day. This is at it should be. On that date, a great throng of Parisians besieged the city’s medieval fortress and prison. They were driven not just by practical reasons — they were seeking arms — but also by political and ethical reasons: The Bastille symbolized the arbitrary, unchecked powers of the French monarchy. Horror stories associated with the Bastille were legion, mostly tied to the infamous *lettre de cachet*: the arrest order, as readers of Charles Dickens’ “A Tale of Two Cities” know, issued by the monarchy without just cause

**THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.**

4-5 minutes

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

PARIS—French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday pushed Germany to step up commitments to the eurozone with more investment as he met with Chancellor Angela Merkel, saying Berlin has benefited from a dysfunctional currency bloc and the weakness of other economies.

The French leader said the eurozone has deepened disparities, loading indebted nations with yet more debt and making competitive countries even more competitive.

France’s public debt stands at more than 96% of economic output, compared with 68.3% in Germany at the end of last year. Unemployment is above 9% in France but closer to 4% in Germany.

Mr. Macron is calling for a shared eurozone budget that could be used to for a variety of reasons, including helping currency members in

or judicial process.

While the Revolution’s bloody origins could not be denied, neither could they be acclaimed.

Never mind that when the revolutionaries sprung open the dungeon doors after a fierce battle, there were only seven prisoners, mostly crooks or madmen, including a wizened old man dubbed by his guards as “Major Immensity.” Nevertheless, in a preview of the bloody events that would soon follow, the thickening crowd, incensed over the deaths of fellow fighters, paraded the Bastille’s commander through the streets before pummeling him to death. His head then was sawn off with a penknife and displayed on a pole *pour encourager les autres* (roughly, to send a message).

One year later, the organizers of an official anniversary celebration called the Festival of the Federation tried to airbrush the taking of the Bastille. They downplayed the palpable class violence and sought instead to embrace the entire nation, bringing all of France to “the great national table.” This was not empty chatter. Aristocrats and workers, bourgeoisie and artisans had worked together to prepare for the festival. The parade, which lasted more than two hours under torrential rain, included civilians and soldiers, politicians and revolutionary militias. Arriving in France that same day,

British poet William Wordsworth sensed joy everywhere, like the “perfume of spring.”

Soon after, however, *le quatorze juillet*, a victim of the Bourbon Restoration, disappeared from holiday calendars the way the 13th floor disappeared from most American buildings. It was there, but unacknowledged, persona non grata at a national table where kings and emperors again presided. No table was long enough to seat the revolutionary values of liberty, equality and fraternity with the counterrevolutionary values of autocracy, inequality and hostility toward others.

As a result, the date led a furtive and forbidden existence, its memory kept alive by those committed to republic ideals. It was only with the overthrow of the second (and lesser) Bonaparte and establishment of the Third (and wiser) Republic in 1870 — oddly, the same year our long de facto national holiday became official — that July 14 could be celebrated again.

It took France 10 more years to decide *which* July 14, though. Behind door one was the taking of the Bastille in 1789, while behind door two was the making of the Federation in 1790. The choice of doors meant a choice of destinies. 1789 pointed to the “national razor” — a.k.a., the guillotine — while 1790 pointed to national celebration. But

the choice wasn’t simple: While the Revolution’s bloody origins could not be denied, neither could they be acclaimed. And so, in order to bring conservatives and radicals together, the Republic chose not to choose. Or, rather, to choose both.

During the parliamentary debate in June 1880, the Parisian deputy who proposed the official holiday, Bernard Raspail, declared that the Bastille’s fall and Festival’s parade were joined at the hip. The first event drew the curtain “on the old world and inaugurated a new world of justice, humanity and equality,” while the second event, by bringing together French from all walks of life, will “teach them to understand and love one another, and so establish our nation’s unity on an indestructible foundation.”

For this year’s festivities, France has invited U.S. President Trump, the herald of the so-called Trump Revolution. The president thus will have a front-row seat to recall the true meaning of revolution, one dedicated to the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, and predicated on the need for national unity.

Robert Zaretsky teaches at the University of Houston and is completing a book on Catherine the Great and the French Enlightenment.

Macron Pushes Germany to Commit More to Eurozone

William Horobin

economic distress, believing that would help address flaws revealed by the 2010 debt crisis.

“Germany has benefited from these malfunctions of the eurozone. This situation is not healthy because it is not sustainable,” Mr. Macron said in an interview with French regional paper *Ouest France* and the German *Funke Media Group*.

For the eurozone to have a future, the French leader said, it must have “powerful solidarity mechanisms.”

Mr. Macron’s leaning on Germany is his latest salvo in an attempt to strike a new deal for the eurozone.

As part of France’s side of the bargain, the 39-year-old has set in motion a fast-track parliamentary procedure to loosen France’s rigid labor laws and is taking austerity measures to bring the country’s deficit within European rules. Berlin has long called for such policies, but successive French governments have resisted when confronted with street protests and political opposition in France.

“Germany has to shift, like France has to shift,” Mr. Macron said in the interview.

The French leader said Germany should assist with a stimulus of public and private investment in Europe and work with France to find “the right macroeconomic plan.”

Ms. Merkel has signaled Germany is open to Mr. Macron’s ideas on changing how the eurozone works. But she has also expressed caution about Germany underwriting the liabilities of countries she says should accept their responsibilities on a national level.

Ms. Merkel instead puts greater emphasis on countries harmonizing their tax regimes and labor laws.

“A standstill in Europe is close to being a setback,” Ms. Merkel said at a news conference after meeting Mr. Macron. “In this respect, we need a dynamic, and part of this is economic convergence of eurozone member states as much as instruments that help make us independent.”

At the news conference, Mr. Macron stepped back from criticism of

Germany’s competitive advantage in the eurozone, saying his comments in the French press were reported ambiguously. Instead, he stressed that Germany implemented economic overhauls 15 years ago from which the country is now benefiting.

“In our relationship, we give lessons to nobody,” Mr. Macron said.

Ms. Merkel said, “We have the utmost interest in all countries of the eurozone and the European Union being strong. That’s why we follow French reforms with great interest [...] and with the hope that France will emerge stronger.”

The two leaders were meeting in Paris Thursday as part of an annual Franco-Germany cabinet meeting. Before sitting down with ministers, Ms. Merkel and Mr. Macron visited a center for promoting exchanges between young French and German people.

The two leaders participated in language learning games, introducing themselves in each other’s languages and fielding questions on topics from rules banning headscarves in French

schools to teaching languages to refugees.

"Tensions are always born from misunderstandings. Learning

languages enables us to lift those misunderstandings," Mr. Macron said.

—Andrea Thomas in Berlin contributed to this article.

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The
Washington
Post

Trump and Macron, once cast as adversaries, show they have much in common

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

10-12 minutes

PARIS — For dinner on Thursday, French President Emmanuel Macron chose to dine with President Trump at Le Jules Verne, an opulent restaurant nestled in the Eiffel Tower that has earned a Michelin star yet still carries the reputation of being an overpriced tourist destination.

The extravagant meal capped off a day filled with frequent backslaps, handshakes, toothy smiles, knee pats, photo ops and a shared determination to find common ground.

Up until now, the relationship between these two world leaders has been largely defined by their stark differences — Trump vs. the international anti-Trump — and a defining moment occurred in May when the boyish 39-year-old French centrist fought for dominance in a white-knuckle handshake with the red-faced 70-year-old U.S. president in front of reporters and cameras. (Trump has since had a birthday.)

But as their presidencies slowly age, it is becoming clear the two leaders have a lot in common.

Both are political outsiders holding their first elective positions and relish having defied their countries' main political parties, and they maintain contentious relationships with the media. Both have pledged to dramatically shake up the establishment and rid their capitals of power players and bureaucrats who have long wielded influence. Both have stressed business-friendly policies and promised to roll back regulations.

U.S. President Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron discussed Russia, China, the Paris climate agreement and terrorism at a joint news conference on July 13. U.S. President Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron discuss Russia, China, the Paris climate agreement and terrorism at a joint news conference (Reuters)

(Reuters)

Both are seeking to confront terrorism with actions critics say

could infringe on the freedoms of their citizens.

And Trump and Macron also appear to enjoy the opulence of places such as Le Jules Verne and the pomp that accompanies being a world leader. In the two months that Macron has been president, he has made two major public declarations at Versailles, while Trump likes to give television crews tours of the Oval Office and has hosted several events in the Rose Garden.

Macron's allies are quick to challenge comparisons to Trump, arguing that former president Barack Obama is a better match, but his critics contend the emerging similarities are more than superficial.

"They both want a monopoly on public attention and are attracted by constant media coverage. And there is a similar kind of narcissism in their attraction to power," said Patrick Weil, a French constitutional scholar and leading historian of immigration. "Both show a will to govern against the Parliament and against the press — without any separation or balance of power."

For his part, Macron has quickly and quietly amassed an authority that Trump could only dream of possessing. In a country where the executive is already stronger than in many of its Western counterparts, the new president will govern largely with a coalition entirely of his own creation — with deputies he himself hand-selected. The new party that Macron created — "En Marche!" (Onward) — bears his initials, which some see as Macron placing himself at the center of political life. The French media has likened him to a "Jupiter" in the Elysee Palace and called him the "sun president," a playful recasting of the "sun king," another name for Louis XIV, France's iconic monarch.

Last week, Macron gave a 90-minute address to both houses of Parliament at Versailles and announced his intent to get rid of one-third of France's 577 parliamentary deputies, in front of the very deputies whose positions would conceivably be eliminated.

"The French people have shown their impatience with a political world made up of sterile quarrels and hollow ambitions in which we have lived up until now," Macron said.

President Trump praised French first lady Brigitte Macron's physique July 13, during his meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron. President Trump praised French first lady Brigitte Macron's physique July 13, during his meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron. (Emmanuel Macron/Facebook)

(Emmanuel Macron/Facebook)

It was a more poetic version of Trump's popular rallying cry: "Drain the swamp!"

When Trump and Macron stand side-by-side — as they did during a news conference on Thursday afternoon in a gilded ballroom at Paris's Elysee Palace — it can be difficult to spot any similarities.

Trump towers over Macron but often slumped or leaned heavily on his lectern with his suit jacket unbuttoned, his hair a bit unruly and his face in a scowl. He agreed to this trip at the last minute and showed up with an entourage that did not include anyone from the State Department — and he has yet to name an ambassador to France. He spoke in vague proclamations instead of specifics. "We will talk about that over the coming period of time," he said of his decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord and whether he might revisit it. "And if it happens, that'll be wonderful. And if it doesn't, that'll be okay, too. But we'll see what happens."

Meanwhile, Macron wore a closely tailored dark suit that was buttoned and he stood at perfect attention, his hair neatly in place. He prepares extensively for public appearances such as this one and filled his remarks with purposeful talking points, speaking with precision — and, at times, in English. Macron went out of his way to avoid conflict with Trump or highlight their differences, despite the U.S. president's deep unpopularity in France.

Earlier in the afternoon, Trump and first lady Melania Trump met with Macron and his wife at Les Invalides, a historic complex in central Paris that is home to Napoleon Bonaparte's tomb. As the two couples exchanged pleasantries, Trump sized up Brigitte Macron and commented: "You're in such good shape." He then repeated

the comment to President Macron, who has proudly filled half his cabinet positions with women and insisted on absolute gender parity for his party's ticket in France's recent parliamentary elections.

From there, the two traveled to Elysee Palace to meet one-on-one and then discussed terrorism and other pressing issues with their top aides.

On the campaign trail, Trump promised to "bomb the s---" out of the Islamic State, seize oil from land it controls, kill the relatives of suspected terrorists and bring back waterboarding. In December 2015, Trump proposed temporarily banning all foreign Muslims from entering the United States, and as president, he signed two executive orders that tried to temporarily limit the entrance of people from several predominantly Muslim countries.

Macron was accused of being too soft on terrorism during the French campaign, a charge that has vanished in his first few months as president. He stunned French liberals — many of whom supported him in the election — when he proposed making permanent some portions of French law that grants the government a host of temporary powers during times of crisis to ensure national security.

France has been under an official "state of emergency" since Nov. 14, 2015, the day after Islamic State militants orchestrated a series of deadly attacks on a Paris concert hall and cafes, killing 130. In the 18 months since then, police have been able to conduct warrantless home searches and place individuals under house arrest if they appear "suspicious" in any way.

To the chagrin of civil liberties advocates, Macron has proposed making certain these powers are permanent — albeit with a judicial review component. On Tuesday, more than 200 French academics and researchers condemned the state of emergency in a harshly worded public letter.

While Macron has condemned Trump's travel ban and comments about Muslims, he has done little since taking office to help migrants displaced by conflicts in the Middle East resettle in his country.

Jacques Toubon, France's public defender of civil liberties and a former justice minister, likened Macron's recent proposal to a French Patriot Act, and criticized what he called the law's "fluid, cloudy" definitions of terrorists and terrorism. "What does it mean, 'terrorist?'" Toubon asked. "What does it mean, 'terrorism?'"

The gray areas, he said, were "dangerous for our national cohesion."

"There needs to be a debate," Toubon said of the proposal. "The people, the Parliament, the intellectuals must debate this question — or the question will never come to be debated."

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

4-6 minutes

Updated July 13, 2017 5:58 p.m. ET

PARIS—The air of regal authority surrounding the young presidency of Emmanuel Macron was on full display Thursday as he played host to U.S. President Donald Trump.

Flanked by Mr. Trump, the 39-year-old French president strode through the courtyard of the Hôtel des Invalides inspecting a line of soldiers before descending beneath the golden dome of the grandiose former military hospital to pay homage at the tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The visit's martial overtones were no accident for a president who has called for more imperious leadership, inviting comparisons to Louis XIV, the "Sun King" who held court at the Palace of Versailles, and even to Jupiter, the king of the gods in Roman mythology. Mr. Macron has made Versailles itself an unusually frequent backdrop for his presidency, hosting recent talks there with Russian President Vladimir Putin and summoning lawmakers to the palace for a rare

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

William Horobin

7-9 minutes

Updated July 13, 2017 6:04 p.m. ET

PARIS—U.S. President Donald Trump and his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, lavished praise

After giving brief remarks Thursday, Trump and Macron prepared to take four questions from reporters — a rarity for the two leaders, who have largely avoided the media.

Evening Edition newsletter

The day's most important stories.

Trump has called the media the "enemy of the people" and often labels stories he does not like "fake news." Hours before boarding his flight to Paris, Trump tweeted that the media has launched "the greatest Witch Hunt in political history" against his eldest son, who admitted this week to meeting with a Russian lawyer in hopes of learning damaging information about Democrat nominee Hillary Clinton during the 2016 campaign.

Emmanuel Macron Takes Regal Approach to French Presidency

Stacy Meichtry
and Nick Kostov

joint session of parliament.

Mr. Macron's penchant for pomp and monarchical authority has surprised many supporters who hailed him upon his election in May as a champion of Western liberal democracy for defeating Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front.

Since then, however, the president has eschewed the consensus-seeking approach of his former boss and immediate predecessor, François Hollande, who memorably described himself as a "normal" president.

Normalcy isn't Mr. Macron's style.

"He has a lot of authority. He's perhaps authoritarian," said Jean-Hervé Lorenzi, an adviser to previous governments who worked alongside Mr. Macron on the 2012 Hollande campaign.

Mr. Macron has adopted what he once described as a "Jupiterian" posture: remaining above the fray and unleashing an occasional thunderbolt to impose order.

In an interview with business magazine *Challenges* in October, Mr. Macron said the presidency needed to embody "a new form of democratic authority."

on one another on Thursday as they touted the growing bond between their two nations, in a pointed effort to move past the deep divisions on display at last week's Group of 20 summit.

Speaking at a joint news conference at the Élysée Palace in Paris, Mr. Trump said the two allies are "together, perhaps more so than ever" and called Mr. Macron a "great

leader" and a "tough president." Mr. Macron said the two leaders would "dine as friends" at the lavish restaurant Le Jules Verne on the second floor of the Eiffel Tower later in the evening.

The two sought to use Mr. Trump's whirlwind trip in honor of Bastille Day to bolster what has been a short but sometimes rocky relationship. Doing so serves both

Macron, meanwhile, tried to hand-select which journalists would accompany him on a recent trip to visit French troops stationed in West Africa and has accused French reporters of leading a "manhunt" during the election. He also broke with the tradition of holding a news conference on Bastille Day, which is Friday. An Elysee official told *Le Monde* newspaper that Macron's "complex thought process lends itself badly to the game of question-and-answer with journalists."

When it came time for the last question of Thursday's news conference, Macron prompted Trump with a reminder: "One last question, for an American journalist." Trump then called on a correspondent for a Chinese

television network who is based in France, who asked about his relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Hours later, Trump and Macron reconvened at the Eiffel Tower for dinner, huddling with their wives at a table next to a wall of windows as the crimson sun fell toward the horizon, illuminating the historic city's skyline.

When asked about his first day in Paris, Trump responded: "Very good."

Still Mr. Macron is likely to get his way, officials say, because he commands a large majority of freshman parliamentarians whom he handpicked in founding his fledgling political party, La République en Marche.

On Thursday, the president warned an audience of military officers not to publicly cross him after a high-profile general reportedly told a parliament committee he would oppose the government's line on military spending.

"For me it's undignified to wash dirty linen in public," Mr. Macron said, adding: "I am your boss."

Mr. Macron's approval ratings remain high, and some analysts think his authoritarian streak is effective in a country that has a long history of monarchs and strongmen, from Clovis, the first king of the Franks who ruled in the sixth century, to Gen. Charles de Gaulle.

"He's perfectly understood from the start that the French like quasi-royal power," Mr. Lorenzi said.

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leaders, as Mr. Macron seeks to cultivate a powerful ally and Mr. Trump seeks a bridge out of his growing isolation abroad.

In perhaps the clearest sign of newfound bonhomie between the two leaders, Mr. Trump dangled the prospect of rejoining the Paris Climate Accord in the future after deciding earlier this year to withdraw the U.S. from the international pact.

"Something could happen with respect to the Paris accord, but we'll see what happens," Mr. Trump said. "The U.S. remains committed to remaining a leader in environmental protection."

French officials interpreted the proclamation as more of an olive branch than an actual policy announcement. "It's not completely new, but it's a bit more balanced than what he said June 1," a French official said, referring to the date Mr. Trump announced the withdrawal.

The two also touched on other issues that have divided them, including trade, but emphasized their joint efforts on counterterrorism and in Syria. The two nations have encountered no trouble finding common ground on combatting terrorism, Mr. Macron said, adding he hoped the countries could in coming months increase their cooperation to fight a "global threat."

The two leaders appeared, at least for now, to have made an effort to move past disagreements, as Mr. Macron said world leaders must do. "Does that mean we have to stop talking about the other subjects? No, resolutely and in no case," he said.

At one point, Mr. Trump clapped Mr. Macron on the back as he described an "unbreakable" friendship between the two nations—"and ourselves." Later, the French leader threw a wink at his U.S. counterpart as Mr. Trump praised him for his plans to shrink the French bureaucracy.

Mr. Trump's diplomacy efforts extended to the French first lady,

Brigitte Macron, too. "You're in such good shape," he told her after their joint tour of the museum at the Hôtel des Invalides, in comments captured by a video on the French presidential Facebook account. "Beautiful."

Mr. Trump said early last month he would begin negotiations to either re-enter the Paris agreement under new terms or craft a new deal that he judges fair to the U.S. and its workers—an assertion viewed skeptically by the nearly 200 countries that signed the pact, many of which have said they aren't interested in renegotiating.

On Thursday, Mr. Trump called for "reciprocal and fair" trade deals but stopped short of his typically harsh rhetoric on countries with which the U.S. has trade deficits. "Both President Macron and I understand the responsibility to prioritize the interests of our country and at the same time be respectful of the world in which we live," he said.

At last week's G-20 summit, Mr. Macron took swipes at Mr. Trump and others for equating fair trade with avoiding bilateral deficits.

Mr. Trump's effusive praise of France marked a reversal from his previous comments. In the fall of 2016, ahead of his election victory, Mr. Trump called the country "a disaster"; on Thursday, he said it was "beautiful."

When Mr. Trump last month announced the U.S. withdrawal from the climate accord, he said he had been elected to "represent the

citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris." Mr. Macron retorted provocatively, parodying Mr. Trump's election campaign slogan to "Make America Great Again" with a call to "Make the Planet Great Again." He also set up a website inviting investors and climate academics to emigrate to France.

Mr. Trump touched down in Paris early Thursday morning for a whirlwind trip to celebrate Bastille Day and commemorate the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into World War I. On Friday, Mr. Trump and first lady Melania Trump will be the guests of honor at a military parade down the Champs-Élysées before returning to Washington in the early afternoon.

Back in Washington, Mr. Trump has faced a growing furor over his eldest son's decision last June to accept a meeting to discuss what he was told was a Russian government offer of damaging information about Democrat Hillary Clinton. On Thursday, he defended his son but didn't answer a question on whether he felt he was misled about the existence of the meeting during the campaign.

The French president has faced criticism from leftist political rivals for inviting Mr. Trump. On Thursday, Mr. Macron stressed that the shared history of the U.S. and France is greater than either he or Mr. Trump.

"The presence of Mr. Trump here is not just natural, but it's also a very good thing for the history of our countries," he said.

Before his meetings with Mr. Macron, Mr. Trump was treated to an elaborate military ceremony at the Hôtel des Invalides, built in the 1670s to care for and house injured war veterans. Mr. Macron led his American counterpart on a tour of the building, which holds the tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte. They were accompanied by their wives, who split off to tour Notre Dame Cathedral and take a boat ride as their husbands traveled to the Élysée Palace for bilateral talks.

Messrs. Trump and Macron had a tense start to their relationship following Mr. Macron's victory in May after a campaign in which Mr. Trump had expressed support for his opponent, far-right politician Marine Le Pen.

In their first meeting, at a NATO summit in Brussels in May, the two leaders' handshake devolved into a white-knuckled, jaw-clenching contest. Mr. Macron later told a French newspaper the move was intended to show he wouldn't "make small concessions, not even symbolic ones."

At the start of their meeting on Thursday, the two leaders' handshake was markedly less ferocious. Mr. Trump unclasped his hand first.

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Appeared in the July 14, 2017, print edition as 'Trump and Macron Stress the Positive.'

The New York Times Trump Defends His Son and Plays Down Differences With French Leader (UNE)

Maggie Haberman and Mark Landler

9-11 minutes

President Trump and President Emmanuel Macron of France held a bilateral meeting on Thursday at the Élysée Palace in Paris. Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

PARIS — President Trump on Thursday defended his eldest son's decision last June to meet with a Kremlin-linked Russian lawyer during the election campaign, saying "most people would have taken that meeting" and "nothing happened from the meeting, zero happened from the meeting."

"My son is a wonderful young man," Mr. Trump said during a news conference in Paris with President Emmanuel Macron of France. "He took a meeting with a Russian

lawyer. Not a government lawyer; a Russian lawyer."

Mr. Trump came to Paris at the invitation of Mr. Macron to take part in Bastille Day celebrations to mark the 100th anniversary of America's entry into World War I.

As the two leaders, an odd couple on the international stage, faced the news media after a private meeting at the Élysée Palace, they sought to play down sharp differences over trade, immigration and climate change. Mr. Macron looked on as the president defended his son in the scandal over possible links between Mr. Trump's presidential campaign and the Russian government.

Mr. Trump said Donald Trump Jr. had merely been responding to a person offering opposition research on his opponent, Hillary Clinton — a common practice in presidential campaigns. "Politics is not the nicest

business," he said, noting that he had received similar offers.

Trump Downplays Donald Jr.'s Meeting as 'Standard' Practice

President Trump, in Paris to meet with President Emmanuel Macron, spoke about the meeting Donald Trump Jr. attended in June 2016 with a Russian lawyer.

By ASSOCIATED PRESS. Photo by Pool photo by ... Watch in Times Video »

The president tried to deflect attention from his son by asserting that President Barack Obama's attorney general, Loretta E. Lynch, had approved a visa for the Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, to enter the United States.

Ms. Veselnitskaya did receive a waiver from the Justice Department in October 2015 to enter the United States to defend a Russian client

involved in a criminal case in New York. Immigration lawyers said the waiver, known as a "significant public benefit parole," is standard practice in such cases.

On climate change, Mr. Trump acknowledged his differences with Mr. Macron — highlighted when Mr. Trump announced six weeks ago that he would withdraw the United States from the Paris climate accord. When asked whether he would reconsider his decision, the president left the door open to some kind of unspecified compromise.

"Something could happen with respect to the Paris accord," Mr. Trump said. "We'll see what happens." He added, "If it happens, it will be wonderful; if it doesn't, that will be O.K., too."

Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

Mr. Macron also acknowledged the disagreement over the climate accord, but noted that the two leaders agreed on many other issues. He also said he understood Mr. Trump's motivation in withdrawing, even if he disagreed with him. "My willingness is to continue to work with the United States," he said. "I understand it is important to save jobs."

Asked for his assessment of President Xi Jinping of China, Mr. Trump referred to him as a "terrific guy" and said the two men had a good working relationship, though he reiterated his disappointment that China had not done more to pressure North Korea on its nuclear and missile programs. "Probably he could do a little bit more," Mr. Trump said. "But we'll see."

At several points during the news conference, Mr. Trump reached over to touch Mr. Macron's arm. And when a French journalist asked Mr. Trump if he believed that his host would keep France safe from terrorism — something he had criticized the previous French government for failing to do — Mr. Trump went out of his way to praise Mr. Macron.

"You have a great leader, a tough president," he said. "He's not going to be easy on people who are breaking the law."

Then, turning to Mr. Macron and leaning into his microphone, Mr. Trump added: "You better do a good job, please. Otherwise, you're going

to make me look bad."

Mr. Trump and Mr. Macron appeared to have put initial tensions in their relationship behind them in the service of developing a working partnership, and in the love of a parade.

President Trump and the first lady, Melania Trump, arrived at Paris Orly Airport on Thursday. The French leader invited Mr. Trump to the Bastille Day celebration. Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

Mr. Trump loves the trappings of the presidency, whether in the United States or in another country. That includes occupying the most prestigious seats at the Bastille Day ceremony, a pomp-filled parade steeped in military tradition and hardware.

Mr. Trump, for his own inaugural parade, had expressed a desire to include tanks and fighter jets. That wish was not granted, but Mr. Trump remains transfixed by displays of military power.

He arrived in Europe once again leaving behind a trail of questions related to Russian meddling in the 2016 election, flying to the more welcoming arms of a foreign leader with whom his bond is still fragile.

Mr. Macron and Mr. Trump have had an unusual relationship, characterized in public primarily by a few forceful, awkward handshakes — particularly their first, which Mr. Macron made clear was an effort to show the American president that he could not be bullied.

So Mr. Trump's decision to accept Mr. Macron's invitation startled some of his aides.

For the embattled American president, trips overseas — the visit to France will be his third abroad in two months — have been a surprising pleasure, a reprieve from days filled with cable news coverage of the Russia investigation, and swirling questions of whether his campaign aides worked in concert with the foreign power.

For Mr. Macron, who took office in May, the visit is a chance to establish himself, if only by default, as Mr. Trump's first point of contact in Western Europe, at a time when Britain is distracted by its plans to leave the European Union, and Germany is focused on its national elections in the fall.

It is an unlikely partnership, given Mr. Trump's stated admiration for Marine Le Pen, the far-right populist whom Mr. Macron defeated in May, and the leaders' radically different worldviews. Mr. Macron is a pro-European technocrat who admires Silicon Valley, while Mr. Trump is an "America First" nationalist who is skeptical of multilateral institutions like the European Union.

Mr. Trump's visit to Paris began with an airport arrival ceremony. He then attended a meeting with troops at the American ambassador's residence while Melania Trump, the first lady, toured the Necker children's hospital.

"I always say how important it is to have, you know, teachers in

children's lives," Mrs. Trump said. "It's the most important. They see them every day and spend so much time. It's very important in the child's life."

"You look very good. Very strong," Mrs. Trump told a 14-year-old girl in a wheelchair. "One day you will be walking and running."

At the ambassador's residence, Mr. Trump joined a lunch that was also attended by Mike Pompeo, the C.I.A. director; Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, the national security adviser; and Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The president also addressed military personnel and their families, before departing for the Hôtel National des Invalides, a sprawling patchwork of museums that includes the tomb of the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

At one point when the two presidential couples were together, Mr. Trump told Mrs. Macron, "You're in such good shape."

Later, the two leaders had a meeting at the Élysée, the presidential palace, followed by the joint news conference. The men capped the day with a dinner at Le Jules Verne, the elite, blue-lobster-serving restaurant ensconced in the Eiffel Tower.

That meal was something of a surprise, considering Mr. Trump's fondness for ketchup-doused steak and cheeseburgers.



Macron welcomes Trump at a military parade — but he's also cutting France's defense budget (online)

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

6-7 minutes

WorldViews

Analysis

Analysis Interpretation of the news based on evidence, including data, as well as anticipating how events might unfold based on past events

By Adam Taylor

WorldViews

Analysis

Analysis Interpretation of the news based on evidence, including data, as well as anticipating how events might unfold based on past events

July 14 at 1:00 AM

President Trump will join French President Emmanuel Macron for a

Bastille Day military parade Friday — an invitation that appears to have pleased a U.S. leader who, despite having never served himself, is enthralled by all things military.

For Macron, the parade is a chance to show off France's considerable military hardware to an important partner, while also commemorating the 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I. Yet as the parade was due to start, there were signs of tension between the French president and his own military leaders.

The problem? Macron campaigned on a platform of increasing defense spending. And this week, his government announced that it would be making significant cuts to France's defense budget this year.

News of the slashed budget came as Macron's government revealed plans to lower taxes this year. In an interview with Les Echos

newspaper, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe confirmed that proposed tax cuts would be offset fiscally by limiting government spending. This meant that the defense budget would see cuts of \$968 million in 2017, Philippe said.

The decision caused anger among French military leaders, who argued that they were already overstretched by expensive foreign commitments in places like Syria and Mali, as well as counterterrorism operations at home. French Army Chief of Staff Jean-Pierre Bosser threatened to resign over the budget cuts, according to reports in the French media Thursday.

Benjamin Haddad, a research fellow on European and transatlantic politics at the Hudson Institute, said Macron's defense budget sent a "confusing signal after campaigning on increasing defense spending and at the very moment when France is fighting on all these

different fronts." Macron's very first trip abroad as head of state was to Mali, Haddad noted, the country at a center of a complicated West African military operation which now involves 3,500 French soldiers.

The debate over spending is a major test for Macron, the youngest French president since Napoleon Bonaparte. Just last year, he formed his own political movement that promised to bring a fresh, entrepreneurial approach to government. His proposed tax cuts are a clear break from the policies of his predecessor, François Hollande, who imposed a 75 percent income tax on high earners. Macron — a former banker — hopes these cuts can make the French economy attractive to investors.

However, Macron's government appears to be struggling to balance the books in a country which has long spent more than it takes in. The new French government has also

promised to push down the country's budget deficit, which just last month its national audit office said would be over the European Union limit of 3 percent for the 10th consecutive year in 2017.

Even within the government, there appears to be disagreement. Philippe had initially announced that tax cuts would be postponed until 2019, but he was later overruled by Macron. Florence Parly, Macron's minister of the armed forces, is also in a weak position to negotiate, having only recently stepped into the

position after her predecessor was accused of corruption.

Macron's assurances during the campaign that he would increase spending to reach 2 percent of France's gross domestic product also make things tricky. That 2 percent target — a benchmark agreed upon by NATO defense ministers in 2006, but not reached by a many of the alliance's members — has been a frequent point of reference for Trump, who often suggested on the campaign trail that America's well-funded military

partners were not pulling their weight.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

According to figures released by NATO this year, France spends 1.79 percent of its GDP on defense. Macron has said that the government is still committed to reaching the 2 percent benchmark by 2025 and that defense spending will rise next year. But analysts say that these cuts will make it difficult

reach the 3 percent target in the longer term.

"By making these cuts in the short term, Macron is not yet backtracking on his campaign pledge to increase spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2025," Fenella McGerty, an analyst for Jane's Defense Budgets, wrote in an email. "However, this reduction in 2017 will make the path toward this goal all the more steep and potentially unfeasible."



France puts on military show as Trump marks Bastille Day in Paris

By Kevin Liptak,
CNN White

House Producer

Updated 7:24 AM ET, Fri July 14, 2017

Story highlights

- Security was tight as US President Donald Trump marked Bastille Day
- US aircraft participated in the flyover over Paris

Paris (CNN) France treated President Donald Trump to an elaborate military display on Friday, a strategic show of friendship by the new leader here who hopes to elevate his country's global standing by flattering his US counterpart.

Thousands of French troops paraded down the Champs-Élysées in a dramatic show of pageantry to mark the storming of the Bastille military prison in 1789, a turning point in the French Revolution.

Trump and French President Emmanuel Macron reviewed the procession side-by-side from a stand at the Place de la Concorde, appearing in periodic and friendly conversation during the two-hour spectacle, which included 241 horses, 63 airplanes and 29 helicopters all advancing down and above the tree-lined avenue.

They shared another extended handshake as they parted ways, each man gripping the other's arm as they paced the cobblestones of the stately plaza.

This year, the celebration is also meant to commemorate the centennial of US entry into World War I, hence Macron's invitation to Trump to attend.

In addition to the display of French military might, the parade was augmented by about 150 US soldiers, airmen, sailors, and Marines, as well as American aircraft participating in the flyover.

All told, Trump and Macron spent upwards of five hours in one-on-one time during Trump's 30-hour visit to the French capital. Unlike past French presidents, Macron speaks nearly perfect English and could converse easily without a translator.

Added to his earlier meetings with Trump last month, Macron is now the foreign leader who has spent the most time with the US leader since he took office in January.

In brief remarks following the ceremony, Macron channeled some of Trump's populist strains, declaring that France's values must be preserved and underscoring a militaristic effort to uphold personal liberties.

"On this day of national celebration, we must not ever forget the price

that we paid for conquering, for winning our rights," he said. "The price which we are prepared to pay to defend them because it is they which unite us and make France, France and make France what it is today."

Security around the area was tight amid heightened security in Paris following a series of terror attacks over the past several years. This year's Bastille Day also marks the one-year anniversary of the truck attack along the Promenade des Anglais, in Nice, which killed more than 80. Macron was due to fly to the Riviera city to commemorate the victims after bidding Trump farewell in Paris.

It's a packed itinerary for the new French president, who has taken to dramatic displays of Gallic splendor in welcoming Trump to France. Thursday saw a full military review and a tour of Napoleon's tomb at Les Invalides before a haute dining experience on the second landing of the Eiffel Tower.

France acts as a key security partner for the United States and has been the second largest contributor to the US-led anti-ISIS coalition, but its days as a military power have faded somewhat. Macron hopes to return his country to major global standing, including by reaching out to the isolationist Trump.

Macron hopes to act as Trump's bridge to Europe, his advisers have said, as other leaders here effectively isolate the US on a set of key issues. While Macron has made his differences with his American counterpart known, he's also made plain his desire to foster a close bond.

Trump, meanwhile, has appeared more than pleased at his reception here. As President, Trump has basked in the traditional trappings of power, including the military symbols of the office.

Trump reportedly requested military hardware to be included in his inaugural parade, though ultimately the usual mix of marching bands processed down Pennsylvania Avenue instead of tanks and troops.

In Paris, however, Trump witnessed his desired show of military might, albeit another country's. He stood and clapped as six F15 Thunderbirds flew overhead, saluted as American troops processed past, and appeared to enjoy a jaunty finale performed by a French military band.

He received applause as he departed, waving to a friendly crowd before stepping into his armored limousine for the ride to Orly airport — an upbeat departure for a leader who now returns back to a storm of controversy back home.



Trump revels in French military pomp far from White House turmoil (online)

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

6-8 minutes

to mark Bastille Day in Paris on July 14. (The Washington Post)

(The Washington Post)

PARIS — First came dozens of French soldiers in historical uniforms who rode into the Place de la Concorde square on horseback. Then French President Emmanuel Macron arrived at the Bastille Day parade viewing stage Friday, riding

in a military jeep as if it were a chariot.

A military band struck up and vintage tanks and other military equipment began rolling into the square as a video shot in action-movie style explained the technological advances France has made since World War I.

Suddenly, nine fighter jets roared past overhead, leaving a trail of red,

white and blue smoke — representing the French tricolor flag — and 200 marchers wearing American World War I uniforms marched along with hundreds of French military personnel.

Watching it all with Macron was President Trump, who made a last-minute trip to Paris this week to witness the grand military parade of France's Bastille Day, which this

year included a tribute to the centennial anniversary of the United States entering World War I.

Even from a distance, the president could be seen eagerly leaning forward in his seat of honor and gesturing to his wife or Macron as each new spectacle came forth. During short lulls, Trump would pull Macron in for a conversation.

[Excerpts from Trump's comments on Air Force One]

Trump has long been fascinated by the military and had hoped to have a similar parade to celebrate his inauguration in January, but he was prevented from doing so.

Macron has been sharply criticized across the political spectrum in France for honoring Trump with this visit, as the U.S. president is deeply unpopular in France. A Pew Research Center poll recently found that only 14 percent of people say they have confidence in Trump.

Yet the president was largely shielded from any dissent and from a "Don't Let Your Guard Down Against Trump" protest march that started more than a mile away from where he sat.

"Donald Trump? I don't like it. I don't understand why he's here," said one of the spectators to the military march, Riad

Jhops, 33, an Algerian living in Drancy, a Paris suburb, and who works for an Algerian aluminum company. "He says he has a problem with our climate treaty, and then he comes for the 14th of July."

He added that Trump's policies and world view is particularly worrisome to Muslims. "Too hard, too hard," he said on the prospects of many Muslims accepting Trump.

Michel Viotti, who works in home decoration in provincial Arles, attended the parade for the first time this year.

"My son's in the military, so it means something to me," said Viotti, 58. "It's good that France is recognizing the U.S. for their help during the war. I've visited the American cemetery in Normandy and think everyone should."

[Trump's legal team struggles to rein in their client]

The parade marks the end of Trump's whirlwind 27-hour visit to the City of Light, which included meeting with U.S. troops based in Europe, a visit Napoleon's tomb, talks with Macron and his staff, a news conference and dinner at an opulent restaurant in the Eiffel Tower.

Trump and Macron are political outsiders in the early months of their

presidencies, and their relationship up until now has been defined by public confrontations. Both leaders said they are committed to finding areas of agreement and developing a productive relationship. Both highlighted the generations-long friendship between the two nations, especially when it comes to national security.

Although Trump repeatedly slammed Paris on the campaign trail — describing it as dangerous and crime-ridden because of an influx of immigrants — he said on Thursday that his view has changed now that Macron is in office and that he looks forward to returning to Paris.

Paris law enforcement officials had planned for heightened security on Bastille Day after a terrorist last year drove a truck through a crowd that had just watched a fireworks display in the seaside city of Nice in southern France, killing 86.

Local Politics Alerts

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

After the parade, Macron plans to travel to Nice to remember those who were killed. Trump will return to the United States on Friday afternoon, arriving home in time for the start of the weekend.

Compared with the violent demonstrations of thousands in Hamburg last week for the Group of 20 summit — when anti-capitalist protesters converged at a meeting of the world's largest economies — Paris was relatively calm after the arrival of Trump.

For some, the relatively muted reaction mirrored the indifference that characterized the general French response to the administration of George W. Bush. At the time, the French government opposed the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, but French citizens did not mobilize massive protests against Bush during his visits to Paris.

President Trump is arguably more unpopular in France than Bush. There were small-scale demonstrations Friday in the Place de la République, where piñatas of the American president were hung, and in the Place des États-Unis, where Democrats Abroad staged a protest against Trump's policies.

"This was not a protest of the fact that Donald Trump came to Paris," said one of the Democrats Abroad organizers, Sally Swartz. "It was to show that the Democrats are alive and well and that we actively oppose the policies and the bills he's trying to get through Congress."



The 'America First' President Heads to France

Yasmeen Serhan

3-4 minutes

In a visit laden with ceremony, President Trump, standing alongside French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, took the opportunity to remind everyone about the historic nature of the U.S.-French alliance.

"France is America's first and oldest ally—a lot of people don't know that," Trump said Thursday at a joint news conference. "Ever since General Lafayette joined the American fight for independence, our fates and fortunes have been tied unequivocally together. It was a long time ago, but we are together ... perhaps more so than ever, the relationship is very good."

What to Make of Trump and Macron's Upcoming Rendezvous in Paris

Trump's remarks came on the eve of France's annual Bastille Day celebration and at the start of a long-anticipated meeting between the countries' two leaders. Their two previous encounters—the first at the May NATO summit in Brussels and the second during last week's G20 summit in Hamburg—led many observers to speculate their relationship was anything but "very good." The two have been cast as diametrically opposed to each other. While Trump has pushed for a more protectionist, "America First" agenda, Macron has positioned himself as a champion of European globalists, pledging to tackle climate change and European Union reform.

In an interview with *Ouest France*, a regional newspaper, published

Thursday, Macron said the West "has been cracking since the American election," noting that with the U.S. expressing doubts over international agreements, "Europe is an absolute necessity." He added, however, that he is not giving up on working with his American allies. On the subject of the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement, Macron said he "will do everything to convince the cities, the states, American entrepreneurs to follow us. Americans will be a part of the Paris agreement, whether the government wants to or not."

This idea of working together despite differences was reiterated during Thursday's press conference. "We have a number of disagreements," Macron said. "Should that have an impact on the discussions we are having on all other topics? No, absolutely not."

Indeed, they have found common ground in the past, and said their

discussions Thursday covered areas of mutual concern, including security, counterterrorism, and building a political roadmap for Iraq and Syria. They managed to sidestep questions aimed at highlighting their differences. When asked about the Paris accord, Trump appeared to suggest the U.S. could reconsider its position, noting "we'll see what happens." When asked about the scandal involving Donald Trump Jr.'s meeting with a Russian lawyer, Macron said: "I think it's always good between partners and allies not to interfere with the others domestic life (Trump, to laughter, responded: "What a good answer that is.") On Friday, Bastille Day, U.S. troops will march alongside their French counterparts down the Champs-Élysées.

Related Story



Science Monitor

6-7 minutes

Trump is back in Europe: Why the continent suddenly appeals

The Christian

July 13, 2017 Washington—Who would have imagined that Donald Trump would take such a liking to Europe — and especially to France — so quickly in his presidency?

But here we are, not yet a half-year into President Trump's tenure, and the leader who as a candidate belittled the Europeans, thrilled at the prospect of a crumbling

European Union, and derided European cities as "dangerous" (Paris) and a "hell hole" (Brussels) is in Europe for the third time in two months.

And this time in Paris, no less.

Ostensibly, Mr. Trump and first lady Melania Trump are on a quick, barely 48-hour jaunt to the City of Lights because France's new president, Emmanuel Macron, invited them to take part in the July 14 Bastille Day festivities – the *pièce de résistance* of which is a grand military parade down the Champs-Élysées.

And while that part is true, administration and French officials and analysts of transatlantic relations suggest there is much more to Trump's newfound affinity for Europe than a soft spot for parades.

The opportunity to look presidential and to burnish American leadership, the relief of getting out of the Washington hothouse, the realization that America and Europe value their enduring ties despite differences – all help to explain Trump's readiness to return to a place that by many accounts he initially dreaded visiting.

Perhaps even flattery played a role in swaying Trump in his estimation of Europe.

"Our president wanted to really make the point that he values the relationship he is already developing with President Trump, he wanted to demonstrate the importance of strong relations between France and the United States on so many issues that are important to both of us, so he invited him to be his guest at this very French celebration," says a senior French official, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "It's not

so often that an American president has been invited to participate in our national day."

Indeed, the last US president to attend the Bastille Day military parade was George H.W. Bush in 1989. But that was in conjunction with a G7 summit (and the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution) and included other Western leaders, from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to pre-unification West Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

This time, Trump is the guest of honor *par excellence*.

Macron's understanding of Trump

Mr. Macron's invitation reflects an astute sizing up of an American president like no other, a showman with a taste for the grandiose, say specialists in the often thorny yet enduring Franco-American relationship.

The French leader will take Trump on a tour of Napoleon's tomb, and he and his wife will accompany the Trumps to a dinner at the Jules Verne restaurant in the Eiffel Tower – with spectacular views of a gorgeous (and not so dangerous) Paris.

But the highlight will be the military parade, with the participation of American forces alongside French gunners, sailors, and air force pilots, marking the 100th anniversary of America's entry into World War I. Macron's message to Trump, aides say, is the value of binding ties between two great nations.

"Just as in our history, we have common issues of deep importance that we know require France and the US to work together, like fighting terrorism and finding a solution in Syria," the French official says. "We French need the Americans with us in the Sahel," the region in north-central Africa where France has taken the lead in defeating Islamist terrorists.

Macron realizes that a key to keeping France punching above its weight on the global stage is to cultivate relations with the leaders of world powers, as difficult as those relations might be, some experts note. Indeed, just over a month ago the young French leader invited Vladimir Putin to the sumptuous Versailles palace, where he had chefs prepare for the Russian president a meal based on the menu that Louis XIV offered to Peter the Great 300 years earlier.

Trump, too, has come to value France's relations with the US, particularly its strong military posture and robust participation in counterterrorism efforts such as the US-led anti-ISIS coalition, aides say.

"France is far and away one of the largest and strongest military members of the [NATO] alliance" and "carries a heavy load in the counterterrorism fight," a senior administration official said this week. Trump "looks forward to reaffirming America's strong ties of friendship with France ... and to commemorating the 100th anniversary of America's entry into World War I," the White House said.

Changed perspective on Europe

But other reasons also played a role in the president's "yes" to Macron's invitation to a quick Paris escape, experts say.

For Trump, it may have started with just wanting to get out of the house – and away from the maelstrom of the Russia hacking scandal. White House reports depict a president increasingly frustrated with the drip-drip of the investigation into the Trump campaign's Russian ties.

And then the optics can hardly be beat. The trip offers Trump an opportunity to look presidential and to stand on the world stage as commander-in-chief. Indeed, shortly after arriving in Paris Thursday, Trump led a ceremony recognizing three American veterans of the 1944 D-Day invasion of German-occupied France.

But Trump's perspective on Europe also seems to have changed to some degree, especially after his two recent visits – to a NATO leaders meeting in Brussels and a G20 summit in Hamburg. Analysts may have largely deemed those trips difficult, but the White House concluded they were successes both for the president personally and in terms of displaying a new version – stronger and tougher – of American global leadership.

And as long as he avoids declarations like "France is a disaster!" – as he said at a campaign rally last September – there's no reason Paris shouldn't join the list of reasons Trump loves Europe.



5-6 minutes

For France, Trump at Bastille Day was Deeply Symbolic

Luis Ramirez

"We have also found sure allies, friends, who came to help us," Macron said. "The United States of America are among them. This is why nothing will separate us, never. The presence today of the U.S. president, Donald Trump, and his wife is the sign of a friendship that lasts through time."

In saying goodbye Friday, the Trumps, President Macron and his wife, Brigitte, walked together before Macron took Trump's hand and shook it firmly for several seconds -- in what has appeared to become a tradition for the two men. President Trump and first lady Melania Trump then went by motorcade to Orly Airport, where they boarded Air Force One for their flight to their next stop in New Jersey.

The celebrations in Paris came one year after a truck attack in the Mediterranean city of Nice killed 86 people. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility.

Agreement on counterterrorism

Counterterrorism was a central point when Trump met with Macron a day earlier, in an agenda that was otherwise marked with differences including on issues of climate change and trade.

In an atmosphere where French and other western European leaders are alarmed by what they perceive as Trump's isolationist and protectionist tendencies, Macron worked to play up the things that he and the U.S. administration have in common. The fight against terrorism topped that list.

After their discussions on Thursday, the French leader said the proper answer to terrorism is to strengthen cooperation between the two countries and sustain a "never-ending fight against terrorists no matter where they are."

"In this respect," Macron said, "there is no difference and no gap between

the French and the American positions."

Symbolic guest of honor

Having President Trump as the guest of honor for the commemoration on France's National Day is deeply symbolic and a sign that France and Europe need America's engagement as much as ever.

France on July 14 marks the 1789 storming by rebels of the Bastille prison in Paris, an event that signaled the start of the French Revolution.

This year, leaders coupled the festivities with the 100th anniversary of the U.S. decision to enter the First World War. The U.S. Congress' declaration of war happened on April 6, 1917, but the anniversary is the subject of yearlong celebrations in France.

PARIS —

U.S. President Donald Trump was the guest of honor Friday at France's Bastille Day celebrations, an elaborate display that included military bands, flyovers by American jet fighters, and a parade that lasted more than two hours to mark the centennial of the U.S. entry into the First World War.

The American flag flew along with the French flag on Paris' famed Champs Elysees, where U.S. troops marched in a parade with thousands of French soldiers, tanks, missile launchers, and armored personnel carriers.

More than 3,500 police took positions along the parade route to guard against potential terrorist attacks.

The United States entered the war against the Central Powers of the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria almost three years after it started and participated for only 19 months. However, Washington's economic help and manpower helped the allies win a war they, broke and overstretched, could have easily lost.

Many people in America had opposed involvement in the war, causing the administration of then-

President Woodrow Wilson to hesitate. Wilson ran for reelection in 1916 on the premise that he had kept the U.S. out of the war, but called for a declaration of war once he was reelected.

Hoping Trump will change positions

Analysts say France's new leaders hope that by engaging President Trump, they can influence him to change positions on issues like climate change and steer him away from perceived protectionist

measures like the tariffs he has threatened to slap on steel imports that could hurt EU members like Germany.

Hours before Macron met with President Trump on Thursday, he had consulted with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who paid a quick visit to Paris as Trump was arriving in the city.

After his discussions with Macron, President Trump gave indications that he might change his thinking on

his decision to pull the U.S. out of the Paris climate accord.

"Something could happen with respect to the Paris Accord. We'll see what happens. But we will talk about that over the coming period of time. And if it happens, that will be wonderful," the U.S. leader told reporters Thursday. "And if it doesn't, that will be okay, too," he said.

Argument



Bastille Day Is a Military Holiday Out of Donald Trump's Fantasies

France and America are seeking rapprochement at an annual pageant that today is less about liberty, equality, and solidarity than tanks, drones, and missiles.

By Grey Anderson

July 13, 2017

Donald Trump's attendance at the Bastille Day festivities in Paris on Friday, confirmed at the beginning of the month, has inspired grumbling in France. The American head of state, invited by French President Emmanuel Macron, scores direly in French opinion polls, his approval ratings (around 14 percent) a dispiriting contrast with the adulation showered on Barack Obama. Denounced by the left — "the 14 *Juillet* is a celebration of the liberty of the French people," declared France Unbowed leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who added that "Mr. Trump is a brute, he is not welcome" — the planned visit has sparked objections even in the friendlier halls of the French-American Foundation, the think tank conceived by the Council on Foreign Relations to combat the scourge of Gallic anti-Americanism. Liberal pundit Gaspard Koenig, a laureate of the foundation's Young Leaders program — like the two most recent inhabitants of the Élysée — singled out the incongruity of Trump's appearance at a ceremony honoring the revolutionary inheritance of equality and human rights. "Nothing is more opposed to this democratic tradition," judged the *Les Echos* columnist, "than the authoritarian whims of Donald Trump."

Yet there is reason to think the U.S. president will not feel out of place amid the jingo and vainglory of the Paris pageant.

From its inception in 1880, the July 14 gala has engendered polemic in France. The date itself reflects a hard-fought compromise aimed at placating radical republicans and conservative monarchists alike. Officially, it commemorates both the storming of the Bastille prison in

1789, reflected in English-language usage, and the 1790 Festival of Federation, a royal jubilee ordained by Louis XVI. The national holiday was to furnish a means of shoring up the precarious legitimacy of the Third Republic, which emerged out of defeat by Germany and the collapse of Napoleon III's Second Empire, and took shape under the menace of social insurrection from below and monarchist restoration from above. July 14 gestured to the country's revolutionary legacy, but was also a show of strength aimed at impressing enemies abroad and subduing opponents at home. At the center of that display of power were the republic's armed forces.

For bourgeois politicians of the Belle Époque, the army was at once indispensable to defense of the empire overseas and maintenance of order in mainland France, regularly tasked with strikebreaking and domestic policing. It was also a persistent threat to civilian authority, the reactionary officer corps a bastion of anti-republican sentiment. The annual military parade, soon eclipsing popular balls and other entertainment as the centerpiece of the July holiday, staged unity as well as power. Challenged at the outset by left-wing anti-militarism and monarchist intransigence, this dramaturgy would be triumphantly confirmed in 1914 to 1918 under the wartime imperative of *Union sacrée* — sacred national unity.

U.S. participation in this year's event is ostensibly meant to commemorate the centenary of American entry into World War I. On July 4, 1917, three months after Congress voted to declare war against Imperial Germany, a battalion of the U.S. 16th Infantry Regiment marched alongside French soldiers through Paris from Les Invalides to the Picpus Cemetery, resting place of the Marquis de Lafayette, serenaded by "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "La Marseillaise." Speeches underscored the historic sources of Franco-American amity and common origins of the two countries'

18th-century revolutions. Public enthusiasm carried into the French function 10 days later, the most extravagant military display since the opening of hostilities. The French government seized on July 14 as an opportunity to vaunt the national armed forces — bled white on the Western Front and troubled by mutinous stirrings — and reassert, against pacifist critics, the need for total mobilization.

One year later, in 1918, American troops joined other Entente delegations in a resplendent July 14 parade and July 4 was again observed with fervor in the French capital. Across the Atlantic, President Woodrow Wilson took in his country's Independence Day procession on Pennsylvania Avenue. A solitary regiment of infantry and army engineers lent a "martial touch" to the cortege, showcasing foreign-born U.S. citizens, but the proceedings were otherwise dominated by civic groups like the Boy Scouts and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Afterward, crowds were treated to an allegorical pageant in which, according to the *New York Times*, "Humanity summoned Justice to her aid, who in turn called upon Columbia, representing the United States.... Then followed the heralds of the allied nations, announcing the coming of the Hope of the World, Triumphant Democracy."

Observers at the time and since have remarked on the contrast between French and American rites of national independence, especially striking in the different roles assigned to the military. While parades in Washington and elsewhere invariably include members of the armed forces, there is little to measure against the missile launchers and armored divisions of the modern-day French exhibition. That has prompted the odd suggestion that American society is perhaps somehow allergic to militarism — a mind-bending notion for anyone who has ever

witnessed a sporting event or political rally in the country.

Arriving in France on Thursday morning, Trump met Macron for a military ceremony at Les Invalides in the afternoon and a visit to the tombs of Napoleon and World War I commander Ferdinand Foch, which was followed by a private meeting. Melania Trump and Brigitte Macron toured the Notre Dame cathedral and relished a boat cruise along the Seine before joining their spouses for supper at Le Jules Verne, Alain Ducasse's Michelin-starred restaurant in the Eiffel Tower. The following morning, the two men will regroup at the Place de la Concorde to preside over the July 14 parade. 145 Americans, five in vintage Doughboy breeches and puttees, have been slated to march at the head of nearly 4,000 soldiers assembled for the event. Drawn from across the service branches, the U.S. contingent includes a detachment from the Army 1st Infantry Division, the "Big Red One," symbolically recalling the 1917 Independence Day cavalcade. In another historical flourish, World War I-era Schneiders and Saint-Chamonds will roll alongside late-model AMX Leclerc tanks and light reconnaissance vehicles. A closing ceremony has been organized in tribute to the victims of the attack in Nice last year that left 86 dead, with a military band performance of the city's anthem, "Nissa la Bella," fading into a medley — per the Ministry of Defense — of Daft Punk compositions.

F-16 Fighting Falcons and F-22 Raptors are expected to take to the skies together with dozens of French aircraft. But the most anticipated guest at the air show is a remotely piloted General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper. The drone, making its Bastille Day debut, will do double duty, hovering ceremonially while providing real-time surveillance footage to the security services. A source of pride for the Air Force, this addition throws light on some of the ambiguities of the 2017 display. The Reaper is an invaluable asset to

ongoing missions in Africa's Sahel region, where French forces have been continuously engaged in operations for more than four years. But the purchase of U.S.-manufactured drones — the first two were acquired in 2013, and a dozen are expected to be on hand by 2019 — has spurred some discontent in France, stoked lately by debate over whether the unmanned vehicles should be armed. As a condition of its contract with the Pentagon, France relies on American personnel to maintain the machines and must seek permission from Washington for their deployment. A report by the French Senate Armed Forces Committee in May, regretting the curtailment of French sovereignty imposed by the weapons system, acknowledged that any decision to equip them with missiles would likewise have to be cleared by the United States.

A spree of military escapades over the past decade has done nothing to soothe doubts about France's lack of autonomy. The 2011 assault on Libya, trumpeted by the *État Major* as a master stroke of French arms, revealed embarrassing signs of inadequacy, corroborated by experience in Mali and Chad. *Furia francese* depends heavily on allied assistance for transport, intelligence, in-flight refueling, and close air support. Early in the spring 2011 campaign it was clear that the United States would have to take charge. French sorties, granted symbolic pride of place in the offensive, were preceded by a barrage of Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from American ships and submarines in the Mediterranean, destroying Libyan air defenses. Operations in Iraq and Syria give little more grounds for cheer.

Nor have France's periodic plans since the conclusion of World War II for a common European defense policy offered much consolation. Such continental reveries are undermined by parochial considerations of interest and ill-favored by the strategic logic of nuclear deterrence. But they always remain close to the surface for Western Europeans anxious about their place in the world, and are reactivated by periodic crises or eruptions of American disregard. Trump's election fit the bill. In the lead-up to the November 2016 election, the candidate's irreverent attitude toward

NATO and his occasional departure from interventionist boilerplate rattled nerves in Paris and Berlin. Complaints about insufficient allied spending, long vented by Yankee supremos, have been especially irksome for Europeans coming from the ructious *Apprentice* mogul. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, on the heels of the American president's failure to acclaim Article 5 of the alliance treaty at a late May summit, enjoined Europeans to "really take our fate into our own hands" and stake out independence vis-à-vis an unreliable hegemon as vexing on defense as on trade and climate issues.

Macron, seen scurrying after Trump to pose and glad-hand at last week's G-20 confab, seems inclined to try a different tack. What stands to be gained from any rapprochement is uncertain, but the Bastille Day visit will be an occasion for the French and American leaders to moot common ground. Saluted by the international press as an antidote to the "populist" poison of Trump, Macron in fact bears strong resemblance to his opposite number. Both campaigned as outsiders and enemies of the political establishment, celebrating the beneficence of private enterprise and scorning a political system deemed out of step with the times. Both have paired unapologetic disdain for poverty and failure to prosper with authoritarian leanings and a penchant for "civilizational" xenophobia. Without the *ancien régime* trappings of French office, Trump has made do with Mar-a-Lago, a Palm Beach Versailles.

So much for style. More consequentially, the French and American regimes stand shoulder to shoulder in the "war against terrorism," invoked by Macron in Lausanne, Switzerland, on Tuesday along with the conflict in Syria as bases for Franco-American collaboration. Like Trump, he bays for intensifying the international crusade against the Islamic State. Meanwhile, Washington and Paris compete to supply weaponry to the House of Saud. During the past five-year presidential term, former Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, kept on by Macron at the Quai d'Orsay, oversaw an annual average of \$3.2 billion in arms sales to Riyadh. French operations overseas are a boon to the defense industry. As politicians have proudly emphasized, "battle-tested" materiel

enjoys a competitive advantage. Hard cash will be made from the gewgaws and quincaillerie festooned on the Champs-Élysées on Friday.

Born of the threefold desire to shore up parliamentary legitimacy, dramatize national power, and bind an obdurate officer corps to republican government, the 14 *Juillet* today may fairly be thought to have exhausted its historical role. The 1789 Revolution, declared "over" a decade before its bicentenary, is no longer central to political debate in France. Visions of French grandeur, dazzlingly awakened midcentury by Charles de Gaulle, were reinterred with the author of the Fifth Republic. Reconciliation between the republic and its army admittedly took longer in coming; officers carried out the putsch that toppled the postwar regime and returned de Gaulle to power. Only with the peaceful inauguration of a Socialist president, in 1981, were fears of praetorian revolt put to rest.

But the July 14 parade, an ornamental arms bazaar and nationalist fanfaronade, retains at least one aspect of its original vocation. It choreographs — televised now to audiences in France and abroad — an idealized self-representation of the French military's place in public life. In this respect, preparations around the 2017 ceremony are as symbolic as the shindig itself.

Under the dispensations of France's ongoing state of emergency, prolonged a sixth time by parliamentary vote last week, upward of 11,000 police, gendarmes, and other law enforcement agents were called up to maintain order Thursday and Friday in the capital and its surroundings. "So that," Paris Préfet of Police Michel Delpuech explained, "these days remain a party." The Champs-Élysées and the Champ de Mars, viewing sites for fireworks in the evening, are going to be entirely fenced off. Would-be revelers, forbidden alcoholic drinks in these "security and protection zones," can look forward to searches of their personal belongings and systematic identity checks. Trump will be the first American president to attend since George H.W. Bush in 1989, and his presence has redoubled already high levels of vigilance in a France

where, since the terrorist attacks of 2015, some 10,000 soldiers have been deployed on home soil. One thousand of these, detailed to Paris, will be on hand this week to reinforce the civilian security forces.

As French engagement in the "global war on terror" has escalated, politicians speak more and more freely of "internal enemies," a usage given juridical form by the emergency legislation. Le Drian, writing last year, delineated a "continuity between threats against the home front and the external front." The collapsed distinction between internal and external security is not, however, uniformly embraced. "Some on the left," the minister of defense lamented in 2013, "have a certain allergy with respect to war and to the army." Before the 2012 presidential contest, Green Party candidate Eva Joly went so far as to propose the elimination of the military parade from the July 14 calendar, a hoary ideal of the fin de siècle left, long since marginalized. Antimilitarists, Le Drian observed, "forget that war and the republic are concomitant," victory in the former the condition of sovereignty for the latter. Ancestors fought for their right to fête.

Yet voices otherwise little suspect of pacifism or leftist sympathies have also been heard to dissent from the reigning consensus. Gen. Vincent Desportes, the iconoclastic former head of French military education, imparted a biting assessment of French strategy and Atlanticist shibboleths in public remarks last autumn. "We've bombed Daesh enough to provoke the Bataclan and Nice," Desportes commented, "but not enough to prevent them." Speaking two months before the U.S. election, he called on policymakers to abandon their starry-eyed fascination with American omnipotence — itself incapable of transforming operational mastery into strategic success — and disabuse themselves of self-deceit retailed as commemoration. "The idea that Private Ryan might return to die on the beaches of Normandy is an illusion," the general asseverated. Not a conviction apt to be swayed by antique armor and period dress, however thick the Franco-American presidential flummery.



Macron Has a Nifty Game Plan With Trump

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7-9 minutes

By

13 juillet 2017 à 17:39 UTC-4
14 juillet 2017 à 02:50 UTC-4

- Macron's strategy: hold firm on disagreements, then pivot
- Visit highlights that military alliance is key to relationship

Donald Trump famously said in February that "Paris is no longer Paris." After Emmanuel Macron showed him the town and met with him at the gilded Élysée Palace, the American president ladled praise on the French capital and the country's 39-year-old leader.

He even suggested that his opposition to the Paris climate accord isn't set in stone.

It was Macron's fourth meeting with Trump since his election in May. The two have acrimoniously clashed over climate change and Macron has made not-so-hidden allusions to his opposition to building "walls," but in this latest encounter they stressed their common positions, from trade to terrorism. Preceding the visit, French officials laid out their strategy to approach Trump: hold your ground where you disagree, and pivot to areas of agreement. And don't forget his love of pomp and the military.

As both leaders prepare to attend the Bastille Day parade together on Friday, that strategy appears to have worked.

"You have a great president, and I think you're going to have a very peaceful and beautiful Paris, and I'm coming back," Trump said on Thursday at a news conference with Macron.

European 'Adjustment'

Macron had never held elective office before winning France's presidency, and all his previous government positions have been in the economic domain. But he's quickly put a stamp on international affairs, lecturing Russia's Vladimir Putin about meddling in France's election during a May meeting in

Versailles, and calling Trump last month to say France would join the U.S. in any air strikes should the Syrian regime resort again to using chemical weapons.

"What we've witnessed over the last month or so since Trump's first trip to Europe is an adjustment in how Europe is going to deal with Trump," said Charles Kupchan, a senior fellow at the Council for Foreign Relations who was the senior director for European affairs on the National Security Council under Barack Obama. "Macron gets stature. He's raising France's profile and its game after a period in which many French voters were profoundly apathetic about the French presidency."

In Europe, he's pushing labor liberalization and tax cuts to win Germany's confidence in his ability to make the French economy more competitive. Macron hosted German Chancellor Angela Merkel just hours before Trump and won assurances from her that she's willing to consider greater solidarity within the euro zone.

Paris, Not Pittsburgh

Even Trump's position on climate change appeared to soften after spending the day with the French president. Trump announced the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate accord shortly after Macron's election, saying that he represents the citizens of "Pittsburgh, not Paris." The 39-year-old Macron responded by inviting U.S. climate scientists to relocate to France and mocking Trump's campaign slogan with a website called "Make Our Planet Great Again."

At the news conference, Trump was asked whether he would reconsider withdrawal from the Paris deal.

"Something could happen with respect to the Paris accord," he said. "We'll see what happens. We'll talk about that over the coming period of time. If it happens, that'll be wonderful, and if it doesn't, that'll be OK too."

Macron said he "respects" that withdrawal from the accord was part of Trump's campaign platform.

Military Alliance

Macron sought to stress that military matters and anti-terrorism cooperation remain the bedrock of French-U.S. relations. Both leaders noted that the U.S. and France are each other's oldest allies: troops of both countries will march on Friday to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the U.S.'s entry into World War I.

The U.S. provides logistical and intelligence support to French anti-militant operations in the Sahel region of Africa, and French warplanes, special forces and an artillery unit are part of the U.S.-led coalition against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

"We represent countries that have been allies forever," Macron said at their news conference. "No matter what our functions, our histories go beyond us. The bonds between our countries are bigger than us."

Their positions on trade aren't even as far apart as presumed, though Macron won his election on a free-trade platform while Trump promised to protect U.S. industry.

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"France and the U.S. want to be able to take the necessary measures within the context of free trade that can help us protect the sectors where we are active," Macron said, though he declined to directly address U.S. threats to limit steel imports and European Union warnings of retaliation if it does. "We want to work together to develop efficient measures to combat dumping wherever it takes place."

Macron and their wives then held a private dinner at the Jules Vernes restaurant in the Eiffel Tower, from where they could admire a view of Paris. Chef Alain Ducasse canceled a planned event in Beijing, and flew back overnight from Hong Kong to be present in the kitchen. The menu included a selection of pate, Dover sole and filet of beef served with brioche, followed by hot chocolate soufflé.

As the night ended, it was clear that Trump's mysterious friend "Jim," whom he described in his February speech to conservative activists as a once-frequent visitor to Paris who recently discontinued his trips because of the threat of terrorism, was nowhere to be found.

"My overall impression was that president Macron sought to emphasize the commonalities and not to harp on the known differences between him and the president on a whole bunch of issues," said Jeff Rathke, a senior fellow and deputy director of the Europe Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The visit "is a success for President Macron, regardless of what their disagreements are."



Why aren't Parisians protesting Trump? (online)

By James McAuley

July 14 at 5:16 AM

11-14 minutes

WorldViews

Analysis

Analysis Interpretation of the news based on evidence, including data, as well as anticipating how events might unfold based on past events

By James McAuley

WorldViews

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Analysis Interpretation of the news based on evidence, including data, as well as anticipating how events might unfold based on past events

President Trump has strong opinions about Paris, so we asked Parisians about their opinion of Trump. President Trump has strong opinions about Paris, so we asked Parisians about their opinion of Trump. (Jenny Starrs, Cléopheed Demoustier/The Washington Post)

President Trump has strong opinions about Paris, so we asked Parisians about their opinion of Trump. (Jenny Starrs, Cléopheed Demoustier/The Washington Post)

PARIS — During the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg last week, Donald Trump certainly drew out the crowds.

What began as a theatrical anti-capitalist protest at the meeting of the world's largest economies

quickly devolved into violence, with thousands of angry, impassioned demonstrators torching cars, smashing store windows and blocking off roads.

Not so in the City of Light, where people seem to have greeted Trump with Gallic sighs and shrugs.

The American president remains deeply unpopular in France: According to one poll, only 14 percent of the French population holds him in high regard. But Trump's arrival for France's national holiday ultimately sparked little in the way of civil unrest or even mass demonstrations.

The Parisians, it seems, have other things to do.

Yes, there were a few pockets of anti-Trump fervor before the Bastille

Day military parade, slated for Friday morning.

The symbolic Place de la République, for instance, the center of the candlelight vigil for the Charlie Hebdo massacre, was briefly converted into a so-called No Trump Zone, where several protesters fashioned and displayed piñatas in the shape of the American president.

"Mr. Trump, you are not welcome!" screamed a headline from *La Gazette Debout*, a newspaper linked to the anti-system "Nuit Debout" (Up All Night) protest that has remained in the square for more than a year.

Likewise, in Paris's aptly named Place des États-Unis, a verdant square in the tony sixteenth arrondissement of the city, there was also a small anti-Trump

demonstration, but this was largely a protest for Americans abroad against their own leader, not necessarily for French citizens against a perceived foreign adversary.

Led by Democrats Abroad, most of the signs on display highlighted American domestic issues — namely, the embattled Obamacare and Trump's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate treaty. "Resist!" read one of

the signs.

Although Paris was one of the cities that featured a major "Women's March" following Trump's inauguration in January, the city is relatively quiet for his first visit to France, otherwise occupied with celebrating France's national holiday.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

In this, the Parisians seemed to be taking a cue from 2003 — the so-called freedom fries era — when the U.S. decision to invade Iraq deeply alienated many in Western Europe and particularly in France. Then-President George W. Bush and his administration were deeply unpopular here, but he was hardly ever met with mass demonstrations.

There is also the example of their president, Emmanuel Macron.

At a news conference on Thursday in the gilded halls of the Elysée

Palace, Macron acknowledged the differences between himself and Trump.

"We have a number of disagreements," Macron said, before saying later that he refused to comment on American domestic politics.

"What a good answer that is," Trump smiled.



Overnight Energy: Trump, Macron fail to break climate deadlock

Timothy Cama

and Devin Henry

6-7 minutes

'AU REVOIR' TO A CLIMATE BREAKTHROUGH: President Trump and France President Emmanuel Macron discussed the Paris climate deal during a bilateral meeting in the French capital Thursday, but did not move any closer to a consensus on the issue.

Macron has been among the most vocal critics of Trump's decision to pull the U.S. out of the climate accord, and pledged to press Trump on the issue during their

meeting in Paris this week.

But, Macron reported during a joint press conference on Thursday, "there is nothing new and unprecedented" on the issue.

"Something could happen with respect to the Paris accord. We'll see what happens," Trump said, though he often uses a similar answer when he doesn't want to commit to a particular policy position.

"But we'll talk about that in the coming period of time. If it happens, that will be wonderful. If it doesn't that's ok, too."

Macron said he would "leave the United States to work on its road map" when it comes to energy and environment policies.

But he said the stark disagreement on climate change wouldn't affect work between the U.S. and France on issues like terrorism and the Middle East.

"Here we know what our disagreements are -- we have expressed them on a number of occasions -- but I think it is important that we can continue to talk about it," Macron said of the Paris deal.

"Should it have an impact on discussions we're having on all the other topics? Absolutely not."

The president said the country's oil and natural gas surge is a geopolitical advantage over Russia, and he claimed "your energy prices right now would be double" if Clinton

had won last November's election instead of him.

"I'm a tremendous fracker, coal, natural gas, alternate energy, wind - everything, right?" Trump said, according to a transcript of the interaction released Thursday. "But I'm going to produce much, much more energy than anyone else who was ever running for office. Ever."

Trump also said he was "not joking" about his plan, floated last month, to put solar panels on a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

"There is a chance that we can do a solar wall," Trump said. "We have major companies looking at that."



Bastille Day Parade in Paris Enthralls President Trump (online)

Rebecca Ballhaus and William Horobin

3-4 minutes

Updated July 14, 2017 8:51 a.m. ET

PARIS—President Donald Trump reveled in the spectacle of tanks, military aircraft and men and women in uniform marching down the Champs-Élysées at a ceremony that served to mark the end of his visit to America's oldest ally.

Mr. Trump, who had considered holding a military parade to celebrate his inauguration in January but ultimately opted against it, appeared thrilled by France's Bastille Day spectacle on Friday.

A procession of tanks rolled along the Champs-Élysées, followed by more than 60 aircraft flying over Paris—some trailing blue, white and red contrails—and hundreds of officers marching

in uniform, including nearly 200 U.S. service members.

Mr. Trump and first lady Melania Trump watched the parade at the Place de la Concorde beside French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife, Brigitte. Mr. Macron, who arrived to the parade standing in the front seat of an open, camouflaged military jeep, invited Mr. Trump to Paris to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the U.S. entry into World War I.

After a somber start to the parade, Mr. Trump grew visibly animated as the aircraft began flying overhead, clapping his hands together and at several points leaning over to Mr. Macron and his wife to point at the sky. He inched closer and closer to Mr. Macron over the course of the parade.

Mr. Trump appeared to grow serious again as the military band approached him and Mr. Macron and began to play "Get Lucky" by

the French electronic music duo Daft Punk.

In a solemn address at the end of the parade, Mr. Macron spoke of French people's ability to find strength within themselves to defend the Republic, but also of how France has relied on allies in the past.

"We have also found sure allies, friends, who came to help us. The United States of America are among them," Mr. Macron said, as Mr. Trump stood beside him. "That is why nothing will separate us, never. The presence today of the U.S. President Donald Trump and his wife is the sign of a friendship that lasts through time."

The parade caps a whirlwind trip to Paris for Mr. Trump, who boarded Air Force One to leave Paris immediately after the ceremony.

At a joint news conference Thursday, the two leaders sought to move past divisions on issues such

as climate change and trade that were on display at last week's Group of 20 world leaders summit.

Mr. Trump said Thursday that the two allies are "together, perhaps more so than ever," and called Mr. Macron a "great leader" and a "tough president." Mr. Macron said they would "dine as friends" later that evening at the lavish restaurant Le Jules Verne on the second floor of the Eiffel Tower.

"Great evening with President @EmmanuelMacron & Mrs. Macron," Mr. Trump tweeted after the dinner, including a photo of the two couples. "Went to Eiffel Tower for dinner. Relationship with France stronger than ever."

Write to Rebecca Ballhaus at Rebecca.Ballhaus@wsj.com and William Horobin at William.Horobin@wsj.com



Gilt, guns and flattery: Macron woos Trump as Europe's go-to

ABC News

5-6 minutes

With a military parade on the Champs-Élysées and a gilded tour of France's most storied monuments, French President

Emmanuel Macron laid on the charm as he positioned himself as the indispensable intermediary between Europe and Donald Trump.

The Bastille Day demonstration on Friday capped two days of Parisian glitz for Trump and his wife, who were Macron's guests of honor in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of America's entry into World War I.

Thanking the United States for the decision that turned the tide of a devastating conflict, Macron said the Trumps' presence on France's national holiday "is the sign of a friendship across the ages."

Macron made a point of detailing both the long history of ties between France and America and the areas where he and Trump disagree. But he made clear it was in the spirit of bluntness with a friend and ally, even offering a conspiratorial wink during a joint news conference.

The two-day visit beginning Thursday featured a personal tour of the golden-domed Invalides monument and a private dinner high in the Eiffel Tower prepared by chef Alain Ducasse himself.

Trump had front-row seats at the reviewing stand Friday, applauding during the hours-long parade carried out under blue skies as various

French military units marched past. At one point, Trump saluted a combined group of U.S. Army and Navy troops and Marines taking part in the annual event.

Macron and Trump both came to office as unlikely outsider candidates. The youngest president of modern France — and the same age as Donald Trump Jr. — Macron started his own political movement just over a year ago. He won strong parliamentary majority and is riding high in the polls.

The flattering French visit gave Trump a respite from his troubles at home, and he amended the opinion of a friend he calls Jim, who believes that "Paris isn't Paris any longer" because of the blight of Islamic extremism.

Asked about Jim's criticisms Thursday, Trump deflected and said Paris was "going to be just fine" because France now has a "great" and "tough" president. At Macron and Trump's first encounter in May, the two shared a white-knuckle handshake that the French president said was intended to show he was no pushover.

As Friday's visit ended, the men embraced and then the arm wrestling seemed to begin anew. As Trump walked to his motorcade, he

gripped Macron's hand firmly, pulling the smaller man off-balance and held fast as they walked together toward their wives.

Still, both seemed to minimize their differences, said Spencer Boyer, former national intelligence officer for Europe and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

"President Macron was highly skilled at putting President Trump at ease and avoiding any land mines that would have derailed the show of unity," Boyer said. "Macron was especially adept at sidestepping questions about U.S. political controversies, which Trump clearly appreciated."

Although the welcome may have taken some of the sting out of their first encounter, Macron's amiable meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel earlier in the day showed the balance Macron appears to be striking.

With Merkel, he emphasized their agreement on nearly every issue as well as their joint development of a fighter jet.

The German leader said there was no getting around interdependence in the 21st century. "Europe alone cannot win the war on terrorism," Merkel said.

"There is no divergence between France and Germany in the manner of treating President Trump," Macron added.

Still, the German chancellor, who was less than a block from the U.S. Embassy when Trump was ensconced inside, left the presidential palace before she and Trump could cross paths.

Trump left open the possibility that he would reconsider his decision to pull the U.S. out of the Paris climate accord — the main source of disagreement with European Union governments. But he said if it doesn't happen, "that will be OK too."

Macron's ability to firmly acknowledge his differences with Trump are part of modern French tradition. His invitation to Trump was "a way of illustrating the history of France and America, allied but not aligned," said Thomas Gomart, director of the French Institute for International Relations.

Trump's parting tweet showed a photo of the two men looking out over the Champs-Élysées, standing shoulder to shoulder during what the American described as a "magnificent #BastilleDay parade."

Newsweek : Climate Change: Trump Opens Door to Rejoining Paris Accord

By Josh Lowe On 7/13/17 at 1:36 PM

World Donald Trump

President Donald Trump appeared to open the door to rejoining the Paris climate accord during a press conference with French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday.

In reply to a question from a French journalist on whether the U.S. president might change his mind on a June decision to withdraw America from the landmark climate agreement, Trump said: "Something could happen with respect to the Paris accord, we'll see what happens."

"We will talk about that over the coming period of time, and if it happens that'll be wonderful and if it

doesn't that'll be OK too. But we'll see what happens," Trump continued.

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At the G-20 summit on Sunday, Macron said he hoped to persuade Trump to change his mind, but he acknowledged on Thursday that the U.S. president had not changed his position.

"We have a number of disagreements which are in particular due to the commitments taken by President Trump during his election campaign," Macron said, in response to the same journalist, reaffirming his own commitment to the accord.

But, Macron said, disagreements over climate policy should "absolutely not" hamper collaboration on issues where their views are more closely aligned, such as security cooperation.

Some of Macron and Trump's previous encounters have been tense. During the President's first visit to Europe in May, the pair engaged in a handshake that was almost pugilistic in its intensity. Macron later said he had intended the forceful greeting to be symbolic of standing up to Trump.

At a G-7 summit during the same trip, Macron also snubbed Trump, heading toward him during a meet and greet, only to swerve aside at the last minute and greet German Chancellor Angela Merkel instead.

But on Thursday the pair were keen to present a warm and united front. Macron and Trump will dine Thursday evening at the Restaurant Jules Verne in the Eiffel Tower, along with their wives. Macron said that it would be a "dinner between friends," while Trump said the two men had a "good friendship."

Tomorrow, Trump will watch the Bastille Day celebrations in the city, which also commemorate the 100-year anniversary of America's entry in World War I.

"When the French people rose up and stormed the Bastille, it changed the course of human history," Trump said. "Our two nations are forever joined together by the spirit of revolution."

The Washington Times

<http://www.washingtontimes.com>

5-6 minutes

ANALYSIS/OPINION:

Pruden : A big Bastille Day for America

The Washington Times

The Donald finally caught a break in Paris, basking in rare Franco-American bonhomie as he joined the new president of France on Bastille Day, this year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the American arrival on the battlefields of World War I.

A contingent of American troops even led the parade down the

Champs-Élysées. Not even a president can resist a parade, especially a military parade with marching bands and serried ranks of fighting men. On Thursday, President Emmanuel Macron of France did not even try.

Neither did Donald Trump, once a schoolboy at a military academy.

Regimental flags floating on a peaceful breeze, despised as nationalist symbols to some, are but reminders to all that "greater love hath no man than this," in the words of Christ as recorded by the Apostle John, "that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Few national leaders have traded such fierce hostility over so short a time than Messrs. Trump and Macron. When the two men met for the first time at a NATO summit two months ago, Mr. Macron seemed to avoid a Trump embrace, moving out of the way to greet other leaders first, a snub much remarked on.

When Mr. Trump announced that he would withdraw the United States from the Paris climate-change agreement, brokered in Paris, he employed a particularly sharp verbal elbow: "I was elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris." President Macron then released a video, in English, inviting U.S. scientists to live in exile in France, with a parody of the Trump campaign slogan, "Make Our Planet Great Again."

This was forgotten this week in Paris, with both men eager to overlook past slights and snubs to get on with what binds the two fractious allies. "It is high time to finish with the juvenile rivalry of handshakes," the influential Paris daily *Le Monde* warned Mr. Macron not long ago. The French president "may have copied

the American president's monopoly on being unpredictable ... but [he wants] to become the European leader of the international political scene, and to achieve this he'll have to go beyond images and symbols."

Bastille Day, after all, commemorates the storming of the Bastille in 1789, copying the example of the American Revolution. Not bad as either image or symbol. The day was a happy symbol for President Trump, too, to restore sheen to America's transatlantic ties and to renew the ancient Franco-American friendship which has survived harsh words and sometimes bitter misunderstandings.

Mr. Macron, who has clashed with Mr. Trump on climate change, immigration and other issues, invited the president and the first lady only last week to Paris for Bastille Day. "What our countries share," Mr. Macron said, "is stronger [than our differences], given our peoples and our histories and our values as well."

The 100th anniversary celebrations are particularly poignant reminders of Franco-American friendship when

it was backs-to-the-wall time. America arrived late to the war, as it always does, and just in time, as it always is. The Germans had ordered an advance on Marigny through Belleau Wood, and the newly arrived U.S. Marines were ordered by the French to dig defensive trenches in the rear.

The American general countermanded the order, telling the Marines to "hold where you are." The Marines dug positions in the dirt with their bayonets, taking prone firing positions, and waited with bayonets fixed. When the Germans, advancing through a grain field, got within a hundred yards, the Marines opened ferocious rifle fire, mowing down the ranks of the Bosch until the survivors fled into the woods.

Much of the lore of the Marine Corps grew from Belleau Woods. Having suffered heavy casualties, the Germans dug in on the road to Paris and the Marines were urged by the French to retreat with them to the rear. It was there that Capt. Lloyd W. Williams of the 5th Marines retorted, "Retreat? Hell, we just got here." It was at Belleau Wood that Sgt. Daniel Daly, twice awarded the

Medal of Honor in other wars, famously led his company against the Germans with the cry: "Come on, you sons of bitches, do you want to live forever?"

A German officer recalled later that "the Marines do not understand this 'live and let live' attitude by the French, they simply wanted to kill Germans." Said a French officer at the time, "the Americans were irrepressible! They climbed like cats into the highest trees to 'kill the Bosch' and began to fire into the enemy sentries or on the German platoons running between the first and second line of trenches."

Paris was saved, and the Marines and the Americans have been popular heroes in France since ("the devil dogs of Belleau Wood"). Bastille Day is sometimes nice for Americans, too. You could ask the Donald.

• Wesley Pruden is editor in chief emeritus of *The Times*.



Victim's daughter says Muslims fear violence, too

Elena Berton,
Special for USA TODAY

5-6 minutes

Published 4:45 p.m. ET July 13, 2017 | Updated 4:53 p.m. ET July 13, 2017

Today in History for July 14th

Highlights of this day in history: Bastille prison stormed during the French Revolution; Outlaw 'Billy the Kid' gunned down; Richard Speck murders student nurses in Chicago; Mariner 4 probe flies by Mars; Folk singer Woody Guthrie born. (July 14)AP

In this July 18, 2016 file photo, people look at flowers placed on the Promenade des Anglais at the scene of a terror attack in Nice, France. (Photo: Claude Paris, AP)

NICE, France — As Hanane Charrihi's plane flew over the Promenade des Anglais in its final approach, the crowds that normally pack the seafront boulevard were replaced by an eerie line of white dots — hotel bed sheets covering the 86 victims of the 2016 Bastille Day truck rampage.

"My mother was there," she recalled in *Ma Mère Patrie* (*My Motherland*),

the book Charrihi wrote last year in tribute to her Moroccan immigrant mother Fatima, 62 — the first victim in a terror attack on this French Riviera resort. Charrihi had jumped on a plane from her home in Paris as soon as she heard about the massacre.

"Even if it was painful, I decided to visit the spot on the Promenade des Anglais a few days later," she said.

To mark the anniversary of her mother's death, Charrihi on Friday is launching an association aimed at stopping the radicalization of young Muslims through education. "I want to work on prevention by telling my story in schools and prisons," said Charrihi, 28.

"Many people who have been radicalized are completely disconnected from society," she added. "I want to show to them there are young people who are desperate to go to school despite having no notebooks or shoes, while in France education is available to them for free."

The terrorist responsible for the Nice attack was Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, 31, a French resident of Tunisian descent with a tumultuous personal life that involved petty crime, drug use and psychiatric problems. His turn to Islamic

extremism had gone largely unnoticed by his family, friends or authorities.

Fatima Charrihi, left, and her daughter Hanane, right. (Photo: Hanane Charrihi)

Researchers say that's not unusual. "Many Muslims who get radicalized have a background of petty crime," said sociologist Tarik Yildiz, author of *Qui Sont-Ils? (Who Are They?)*, a book that explores how young Muslims approach their faith and their life in France.

"They aren't particularly religious or don't even speak Arabic during their adolescence — until they discover certain aspects of religion that give them the points of reference the government, the school or their family haven't been able to provide," he added.

Nice is one of the French cities that have seen the most Muslims become radicalized: More than 100 from the region left to fight for the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, according to municipal authorities. Charrihi said she was shocked to learn that barely two months after the terrorist attack that killed her mother, two teenage girls from Nice were arrested for planning a new attack.

"How do we explain that these kids, who have a whole life ahead of them, prefer to go to war instead of staying here," Charrihi asked. "Do they have so little hope?"

After the Nice attack, Charrihi's family was called "a band of terrorists" and felt similar alienation and discrimination other young Muslims faced in France, she said. She added that Muslims fear future extremist attacks, too. One-third of the victims of the 2016 rampage were Muslims.

A soldier patrols as workers set up a tribune in the colors of the French flag, on July 12, 2017, on Place Massena in Nice, France, ahead of commemorations of the July 14, 2016 terror attack in Nice. (Photo: Valery Hache, AFP/Getty Images)

Terrorism has become part of France's new reality: The country has witnessed 13 terrorist attacks since January 2015.

It's also a new normal for the Muslim community in Nice, in the city's Quartier Notre-Dame, where Islamic bookshops, a mosque, halal food shops and cafes line Rue d'Italie and its neighboring streets.



France Must Discourage Bank Data Theft, Macron's Swiss Man Says

Hugo Miller @hugodmiller More stories by Hugo Miller

7-9 minutes

By

14 juillet 2017 à 04:58 UTC-4

- Son-Forget elected by 75% of French voters in Switzerland
- Swiss, French agreed on July 12 to resume information exchange

France should not follow Germany's lead in endorsing the theft of banking data on its own citizens who have kept money abroad, according to the French parliamentarian who represents his 150,000 fellow countrymen in Switzerland.

"We should not encourage this way of proceeding, this stealing of data," Joachim Son-Forget said in an interview in Paris a month after he was elected by 75 percent of French voters in Switzerland. "My ideal is that we reach a point where there is a cohesion and distribution of information in a free and clear way."

Joachim Son-Forget

Photographer: Fabrice Coffrini/AFP/Getty Images

Newly-elected President Emmanuel Macron will meet his Swiss counterpart Doris Leuthard on July 18 in Paris to discuss among other things a fresh accord the two nations struck to resolve a spat over whether Switzerland would exchange information with its neighbor on French clients of UBS Group AG. On July 12, the Swiss Federal Tax Administration said that both countries had come to an agreement and can move ahead with

outstanding requests. France is seeking detail on more than 10,000 clients based on information it received from German authorities while separately prosecutors in Paris have accused the Zurich-based bank of helping French clients avoid taxes by moving their assets to Switzerland.

Tensions began climbing more than six years ago when tax officials in Germany on several occasions paid for stolen data on Swiss bank accounts held by German clients, a practice the nation's top constitutional court ruled acceptable if used for a legitimate probe into tax evasion.

Then a former employee of HSBC Holdings Plc's Swiss unit took data on clients that he first tried to sell before handing it to French prosecutors, who used it to build a case against local tax evaders. The Frenchman was convicted in 2015 by the Swiss for corporate espionage, five months after HSBC paid a 40 million-franc (\$41 million) fine for "past organizational deficiencies" to avoid criminal charges.

Macron Sweep

Son-Forget, 34, is one of 11 new deputies in the National Assembly that represent French expatriates. Ten of the 11 deputies are from Macron's La Republique En Marche party, that was founded just 14 months ago. The party won a sweeping majority in June elections and plans to use that clout to overhaul France's labor laws to lure foreign investment and reform its tax code to entice wealthy expats to return home from places like Switzerland.

At the heart of the French case against UBS is the allegation it illicitly solicited clients to move their

money to Switzerland. The bank has been ordered to stand trial -- though no date has yet been set --- after settlement talks with French authorities broke down over the size of the fine. "UBS has made clear that the bank will contest the allegations and the legal qualifications made by the investigating judges," the bank said in a statement. "We will continue to strongly defend ourselves."

Son-Forget, speaking over croissants and coffee in the canteen of the National Assembly in Paris, said it was hard for him to comment on the UBS case, but says the historic ties between the two countries are strong and the "Franco-Swiss relationship cannot be tripped up whenever there is a bump in the road."

To read more on Swiss bank secrecy, click here

Barely an hour after Son-Forget spoke to Bloomberg, the Swiss announced they had reached an agreement with their French counterparts, having "been able to find answers to outstanding application issues and several which had emerged in recent months" and are "now in a position to pursue the exchange of information upon request in all pending and future cases effectively." Patrick Teuscher, a spokesman for the Swiss Tax Office, declined to confirm if the agreement includes a clause prohibiting French tax officials from sharing information they obtain from such requests with local prosecutors.

The accord "is a very positive first step" for Franco-Swiss diplomacy so early in President Macron's mandate and is a deal "whose scope goes far beyond just the administrative issue," Son-Forget wrote by email later.

He evoked Former French President Francois Mitterrand comments that Switzerland "was the country closest" to France. "This phrase appears justified more than ever," Son-Forget said.

Korean Roots

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Son-Forget knows the two countries well. Adopted as an orphan from South Korea by a French couple, he grew up in Dijon. He moved to Paris to study at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, working nights as a nurse to earn his way. After earning his Masters in math and cognitive science in 2005, he moved to Switzerland, first to Lausanne for his medical training and then to Geneva, where he lives to this day. He continues working one day a week as a radiologist to allow him to keep up his expertise and teaching.

For Son-Forget, a father of two, his first weeks as a deputy have been a whirlwind of meetings with officials including Macron's economy minister Bruno Le Maire as he tries to pack as much as he can into the three to four days a week he spends in Paris.

It leaves him little time to practice the harpsichord, which he plays at recital-level, so now he's contemplating getting one for his government office. "It's a bit tight," he says, "So it'll have to be an epinette -- a mini harpsichord."

And with that, he's off, heading that evening to a reception at the Swiss Embassy for an early celebration of the country's Aug. 1 national holiday.



Leonid Bershidsky

9-11 minutes

Taxes

It may be impossible to claim much in back taxes from the search giant, but new rules should stop tax avoidance.

by

13 juillet 2017 à 08:49 UTC-4

Better laws will make for better corporate citizens.

Photographer: JOEL SAGET/AFP/Getty Images

Bershidsky : France Shouldn't Let Google Get Off Tax-Free

@Bershidsky More stories by

After Google settled for just 130 million pounds (\$168 million) in back taxes with the U.K. last year, the French government swore it would get more money out of the search giant -- based, as then-Finance Minister Michel Sapin said, not on negotiation but on application of the law. On Wednesday, that approach failed spectacularly.

A Paris court rejected the government's demand that Google pay 1.115 billion euros (\$1.28 billion) in taxes for 2005 through 2010. The failure shows that countries and blocs like the European Union need urgently to change their tax rules as they are too easily flouted by multinationals. In the meantime, old debts will have to be negotiated or forgotten.

In the U.K., then-Chancellor George Osborne touted the 2016 settlement as a "major success" but its opponents claimed Google got off too lightly. Osborne had a point, though. Google could have refused to pay anything at all, and it didn't change its tax structure for the U.K. All Google agreed to do under the settlement was pay more to its U.K. operating company for services rendered, which resulted in more taxes.

The U.K. tax scheme is the same as Google uses in France and other European countries. Throughout the European Union, Google has companies that, technically, do not sell ads. Only an Irish-registered entity does, and signs all the related contracts. It then compensates the

Google operations in other countries for marketing and engineering services. Ireland has a lower income tax rate than most European nations, but Google also uses a structure there that allows it to pay almost no tax. This is the notorious "double Irish with a Dutch sandwich," in which the Irish firm that sells ads pays most of its revenue to a Dutch entity for the use of Google intellectual property, and that entity sends the money on to a Caribbean offshore that owns the international intellectual property rights. Ireland supposedly closed the loophole that allowed this scheme, but multinationals that had it in place before 2015 can keep using it until at least 2020. Even after that date, some version of it may still be possible given Ireland's double

taxation treaty with the Netherlands, which will take precedence over local law.

The arrangement exploits the largely borderless nature of doing business in the EU. Both the U.K. and Italian fiscal authorities, which settled their own case against Google for 306 million euros earlier this year, mainly attacked the U.S. company for paying too little from Ireland to Google U.K. and Google Italy for their services. Google complied, essentially as a matter of goodwill -- so that the national authorities would leave it alone.

The French case was more ambitious: The Socialist government challenged the scheme itself, claiming that Google had a "permanent establishment" in France under guidelines developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The argument was that Google France was essentially doing the ad sales deals, even though the paperwork went through Ireland.

Google France employs 700 people, some of them in commercial roles. That operation reported a 2015 turnover of just 247 million euros -- most of it

payments from Ireland; it paid 6.7 million euros in corporate income tax on a reported 22 million euros of profit. Google doesn't disclose revenue from French ad sales, so the French government tried to extrapolate it to calculate its demand for back taxes.

The government's estimates didn't fly with the court. It found nothing illegal about the Irish structure, just as an independent rapporteur to the court suggested should happen, citing "shortcomings of the current legal basis." Even though the government can still appeal, and ministers have said they'd look into it, the U.K. and Italian path would likely be more profitable. Just to be friendly, Google might prove amenable to admitting it short-changed its French division. Given that deficit-cutting French President Emmanuel Macron has sworn to establish France as one of the world's tech centers, a friendly arrangement -- even if leftists would deride it as a sweetheart deal -- would also make more sense than a continued legal battle over back taxes.

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That, however, doesn't change the glaring unfairness of Google's tax scheme. Google's effective foreign tax rate, which is easy to calculate from its U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filings, is extremely low. Even though it's risen somewhat in recent years, it's still way below even Ireland's 12.5 percent statutory rate. It's also much less than the company pays in the U.S., where its effective tax rate reached 34.3 percent in 2015.

Not an Eager Taxpayer

Google's effective tax rate outside the U.S.

Source: Authors's calculations based on SEC filings

Google is not really a U.S. business anymore: 53.6 percent of its revenues came from the rest of the world last year. In Europe, with more than 90 percent market share in search in most countries, Google is more dominant than in its home market. Just as in the U.S. market, its duopoly with Facebook is shrinking the ad revenue base of local news organizations. It's also the subject of European antitrust investigations, the first of which

recently ended with a record \$2.7 billion fine. Google is a muscular, sometimes overly aggressive and destructive local player -- and yet, while no doubt of value to consumers, it contributes little in the way of tax revenue to the countries where it's active, far less than it does to its home country.

This cannot be fixed with fruitless legal action over back taxes or even with more constructive negotiation. Legislative action is needed to force multinationals such as Google to disclose revenue collected and profit made in each country -- and to pay tax on that profit as they generally do in the U.S. Macron may be an unlikely candidate to pioneer such legislation -- it would make him look like an enemy of progress -- but he should try. Forced to pay taxes like a responsible local company, Google won't leave France. In 2015, its pretax foreign profit reached 28 percent of foreign revenue. It will still be wildly profitable if it's forced to pay taxes at European countries' statutory rates.



Sean Spicer, Kellyanne Conway join Bastille Day celebration at the French embassy

<https://www.facebook.com/emilyheil>
1 minute

As the boss wheels up for Paris, where he was set to celebrate Bastille Day with French President

Emmanuel Macron, some White House aides celebrated the *bleu, blanc et rouge* a little closer to home, joining the champagne-swilling crowd at the French ambassador's residence Wednesday night.

Press secretary Sean Spicer, accompanied by his wife, Rebecca Miller Spicer, and counselor Kellyanne Conway and her husband, George Conway, had a rare night out in social Washington (did we mention the boss was out of town?) at the Bastille Day party

hosted by French Ambassador Gérard Araud. Also spotted at the swanky Kalorama soiree? Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and his wife, Hilary Geary Ross, and NBC anchor Andrea Mitchell.



British Bill Sets Up More Brexit Strife

Jason Douglas
4-5 minutes

July 13, 2017 12:10 p.m. ET

LONDON—The U.K. government on Thursday published its first draft legislation on Brexit since a June election cost Prime Minister Theresa May her parliamentary majority, marking the first step in what looks set to be a bitterly fought domestic battle at the same time Britain negotiates its departure with Brussels.

The government's bill is designed to revoke a 1972 law that made European Union law applicable in the U.K., while simultaneously pasting thousands of EU laws and regulations into domestic statute.

The proposals will end the supremacy of EU law in British

courts after Brexit—a key goal of leaving—and allow Parliament to keep, alter or ditch the 19,000 EU laws currently enforceable in the U.K.

But Mrs. May's chances of steering such a complex process through Parliament without concessions to her opponents have been severely weakened by her disappointing showing in last month's national election.

The loss of her majority means she is vulnerable to rebellion from both pro- and anti-Brexit lawmakers within her own party. Meanwhile, opposition leaders on Thursday began setting out the price of their support, calling for assurances on issues such as workers' rights and environmental protection.

Lawyers say that failing to pass such legislation before Britain leaves the EU, expected in March 2019,

risks exposing businesses and households to legal chaos at the moment of departure.

"If you don't have something like this, we will end up with a massive hole in our domestic legal system," said Kieran Laird, head of constitutional affairs at the Brexit unit of law firm Gowling WLG.

Brexit Secretary David Davis described it as "one of the most significant pieces of legislation that has ever passed through Parliament" and a milestone on the road to Brexit.

The bill isn't due to be debated in Parliament until the fall but opposition parties were quick to signal they will oppose it becoming law without major changes.

One of their shared concerns is that the bill proposes giving government ministers so-called correcting power,

or the ability to alter the law where withdrawal from the EU makes an existing law unworkable, for example if it refers to an EU agency that no longer has authority in the U.K.

Ministers said the use of these powers will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny, but Labour Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer described them as "undemocratic, unaccountable and unacceptable."

The Scottish National Party described the bill as "a power grab."

The government also looks set for a fight over a decision not to incorporate the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, which lays down legal, social and economic rights, into U.K. law along with other EU statutes, an omission opposed by both Labour and the smaller, pro-EU Liberal Democrats. The

government said existing British law protects human rights.

Tim Farron, leader of the pro-EU Liberal Democrats, said the differences between the parties mean Mrs. May will face “a parliamentary version of guerrilla warfare” when lawmakers debate the bill.

Separately Thursday, the U.K. government published three papers setting out its negotiating position on three aspects of the Brexit talks: Ongoing judicial proceedings in European courts, the treatment of nuclear materials, and the post-Brexit privileges of EU officials.

The papers highlight the potential for negotiating snags. The EU has said it wants European courts to be able to hear cases against the U.K. covering its time as a member even after Brexit, while the U.K. says only cases that have been brought to court prior to withdrawal should be heard.

Appeared in the July 14, 2017, print edition as ‘Bill Would End EU Law Primacy in U.K.’

INTERNATIONAL



Zakaria : Why, oh why, does Trump love Russia so very much?

<https://www.fareedbook.com/fareedzakaria>

5-7 minutes

The latest revelations about Russia and President Trump’s campaign are useful because they might help unravel the mystery that has always been at the center of this story. Why has Trump had such a rosy attitude toward Russia and President Vladimir Putin? It is such an unusual position for Trump that it begs for some kind of explanation.

Unlike on domestic policy, where he has wandered all over the political map, on foreign policy, Trump has held clear and consistent views for three decades. In 1987, in his first major statement on public policy, he took out an ad in several newspapers that began, “For decades, Japan and other nations have been taking advantage of the United States.” In the ad, he also excoriated “Saudi Arabia, a country whose very existence is in the hands of the United States,” and other “allies who won’t help.”

This is Trump’s worldview, and he has never wavered from it. He has added countries to the roster of rogues, most recently China and Mexico. On the former, he wrote in his presidential campaign book, “There are people who wish I

wouldn’t refer to China as our enemy. But that’s exactly what they are.” During the campaign, he said: “We can’t continue to allow China to rape our country.” A few months before announcing his candidacy, he tweeted, “I want nothing to do with Mexico other than to build an impenetrable WALL and stop them from ripping off U.S.”

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Trump is what historian Walter Russell Mead calls a “Jacksonian” on foreign policy (after Andrew Jackson), someone deeply skeptical and instinctively hostile toward other nations and their leaders, who believes in a fortress America that minds its own business and, if disturbed, would “bomb the s---” out of its adversaries and then retreat back to its homeland.

This was Trump’s basic attitude toward the world, except for Russia and Putin. Ten years ago, when Russian money was pouring into the West, Trump began praising the country and its leader: “Look at Putin ... he’s doing a great job in rebuilding the image of Russia and also rebuilding Russia period.” In 2013, Putin wrote an op-ed in the New York Times to try to dissuade the Obama administration from responding to the Syrian government’s use of chemical

weapons. In it, he argued that the poison gas was actually used by the Syrian opposition to trick Washington into attacking the regime. Trump’s reaction was lyrical. “I thought it was an amazingly well-written ... letter. ... I think he wants to become the world’s leader, and right now he’s doing that.”

Trump so admired Putin that he imagined that the two of them had met, making some variation of that false claim at least five times in public, and playing down any criticisms of him. “In all fairness to Putin, you’re saying he killed people. I haven’t seen that,” he said in 2015. “Have you been able to prove that?” When confronted on this again earlier this year, he dismissed it, saying, “We’ve got a lot of killers. What, you think our country’s so innocent?” Trump could not have been making these excuses for any political advantage. The Republican Party was instinctively hostile toward Russia, though in a sign of shifting U.S. alignments, Republicans today have a more favorable view of Putin than Democrats by 20 points.

“There’s nothing I can think of that I’d rather do than have Russia friendly,” Trump declared at a news conference last July. His campaign seemed to follow this idea. He appointed as a top foreign policy adviser Michael Flynn, a man who

had pronounced pro-Russian leanings and, we now know, had been paid by the Russian government. Paul Manafort, who was for a while the head of Trump’s campaign, received millions of dollars from Ukraine’s pro-Russian party. During the Republican convention, there was a very unusual watering down of hawkish language on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. And once elected, Trump chose as his secretary of state Rex Tillerson, who had been awarded one of Russia’s highest honors for foreigners and had a “very close relationship” with Putin. Finally, there are the repeated contacts between members of Trump’s campaign and family with key Russian officials and nationals, which again appear to be unique to Russia.

It is possible that there are benign explanations for all of this. Perhaps Trump just admires Putin as a leader. Perhaps he has bought in to the worldview of his senior adviser Stephen K. Bannon, in which Russia is not an ideological foe but a cultural friend, a white Christian country battling swarthy Muslims. But perhaps there is some other explanation for this decade-long fawning over Russia and its leader. This is the puzzle now at the heart of the Trump presidency that special counsel Robert S. Mueller III will undoubtedly try to solve.



Do the US and Russia need clearer rules of engagement?

The Christian Science Monitor

6-7 minutes

July 13, 2017 Moscow—Barely a week after Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin sat down in a bid to iron out their differences, the effort appears to be in tatters.

The scandal engulfing Mr. Trump’s administration, over his campaign’s alleged collusion with Russia, has

grown so intense that leading Russian foreign-policy specialists say they fear the very principle of US-Russia rapprochement is in danger of being thrown out with the Trump bathwater. Three key deals that seemed to be struck at the meeting – to work out joint rules for security in cyberspace, a ceasefire in southern Syria, and a new US push to support the Minsk accords in Ukraine – are already floundering.

Russian cold war veterans say that efforts to maintain positive diplomatic dialogue have always been hostage to daily headlines and adverse geopolitical events. But today, they say, channels of communication appear woefully inadequate and there is no preexisting set of rules to fall back on – straining basic, practical communication between the US and Russia.

“You might think that the development of relations between

the US and Russia depends upon an objective assessment of security threats, but you’d be wrong,” says Pavel Zolotaryov, deputy director of the official Institute of USA-Canada Studies in Moscow. “Subjective factors, such as propaganda and enemy imagery, play a huge role. We don’t have any basic ideological differences as we did in the cold war, but the security threats are different.”

The need to speak with each other

In a clear sign that the Kremlin's brief honeymoon with Trump is ending, the Russians are now threatening to expel 30 US diplomats – delayed retaliation for President Obama's purge of Russian emissaries and seizure of two diplomatic dachas in December. That move was punishment for Moscow's alleged interference in the US elections

A Foreign Ministry source quoted in major Moscow newspaper Izvestia suggested that the belated return to cold war-style tit-for-tat diplomacy may be imminent. That would effectively roll things back to the dire state they were in before Trump took office.

"This diplomatic scandal is still raging. The US expelled 35 Russian diplomats and seized our property half a year ago. That can't be left unanswered," says Andrei Klimov, deputy chair of the Russian Senate's international affairs commission. But "Russia's position is that the two nuclear superpowers need to speak with each other. We are ready to go as far as our partners are ready to go."

Russia also put forward the need for dialogue regarding cyber-issues during Putin's meeting with Trump, suggesting the formation of a

committee to work out a set of joint rules to manage competition in cyberspace, and perhaps prevent future cyber-intrusions. But in subsequent statements about the proposal, Trump incorrectly described it as a joint enforcement body, rather than a rule-making one – leading it to be howled down by critics in Washington. Trump backed off the plan, leaving it dead in the water, even though many experts say it would be feasible if the political will to do it existed.

"In a previous generation our countries worked out rules to monitor and control nuclear weapons, and it was mutually beneficial," says Alexei Rayevsky, director of Zecurion, a leading Russian cybersecurity company. "Of course it's not the same, there are no physical objects in cyberspace to keep track of. There would be a lot of specific technical challenges, not to be underestimated. But if both parties were determined, it is a perfectly feasible idea."

A US-Russian backed ceasefire in southern Syria, which is still holding, was agreed on by Trump and Putin. But without consistent follow-up, few experts think it can last. "The ceasefire is a positive step, but whether it will survive or be effective

is still very uncertain," says Mr. Klimov.

The Russians have also cautiously welcomed the Trump administration's appointment of Kurt Volker to be the US special representative to negotiations on Ukraine, which addresses long-standing US disengagement from the Minsk peace process. But the Russians also complain that Mr. Volker is an anti-Moscow hard-liner who seems more likely to solidify differences than find ways around them.

Cold war defaults

Pavel Palazhchenko, who was Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's personal interpreter during the late 1980s, when the US and the USSR were actively dismantling the cold war, says he is "surprised and perplexed that the summit did not establish some kind of a mechanism for ongoing review of the entire US-Russian agenda, such as joint working groups that would consider all issues and suggest solutions for leaders to consider."

"When US-Soviet dialogue resumed in 1985, working groups were created to deal with key issues like human rights and arms control," he says. "Those groups met regularly, before, during and after summits

and ministerial meetings, it was a continuous process. That was an excellent way to start a durable dialogue that would go on regardless of the scandals, accusations, and unexpected events that tend to blow up all the time. That way things can be done even when the atmosphere is bad and the news cycle brings unpleasantness. Those things were happening then as well...."

"I don't understand why this obvious step isn't being taken now."

The mood in Moscow appears to be in favor of hunkering down and waiting till the Trump-Russia storm subsides in Washington, even if that means returning to some cold war defaults – like tit-for-tat expulsions – in the meantime.

"Even if Trump wants to do something, it's becoming clear that he can't realize much in practice," says Klimov. "It seems that bureaucrats of his own government, the mass media, and even congressmen from his own party have no sympathy for him and are constantly blocking him. We see that their attacks are skillful and effective, and he has to reckon with that before he can get anything done."



Iran's Stature Grows as Rivals Quarrel

Yaroslav Trofimov

5-7 minutes

July 13, 2017 5:30 a.m. ET

It's been more than five months since President Donald Trump declared that he was putting Iran "on notice."

For the Iranian regime, that is turning out to be a rather comfortable place.

While the Trump administration is still formulating its Iran and Syria policies, a series of international events have combined to bolster Iran's influence, at least for now.

Top among them is the crisis over Qatar, which erupted days after Mr. Trump's high-profile trip to a summit in Riyadh in May. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt have shut their embassies in Qatar, closed borders and banned travel and trade with the emirate.

The conflict has already turned what used to be a two-way confrontation between the Saudi-led Sunni axis and the Iran-led Shiite camp into a three-way regional fracture that offers fresh strategic opportunities for Tehran.

"The Saudi effort to build a consensus against Iran in the region has hit the rocks with Qatar. This split is something that Iran is enjoying," said Hassan Ahmadian, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic Research think tank in Tehran. "Iran's ruling elite likes it and believes that the future stability of the region is better served by having more than two axes confronting one another."

In fact, the measures the Saudis and their allies have adopted against Qatar are sometimes harsher than their policies toward Iran. The U.A.E. and Iran, for example, maintain diplomatic and trade relations, and extensive air links.

With regional heavyweight Turkey taking Qatar's side, the collapse of the Sunni alliance isn't the only good news for Tehran. The growing alienation between the Trump administration and European nations, particularly Germany and France, is also making any new concerted international effort to pressure Iran increasingly unlikely.

Some Iranian leaders appreciate this trans-Atlantic discord "as giving Iran some short-term advantages and breathing space," said Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the Center

for American Progress, a think tank close to the Democrats, who recently participated in informal discussions with Iranian representatives. "America looks distracted and unfocused—and besides the rhetoric of putting Iran 'on notice' and a few tactical policy shifts, Iran right now seems to see the gap between Trump's bluster and actions."

This month, France's Total SA said it would push ahead with a \$1 billion investment into Iran's South Pars gas field, the first major injection of Western money since international sanctions against Iran were lifted as part of a nuclear agreement last year. Iran and Qatar share ownership of this gas field, the world's largest.

Iran's position has strengthened, too, in the Middle East's actual battlefields. In Iraq and Syria, advances by Iran's Shiite proxies against Islamic State and moderate Sunni rebels are making possible the establishment of an overland "resistance highway" that would link, through friendly territory, Tehran to Damascus and Beirut for the first time since the Syrian war began in 2011—a major geopolitical gain.

The war in Yemen remains at a stalemate, at great cost to Saudi

Arabia and the U.A.E. The Iranian-backed Hezbollah Shiite militia keeps consolidating its influence over the Lebanese state. Even the low-grade Shiite insurgency in parts of eastern Saudi Arabia has flared up of late.

The Saudi-led campaign against Qatar, meanwhile, has allowed Tehran to improve its relationship with the embattled emirate—and with Qatar's main ally, Turkey. Both nations have long backed Sunni rebels fighting against Iranian allies in Syria, a support that could diminish as a result of the current Gulf crisis.

"In the recent past, each time Saudi Arabia has downsized or frozen its relations with an Arab country, such as Lebanon and Iraq, this has presented Iran an opportunity to strengthen its relations to the local actors at a detriment to Saudi Arabia," said Ellie Geranmayeh, senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

While Iran and the Qatar-Turkey camp agree on some key regional issues, such as support for the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, their rapprochement can go only so far, of course. Turkey and Qatar remain military allies of the U.S., and Turkey in particular views

itself as Iran's geopolitical rival and equal. The Sunni Islamist ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood, a Pan-Islamic group that is backed by Turkey and Qatar alike, is also fundamentally at odds with Iran's Shiite theocratic doctrine.

This means that Iran's overriding interest is for both sides of the Qatar crisis to get bruised by the dispute.

"In the long term, both the Muslim Brotherhood and Wahhabism,

which is the basis of Saudi Arabia's kingdom, don't accept Shiites as Muslims," said Mohammad Eslami, an Iranian commentator and a fellow at Mofid University in Iran. "And both believe that they should

control the power of Iran in the region."

Write to Yaroslav Trofimov at yaroslav.trofimov@wsj.com

**The
Washington
Post**

Trump administration plans to certify Iranian compliance with nuclear agreement

DeYoung

8-10 minutes

By Karen

(Gillian Brockell and Julio C. Negron/The Washington Post)

(Gillian Brockell and Julio C. Negron/The Washington Post)

The Trump administration, delaying an anticipated confrontation with Iran until the completion of a long-awaited policy review, plans to recertify Tehran's compliance with the Obama-era nuclear deal, according to U.S. and foreign officials.

The recertification, due Monday to Congress, follows a heated internal debate between those who want to crack down on Iran now — including some White House officials and lawmakers — and Cabinet officials who are "managing other constituencies" such as European allies, and Russia and China, which signed and support the agreement, one senior U.S. official said.

As a candidate and president, Trump has said he would reexamine and possibly kill what he called the "disastrous" nuclear deal that was negotiated under President Barack Obama and went into effect in January last year. The historic agreement shut down most of Iran's nuclear program, in some cases for decades, in exchange for an easing of international sanctions.

Under an arrangement Obama worked out with Congress, the administration must certify Iranian compliance with the terms of the accord every 90 days. If the administration denies certification, it can then decide to reinstitute sanctions that were suspended under the deal.

The Trump administration issued its first certification in April, when it also said it was awaiting completion of its review of the agreement, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. The senior official, one of several who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal administration deliberations, said the review should be completed before the next certification deadline in October.

Here's what's in the Iran nuclear deal, and what happens next. Here's what's in the Iran nuclear deal, explained in 60 seconds.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations and other signatories have said repeatedly that Iran is complying with the agreement, under which the country dismantled most of its centrifuges and nuclear stockpile, shut down a plutonium production program and agreed to extensive international monitoring of all stages of the nuclear process.

[France's Total bets big on Iran's gas fields. American rivals watch from afar.]

Beyond disagreements over what supporters of the deal consider minor and quickly rectified infractions, and detractors assert are dealbreaking violations, there is broad consensus within the administration and Congress that Iran continues to participate in other prohibited activities not covered in the nuclear accord.

The question is how the United States should respond.

White House officials, including those charged with managing Iran policy within the National Security Council, believe Iran should be punished not only for nuclear violations, but also for its support of international terrorism and its development of ballistic-missile technology.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who has statutory responsibility for certification, and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis have successfully argued that the nuclear deal should not be tied to punishments for those activities and that any nuclear-related action should await the review.

Officials cautioned that Trump, who has made clear his disdain for the accord, could decide not to sign off on the recertification between now and the Monday deadline but said that was unlikely. The decision to recertify was first reported Thursday by the Weekly Standard.

Next Tuesday, the administration must also comply with a separate deadline, reporting to Congress on

Iran's overall nuclear behavior and deciding whether to waive reinstating sanctions lifted under the accord. That report, due 180 days after Trump's inauguration, was part of restrictions lawmakers put on the agreement, as was the 90-day certification requirement.

As White House officials have asserted their role in the process, the administration has downgraded internal State Department mechanisms for monitoring Iranian compliance. In recent weeks, a separate State Department office of Iran Nuclear Implementation established by Obama was subsumed by the bureau in charge of overall Middle East policy. Both Stephen D. Mull, the lead coordinator for implementation, and Stuart Jones, the acting head of the Middle East bureau, are moving on from those jobs.

It is unclear who will replace Jones or whether Mull will be replaced at all.

Among those weighing in from the outside during the debate, which included a meeting of Trump's national security principals last week, were four Republican lawmakers — Sens. Tom Cotton (Ark.), Ted Cruz (Tex.), David Perdue (Ga.) and Marco Rubio (Fla.).

They urged noncertification in a letter Tuesday to Tillerson, saying that in addition to "violations" of the deal, "Iran continues to wage a campaign of regional aggression, sponsor international terrorism, develop ballistic missile technology and oppress the Iranian people."

Mark Dubowitz, head of the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which has long criticized the accord and urged its reformulation, said that recertification was "the wrong decision."

"I think the administration this time around should have made the decision not to recertify, explain why, and actually gone ahead with the waiver and slapped on some new nonnuclear sanctions."

Noncertification would not automatically trigger the end of the deal. That would require the United States to allege a "material breach"

on Iran's part and a referral to the joint commission of signatories to the agreement for assessment. But proponents of the accord said that a failure to certify would nonetheless trigger unwanted reactions.

Even if new sanctions were not related to Iran's nuclear program, said Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, "the real question is whether under those conditions the political support inside Iran for compliance with the deal will continue."

Allegations of Iranian violations, he said, are "trumped up" and "not supported by any evidence. ... They have exceeded heavy-water limits by a tiny percentage, and gone back into compliance within days."

Tillerson aide R.C. Hammond made clear that his boss believes that Iran is behaving badly in a number of areas, regardless of the assessment of the nuclear deal, and that a new policy is being formulated. "All the Obama Iran deal did was pay for a pause" in Iran's nuclear program, he said. "It didn't fix any problems. What we're going to try to do is fix the problems."

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The senior official added that unlike the previous administration, "this administration sees the JCPOA as a symptom, not the disease."

"The disease is broader Iranian aggression. That's what the strategy review is focused on, and until it's complete, it's difficult to know what is the best resolution," the official said. "The president has been very frank about his opinion."

Friday is the second anniversary of the signing of the deal, negotiated with Iran over a number of years by the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China, Russia and the European Union. Other signatories have been open in their rejection of Trump's assessment, and they have warned that they would continue to honor the agreement, and increase their trade and relations with Iran,

no matter what the United States does.

"I know that in the U.S. there is a review ongoing," E.U. foreign policy

chief Federica Mogherini said at a news conference Tuesday with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. "We respect that. But we also have the duty to make it clear

that the nuclear deal doesn't belong to one country. It belongs to the international community, to the U.N. system. . . . We share responsibility

to make sure that this continues to be implemented fully by all."

Carol Morello in Kuwait contributed to this report.



The Iran Nuclear Deal Has Been a Blessing for Israel

5-7 minutes

During my time as director of Israel's General Security Service, the Shin Bet, I was among those responsible for maintaining my country's security in a tumultuous and dangerous region. It was my job to consider every threat and every challenge. Among the most serious threats that I worried faced Israel was the possibility of Iran developing a nuclear weapon. That was one danger I knew we could never accept.

Now, as the world marks the two-year anniversary of the adoption of the nuclear agreement with Iran, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the threat of an Iranian nuclear weapon is more remote than it has been in decades. Thanks to the agreement, Iran's nuclear program has been defanged and all its pathways to a bomb blocked.

While no agreement is perfect, this achievement must not be underestimated. For decades, leaders and experts in Israel and among our allies contemplated the drastic steps we might have to take to restrain or destroy Iran's nuclear program. That included potential military operations that might have triggered a major escalation and cost many lives — with no guarantee of achieving their goal.

Through the JCPOA, the major world powers came together to ensure — without a single shot

being fired — that Iran dismantled key nuclear infrastructure and submitted itself to thorough monitoring and inspection.

Two years later, the results are in, and they show the effort has been a clear success.

Two years later, the results are in, and they show the effort has been a clear success.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed that Iran has complied with the terms of the agreement. It has dismantled and removed two-thirds of its centrifuges. It has reduced its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent, shipping over 25,000 pounds out of the country. The core of its Arak reactor, which could have allowed Iran to produce weapons-grade plutonium, has been removed and its shell filled with concrete. Perhaps most importantly, Tehran has provided inspectors with unprecedented access to its nuclear facilities and supply chain.

In the face of this success, even some of the agreement's most vocal critics have grudgingly accepted its positive impact. In April, President Donald Trump's administration certified to Congress that Iran continues to be in compliance with the JCPOA. In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after leading a vociferous international campaign against the agreement, now remains mostly silent on the subject. And while the majority of my colleagues in the Israeli military

and intelligence communities supported the deal once it was reached, many of those who had major reservations now acknowledge that it has had a positive impact on Israel's security and must be fully maintained by the United States and the other signatory nations.

Of course, Iran remains an extremely dangerous regime and a bad actor across the Middle East. Its support for terrorist organizations like Hezbollah and regimes like that of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad continue to contribute to regional chaos and present a major threat to Israeli security and U.S. interests. Israel and its allies must remain extremely vigilant and active to counter the Iranian threat.

But it is for precisely these reasons that the nuclear agreement is so important. By ensuring that such a dangerous regime can never possess nuclear weapons, the deal makes it easier for Iran to be confronted for its other malign behaviors. The Trump administration's primary international accomplishment, for instance, has been to enlarge the coalition of moderate Sunni Arab countries who are threatened by Iran's territorial ambitions. If Iran had been protected by a nuclear umbrella, it would have been impossible for countries such as Egypt, Jordan, or Saudi Arabia — as well as Israel and the United States — to array themselves so staunchly against Tehran. Key sanctions on Iran's support for

terror, human rights violations, and ballistic missile programs also have remained in place.

And while Iran's hardliners retain key positions of power, the willingness of the international community to pursue tough diplomacy has helped empower more moderate Iranian leaders. President Hassan Rouhani, a strong proponent of the agreement, was re-elected in May despite the opposition of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Rouhani understands and fears the consequences of major military confrontation — and his election serves as an important indicator that much of the Iranian people prefer a path of compromise and increased dialogue with the West over recklessly pursuing nuclear ambitions and conflicts.

As a guardian of Israel's security, my job was to prepare for the worst — while searching always for bold and proactive measures to head off disaster and stop threats in their tracks. The nuclear agreement is a good example of the kind of solutions to which I aspired. It has neutralized a major threat to the world, while ensuring that the United States and its allies have the tools, the information, and the leverage that they need to confront the Iranian danger and make the region, and the world, a safer place.

Photo credit: DEBBIE HILL/AFP/Getty Images



Making Peace With Assad's State of Barbarism

12-15 minutes

President Donald Trump's trip to Britain went from a state visit, to a quick stopover landing under the cover of night, to being postponed till next year. But he got the royal treatment in Paris instead, a guest of France's new president Emmanuel Macron for the Bastille Day celebrations.

Undoubtedly on the agenda, after the holiday's annual military parade, is Syria — once under French mandate and a country that Paris continues to see as an entry point for its influence in the Middle East.

But endless unanswered questions have been raised since Macron's

inauguration about what will drive his Middle East policy: values or realpolitik? The same, of course, might be said about Trump. The U.S. president bombed President Bashar al-Assad's forces in April because Assad was killing "beautiful babies," but his secretary of state has also indicated that the Trump administration was ready to let Russia decide Assad's fate — a way of saying Assad could stay in power.

Macron, for his part, warned that Syria's use of chemical weapons would be a red line for France. But he also recently told *Le Figaro* that Assad was an enemy of the Syrian people, not of France — appearing to imply that he was unconcerned about the devastation wrought on

the country by Assad, only about the repercussions of the conflict in France.

How France and the United States envision the resolution of the conflict in Syria today will help determine how sustainable the peace will be or whether it will contain within the seeds of further devastation. Tragedies, personal or national, tend to announce themselves long before they arrive.

Twenty-five years ago, French sociologist Michel Seurat penned a series of essays that brought to light what he described as "*l'Etat de barbarie*," the state of barbarism, inherent in the Assads' rule. He detailed their savagery in repressing the Islamist uprising of the early

1980s, with summary executions of dozens of villagers, hundreds of prisoners shot to death in their cells, and indiscriminate shelling of whole towns.

"The crumbling of the political legitimacy of the regime translates on the ground to a reactivation of forms of legitimacy that precede political structures," he wrote. In other words, the solidarity of ethnic and sectarian groups, rather than sociopolitical organizations, held sway. President Hafez al-Assad's political vision had devolved to consisting solely of "tying the destiny of the Alawite community to his own destiny."

Seurat would pay the ultimate price for his work. He was kidnapped in

Beirut in 1985, at the height of the civil war, by the Islamic Jihad, a group with ties to Syria and Iran. He was executed in captivity, his body only found and repatriated to France in 2005. As both Trump and Macron broach the possibility of reconciling themselves to Assad's reign in Damascus, his writings remain a cautionary tale about the costs of that approach.

Bashar al-Assad himself was once the guest of a French president for Bastille Day.

Bashar al-Assad himself was once the guest of a French president for Bastille Day. Nicolas Sarkozy, eager to do the opposite of everything his predecessor had done, rolled out the red carpet in 2008 for the Syrian leader, who had been transformed into an international pariah by Jacques Chirac and George W. Bush.

But Sarkozy's solicitousness marked a reversion to an earlier pattern. If the Holy Grail for international diplomats is the achievement of regional peace in the Middle East, peace between Syria and Israel has long been identified as a first step toward it. As Henry Kissinger once said, "You can't make war in the Middle East without Egypt, and you can't make peace without Syria." That one sentence sent endless diplomats and officials on the road to Damascus in a vain quest to persuade Bashar's father, President Hafez al-Assad, to sign on the dotted line of various peace accords. The signature never came.

At first, there was more hope in Bashar, a British-educated ophthalmologist with a pretty wife, who kept making the right noises about peace and promising domestic reforms — promises that sounded good enough that everyone kept coming back, hoping the next visit would seal the deal.

Assad's isolation began when his regime was accused of ordering the assassination of Lebanon's former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in a massive truck bomb on Beirut's seaside corniche on Feb. 14, 2005. Huge protests ensued in Lebanon, calling for an end to the 30-year Syrian occupation of that country. With Bush and Chirac, a close friend of Hariri, leading the charge, the international community ostracized Assad and forced his 15,000 troops into a humiliating retreat out of the country that the Assad family considered a part of Syria.

Sarkozy's 2008 invitation to the "well behaved autocrat," as *Le Monde* described him then, ended five years of painful isolation for Assad. It was a period during which

his political obituary was being drafted and people close to the regime in Damascus would joke to you in hushed tones about who should turn off the lights on the way out of the country.

What motivated Sarkozy was the belief that unlike his predecessor, he could forge a different relationship with Assad, and that his persona and cunning could persuade the ruler of Damascus to change his ways. (The same self-confidence might be said to have motivated Secretary of State John Kerry, who was one of the last to withdraw his faith in Assad after his forces started shooting protesters in 2011.)

One can speculate about an alternative course of events if Sarkozy had not rehabilitated Assad in 2008, one where perhaps the pressure had not let up and Assad would have had to deliver on his vague promises to reform. Or possibly popular dissent would have swelled up sooner than it did in 2011, but would not have earned the same ruthless response from a leader already cowed into submission. In these scenarios Syria could have remained a country intact. We will never know.

But today it's worth pondering the trajectory on which Macron's approach is placing Syria and the region. What France wants from Syria is no longer peace with Israel, or even a rejection of its alliance with Iran. Assad, in any case, can deliver neither of those things. Macron's focus is understandably on counterterrorism and stemming the flow of jihadis from Syria into Europe.

In his much-scrutinized and wide-ranging interview with *Le Figaro*, Macron made two key points on Syria. The first one was the statement about Assad not being the enemy of France. The other was a clarification of his position on Assad's future. Having once said that there was no solution to the conflict in Syria with Assad in power, he clarified, "I never said that the destitution of Bashar al-Assad was a prerequisite for everything, because no one has introduced to me his legitimate successor."

But as France well knows, there's also a price for keeping Assad in power.

But as France well knows, there's also a price for keeping Assad in power. In 1981, agents suspected of working for the Syrian secret service assassinated Louis Delamare, the French ambassador in Lebanon, in broad daylight in Beirut. In 1983, the two attacks against the U.S. Marines and

French paratroopers in Beirut were blamed on the Islamic Jihad (an early version of Hezbollah), which was tied to Iran and Syria. In the mid-1980s, Paris suffered a string of terrorist attacks that killed dozens and were linked directly or indirectly to groups with ties to Syria.

This may seem like ancient history, but the Assad regime has also made veiled threats against the West far more recently. Assad's cousin, businessman Rami Makhoul, warned in a *New York Times* interview: "Nobody can guarantee what will happen after, God forbid anything happens to this regime. ... They should know when we suffer, we will not suffer alone."

It was another version of a favorite Syrian threat: We can help bring peace to the region, but ignore us at your own peril because we can cause havoc.

At the beginning of the uprising, Syria's Grand Mufti threatened to send suicide bombers to Europe if Syria came under attack. There is nothing to indicate that the Syrian regime has any connection whatsoever to any of the attacks that recently occurred in Europe, but what dozens of French, Syrian, and Lebanese intellectuals point out in an open letter to Macron is that Assad helps create the environment in which radical groups and jihadis can thrive. Rehabilitating Assad only once again delays a sustainable solution to a problem that has now reached the shores of Europe.

Just as troublesome is Macron's second statement about legitimacy and Assad's future. Despite past statements from world leaders, including François Hollande and Barack Obama, that there is no place for Assad in Syria's future, none of the communiqués that emerged from peace talks in Syria ever stated that Assad's departure was a precondition to a solution. So while Macron's words alarmed many in the opposition, it does not necessarily contradict the current approach in Syrian peace talks.

The first Geneva communiqué in 2012 did mention that a new government should be formed by "mutual consent," which indirectly excludes the possibility that Assad could participate because the opposition would reject it. But today, six years into the war, few truly believe that Assad will simply depart. Whatever the outcome, it will include a transition in which Assad is probably involved.

One does have to wonder about this legitimacy that Macron speaks of. Does Assad still have it, after unleashing every type of violence against his own people? Is he still

legitimately a president who can be relied upon to cooperate on counterterrorism, when he is barely in control of his own country and is wholly dependent on the fighting power of Iran and Russia?

As for Macron's question — Where is Assad's natural successor? — ask any Syrian opposed to Assad's rule and he or she will have the answer for you: Assad has killed, jailed, or exiled anyone who could rise as a potential replacement. It's a ruthlessly efficient *modus operandi* that the Assads have used before, including in Lebanon, where they stand accused of having steadily assassinated over decades every progressive politician and intellectual figure.

Within rebel-held areas in Syria, there are probably possible future leaders, the product of years of civil resistance, who are little known today to the outside world but could surface once the guns fall silent. If the West wants a ready-made, English-speaking successor who could lead a transition government, a few names have already been making the rounds. There's Abdullah Dardari, a former Syrian finance minister who has been leading the planning for Syrian reconstruction at the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, though he could be seen as too close to Assad for some in the opposition. Another name is Ayman Asfari, a Syrian-born British oil businessman and outspoken critic of Assad who is the founder of the Asfari Foundation, which provides humanitarian aid and promotes civil society. A third name is Riad Hijab, a former prime minister who defected in 2012 and is the current head of the opposition's High Negotiations Committee.

If a compromise is to be found for a transition with Assad, it may well have to involve such figures. The key is to make sure their voice, too, is heard. After more than 40 years of Assad rule on Syria, it may be hard to imagine anyone else presiding over the country. But imagination is precisely what is required in this situation — that and building up military leverage on the ground that the West can use at the negotiating table.

Change the dates and some names and Seurat's essays and descriptions could be about today's events in Syria. And yet unlike Saddam Hussein or Muammar al-Qaddafi, the Assads have always managed to come out on top. France, the United States, and others always seem to revert to courting the Assads, and hoping that this time their promises of cooperation are not a double-edged sword. Perhaps Macron should read

Seurat's writings to understand the kind of adversary he faces.

So, values or realpolitik? Sometimes, realpolitik without values is simply the denial of reality.

Thierry Chesnot/Getty Images

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Islamic State Turned Desperate in Mosul Fight, Iraqis Say

Asa Fitch and Ali A. Nabhan

5-7 minutes

July 13, 2017 7:01 p.m. ET

MOSUL, Iraq—In their final days in Mosul, Islamic State militants dispatched dozens of suicide bombers—including women with babies in their arms—and searched homes for young boys they could force into battle, said Iraqi commanders who led the fight and residents who survived.

Almost all of the terror group's remaining fighters in Mosul's Old City wore suicide vests during gunbattles, and the extremists also strapped bombs to disabled civilians, according to Iraqi commanders who described the fierce resistance Islamic State put up as the last stage of the battle unfolded over the past week.

Civilians who fled late in the battle said Islamic State fighters searched homes periodically. Hassan Yunis Khidhir, a bakery worker who fled his neighborhood last week, said he had his three sons, aged 14, 17 and 20, wear full niqabs, the black face coverings worn by conservative Muslim women, when Islamic State came looking.

"When we finally made it out to the security forces, we were so happy that we all cried because we never expected to make it out alive," Mr. Khidhir said.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory over Islamic State in Mosul on Monday after nearly nine months of fighting to recapture Iraq's second-largest city, which Islamic State had held for three years.

Some fighting continued in subsequent days as Iraqi forces coordinated airstrikes with a U.S.-led military coalition on buildings in the Old City's narrow streets where Islamic State fighters were believed to be holed up.

But the fighting seemed to have died down to a large extent on Thursday. Streets in the Old City were strewn with rubble and the twisted metal of bombed-out cars.

Iraqi counterterrorism forces cleared the last buildings in their area of operations on Wednesday afternoon, commanders said, though the forces brought a gray-bearded man wrapped in a blanket on the hood of a Humvee to their headquarters west of the Old City on Thursday morning—a newly captured Islamic State suspect, according to an Iraqi soldier.

The Iraqi army was also still battling groups of three or four Islamic State fighters in the Old City on Thursday, according to a commander with those forces who asked not to be named.

Iraqi forces recaptured eastern Mosul in January, and had cornered Islamic State fighters into a shrinking portion of the Old City in the west in recent months.

Surrounded by Iraqi forces, the militants recalled fighters from other areas of the Old City to defend their last patch of territory, said Lt. Col. Salam al-Obaidi, a top field commander in Iraq's counterterrorism forces.

The final push against the militants began on Saturday, at which point Iraqi forces had Islamic State fighters pinned in a long strip of territory in the Old City, running along the western bank of the Tigris River, according to commanders.

As the U.S.-trained counterterrorism forces tried to push from south to north, Islamic State fighters turned to desperate tactics, commanders said.

The militants wore suicide vests with the aim of detonating themselves if they encountered Iraqi forces in close combat, according to a high-ranking officer who asked not to be named. Around 60 suicide bombers were blowing themselves up every day at the end, he said.

Women, some carrying babies, also wore suicide vests and blew themselves up when they reached Iraqi forces, said Lt. Col. Obaidi.

"In this last small area, they weren't able to use their traditional weapons like car bombs, mortars and drones, so they used suicide bombers," he said Thursday in the Old City, smoking a cigarette and drinking Red Bull to stay alert after a grueling battle. "Many were women. More than 25 women detonated explosive vests targeting our troops in the last few days."

The extremists also piled up berms of dirt and rubble at the entrances of narrow alleyways, forcing Iraqi forces to go in on foot to clear buildings before bringing in armored bulldozers to plow paths for armored vehicles, according to Lt. Gen. Sami al-Aridhi, another counterterrorism commander.

"We had to give up all our vehicles and heavy weaponry," he said.

Islamic State fighters, most of them foreigners, had confined around 1,000 civilians to the area, commanders said. That meant Iraqi forces had to be tentative when calling in airstrikes.

On Sunday, when Mr. Abadi arrived in Mosul, there was still a pitched battle for control and the front lines had moved little from the previous day, Iraqi commanders said.

The counterterrorism forces adopted a new strategy, pushing through the middle of the unconquered territory. Separately, Iraqi army units pressed from the north and west, commanders said.

By Monday morning, that strategy was paying off as the forces drew closer to wresting the entire patch from Islamic State and most civilians were evacuated, they said.

Write to Asa Fitch at asa.fitch@wsj.com

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

U.S. Calls on Feuding Arab Nations to Meet to End Dispute

Felicia Schwartz
4-5 minutes

July 13, 2017 6:31 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Secretary of State Rex Tillerson urged Qatar and four other Arab nations on Thursday to meet directly to end a feud between the crucial U.S. allies now in its second month.

The chief American diplomat's shuttle diplomacy over the last several days didn't break a stalemate between the sides. And Arab officials said it was unlikely all of the parties would meet together soon. But Mr. Tillerson said he saw more willingness between the

Middle Eastern nations to communicate.

"Right now the parties are not even talking to one another at any level," he said on a plane from Qatar to Washington. "We'd love to get them to the table, face to face, to begin a discussion around addressing these issues."

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut diplomatic ties and imposed a transport ban against the tiny Gulf nation on June 5 in response to what those countries described as concerns about support for terrorist groups and meddling in their domestic affairs.

The U.S. has taken on a diplomatic role in the dispute because the five

countries are vital political and economic allies to Washington. Some of them are major suppliers of oil and cooperate on regional security and they fight against Islamic State militants. Qatar is home to the U.S.'s largest military base, a hub for aircraft involved in the air campaigns against the militants in Iraq and Syria. Bahrain is home to the Navy's Fifth Fleet.

"We need this part of the world to be stable and this particular conflict between these parties is obviously not helpful," said Mr. Tillerson, a former Exxon Mobil Corp. chief.

He said that the U.S. backs Kuwait as the main mediator of the conflict, but that the U.S. would suggest ideas for progress. Mr. Tillerson this week circulated documents among

the feuding nations he said that laid out "some ways that we might move this forward."

After cutting ties, the four-nation Arab bloc later issued a list of 13 demands for Qatar to meet, including closing down state broadcaster Al Jazeera, curbing ties with Iran and ending Turkey's military presence on its soil. Qatar has rejected those demands and accused the countries of running a smear campaign.

U.S. and Western officials dismiss most of the demands as unreasonable, but hope they might be able to negotiate on some of the requests.

Mr. Tillerson said he attempted to try to sort out grievances that the

four nation bloc had with Qatar, but that some of them are complex, date back years and may take longer to resolve.

In Doha on Tuesday, Mr. Tillerson and his Qatari counterpart signed a pact to crack down on terror financing. The next day, he met with officials from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, who deemed the accord insufficient to satisfy their concerns about Qatar's alleged

support for terrorist groups.

"There is a diplomatic solution to this crisis, but any solution is going to ultimately require addressing the core issues of the demands, including security, support for extremists and terrorism, and meddling internal affairs of countries," one Arab diplomat said.

The Trump administration has sent mixed signals about its position in the crisis. When the Saudi-led bloc

first moved to cut ties with Qatar in June, President Donald Trump took credit for the move and said it was a result of a successful visit to Riyadh in May. Later, Mr. Tillerson called on the bloc to end a blockade of Qatar and the State Department questioned the motives of the Saudis and others for keeping the conflict going.

Mr. Tillerson likened the negotiations to "dealing with

dynamic situations in my old CEO role."

Write to Felicia Schwartz at Felicia.Schwartz@wsj.com

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The New York Times **Tillerson Comes Up Short in Effort to Resolve Qatar Dispute**

Gardiner Harris

5-6 minutes

Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson met Wednesday with King Salman of Saudi Arabia in Jiddah. U.S. State Department

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait — Weary after failing to resolve a bitter dispute among regional allies, Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson left the Middle East on Thursday, contrasting the "fragmented" decision making of the United States government with that of Exxon Mobil, the "highly structured" company he once ran.

The last stop in his effort at shuttle diplomacy was in Doha, the capital of tiny, gas-rich Qatar, where he consulted on Thursday with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the emir, about his meetings the day before with the Saudi-led coalition behind the embargo of Qatar — an action that threatens a variety of United States priorities in the region.

A meeting Wednesday at the royal airport lounge in Jidda with Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir of Saudi Arabia gave some hope of progress, as the two men huddled for a long talk and then sat nearly

knee to knee and simultaneously consulted their cellphones.

But Mr. Tillerson left Jidda Wednesday night without even attempting the usual tight-smiled announcements of incremental progress.

"I'm tired, I'm tired, been a long trip," Mr. Tillerson told reporters on his plane after leaving Doha on Thursday. Asked what most surprised him in his new job, he said, "Well, it is a lot different than being C.E.O. of Exxon because I was the ultimate decision maker. That always makes life easier."

He spoke fondly of the discipline that marks the oil giant's decision-making process. "That allows you to accomplish a lot, to accomplish a lot in a very efficient way," he said.

"Those are not the characteristics of the United States government," Mr. Tillerson said. "And I don't say that as a criticism; it's just an observation of fact. It's largely not a highly disciplined organization, decision making is fragmented, and sometimes people don't want to take decisions, coordination is difficult through the interagency — has been for every administration." He added that "we have a president that doesn't come from the political world either."

Much of Mr. Tillerson's focus since taking office has been on an effort to restructure the State Department, but the extended process and proposed deep budget cuts have resulted in a mixture of bewilderment and fierce opposition even among Republicans on Capitol Hill. Despite these difficulties, Mr. Tillerson decided to try his hand at shuttle diplomacy this week. But after three days of sipping tea with royalty on white coaches in ornate palaces, he said that a solution remains far off.

"Right now, the parties are not even talking to one another at any level," he said of the dispute between Qatar and four Persian Gulf countries, led by Saudi Arabia. Some of the issues that led the four to impose an embargo against Qatar are so complex that the "ultimate resolution may take quite a while," he added.

"You know all four of these countries are really important to the U.S.," Mr. Tillerson said. "It's the reason I came over to take a direct interest in it because we need this part of the world to be stable and this particular conflict between these parties is obviously not helpful."

Part of the reason a deal could not be reached might have something

to do with President Trump's embrace of King Salman of Saudi Arabia. The president's support is thought to have given the kingdom the confidence to start and then stick by the embargo regardless of Mr. Tillerson's increasingly urgent and frustrated pleadings.

As he left Qatar on Thursday, Mr. Tillerson shook hands with Sheikh Mohammad bin Hamad al-Thani, the brother of the emir, who was overheard saying to Mr. Tillerson, "Hope to see you again under better circumstances."

Whether the continuing dispute between Qatar and the other United States allies in the Persian Gulf has strategic consequences may become clear as soon as next week, when representatives from more than 70 countries united against the Islamic State extremist group will convene in Washington to discuss how to rebuild and govern Mosul and other areas of Iraq newly liberated from the militants' brutal control.

The Trump administration, which has refused to engage in nation building, is hoping to rally a united Arab world to undertake the huge effort, but as the Qatar crisis demonstrates, such unity may be difficult to achieve.

The Washington Post **Igantius : The question about Islam that has vexed the world for a decade**

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

5-7 minutes

The diplomatic machinations that have enveloped Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar may seem like a membership feud in a Persian Gulf club for the wealthy. But their quarrel highlights battles that have been roiling the Middle East since the Arab Spring began nearly seven years ago.

The boycott against Qatar announced last month by the Saudis, Emiratis, Bahrainis and Egyptians took the Trump administration by surprise — and triggered a mediation effort this week by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. He is said to view the conflict as counterproductive — damaging all the feuding countries and helping their common rival, Iran.

Tillerson is right to see this as a fratricidal dispute that should be resolved through negotiation. The allegation that Qatar supports

terrorism is weak, especially after it signed a memo with Tillerson on Tuesday committing to a joint counterterrorism battle with the United States. The demand that Qatar close Al Jazeera is outrageous; the region needs freer media, not more censorship.

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The Saudis' and Emiratis' basic problem is that they find Qatar a meddlesome and untrustworthy neighbor. But by escalating the family quarrel so radically, they have hurt themselves. The longer this battle goes, the more damage it will do to gulf relations with Washington, stability in the region and, perhaps most important, hopes for modernization and reform in Saudi Arabia.

If Tillerson wants to resolve this dispute, he needs to reckon with the intensity of the anger that triggered it. The fuse was lit in 2013, but its

roots go back to 1996, when a branch of the ruling family the Saudis didn't like took power against Saudi wishes. For Saudi Arabia and the UAE, Qatar feels like a thorn in the side, much as Cuba did for the United States for more than 50 years.

This secret history emerges in documents published this week by CNN. The network obtained a copy of a handwritten accord signed Nov. 23, 2013, by the ruling monarchs of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait. It's basically a mutual non-interference pact, with the additional stipulation that no signatory will destabilize Yemen or support the Muslim Brotherhood.

It's the Muslim Brotherhood issue that has caused the most bitterness. Qatar has argued that the Brotherhood's involvement in politics will defuse extremism, rather than augment it. The Obama administration

took a similar view in its outreach to the Brotherhood in Egypt after the fall of President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011, and in its support for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government in Turkey. Both Obama policies are now widely judged to have been failures.

President Barack Obama's pro-Muslim Brotherhood actions were poisonous to the Saudis and Emiratis and help explain the deep split that developed after Mubarak's departure in 2011. Rage at Obama deepened as he negotiated the nuclear deal with Iran, another bitter enemy of the gulf Arabs.

The gulf Arabs responded by squeezing Qatar to protect their flanks. The secret November 2013 agreement came just five months after a coup ousting the Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi in Egypt, and after Iran had signed a framework nuclear agreement.

Hoping to compel Qatar to cease its regional activism, the gulf states signed a second pact on Nov. 16, 2014, which was described as a "rescue of the first agreement," Saudi sources said. It was broadened to include the rulers of Bahrain and the UAE. And it added a joint commitment to protect Egypt's stability (meaning, help suppress the Brotherhood).

Qatari officials argue that they have abided by the non-interference terms of the agreement and that Al Jazeera and other media outlets operate independently. They protest that any complaints regarding the 2014 pact should have been referred to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The Saudis privately concede that they acted unilaterally because they didn't have GCC consensus.

What complicates this feud is that nearly everyone has been playing both sides of the street. The Qataris

do maintain contact with the Taliban and al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, but they coordinate some of their activities with the CIA. The Qataris do broadcast some extremist Islamist rhetoric, but they also host the biggest U.S. air base in the region. The Saudis and Emiratis want to be America's best friends, except when they decide that their interests compel unilateral action.

The Qatar quarrel may seem like a tempest in an Arabian teapot. But at its heart is the question that has vexed the world for a decade: Is there a role for political Islam in the modern world? Qatar says yes. The UAE counters that Islamist agitators are the enemy of tolerance and modernity. It falls to Tillerson to see whether there's a middle ground.



Trump envoy mediates water deal for Israel, Palestinians

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

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10-13 minutes

JERUSALEM — President Trump's Middle East envoy, Jason Greenblatt, on Thursday announced a water-sharing agreement between Israel and the Palestinians that will provide additional supply to the parched populations in the West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip.

The deal is part of a larger, previously announced plan to draw salty water from the Red Sea to a huge desalination plant, which will then move fresh water via pipeline to Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians. The undrinkable brine

will be used to help replenish and restore the Dead Sea, which is slowly disappearing.

Greenblatt's mediation on the water deal was the first fruit of the Trump team's effort to see if it can bring Israel and the Palestinians back to peace negotiations. The agreement to provide more water to the Palestinians, at a reduced rate, is also designed to build some trust between the antagonists.

Israel will begin to provide the extra water to the West Bank and Gaza Strip now. The supplies will eventually come from a desalination plant linked to a Red Sea-Dead Sea pipeline, to be completed in four or five years.

Greenblatt, who has been taking meetings with Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, called the water deal "an important step forward."

Trump's envoy declined to answer any questions at the news conference here about how his effort to renew peace negotiations are going.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

Mazin Ghunaim, head of the Palestinian Water Authority, said the increased supply of water "will reduce the suffering of the Palestinian people, which has been worsened by the beginning of summer and the crises that they are living through."

About one-third of the additional supply will go to Gaza, "where more than 97 percent of the water is not drinkable," he said.

Tzahi Hanegbi, Israel's minister of regional cooperation, said that after years of stalemates, the Red Sea project will move forward. He thanked both Greenblatt and the Palestinians. He called the desalination and pipeline venture the "biggest, most ambitious project ever initiated in our area."

"It will supply a significant amount of water to Jordan, to Israel and to the Palestinians. It will help us challenge the biggest problem the Dead Sea is facing — the evaporation of a meter a year — and it will also harness green energy," Hanegbi said.



Mysteries, and a Crackdown, Persist a Year After a Failed Coup in Turkey

Patrick Kingsley

8-10 minutes

Protesters took over a tank on the night of the failed Turkish coup of July 16, 2016. Many questions about the coup remain. Gurcan Ozturk/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

ISTANBUL — Turkey's failed coup, which unraveled a year ago on Saturday, has had a profound impact on contemporary Turkish life. Far from ending the rule of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, it tightened his grip on the country,

giving him the political room to impose a state of emergency that is still in effect; fire or suspend about 150,000 dissidents and accused coup plotters; and arrest roughly 50,000 people.

But while the fallout from the coup is clear, there are still questions about what happened during the coup.

Who was involved?

The Turkish government says the coup attempt, which left more than 240 people dead, was led by Fethullah Gulen, an Islamic cleric and former ally of Mr. Erdogan's who is living in exile in the United

States. Mr. Gulen's followers have been infiltrating Turkish state institutions for several decades.

There is plenty of circumstantial evidence that Gulenists had a hand in the coup. For example, two civilian Gulenists — Adil Oksuz and Kemal Batmaz — were arrested in the vicinity of the air base that served as the coup headquarters. Hulusi Akar, the loyalist army chief who was detained by the coup plotters, said in written testimony afterward that a general in league with the coup offered him the chance to speak to Mr. Gulen by telephone. And Mr. Akar's aide-de-camp, who helped detain Mr. Akar

on the evening of the coup, admitted in written testimony to being a Gulenist, though that testimony was given under duress.

But it is not clear whether the Gulenists acted on their own. Some of those accused of being Gulenists have admitted to participating in the coup attempt while denying any links to Mr. Gulen. On the night of the coup, some generals took more than three hours to publicly voice support for Mr. Erdogan, prompting rumors that some of them might have supported the coup at first, only to change their minds when it appeared to falter.

The European Union's intelligence agency has since stated that it believes the coup plotters included various secularists and opportunists as well as Gulenists. Officials of the agency and of German intelligence say they do not believe Mr. Gulen personally ordered the coup.

Who knew what, and when?

The indictment against the coup plotters suggests that Turkish intelligence officials were warned about the insurrection at least six hours before it began on the evening of Friday, July 15. A major who was referred to in the indictment only by the initials "O.K." was assigned by the coup leaders to help kidnap the chief of Turkish intelligence, Hakan Fidan. But O.K. instead reported the kidnapping plan to Mr. Fidan's office around 3:30 p.m. on Friday, and Mr. Fidan's office then informed Mr. Akar. In the major's written statement, he says he gave express warning that the kidnapping could be part of an attempt to overthrow the government.

As a result, some analysts find Mr. Fidan's and Mr. Akar's subsequent response to be oddly slow and piecemeal. In written statements to Parliament, Mr. Fidan said he did not call the president's office until as late as 7:26 p.m., and even then did not speak to the president or explain to Mr. Erdogan's subordinates exactly what was happening. Later that evening, Mr. Fidan said, he met with a leader of the Syrian opposition, as if there were nothing to worry about.

Mr. Akar said he did not order the grounding of the Turkish air force until around 6:30

p.m., and that he ordered lockdowns at only certain army bases. He also raised eyebrows by taking several months to supply written testimony to a parliamentary inquiry into the coup — testimony that ultimately raised as many questions as answers.

Mr. Erdogan's own statements have also raised questions about the sequence of events. In an account posted on the president's website, Mr. Erdogan said he was first warned of unusual military activity at 4:30 p.m. by his brother-in-law. He tried to contact Mr. Fidan and Mr. Akar around 5 p.m., he said but was unable to reach either of them.

The confusion about what happened in the hours leading up to the coup last July has led to speculation among the Turkish opposition that the government may have allowed the coup to unfold, or even encouraged it, in order to justify the subsequent crackdown. The leader of Turkey's largest opposition party, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, has described what happened as a "controlled coup."

Why was the coup so poorly executed?

At the onset of the coup, rebel soldiers began blocking roads and bridges around 10:30 p.m. on a Friday night — a time when most Turks were still up and about, and therefore an odd moment to commence an operation that relied on surprise. Some observers have suggested that the coup was meant to begin much later in the night, but was rushed forward after coup leaders realized that their plans had been uncovered.

Other decisions are harder to explain. The coup plotters raided the state broadcaster, T.R.T., early in the evening but did nothing about most of the country's private television channels. Those channels put government officials on the air throughout the night, letting the government control the narrative. And while the plotters tried to seize Mr. Erdogan, few attempts seem to have been made to round up other important government figures.

The attempt to kidnap Mr. Erdogan was bungled. The soldiers sent to seize him did not reach his vacation hotel until several hours after the coup began. In a recent court hearing, one of them, Brig. Gen. Gokhan Sonmezates, said they had been ordered to wait, a decision he found strange. "Who misled us," General Sonmezates asked, "and made us wait for four hours?"

What did foreign powers know?

In Turkey, foreign governments were seen as responding slowly and tentatively to the unfolding events, prompting Mr. Erdogan's supporters to suggest that the coup had the tacit support, or at least happened with the foreknowledge, of Turkey's allies, including the United States. No evidence of this has surfaced, but the fact that Mr. Gulen lives on American soil has fed speculation that foreign officials must have been tipped off.

Statements by Michael T. Flynn, the retired American general who later served briefly as President Trump's first national security adviser, seemed to strengthen this impression. Speaking as the coup unfolded, Mr. Flynn suggested that he had been briefed on the

operation by a friend in the Turkish officer corps, and expressed his support. (He later reversed his position and blamed Mr. Gulen for the coup, casting some doubt on how much Mr. Flynn had actually known at the time.)

By one account, the Russian government knew of the coup plans and warned the Turkish government. A representative of the mayor of Ankara told *Hurriyet*, a major Turkish newspaper, that Aleksandr Dugin, a Russian academic with ties to the Kremlin, warned Turkish lawmakers and intelligence officials about unusual military activity before the coup began.

Where is Adil Oksuz?

Adil Oksuz, a theology professor, was one of the two civilian Gulenists arrested near the air base the morning after the coup began. He is accused of leading the operation.

Two days after his arrest, he was released on the order of a judge who has since acknowledged being a fellow Gulenist. Once free, Mr. Oksuz disappeared, and his whereabouts is a subject of wide speculation.

Pro-government media outlets insinuate that the United States is hiding Mr. Oksuz and point to reports that say that American consular officials had tried to contact him on July 21, six days after the coup began. The United States Embassy in Turkey said it was simply trying to notify him that his visa to travel to the United States had been revoked at the request of the Turkish government.



He ran North Korea's secret moneymaking operation. Now he lives in Virginia.

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

8-10 minutes

Efforts to sanction North Korea into submission won't work because there are too many ways around them, Ri Jong Ho says.

He should know.

For about three decades, Ri was a top moneymaker for the Kim regime, sending millions of dollars a year back to Pyongyang even as round after round of sanctions was imposed to try to punish North Korea for its nuclear defiance.

"We were never in pain or hurting in our trade business because of the sanctions. Instead, we conducted our first nuclear test in 2006," Ri

said in an interview near Tysons Corner.

The 59-year-old, whose job had been to raise money for the North Korean regime, and his family live in Northern Virginia, having defected to South Korea at the end of 2014 and moved to the United States last year.

"I used to be sanctioned, as a North Korean who led trade at the front line, but I never felt any pain from the sanctions. The sanctions were perfunctory," Ri said.

He described being able to send millions of U.S. dollars to North Korea simply by handing a bag of cash to the captain of a ship leaving from the Chinese port city of Dalian, where he was based, to the North Korean port of Nampo, or by giving

it to someone to take on the train across the border.

In first the nine months of 2014 — he defected in October that year — Ri said he sent about \$10 million to Pyongyang this way.

[*Trump warns of 'severe' consequences for North Korea as Russia, China balk at tough U.S. talk*]

For more than two decades, the United States has been trying to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program, alternating between inducements and punishments.

In both cases, American policy has relied on China, North Korea's erstwhile patron, using its economic power over its cash-strapped neighbor. But Beijing's

implementation of sanctions, even those it backed through the United Nations, has been patchy at best. China's overwhelming priority is ensuring stability in North Korea.

President Trump has repeatedly called on China to support his policy of putting "maximum pressure" on Pyongyang to stop its nuclear and missile programs.

Efforts have not changed North Korea's behavior. This is partly because multilateral sanctions imposed through the United Nations must be watered down to avoid being vetoed by China or Russia, traditional backers of North Korea, and partly because other countries don't implement the tougher but unilateral U.S. sanctions.

"Unless China, Russia and the United States cooperate fully to

sanction North Korea, it will be impossible to hurt them," Ri said.

China's interest in North Korea is well known, but Russia's role in supporting the former Soviet client state is often overlooked. Amid calls for China to limit oil exports to North Korea, Russia has dramatically increased the amount of oil it has sent — some reports suggest exports have quadrupled — to North Korea this year.

North Korea's financial networks, moreover, are intentionally murky. The U.S. Treasury has sanctioned more and more North Koreans and North Korean companies by name to try to cut them off from the American financial system, but few, if any, have any exposure to the United States.

For this reason, Ri's insights are widely sought after in Washington, where successive administrations have been trying to find North Korea's pressure points.

[The messy data behind China's growing trade with North Korea]

Ri worked for three decades in Office 39, the Workers' Party operation responsible for raising money for the North Korean leader. The office has long been associated with both legal trade and illicit activity, including counterfeiting dollars and drug smuggling.

Ri said he worked as president of a shipping company and was chairman of Korea Kumgang Group, a company that formed a venture with Sam Pa, a Chinese businessman, to start a taxi company in Pyongyang. Ri supplied a photo of him and Pa aboard a jet to Pyongyang.

He was awarded the title "hero of labor" in 2002 for

his efforts, and said he lived the good life in Pyongyang, with a color TV and a car. "I was very loyal to Kim Jong Il, so I was rewarded by him," he said. "I was rich."

His last position was running the Dalian branch of Daeheung, a trading company involved in shipping, coal and seafood exports, and oil imports. The company was given targets to meet in terms of profits, he said, declining to go into details.

But in 2014, Ri grew increasingly disillusioned after Kim Jong Un suddenly denounced his uncle, Jang Song Thaek, as a "traitor for all ages" and had him executed at the end of 2013.

Jang had been leading economic cooperation efforts with China, and dozens of people who worked for him were also purged at the time, Ri said. He worried that his family would be next. They escaped to South Korea before moving to the United States, where his two children, now in their 20s, plan to go to college.

Experts said Ri's arrival in the United States could be a boon for American efforts to crack down on North Korea.

"It's always useful when a defector, especially one that knows the internal operations of Office 39 — and my assumption is that he knows the external operations too — can help us," said Anthony Ruggiero, who worked on sanctions at Treasury and is now with the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

The United States has been trying to understand how North Korea uses banks in China in particular to finance its activities. "I hope that the

Treasury and some other organizations with 'agency' at the end of their name are talking to him," Ruggiero said.

[The secret to Kim's success? Some experts see Russian echoes in North Korea's missile advances]

Ri said North Korea has repeatedly found ways to circumvent whatever sanctions are imposed on it.

"North Korea is a 100 percent state enterprise, so these companies just change their names the day after they're sanctioned," he said. "That way the company continues, but with a different name than the one on the sanctions list."

Ri's Chinese counterparts weren't bothered, either, he said.

"My partners in China also want to make a profit, so they don't care much about sanctions," he said. "When the Chinese government orders them to stop, they stop for a few days and then start up again."

Growing impatient with Beijing, Washington is increasingly targeting Chinese companies that help North Korea with what are called "secondary sanctions." At the end of last month, the Trump administration blacklisted the Bank of Dandong, located on the border between the two countries, for its dealings with North Korea.

But without knowing how to really hurt North Korea and teaming up to do it, it will be "impossible" to change Pyongyang's calculus on the nuclear program, Ri said.

For that reason, the former money man advocates an approach that combines Trump's "maximum pressure" with another idea that the president has at least flirted with: talks.

"I think there should be top-level talks between the U.S. and North Korea, so that they can both work together to solve the problem," Ri said.

After last week's intercontinental ballistic missile test and last month's death of Otto Warmbier, the Ohio college student who returned from 17 months' detention in North Korea in a coma, talks seem a long way off.

Today's WorldView

What's most important from where the world meets Washington

But Trump, a businessman who prides himself on being a master negotiator, has said he would be "honored" to meet Kim, whom he called a "smart cookie."

At unofficial talks in Oslo in May, a North Korean delegation signaled to American representatives Kim's interest in talking, according to two people with knowledge of the discussions.

Previous diplomatic efforts to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons have failed, and there is a great deal of skepticism in Washington about negotiations.

But that shouldn't stop the current administration from trying, Ri said: "Like they say in politics, yesterday's enemy can be today's friend."



Karatnycky : Putin's Dangerous New Ukraine Doctrine

Adrian Karatnycky

6-8 minutes

July 13, 2017 7:13 p.m. ET

"Sanctions were not discussed at my meeting with President Putin," Donald Trump tweeted Sunday. "Nothing will be done until the Ukrainian & Syrian problems are solved!" Hours before the two presidents met, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson underlined this tough line on sanctions by appointing Russia hawk Kurt Volker as chief U.S. envoy on Ukraine.

Messrs. Trump and Putin made limited progress on Syria, but Moscow has been intensifying its efforts to destabilize Ukraine. Mr.

Putin has been reluctant to deploy large military forces, but fighting in Eastern Ukraine claims five or six lives a week. Of late the Kremlin has escalated its aggression with military attacks on civilian targets, assassinations, cyberattacks to cripple the state and economy, and the economic and partial political integration of the occupied region into Russia.

Mr. Putin's war against Ukraine has boomeranged. His aggression has consolidated popular opinion, with one recent poll showing that 92% of those on territory controlled by Kiev now see themselves as Ukrainians. A decade ago that number stood at 75%. While a portion of this shift is attributable to the absence of data from occupied portions of Ukraine, most of it comes from shifting public

attitudes. Mr. Putin is further stymied by Ukraine's growing military capability and frustrated by signs of its economic recovery, both results of President Petro Poroshenko's reforms.

For Mr. Putin, this is unacceptable. Russia is paying a large economic price because of Western sanctions. It also faces a growing threat of social discontent in the impoverished parts of Ukraine it controls. With 1.8 million residents internally displaced on Ukraine-controlled soil and 600,000 resettled in Russia, the self-styled Donetsk and Luhansk "peoples republics," known by the acronyms DNR and LNR, have a combined population of more than 3.5 million. Many are retirees dependent on Ukrainian state pension payments. Others are

miners and industrial workers whose plants were deeply integrated into the Ukrainian economy.

Mr. Putin's response has been to step up the aggression. The first five months of 2017 saw a steep increase in attacks on hospitals, schools, factories and other civilian targets, resulting in 44 fatalities. Terrorist bombings and assassinations in Kiev and elsewhere have become commonplace. On June 27 and 28 car bombs killed two colonels from Ukraine's security service. On June 1 a Russian citizen posing as a correspondent for the French newspaper Le Monde shot but failed to kill a Chechen volunteer in the Ukrainian militia. In late March an assassin from Russian-annexed

Crimea killed a former Russian parliamentarian and Putin critic who had received asylum in Ukraine.

Russia is also accelerating the integration of occupied Donbas into Russia. On Feb. 18, Mr. Putin issued a decree enabling Russian state and private institutions to accept passports and other identity documents issued by the self-styled DNR and LNR. The Russian press widely promoted the view of Luhansk separatist leader Igor Plotnitsky that the decree is a "step along the path of international recognition of our sovereignty."

The DNR and LNR economies have begun rapidly converting to the Russian ruble. A further step came March 5, with the confiscation by the "republics" of some 40 major privately held Ukrainian companies. These enterprises had provided employment for locals while paying taxes to Kiev and scrupulously withholding them from the renegade authorities.

Although these "nationalizations"—a

war crime under the Geneva Conventions—had been accelerated by an unofficial embargo of trade with the region started by Ukrainian civic activists in January, the swiftness of the confiscations suggested they had long been planned. On the day of the takeovers, senior Russian managers appeared at the "nationalized" workplaces to announce they were taking charge.

In mid-March, Kremlin-controlled media publicized the launch of a "Committee for the Integration of the Donbas and Russia" in Russian-annexed Yalta, Crimea. The Russian media trumpeted a call there by Mr. Plotnitsky for a referendum on the accession of the LNR to Russia.

In early April, Vladimir Pashkov, a former deputy governor of Russia's Irkutsk region, arrived to administer Eastern Ukraine's key industrial holdings, according to Russia's RBK news agency. On April 25 came news that the Russian Parliament was readying legislation

backed by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to simplify the procedure for granting Russian passports to residents of the occupied Donbas. A group of lawmakers called the Russian Friends of the Donbas announced they would set up centers to assist in the naturalization process.

Russia is also escalating its interference in the internal political life of the rest of Ukraine, including cyberattacks against government and business targets and the use of fifth columns. These steps come from the well-known playbook that Russia used to foment separatism in Georgia's Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. There, too, Russian military forces helped seize territory from a sovereign state, installed Russian advisers, and distributed Russian passports. The Kremlin now recognizes both entities as independent states.

None of this means the Kremlin is irrevocably committed to the permanent separation of the DNR and LNR from Ukraine. What Mr.

Putin wants above all is to ensure that whatever the future status of these regions, Moscow, not Kiev, will call the shots. Still, the radical steps Russia is taking, including terrorism, make clear that Mr. Putin seeks to derail the 2015 Minsk II process, even as he points the finger at Ukraine for lack of progress toward peace.

The U.S. and Europe must respond forcefully to this new intensification in Russia's hybrid war. The engagement of Mr. Volker to shape diplomacy on the Russia-Ukraine conflict signals that the U.S. will adopt a pragmatic hard-line policy. It is a welcome sign that the personal chemistry between Messrs. Trump and Putin won't override the physics of power politics and diplomacy.

Mr. Karatnycky is Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council and co-director of its Ukraine in Europe initiative.



Margolis : Latin America Needs an Emmanuel Macron

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8-10 minutes

Latin America

Who will break the regional stranglehold of politics as usual?

by

13 juillet 2017 à 12:30 UTC-4

What's your secret, bro?

Photographer: Etienne Laurent/AFP/Getty Images

Whether as a haven for political exiles or a playground for the power elite, Paris has been a cherished destination for Latin Americans. But since the rise of Emmanuel Macron, Francophilia has taken on a whole new meaning. Young, camera-friendly, fiscally sensible, and -- most importantly -- un beholden to legacy parties and their bosses, Macron is a new French leader for disenchanting times. Little wonder that the presidents of Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, all struggling in the polls, have reached out to him.

As in many other regions, politics in Latin America is damaged goods and bereft of role models. Traditional parties are seen to be in the hands of political fossils who take turns in power, often helping themselves at the trough. Elections go to campaigns with the deepest pockets -- wealthy publicist Joao

Doria bankrolled 40 percent of his own campaign for São Paulo mayor -- turning democracy into a club of gray heads with little resonance among constituents. "It's the same parties, winding up in elections over and over again," said Monica de Bolle of the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "Where is the political renewal in Latin America?"

Chileans recently ranked political parties as the least trusted and most corrupt of all national institutions, while 81 percent of Brazilians said they disapproved of their political leadership, according to a 2015 Gallup poll. And they're not alone: Earlier this year, the Economist Intelligence Unit ranked only one Latin American nation (Uruguay) as a "full democracy," relegating the rest to the status of "flawed" democracies or semi-authoritarian states.

Indeed, for all the talk about the ebbing Latin American Pink Tide, the region's politics hasn't so much tacked to the right as drifted into democratic doldrums. After all, in a time when political brands like Venezuela's Bolivarian socialism rely on paramilitary gangs to thwart opponents, and Brazil's signature leftwing leaders were found to be in bed with the corporate moguls, yesterday's ideological battle lines seem increasingly nonsensical.

Some of the region's recently elected leaders appeared momentarily to stand for something new. Argentine voters elected

Mauricio Macri, the scion of a businessman and a former mayor, who parlayed his outsider's cachet into the Casa Rosada in 2015. Likewise, Peruvians last year elected Wall Street veteran Pedro Pablo Kuczynski over Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of a onetime dictator who roiled the country with his messianic brand of authoritarian populism. And Mexicans had high hopes for the dashing Enrique Peña Nieto, who surrounded himself with brainy technocrats and accomplished scholars.

And yet each of this crop of ambitious reformers is struggling with homemade permutations of protests, deadly violence, tumbling approval ratings, and partisan gridlock. Populists are pushing back in Peru and Mexico, while a lackluster Argentine economy and deepening poverty have rallied the fractured Peronists, turning the October midterm elections into a proxy war for the 2019 presidential race.

So instead of *El Macron*, the region's democracies once again appear poised to embrace *lo mismo* -- the same old political script. "We've fallen into a kind of vicious cycle in Latin America, alternating between populists and technocrats," Argentine historian Federico Finchelstein, at the New School for Social Research, told me. "The technocrats say we'll manage the country like we manage companies, while populist mother and father figures say they'll take care of the nation. Either way,

citizens don't much feel like they're part of the solution," he added.

Still, there are encouraging signs that Latin Americans may be moving beyond deadlock. The Montevideo-based political think tank Ceres has sponsored a series of town halls across Uruguay to invite local communities to weigh in on public policy and national politics. Disappointing economic growth in Chile has given rise to an assortment of new contenders from centrist parties, who are competing for voters eager to move beyond the stale old-guard right versus soft-left Christian Democrats duopoly that has traded power since the days of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

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In Brazil, lawyers, community activists, social entrepreneurs, and tech-savvy business leaders are building grassroots groups to bypass a political system barnacled by traditional parties. One of them is Agora!, (or Now!), a nascent citizen's movement that already has an agenda for the 2018 presidential race: capping campaign donations to curb Brazil's money-talks politics, party primaries to democratize candidate selection, and political reform to allow independent candidates.

"One hero won't save us," said Ilona Szabo, an analyst at the Brazilian think tank Igarape Institute and

founding member of Agora!, which has representatives in nine of Brazil's 27 states. "We need a

collective effort of citizens from all political tendencies engaged for the public good."

Latin America may not have a political ringer in the wings. But a

host of mini-Macrons might just make a difference.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Editorial : China's Empty Nobel Chair

The Editorial Board

3 minutes

Updated July 13, 2017 7:26 p.m. ET

Liu Xiaobo, the 2010 Nobel laureate, died on Thursday, only weeks after he was moved to hospital from a prison cell. The Chinese government bears responsibility for failing to competently diagnose and treat his liver cancer. To Beijing's shame, the only other Peace Prize winner to die in custody was Carl von Ossietzky, a prisoner of Nazi Germany

who won in 1935 and died in 1938.

Liu played a pivotal role in the 1989 student protests in Tiananmen Square, helping to negotiate the peaceful departure of the last students to occupy the square. He kept the spirit of that movement alive in 2008 when he helped to write Charter 08, a democracy manifesto. Shortly thereafter he was sentenced to 11 years in prison for "subversion."

China's rulers have worked hard to make sure their citizens learned little about Liu's ideas. That fear of one man's courage testifies to the illegitimacy of their power. Liu could have played an important role in

China's transition to democracy, but his example will serve as an inspiration to future generations.

Beijing has used the fruits of economic reforms started by Deng Xiaoping in 1979 to prolong authoritarian rule far longer than most thought possible. But its obsession with social control is hampering further moves toward a free-market economy. The resulting tensions are building and increase the risk of instability.

At the Nobel prize ceremony in 2010, Liu was represented by an empty chair. His death is a reminder of the world's obligation to keep attention on China's rights abuses.

Without political reform, China will continue to use its growing economic and military clout to spread its authoritarian model. Pressuring Beijing to free the imprisoned human-rights lawyers who have taken up Liu's freedom fight would serve the interest of China's people, as well as the rules-based international order that its undemocratic government seeks to subvert.

Appeared in the July 14, 2017, print edition.

The New York Times

Editorial : The Spirit of Liu Xiaobo

The Editorial Board

Board

5-6 minutes

Illustration by Sam's Myth; Photograph by Liu Xia, via European Pressphoto Agency

How Liu Xiaobo died says a lot about modern China and the fears of modern Chinese leaders. The government in Beijing controls a nuclear weapons arsenal and throws its weight around in international affairs. Yet it was afraid to hear the democratic ideas advocated at great cost by a courageous man of conscience.

all humankind," including human rights, equality, freedom, democracy and the rule of law. The charter endorsed direct elections, judicial independence and an end to Communist Party dominance, and though it was on the internet only briefly before censors pulled it, it garnered 10,000 signatures.

The government accused Mr. Liu of "inciting subversion of state power," but in fact the life of this multitalented scholar, writer, poet and social commentator was devoted to peaceful political change. During the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, he staged a hunger strike, then negotiated a peaceful retreat of student demonstrators as thousands of soldiers stood by with rifles.

Mr. Liu was detained many times after that. Yet when Beijing pressed the Norwegian Nobel Committee not to honor him, the committee wisely awarded Mr. Liu the 2010 Peace Prize in recognition of "his long and nonviolent struggle for fundamental human rights in China."

There are reasons to question whether the detention prevented him from being diagnosed early enough and from receiving medical treatment that could have extended his life. On Saturday as he weakened, two Western doctors

who were allowed to examine him pronounced Mr. Liu fit to travel overseas for care, but still China refused, seeking to control the man and message until the end.

The authorities also ignored dozens of writers and Nobel laureates who signed petitions calling for Mr. Liu's release. His final days were spent in a hospital under guard, unable to communicate with the outside world. Meanwhile, authorities filmed him lying still in his bed, then released the footage without his permission for propaganda purposes.

Western leaders, perhaps cowed by President Xi Jinping's obvious distaste for hectoring on human rights, were unacceptably subdued before Mr. Liu's death, mostly leaving comments about his case to lower-ranking officials. None were more callow than President Trump, who since taking office has shown little interest in human rights while enthusiastically embracing many authoritarian leaders, including Mr. Xi.

Mr. Trump did not raise Mr. Liu's case when he met Mr. Xi in Germany last week. And within hours of Mr. Liu's death, Mr. Trump, asked at a news conference in Paris to give his impression of Mr. Xi, heaped praise on him, calling him a "very good man" who "wants to do what's right for China." Some

American officials, including Nikki Haley, the ambassador to the United Nations, hailed Mr. Liu's contribution, but Mr. Trump's words in Paris signaled to Beijing that it need not listen. Regardless of Mr. Trump, other world leaders should join human rights groups in insisting that Beijing release Mr. Liu's wife, the poet Liu Xia, who has been under police surveillance since 2010, and let her move to the country of her choice.

Mr. Liu's death is soul-crushing for his supporters, and there are no signs China will open the door to political reform anytime soon. Even so, there is reason to work for a different future. More than 34,000 people, most in China, recently signed an open letter demanding Mr. Liu's freedom. And many more Chinese today than in 1989 or 2008 are carrying out "small but significant peaceful acts of protest to further human rights protections," Xiaorong Li, the founder of several human rights groups, wrote in a Times Op-Ed article.

It will now be up to Mr. Liu's admirers to dedicate themselves to his dream of a modern China that embraces "universal values," which will outlive the ruthless leaders who sought to crush him but never could.

The Washington Post

Editorial : True honor lies not with China's rulers but with the man they imprisoned until his death

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4-5 minutes

The Post's View

Opinion

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

By Editorial Board

The Post's View

Opinion

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

July 13 at 10:18 AM

POLITICAL DISSIDENCE is a great, and beautiful, mystery. For those living under repressive rule, the path of least resistance is, well, not to resist — to accommodate and survive, or, in less honorable but hardly rare cases, to collaborate. And yet, some do choose the more decent and difficult way. Out of idealism, necessity, sheer refusal to submit or some unfathomable combination of all three, they stand up, they speak out, they assume risks.

China's Liu Xiaobo epitomized the dissident tradition, fighting back relentlessly but peacefully against a regime in his

country that epitomized modern-day authoritarianism — until he died of liver cancer on Thursday at age 61.

Mr. Liu was born in 1955, amid the horrific throes of the early People's Republic, and went on to study literature and philosophy, earning his doctorate in 1988. Moved by the fall of communism in Europe and the limited opening under Deng Xiaoping in China, he joined the student protests on Tiananmen Square in 1989. This conscientious activism earned him a two-year prison sentence. Later he served three years in a labor camp for other purported political offenses. Mr. Liu's causes were liberty and democracy, which he considered universally applicable, not Western imports for which his native country was somehow "not ready." His specific demand was that the Chinese Communist authorities accept the need for a constitutional overhaul that would establish elections, rule of law and freedom of

speech, of the press, of assembly and of religion.

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

In December 2008, Mr. Liu joined other intellectuals in publishing Charter 08, a pro-democracy manifesto modeled on the Charter 77 issued by Czech dissidents 31 years earlier. Notably, the document not only called upon China's rulers to enable a better future for their people; it also told the truth about the "gargantuan" price China's people had paid since the 1949 revolution: "Tens of millions have lost their lives, and several generations have seen their freedom, their happiness, and their human dignity cruelly trampled," the charter observed.

Forthrightly addressing China's past, present and future earned Mr. Liu an 11-year sentence, for "inciting subversion of state power," which began in late 2009 and which

he was still serving, albeit on medical parole at a hospital, when he drew his last breath. His steadfast dissidence also earned Mr. Liu the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, though Beijing refused to let him travel to Oslo for the award ceremony, just as it also refused to let him receive friends and well-wishers in his final days, or to go abroad for medical treatment.

These final indignities were intended to degrade and humiliate, but the attempt was futile and indeed shames those who made it. Shortly before Mr. Liu died, the man ultimately responsible for this and so many other abuses in China, President Xi Jinping, was basking in the glamour and glory of international politics at the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg. Yet throughout Mr. Xi's rule, the true locus of honor in China has been any place of confinement occupied by Liu Xiaobo.



Hiatt : Why Chinese leaders were afraid of a man who died in their captivity

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book.com/fhiatt1

5-7 minutes

By Fred Hiatt Editorial Page Editor
July 13 at 7:51 PM

As you read about Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, who died in Chinese captivity Thursday, ask yourself this: Why are his jailers — President Xi Jinping and the rest of China's Communist regime — so afraid?

I wonder about that question sometimes when I think of another of their captives, someone you are less likely to have heard of, a man named Wang Bingzhang.

Wang is, at this point, one of China's longest-serving political prisoners. He is 69 years old and in poor health. He has been locked up since 2002, when Chinese agents kidnapped him from Vietnam, hauled him across the border, kept him incommunicado for six months and then sentenced him, in a one-day, closed-door "trial" held without notice to family or friends, to life in prison.

Act Four newsletter

The intersection of culture and politics.

Wang's crime? Like Liu, he had campaigned, peacefully, for democracy in China. He had argued that freedom is not a "Western"

value but a desire and a right of all human beings.

For that, he, like Liu, had to be locked away and prevented from communicating with the world. As with Liu, whose wife, Liu Xia, has been subjected to a tormenting, bullying, isolating house arrest though she has never been charged with any crime, Wang's family must be made to suffer. His daughter Ti-Anna Wang, who is Canadian and a friend of mine, has not been permitted to visit her father since she published an op-ed in The Post urging his release 8½ years ago.

Chinese dissident and writer Liu Xiaobo has died at 61. He suffered from late-stage liver cancer. Chinese dissident and writer Liu Xiaobo has died at 61. He suffered from late-stage liver cancer. (The Washington Post)

(The Washington Post)

Why are they so afraid?

Why would they keep Liu Xiaobo in his cell until his cancer was so advanced that he was near death — and then keep him from traveling abroad, where he might yet have gotten care? Why would they keep Wang from spending his last years with his children and grandchildren?

What fear could motivate such cruelty?

The answer, I believe, has something to do with the story China's rulers tell their people, and

maybe themselves, to cling to power.

The story, it's important to note, is partly true: The regime has, in the past quarter-century, presided over steady economic growth that has brought hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and into the middle class. On its scale, it is a unique achievement in human history.

But their story is also, in many respects, false. Far from being selfless patriots, the ruling elite has grown fat off the state. They do not want Chinese people reading about their overseas bank accounts or their children attending elite foreign prep schools and universities.

Far from being an alien Western import, democracy has proved to be a universal aspiration that has been embraced successfully in Japan, Indonesia, South Korea and — most dangerously for Beijing — Taiwan.

Far from delivering continuous progress for an ever-happier nation, the regime since 1949 has intermittently plunged China into disastrous famines and spasms of internecine violence that have cost tens of millions of lives. Today it must employ tens of thousands of censors and lock away hundreds of lawyers, journalists and religious believers to maintain the facade of universal acclaim.

Perhaps most perilously, the Communist Party rules over a

population that no longer believes in communism. The regime's only remaining justification is that it delivers economic growth. Yet, as the economy becomes more complex, growth becomes more and more dependent on people being free to think, read, challenge and compete. The regime is caught in this paradox — and afraid.

"Any government that jails its own people for political dissent still has a long way to go to become a respected member of the international community," Ti-Anna Wang wrote in that 2009 op-ed.

On some level, the regime must understand that. If it enjoyed international respect, it would not have to browbeat and bully other governments not to meet with the Dalai Lama and other peaceful critics.

And China's leaders must understand that the same logic applies at home: If they enjoyed the respect of their own people, they would not have to shut down every blogger, newspaper and website that expressed an opinion contrary to the party line. They would not have to keep Liu Xiaobo from traveling to Norway to pick up his Nobel Prize. They would not have to lock up 69-year-old Wang Bingzhang to keep him from extolling the virtues of democracy.

On some level, Xi and his colleagues must know that Liu and Wang are right and they are wrong. Clearly they fear that their people

will come to that realization. Maybe themselves. they are also afraid to admit it to

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New Senate Health Bill Aims to Bridge GOP Gaps, But Resistance Remains (UNE)

Stephanie Armour and Kristina Peterson

7-9 minutes

Updated July 13, 2017 6:41 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Senate Republicans unveiled a revised health bill Thursday in an effort to shore up its faltering GOP support, but its future remained precarious as at least two Republicans quickly vowed to oppose it, bringing the proposal within a single vote of potential collapse.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) implored his fellow Republican lawmakers to at least support a procedural measure next week that would allow debate to begin on the bill, which aims to topple large parts of the Affordable Care Act.

But by Thursday afternoon, Republican senators Rand Paul of Kentucky and Susan Collins of Maine said they would oppose the procedural motion. Several other Republican senators—including Rob Portman of Ohio, Dan Sullivan of Alaska and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana—said they had to digest the bill before committing.

That leaves Mr. McConnell with a dangerously thin margin. The majority leader was forced to delay a vote on the bill's initial version two weeks ago due to lack of support, and he introduced a number of changes in the new draft—notably a provision letting insurers offer less-comprehensive policies—that drew praise from some conservatives. No Democrats are expected to support the bill.

But one more defection would derail the bill, putting its fate largely in the hands of centrists, who greeted the bill tepidly.

The new Senate GOP bill would still dismantle much of the ACA, setting up a new system of tax credits to help some people buy insurance and dramatically curbing federal spending on Medicaid. Unlike earlier versions, the bill unveiled Thursday would allow insurers to sell cheaper, less comprehensive plans. It also adds \$45 billion to

combat the opioid epidemic and retains two of the ACA's taxes on high-income households.

"I still have concerns," said Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R., W. Va.), who has expressed worry about proposed cuts to the Medicaid program.

The latest version of the bill would preserve a 0.9% payroll tax and a 3.8% tax on investment income. Both taxes apply only to individuals with incomes above \$200,000 and married couples making over \$250,000.

Conservatives have pushed for a more aggressive repeal of the ACA, often called Obamacare, while centrist GOP lawmakers complain that deep cuts to Medicaid would strip coverage from millions of people.

Thursday's revisions appeared to tilt the bill toward conservatives, including the adoption of a controversial proposal by Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas. That proposal allows insurers that offer policies that follow ACA requirements to also sell less-comprehensive policies that don't comply.

Mr. Cruz said this would cut premiums for many Americans, but centrists worry it would drive up costs for people with pre-existing medical conditions. Mr. Cruz, who had opposed the initial bill, applauded the inclusion of his measure.

"It's very significant progress," Mr. Cruz said.

But not all conservatives were sold. Sen. Mike Lee (R., Utah) said Thursday afternoon he was undecided on the bill. He is concerned about how GOP leaders modified Mr. Cruz's amendment, which he is worried could affect the premiums charged by insurers.

In another gesture to conservatives, the revised legislation would for the first time permit people to use tax-advantaged health savings accounts to pay for their premiums.

Democrats derided the new bill as essentially the same as the old one, which polls suggested was deeply unpopular. And they said the Cruz

measure would let insurers sell bare-bones policies that do little to protect consumers.

"That is like allowing car companies to sell cars without air bags, bumpers, or emergency brakes," said Sen. Chris Coons (D., Del.). "It might make the cars cheaper, but the cars are too dangerous to drive."

Republicans, including President Donald Trump, acknowledged it was hard to bridge the gap between conservatives and centrists.

"I'd say the only thing more difficult than peace between Israel and the Palestinians is health care," Mr. Trump told reporters as he traveled to Paris. "It's like this narrow road that's about a quarter-of-an-inch wide. You get a couple here and you say, 'Great'—and then you find out you just lost four over here."

GOP leaders took fewer steps to address some members' concerns about the Medicaid program. The Senate bill would phase out enhanced federal money that the ACA sent to states that expanded Medicaid, and would also make steep cuts to the underlying program.

Ms. Collins said that despite some tweaks to Medicaid funding, "there's no doubt in my mind that there are hundreds of billions of dollars of cuts in the Medicaid program that would shift costs onto state governments."

Yet other Republicans said the bill's Medicaid cuts were crucial to bringing costs under control, and they took issue with some GOP governors who oppose the cuts.

"If we can't even deal with our governors back home, how will we ever deal with Medicare and Social Security?" said Sen. Bob Corker (R., Tenn.). "Our governors, if they were in our position, would be doing exactly the same thing we're doing."

The revised bill did make some changes to court centrists, establishing a fund to give federal money to insurers so they could offset the cost of covering people with expensive medical conditions who buy ACA-compliant plans.

The legislation also would give significant aid to Alaska, which has especially expensive medical costs. The state's Republican senator, Sen. Lisa Murkowski, has also been considered an uncertain vote due to concerns about the impact of Medicaid cuts on Alaska.

Republican leaders now have just a few days to unify their party behind the new bill. A key moment will come early next week, when the Congressional Budget Office releases its estimate of the bill's impact on cost and coverage.

Many senators said they would wait for CBO's assessment before deciding how to vote. Sen. John Hoeven (R., N.D.), who opposed the initial bill, said he is reserving judgment until he sees a CBO score, but that he was encouraged by some of the changes.

The Senate procedural vote could come shortly after the CBO report, probably by the middle of next week. If the bill survives, a debate on the underlying measure would follow, including the offering of numerous amendments.

In a surprise twist Thursday, Sens. Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) and Cassidy (R., La.) pitched their own health plan, describing it as a fallback if Mr. McConnell is unable to secure enough votes for his bill.

The Graham-Cassidy plan would retain most of the ACA's taxes and send that money to the states. The senators hope that might appeal to centrist Republicans and possibly some Democrats, since states could use the money any way they like, including re-creating state-level versions of the ACA.

—Michelle Hackman and Louise Radnofsky contributed to this article.

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Revised Senate Health Bill Tries to Win Votes, but Has Fewer Winners (UNE)

Margot Sanger-Katz

8-10 minutes

The revised Senate health bill has a dwindling list of winners and a bigger pool of potential losers.

It would still make insurance much less affordable for poorer and older Americans who don't get coverage through work or Medicare. It would make that insurance less valuable for many people with the most significant health care needs. The biggest beneficiaries of the original bill — the rich — would get less.

The new draft bill, released Thursday, is full of small tweaks and goodies throughout, but its most substantial policy change came at the behest of two Senate conservatives, Ted Cruz of Texas and Mike Lee of Utah. They wanted to roll back the Affordable Care Act's regulations of health insurance, and largely got their wish. The Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, faced with objections to his original health care bill from both moderate and conservative Republicans, took a step to the right.

Mr. Cruz championed the change as a way to improve consumer choice and reduce the cost of insurance for Americans who do not have serious health care needs. It would, indeed, give some young and healthy consumers a chance to buy cheaper plans.

But the bill would partly roll back popular consumer protections that are required under Obamacare. Insurers would be free to offer skimpy, no-rules plans that could exclude people with prior illnesses, strip out major benefit categories, like prescription drugs, and limit the total amount of care they will cover. In exchange, carriers would also need to offer a set of more comprehensive plans, and the federal government would set aside a fund to help make those plans affordable for sicker Americans.

The Senate bill would still make fundamental changes to Medicaid, which covers poor and disabled Americans, including two-thirds of all nursing-home residents. And it

would still ask middle-income Americans to pay a larger share of their incomes for health plans with higher deductibles. Moderate Republicans had asked for changes that would make the bill more generous to poor and elderly Americans who would lose out, and those requests were largely ignored.

Protesters in Elizabethtown, Ky., waited for the arrival of Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, at a dinner event in his home state last month. Timothy D. Easley/Associated Press

But the bill eliminates big cuts in payroll taxes and investment taxes for the wealthy, blunting one of the most resonant Democratic lines of attack against the effort. Still on the winners ledger: tanning salons, medical device manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies and health insurers, which all still would get a tax cut.

The revision with the biggest implications for consumers is the Cruz amendment. Two of the biggest insurance industry groups, which have been largely silent as the health debate has played out, spoke out Wednesday in opposition to the amendment. America's Health Insurance Plans and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association indicated that they did not wish to operate in the regulatory landscape created by the bill, which they said would split the insurance market in two.

Sicker patients would be likely to flock to more comprehensive coverage, driving up prices, while healthier patients would be more likely to choose stripped-down plans with fewer benefits and financial protections. Those slimmer plans could be a good deal for some Americans in good health, particularly upper-middle-class professionals, whose premiums have risen under the Affordable Care Act.

But those customers could be at a disadvantage once they become sick, since the rules-free plans could be canceled at the end of the year, and premiums would be likely to rise sharply for the healthier plans that would take all comers.

(Mr. Lee, in a statement, said he was still unsure if he would vote for the bill, because he disagrees with some of the fine print in the wording of the provision.)

Actuaries were puzzling over the details Thursday afternoon. "How could this work? I don't see how," said Cori Uccello, senior health fellow at the American Academy of Actuaries.

Mr. McConnell's decision to include Mr. Cruz's idea mirrors the choice by House Speaker Paul Ryan, who added a deregulatory amendment to the House's version of the health care bill to help it pass. But the two solutions, each designed to make insurance less expensive for the young and well, are different. The House bill would have asked states to fund special high-risk pools for customers shut out of a broadly deregulated market.

Senator Mike Lee of Utah on Thursday. The Senate health care bill was revised with him and Senator Ted Cruz in mind, but he said he was still unsure if he would vote for the bill. Al Drago for The New York Times

The Senate bill would establish open-ended federal funding for middle-income consumers in that market, by allowing them to use income-based tax credits to help them buy the healthier health plans. People earning more than about \$42,000 a year, however, would face sharp premium increases. The bill also sets aside an additional \$70 billion over a decade for the federal government to pay directly to insurers that offer plans in that market.

Mr. McConnell held firm against the principal request of Senate moderates: He did not give them substantially more money for state Medicaid programs. Since its creation in 1965, Medicaid has operated as an open-ended partnership between the federal government and the states, with each paying a share of beneficiaries' medical bills.

The new bill would limit federal spending on the program, shifting an increasing share of its cost to states over time. It would also cut

back new funding, established under the Affordable Care Act, to help states insure more poor adults. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that the changes would result in 15 million fewer poor Americans with coverage through the program by 2026.

But even with those cuts, the bill still spends a lot, in assorted inducements for votes. It adds \$45 billion in funding for opioid addiction treatment and research, a response to concerns from moderate Republicans, particularly Rob Portman of Ohio and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, who are worried that the drug overdose epidemic would be worsened by the bill's cuts to Medicaid.

It includes exceptions to the spending caps for declared public health emergencies, a request from Senator Marco Rubio of Florida. His state has been hard hit by the mosquito-borne Zika virus, which causes birth defects. The bill changes a Medicaid formula in a way that benefits states that expanded Medicaid recently: Louisiana, Montana and Alaska, although the Alaska senator Lisa Murkowski has withheld support for the bill. It increases federal Medicaid spending on care for Native Americans, a change that would help states with large native populations, including Arizona, Alaska and North Dakota.

The bill sets aside extra money to help insurance markets with very high health care costs. That provision would benefit only Alaska, handing the state hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding.

Whether moderates will be satisfied with these smaller sweeteners is unclear. Rand Paul of Kentucky has said he won't vote for the bill, criticizing it from the right. Among more moderate Republicans, so far only Susan Collins of Maine has said she would block the bill if asked to vote on it in its current form. Mr. McConnell can spare only two defections if he hopes to pass the bill.

Senate Republicans Unveil New Health Bill, but Divisions Remain (UNE)

Robert Pear and Thomas Kaplan

11-14 minutes

The Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, has said he intends to take up the revised health care bill

next week. Al Drago for The New York Times

WASHINGTON — Senate Republican leaders on Thursday unveiled a fresh proposal to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, revising their bill to help hold down insurance costs for consumers while allowing insurers to sell new low-cost, stripped down policies.

Those changes and others, including a decision to keep a pair of taxes on high-income people and to expand the use of tax-favored health savings accounts, were intended to bridge a vast gap between the Senate's most conservative Republicans, who want less regulation of health insurance, and moderate Republicans concerned about people who would be left uninsured.

But Republican leaders will have to battle for votes ahead of a final showdown they hope will come next week. Two Republican senators, Susan Collins of Maine, a moderate, and Rand Paul of Kentucky, a conservative, said they were not swayed — even on a procedural motion to take up the bill for debate.

Several others, from both sides of the party's ideological spectrum, expressed misgivings.

Senator Mike Lee, Republican of Utah and a strong conservative, said, "The new Senate health care bill is substantially different from the version released last month, and it is unclear to me whether it has improved."

But more moderate members were upset by cuts to Medicaid, the health program for low-income people.

Senator Shelley Moore Capito, Republican of West Virginia and a moderate voice, expressed "serious concerns about the Medicaid provisions" in the latest draft, and Senator Rob Portman, Republican of Ohio, expressed similar concern.

"I want to make sure that with regard to those people who are currently getting coverage under Medicaid expansion, that we have some options for them," Mr. Portman said.

Two other Republican senators, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, went on television to promote their own alternative plan, just minutes before Senate leaders offered their latest.

With 52 Republicans in the Senate, and two firm "no" votes already, a single new defection would doom the bill and jeopardize the Republicans' seven-year quest to dismantle the health law that is a

pillar of President Barack Obama's legacy.

Democrats probed for weaknesses in the Republican ranks.

"The Republican Trumpcare bill still slashes Medicaid," Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, said. "The cuts are every bit as draconian as they were in the previous version — a devastating blow to rural hospitals, to Americans in nursing homes, to those struggling with opioid addiction and so many more."

Senator Susan Collins, Republican of Maine, said Thursday that she remained opposed to the new health care bill. Eric Thayer for The New York Times

If enacted, the bill would be a sharp departure from more than a half-century of efforts by Congress and presidents of both parties to expand health insurance coverage, through a patchwork of federal programs.

Repealing the Affordable Care Act is a high priority for President Trump and House Republicans, who passed their own version of a repeal bill on May 4. Republicans say they are trying to stabilize insurance markets and rescue consumers who face sky-high premiums and deductibles on the Affordable Care Act's exchanges.

But passing a bill is proving to be a huge challenge in the Senate, just as in the House, which struggled with its repeal measure. Over all, the new version of the Senate bill made broad concessions to conservative Republicans who had said that the initial draft left too much of the Affordable Care Act in place. Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the majority leader, then backfired the bill with money intended to placate moderates.

The resulting mix left neither side completely satisfied.

The revised bill, like the previous version, would roll back the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, and it would still convert Medicaid from an open-ended entitlement to a system of fixed payments to states. However, in the event of a public health emergency, the resulting surge in state Medicaid spending would not be counted toward the spending limits, known as per capita caps.

The revised bill would provide roughly \$70 billion in additional funds that states could use to help reduce premiums and hold down out-of-pocket medical costs.

In a departure from current law, the bill would allow insurers, under certain conditions, to offer health

plans that did not comply with standards in the Affordable Care Act. Under that law, insurers sell regulated health plans through a public insurance exchange in each state and must provide "essential health benefits," such as maternity care, emergency services and mental health coverage.

Under the Senate bill, if an insurer offered several plans on state exchanges that were subject to the Affordable Care Act mandates, it could also offer coverage outside the exchanges that would be exempt from most of those regulations.

Insurance plans could escape from some of the most important consumer protections in the Affordable Care Act, such as prohibitions on discrimination based on a person's health status, medical condition, claims experience, medical history or disability.

This part of Mr. McConnell's bill, incorporating ideas from Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, was tacked onto the end of the bill and is enclosed in brackets. Aides to Senate Republicans said the brackets meant that the language was not final and could be revised in light of comments from other senators.

Mr. Cruz said the inclusion of this provision was "very significant progress," and he called the revised bill a "substantial improvement." But insurers and consumer advocates worried that the new provision would send healthy consumers to low-cost, basic health plans, leaving sick and older consumers to purchase more comprehensive health policies at much higher prices.

Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, said of passing a new health care bill, "I think failing to get this done would be really catastrophic." Tom Brenner/The New York Times

To compensate, Republican leaders allocated tens of billions of dollars in their bill to try to offset rising premiums. Consumers could not use federal tax credits to help pay premiums for coverage that did not meet federal insurance standards.

Senator Chris Coons, Democrat of Delaware, said the section of the bill based on Mr. Cruz's proposal "would allow insurers to offer junk health insurance plans."

"To me, that is like allowing car companies to sell cars without airbags, bumpers, or emergency brakes," Mr. Coons said. "It might make the cars cheaper, but the cars are too dangerous to drive."

In another change, the bill would allow people to use tax-favored health savings accounts to pay insurance premiums. Republicans said this policy change would increase health care coverage.

The bill also provides \$45 billion to help combat the opioid abuse crisis — a provision that was particularly important to two Republican senators who opposed the previous version of the bill, Mr. Portman and Ms. Capito.

In a notable change, the revised bill would keep two taxes imposed by the Affordable Care Act on people with high incomes: a 3.8 percent tax on investment income and a 0.9 percent payroll tax. The taxes apply to individuals with income over \$200,000 and couples with income over \$250,000. Those taxes would have been repealed under the previous Senate bill, reducing federal revenue by about \$231 billion over a decade, according to the congressional Joint Committee on Taxation.

The updated bill would also retain limits on the tax deductions that insurers can take for compensation paid to top executives. The previous Senate bill would have removed those limits, imposed by the Affordable Care Act.

To succeed, Mr. McConnell must win over all the holdouts in his caucus, a daunting and delicate task given the litany of complaints he has faced and the sharp policy differences among Senate Republicans.

"This is our chance to bring about changes we've been talking about since Obamacare was forced on the American people," Mr. McConnell said. "It's our time to finally build a bridge away from Obamacare's failures and deliver relief to those who need it."

But Ms. Collins and some Democrats, such as Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, say it is time to recognize the flaws in the Affordable Care Act and try to find bipartisan solutions, without such far-reaching legislation.

Republicans expect that an analysis of the revised bill will be released by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office early next week. The previous version would have increased the number of people without health insurance by 22 million in 2026 compared with current law, the budget office found.

Mr. McConnell said he would then move to take up the bill for debate, amendments and a final vote — if he can get 50 willing senators.

Revised Senate health-care bill still lacks the votes to pass (UNE)

<https://www.facebook.com/kelsey.snell.3>

11-13 minutes

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) released a new proposal to overhaul the Affordable Care Act on Thursday after spending three weeks reworking it to win over wavering lawmakers on the right and in the center.

But within hours, it was clear that Senate leaders still didn't have the votes to fulfill their long-standing quest to replace former president Barack Obama's 2010 health-care law.

The new draft would lift many of the ACA's regulatory requirements, allowing insurers to offer bare-bones policies without coverage for services such as preventive or mental-health care. It would also direct billions of dollars to help lower- and middle-income Americans buy plans on the private market.

However, the draft leaves in place deep proposed cuts to Medicaid — and at least three Republicans quickly signaled opposition to the bill, casting doubt on McConnell's plans to pass the bill next week.

What the Senate bill changes about Obamacare

"The revised Senate health-care bill released today does not include the measures I have been advocating for on behalf of the people of Arizona," said Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) in a statement, adding he planned to offer amendments to change it.

The GOP's continuing push — and continuing struggle — to make good on a campaign promise it began invoking seven years ago to "repeal and replace" Obamacare reflected the peril Republicans face whether they pass a bill or not.

On the one hand, the ACA has provided medical coverage for millions of Americans — and has grown more popular as a result. Moderate Republicans remained concerned Thursday that the new proposal would make insurance unaffordable for some middle-income Americans and throw millions off the rolls of Medicaid, the public insurance for disabled and low-income Americans.

Yet conservatives continued to push for a more wholesale rollback of the ACA — highlighting the danger for all Republicans of failing to achieve

a promise most of them made on the campaign trail.

"The new Senate health care bill is substantially different from the version released last month, and it is unclear to me whether it has improved," Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), a conservative who has pushed for a full Obamacare repeal, said in a statement. "I will need time to study the new version and speak with experts about whether it does enough to lower health insurance premiums for middle class families."

Looming even larger was the reality that Republicans, despite their control of both chambers of Congress and with President Trump in the White House, have made little progress on an ambitious agenda that McConnell had hoped to move on to next week after a vote on the health-care bill. Among their goals are major tax legislation, raising the debt ceiling and passing a defense authorization bill.

Republican leaders seemed to acknowledge Thursday the difficult path ahead, with several speaking privately about internal divisions on how to pass the bill — and to prevent further defections.

Which GOP senators have concerns with the health-care bill

"We will have the votes when we start voting," said Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Tex.).

McConnell's new draft was the result of weeks of negotiations with conservatives and moderates. For those on the right, the plan incorporated a proposal from Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) allowing insurers to offer minimalist policies as long as they offer more-comprehensive ones as well. Cruz said the provision would give consumers greater choice and lower-cost premiums.

For those in the center, the new proposal would spend an additional \$70 billion offsetting consumers' costs and \$45 billion to treat opioid addiction.

Republicans financed these changes by keeping a trio of Obamacare taxes targeting high earners — a 3.8 percent tax on net investment income and a 0.9 percent Medicare payroll tax on individuals making \$200,000 a year or couples earning \$250,000, along with a tax on insurers with high-paid executives. Lawmakers such as Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) said repealing those taxes would give too much relief to the wealthy at the expense of the poor.

The new measure has won Cruz's backing, but Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), another conservative who said the measure still does not do enough to unravel Obamacare, remained opposed to voting on the bill, as did centrist Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine).

"My strong intention and current inclination is to vote no on the motion to proceed," Collins told reporters, referring to the procedural vote required before the legislation can reach the Senate floor. Collins added that she hopes Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) will be willing to work with Republicans to fix the legislation. "I have had numerous Democrats come to me and say they want to work with us on the bill," she said. "I'm going to take them at their word."

Even as McConnell negotiated with individual members, the outlook for the bill was complicated when Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) and Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) debuted an alternative proposal.

In a joint interview with CNN on Thursday, Cassidy and Graham said they would take the billions of dollars the federal government now receives in taxes under the ACA and direct that revenue to the states.

The plan did not appear to be gaining traction — Graham said he would vote to start debate on McConnell's bill — but its introduction underscored the extent to which a growing number of GOP senators have started looking beyond the current effort, with diminishing confidence that it will prevail.

"I don't see this as the end if this bill were not to pass," Collins said. "I see it as the beginning of the kind of process that I would have liked to have seen in the first place."

The surprise announcement from Graham and Cassidy came just before Senate GOP leaders released their revised health-care proposal.

The McConnell plan would allow Americans to pay for premiums with money from tax-exempt health savings accounts, an idea that many conservatives have pushed for — a tax break that primarily would benefit the upper middle class.

The plan's proposed rollback of Medicaid expansion under the ACA, as well as a proposal to slow the overall growth of the program starting in 2025, gave a number of

Republican moderates pause Thursday.

Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), who came out against the original draft of the bill, said he was not yet willing to vote yes to move the bill to the floor. "I'm in the same position I've been in, looking at the language and looking forward to the analysis," he said.

Cassidy and Sen. John Hoeven (R-N.D.) said they need to see the Congressional Budget Office score, due next week, before making a decision.

"We are going to look at it, read it, understand it and see the CBO score," Hoeven told reporters. He said that he was encouraged by changes intended to help lower-income Americans but that, "at this point, I'm reserving judgment."

In a sign of the challenge McConnell still faces to round up votes, he huddled Thursday afternoon in his office with Portman and Sens. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Dean Heller (R-Nev.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska). Those lawmakers hail from states that have extended Medicaid under the current law to cover able-bodied, childless adults. Capito, who opposed the earlier bill, said in a statement she still has "serious concerns" about the revised draft.

With Vice President Pence prepared to cast a tiebreaking vote and no Democrats expected to support the bill, Republicans need the support of 50 of their 52 members to pass the legislation.

Senate leaders and Trump officials are aware that moderate Republican holdouts may be the bill's biggest threat.

Seema Verma, administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, made a presentation to a group of Republican senators from Medicaid-expansion states Thursday afternoon. She promised to do everything possible to minimize the number of uninsured, by giving states maximum flexibility in how they could use some of the money from the bill's \$182 billion state stabilization fund.

Nearly 15 million Americans would lose their Medicaid coverage by 2026 under the Senate bill, according to the CBO. Verma sought to minimize that outlook, saying states could use the stabilization funding to heavily subsidize private coverage for these Americans — even though the size of the fund does not come close to

the bill's \$772 billion in cuts to the program over the next decade.

Cruz said the new bill was a "substantial improvement" over the first version and argued that a focus on reducing premiums was the best way to unite fractured Republicans. He touted his proposal as a means of accomplishing both.

"It's not what the federal government mandates you have to buy — it's your choice what health insurance is the best for you and your family," Cruz said.

Critics, including insurers, say that providing the option of skimpier plans would draw younger, healthier consumers into a separate risk pool. That development would drive up rates for the Americans buying more-comprehensive coverage on the individual market, which could in turn destabilize the entire market.

The revised bill would establish a \$70 billion fund to subsidize insurers providing both kinds of plans "for the associated costs of covering high-risk individuals," according to a GOP summary of the bill. It would also allow individuals buying catastrophic plans to get a federal tax credit if they would be otherwise eligible, which is now barred under current law.

Larry Levitt, senior vice president for special initiatives at the Kaiser Family Foundation, said in an interview that "healthy people could end up with much lower premiums" on the private insurance market, though the proposal's regulatory changes could upend coverage for those with costly medical conditions.

"There are many provisions in this bill that destabilize the individual

insurance," he said. "Then it attempts to restabilize it by funneling an enormous amount of money to insurers."

The Senate bill also includes a limited exemption for members of Congress, which Republicans said was due to procedural limitations in Senate budget rules. Cruz introduced a measure to strike the exemption Thursday afternoon, saying in a statement, "While this exemption was included in the Senate health care bill out of procedural necessity, we must still be diligent in ensuring that Members of Congress are treated just like other Americans under this law."

Senate leaders are leaving themselves the option of jettisoning the Cruz proposal after they get the nonpartisan CBO score, which will

gauge the Cruz amendment's impact on the budget and the overall number of uninsured.

Cornyn said Thursday that he expects the CBO will release two scores for the bill but would not confirm what those scores would include or when they will be released.

The Health 202 newsletter

Your daily guide to the health-care debate.

"We are expecting a CBO score, but I can't tell you exactly what the format will be," Cornyn told reporters, adding that the Cruz amendment would be scored.

Paige Winfield Cunningham and David Weigel contributed to this report.

POLITICO Senate Republicans one vote away from Obamacare repeal failure

Burgess Everett

9-12 minutes

Undecided Republicans include Lee and Sens. Jeff Flake of Arizona (pictured here), Rob Portman of Ohio, John Hoeven of North Dakota, Dean Heller of Nevada, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia. | AP Photo

GOP leaders unveiled a new plan to gut the health law, but it immediately ran into near-fatal opposition.

Senate Republican leaders are praying that their fragile whip count holds over the weekend, as just one more "no" vote would doom the party's Obamacare repeal effort from even coming up for debate.

Two GOP senators, Susan Collins of Maine and Rand Paul of Kentucky, said Thursday afternoon they will oppose a procedural vote next week to bring the bill to the floor. GOP leaders are putting immense pressure on about half a dozen other Republican senators not to join them and topple the entire effort. Another "no" is enough to kill the bill, and would also likely lead to mass defections.

Story Continued Below

The Trump administration is also lobbying intensely for the bill, the latest version of which was released Thursday. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma spent Thursday trying to convince centrist senators to reconsider their opposition to prior drafts of the bill. Republicans are also hoping Sen. Ted Cruz (R-

Texas) can convince Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) to back the measure after Lee said it was "unclear" if this version is better than the last.

Majority Whip John Cornyn acknowledged GOP leaders don't have the minimum 50 votes right now but insisted, "We're making good progress." He said he and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell were not making "state-specific" promises to wavering senators and were instead merely trying to convince them that the bill is better than Obamacare.

"We're not through yet," Cornyn said of his and McConnell's work.

"The only thing more difficult than peace between Israel and the Palestinians is healthcare," President Donald Trump told reporters in a conversation released Thursday by the White House.

Paul said he pitched Trump Thursday afternoon on separating the repeal and replace aspects of the Obamacare bill, but the president wasn't interested.

"He still wants to try to pass what they've got," Paul said.

But McConnell must run the table to even clear a procedural hurdle much less pass the entire bill.

GOP leaders hoped to win senators' support for the new draft by adding funds to combat opioid addiction as well as a controversial measure that would allow insurance companies to sell plans that don't comply with Obamacare consumer protections.

Undecided Republicans include Lee and Sens. Jeff Flake of Arizona, Rob Portman of Ohio, John Hoeven of North Dakota, Dean Heller of

Nevada, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia.

Heller, Capito and Portman may be the toughest to convince and met extensively with McConnell and Cornyn on Thursday afternoon alongside other holdouts. Heller, who said last month he would have opposed starting debate on the first Senate bill, told POLITICO Thursday that he was undecided on the latest version.

He won't make a decision "until I read the bill — that's what I'm doing this weekend," he said, holding a copy of the text. He had not spoken to Gov. Brian Sandoval (R-Nev.) yet about the bill, sources familiar with matter said. If Sandoval opposes the bill, it will be harder for Heller to back it.

Portman said he's "not there" on opening debate and still does not support the underlying bill. He said more money to combat opioids abuse was helpful, but haven't moved him to yes.

"I haven't made any commitments one way or the other," Capito said in an interview. "I still have concerns about the issues that I had before."

If just three Republicans oppose the procedural motion planned for next week, the seven-year effort to repeal Obamacare would end before the Senate can even formally start debate in what would be a stunning embarrassment for the GOP.

"We gotta get on the bill. ... If we don't at least get on the bill, we're never going to know," said Sen.

John Thune of South Dakota, the No. 3 Republican.

Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee said McConnell will take up a motion to proceed to the bill next Tuesday, adding, "This isn't a vote on the merits of the bill. This is a vote on whether to even talk about it." Republicans said there is no way McConnell will pull the vote this time after yanking it last month.

McConnell also promised action: "We will be voting next week," he told reporters. The GOP leader is urging Republicans to vote to open debate and amend it later. About \$200 billion is still at McConnell's disposal, which could be further allocated to alleviate moderates' concerns during the amendment process.

McConnell unveiled the plan on Thursday morning at a closed-door, GOP members-only meeting before posting the text online. Unlike their previous bill, which faced stiff resistance across the conference, it would maintain some Obamacare taxes on the wealthy, provide new financial support to help low-income people purchase health insurance and allow people to pay for insurance with pre-tax money.

It also includes an amendment to allow insurers to sell plans that are noncompliant under Obamacare, which is backed by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas). That could be altered or removed later, sources said. The amendment would allow the sale of cheap, deregulated insurance plans as long as Obamacare-compliant plans are still sold.

It is not yet clear whether the inclusion of Cruz's proposal will be enough for Lee, who advocated for

a prior version of the amendment with Cruz. Cruz has been handling the lion's share of negotiating with McConnell.

Cruz said if his language stays, he will support the bill. He said if it is removed it will do "substantial damage" to the bill's support.

The latest proposal will also give states new flexibility on their Medicaid funding if a public health emergency — such as a Zika outbreak — takes place. The block grant option would also allow states to add the newly eligible Medicaid population to coverage under the block grant.

The bill also includes \$70 billion more than the first draft of the bill's \$112 billion for state-based health care initiatives to drive down premiums. It will include \$45 billion for fighting drug addiction and would ease the sale of low-premium "catastrophic" insurance plans.

Senators are already angling for more changes. An amendment from Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) would direct much of Obamacare's federal funding

directly to the states that could offer a starting point for Congress if the Senate GOP's partisan effort fails next week.

Some Republicans worry that the Cruz proposal could result in split risk pools, one with sick people with pre-existing conditions and the other with healthy young people. Centrists are worried the proposal would undermine protections for people with pre-existing conditions. Cruz disputes that and will argue it will likely lower premiums and allow people to opt out of Obamacare.

Several senators said it was their understanding that Cruz's latest draft would combine those risk pools, though Republicans said the details of how it would work are murky.

Some Republican senators now believe it will be a victory to even open debate on the legislation passed by the House, one senator familiar with the negotiations said.

"I don't even know that it's going to get to a vote," countered GOP Sen. John McCain of Arizona.

If that procedural vote is successful, a freewheeling amendment process will begin. At some point, McConnell will introduce a substitute that will represent the Senate's draft bill. It may be different than what is introduced on Thursday and could be subject to amendment on the Senate floor next week. The bill, in other words, will be a work in progress until the final vote.

The Congressional Budget Office is analyzing two versions of the bill, one with the Cruz amendment and one without. The Cruz amendment is in brackets in the bill, indicating it is subject to change. CBO is expected to deliver a score for the updated draft on Monday, though it may not include the Cruz amendment.

In addition to Cruz and Lee, Paul has cited huge problems with the bill. Paul, who argues the bill keeps too much of Obamacare, has said including the Cruz proposal would not be enough to get his support.

At the other end of the GOP conference, several moderates, including Collins and Murkowski, are worried that the bill would hurt

people with pre-existing conditions and others who got coverage under Obamacare. A number of Republicans are uncomfortable with spending reductions to Medicaid, which covers more than 70 million Americans, including families from low-income households, people with disabilities and seniors.

"Certainly there are steps that could be taken [to win her support] but they would be major overhauls of the legislation," Collins said. "If the provisions that completely overhaul the Medicaid program were dropped from the bill that would be a great step in the right direction."

Rachana Pradhan, Seung Min Kim, Sarah Karlin-Smith and John Bresnahan contributed to this report.

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The New York Times

Board
4-5 minutes

Editorial : A Scary New Senate Health Care Bill

The Editorial Board

the concerns of Republican senators and governors who questioned those cuts.

The initial version of the Senate bill would have taken health insurance away from 22 million people, the Congressional Budget Office found. Experts say that the number could rise once Mr. McConnell's changes are factored in.

It was always going to be hard for Mr. McConnell to pass his bill, given that he has a slim majority of 52 and refuses to work with Democrats. He has chosen to make the legislation more appealing to conservatives like Ted Cruz of Texas, rather than to centrists like Susan Collins of Maine.

Ms. Collins and Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky said on Thursday that they are opposed to the current version of the bill, so Mr. McConnell can't afford to lose anyone else. The question now is, has he done enough to win over senators like Dean Heller of Nevada, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Shelley Moore

Capito of West Virginia and Rob Portman of Ohio? The answer is most likely no. The changes meant to appeal to them amount to crumbs. For example, the new version includes \$45 billion to help states fight the opioid epidemic. Gov. John Kasich of Ohio, who opposed the original bill, has said that this level of federal spending on this huge problem would be "like spitting in the ocean."

Mr. McConnell is also trying to make his legislation look less extreme by continuing some of the taxes from the A.C.A., or Obamacare, rather than jettisoning them all. But this is not a big improvement, because a majority of the taxes in the Obama-era law that helped pay for expanded health coverage would still be lost. In addition, the revised bill would expand the use of tax-free health savings accounts, which primarily benefit rich families.

The biggest losers in the new bill are the sick. A provision by Mr. Cruz

would let insurers discriminate against people with pre-existing conditions. And they would be allowed to sell plans that do not cover essential services, which would be cheaper and attract healthier people. They would still have to offer comprehensive plans to everyone, but those policies would cost a lot more because they would attract sicker patients. That is why the American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network said the bill "would significantly weaken the ability of millions of cancer patients, survivors and those at risk for the disease to find and afford adequate, meaningful health care coverage."

Mr. McConnell wants to hold a vote on his legislation early next week. Congressional aides say he might even proceed before the C.B.O. can analyze all the changes. Senators who vote for this bill will send a simple message to their constituents: Get sick, and you are on your own.

Los Angeles Times

Editorial Board
6-8 minutes

Editorial : The new GOP healthcare bill is more conservative and more moderate, and still plain bad

The Times

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell leaves the Senate chamber after announcing the revised version of the Republican health care bill in Washington on July 13. (J. Scott Applewhite / Associated Press)

The Times Editorial Board

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has done something remarkable to the Republican healthcare bill he's been trying to steer through the Senate:

He's simultaneously made it more conservative and more moderate. But he hasn't magically transformed it into a good bill that would make healthcare better or more accessible in this country.

Instead, the new version of the "Better Care Reconciliation Act" would continue to push insurance coverage out of reach for many Americans, particularly the working poor and moderate-income adults with pre-existing conditions. And in a new twist, it would reward insurers financially for offering cheap policies to younger, healthier consumers, pitting those individuals against people who want or need more comprehensive coverage.

It's tempting to blame the bill's shortcomings on the secretive, corner-cutting process taken by McConnell (and House Republicans before him). As bad as the process may have been, though, the real issue is the bill's goals and the ways it tries to achieve them.

The likely outcome is that the bill would quickly make a mess out of the individual markets in most states.

First, Senate Republicans are so eager to rein in federal spending on Medicaid, they've proposed budget caps that will gradually, inexorably shift more of the program's cost onto states. The 2010 Affordable Care Act encouraged states to expand coverage

to more disabled and working poor Americans who couldn't possibly afford private insurers' premiums; the Senate bill would reverse that move and pressure states to offer thinner coverage to fewer people. And to what end? Those who will be kicked off Medicaid will wind up in hospital emergency rooms, racking up costs that will inevitably be passed on to taxpayers or the insured.

Second, the bill's architects say they want to reduce insurance premiums for the roughly 20 million Americans not covered by government health programs or large employer health benefits — but their proposal would do so in the short term just for younger and healthier consumers willing to forgo comprehensive coverage. Specifically, the bill would encourage insurers to offer cheap, thin policies to the healthy, which may entice people who don't really need coverage to sign up anyway. That would theoretically lower insurers' average cost per customer, helping to hold down premiums in the long run.

That's the hope. But the likely outcome is that the bill would

quickly make a mess out of the individual markets in most states. With no penalty for people who go uninsured — just a six-month waiting period should they ever decide to sign up — the bill could prompt millions of healthy people to stop carrying coverage, driving up premiums even faster. And even if healthy consumers signed up for a cheap, low-value policy, the Senate bill would still shift risks and costs onto Americans with preexisting conditions or who may eventually need expensive treatments not covered by the cheap policies. Based on pre-ACA experience, analysts say, these thin policies are unlikely to cover maternity care, substance abuse treatment and specialty prescription drugs.

In a concession to conservatives, the new version of the bill would roll back more of the ACA by making it easier for insurers to get out from under the law's requirements, including its protections for those with preexisting conditions and its limits on profits. And in a nod to moderates, it offers insurers that sell thin plans an additional \$70 billion over seven years to help offset the cost of offering comprehensive ones, plus \$45

billion to help states combat the opioid epidemic. It also would preserve the ACA's tax increases on high-income Americans and insurance-industry executives, so critics could no longer accuse the GOP of cutting Medicaid to finance tax breaks for the wealthy.

Democrats ought to be just as troubled as Republicans by the rapid rise in premiums in recent years, as well as the withdrawal of several major insurers from some Obamacare exchanges — even if many of the current problems stem from efforts by Republican state officials who opposed the ACA. McConnell may try and sell this bill as a less "mean" version of the House-passed version. But don't be fooled. It would leave millions of Americans without health insurance and leave many more with low value policies, while doing nothing to slow the rising costs of prescription drugs and medical treatments. But then, that's a lot harder than slapping a cap on Medicaid and letting insurers sell threadbare policies again.



Editorial : ObamaCare Moment of Truth

The Editorial Board

5-7 minutes

July 13, 2017 7:26 p.m. ET

Republican leaders unveiled a revised health-care bill on Thursday, setting up a Senate watershed next week. Few votes will reveal more about the principles and character of this Congress.

Months of stations-of-the-cross negotiations between conservative and GOP moderates have pulled the bill towards the political center, and for the most part the new version continues the journey. This leftward shift is Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's bid to meet the demands of still-recalcitrant Republican moderates. The bill remains a net improvement over the Obama Care status quo, but the question now is whether they'll take yes for an answer.

In the new bill, the GOP's economic growth wing made a major and bitter concession by retaining the 3.8-percentage-point surcharge on investment income. This political capitulation doesn't even phase out the tax. Repealing this millstone on investment and rising wages has allegedly been a Republican goal for years, and the Senate voted to do so as recently as 2015. Markets

have also been expecting relief, meaning the retreat will undercut an economy that can't afford many political shocks.

As worrisome is what this capitulation shows about GOP fortitude against relentless progressive opposition. Moderate Republicans folded amid a false if completely predictable tax-cuts-for-the-rich narrative, as if they'll somehow get credit for reneging. Has opposition to the bill lessened even an iota? Choking over the tax doesn't bode well for tax reform, when Democrats will be invoking "the affluent" at every turn.

The priority has to be growth and increasing incomes, not the short-term politics. Or maybe Republicans could do a better job making a political argument about jobs and wages instead of nothing. Any reform worth passing is difficult, and Republicans have sent a signal they'll give up at the first whiff of grapeshot.

The new bill uses the revenue from the investment tax to pay for spending the moderates favored, which might once have been called tax-and-spend liberalism. This includes expanding eligibility for insurance subsidies, increasing subsidies for out-of-pocket expenses and higher up-front spending in Medicaid, such as for hospitals that provide

uncompensated care for the uninsured. Financing for high-risk pools and insurance market stability is tripled.

It also dispenses \$45 billion for heroin and opioid abuse treatment. In February 2016, President Obama proposed a \$1.1 billion plan that would increase access to addiction therapy, boost public-health education, stockpile the anti-overdose medicine naloxone, deter fentanyl trafficking, expand needle-exchange programs and make sundry grants to law enforcement and rural communities. The Senate bill is 40 times as large. Don't believe anyone who claims this isn't enough money, because it probably reaches the limit of what government can do to mitigate the crisis.

The most important residual virtue of the McConnell rewrite, and the main reason it is still worth passing, is that it maintains the original Medicaid reform. This would transition the program to per capita block grants and equalize payments for the poor and the disabled compared to ObamaCare's Medicaid expansion population of able-bodied adults. The revision is too generous in the early years and has a long runway to give Governors time to plan and adjust, but it shifts to a budget growth rate

in a decade that is fiscally sustainable.

Moderates intensely opposed this transformation, but structural changes are the only way to make the entitlement state even remotely affordable. The discipline will save \$772 billion over 10 years.

Conservatives gained a modest expansion of Health Savings Accounts and a version of Ted Cruz's "freedom option," which would allow insurers that sell ObamaCare-compliant plans to also sell deregulated plans. Combined with state waivers, this could lead to significantly lower premiums for most consumers.

The Senate bill has never been the "root and branch" repeal that some Republicans overpromised, but any legislation with a chance of passing must negotiate both political reality and health-care conditions that have developed over decades. The bill is now a pragmatic, modest compromise that tries to satisfy all camps.

Most Senate conservatives like Mr. Cruz are warming to the bill despite previous concerns about ObamaCare Lite, and we'll support it too despite its watered-down tax cuts and reform. Moderates now have to decide if they can say the same, having extorted almost

everything they asked for and then some.

Moderates never objected to the repeal-and-replace agenda and surely benefitted from the slogan

politically, yet some are still threatening to vote against even allowing a debate. If what they really want is ObamaCare, they should have said so earlier, though

now at least they'll be accountable for their true position. Mr. McConnell is right to hold a vote next week to force Republicans to

honor their avowed principles—or betray them.

Appeared in the July 14, 2017, print edition.



Editorial : The new Senate health-care bill may be worse than the old one

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

4-5 minutes

The Post's View

Opinion

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

By Editorial Board

The Post's View

Opinion

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

July 13 at 7:27 PM

SENATE REPUBLICANS released Thursday a new version of their Obamacare repeal-and-replace bill. It is arguably worse than the unpopular bill that preceded it.

The Congressional Budget Office projected that the previous iteration would result in 22 million more uninsured in a decade. "Looking at the revised Senate health bill, it's hard to see how it could

meaningfully alter CBO's projection of how the uninsured will grow," the Kaiser Family Foundation's Larry Levitt noted. "The revised Senate bill reinstates taxes on wealthy people, but it mostly does not spend that money on health care for low-income people."

In their revision, Senate leaders tried to blunt the charge that the GOP wants to cut poor people's health care to fund tax cuts for the rich. Taxes on wealthy people's investment income were indeed maintained. But the bill would deeply slash Medicaid, the state-federal program covering the poor and near-poor, just as before. And it would still use the savings to fund an array of tax cuts, including a break for medical-device manufacturers. It would even add a new tax break expanding tax-advantaged health savings accounts, which would mostly benefit wealthier people who have savings to put into them.

Act Four newsletter

The intersection of culture and politics.

Moderate senators who earlier claimed to have concerns about cutting off poor people have no

reasonable justification for supporting this bill. If they vote for it in anticipation that its Medicaid cuts would phase in as planned, they would support a massive blow to low-income people in their states. If they vote for the bill with the calculation that future Congresses would cancel its Medicaid cuts, then their vote would likely equate to support for expanding the national debt, because the Medicaid savings are the major source of financing for the bill's many tax cuts.

Medicaid is not the only way to cover people, of course. But the new bill would chop up the private market for individual insurance. A new provision from Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) would divide healthy people buying cheap and skimpy plans from less healthy people who want comprehensive coverage. The flimsy plans would cover little and come with few consumer protections, a grave risk for anyone who ended up needing care. The more comprehensive plans would become increasingly unaffordable as the least healthy — and therefore, to insurance companies, most expensive — customers found themselves increasingly isolated.

Even if the market avoided a death spiral, federal assistance offsetting premiums for those seeking comprehensive coverage would still be pegged to much thinner plans than the current standard. Despite GOP carping about high deductibles under Obamacare, their alternative is destined to increase these and other out-of-pocket costs.

States could lower costs with a pot of federal money set aside for experimentation and market stabilization. But these funds, even if fully appropriated, would be inadequate to the many tasks assigned them: addressing potentially skyrocketing premiums in the sicker market, ensuring that skimpier coverage does not lead people to forgo needed care and stabilizing the finances of insurers who may find the individual insurance market difficult.

The CBO, slated to release its analysis of the updated bill early next week, should have the final say. But we cannot imagine it will contain good news for the bill's backers — nor, more important, for Americans who want access to affordable health care.



Editorial : Put Trumpcare Out of Its Misery

by The Editors
More stories by

The Editors

8-10 minutes

White House

Revelations about Russia and the Trumps are damning. All their allies can do is quibble about the definition of "collusion."

by

11 juillet 2017 à 14:35 UTC-4

Oh hey, guys.

Photographer: Win McNamee/Getty Images

On Monday, the New York Times published a jaw-dropping story, alleging that a 2016 meeting between a Russian attorney and Donald Trump's son and son-in-law had been arranged to discuss dirt on Hillary Clinton that a Kremlin-

connected lawyer might be willing to provide to the Trump campaign. Donald Trump Jr. had been informed via email that this compromising information was part of a Russian government operation to help his father win the presidency.

Facing an accusation like that, Donald Trump Jr. obviously didn't want to sit around while the Times dribbled out information bolstering the speculation that the Trump campaign had colluded with Russia. He rushed to confirm it himself, tweeting out the email chain. His response to being informed that Russia was trying to engineer the outcome of an American election, with efforts that included providing damaging information about Clinton? "If it's what you say I love it especially later in the summer." Son-in-law Jared Kushner was cc'd on the email.

Is this illegal? Does getting oppo research from a foreign power count

as an in-kind campaign contribution from a foreign national, one that might leave Jr. and Kushner vulnerable to criminal prosecution? I have no idea, because as we say on the interwebs, I am not a lawyer. Regardless of whether these actions turn out to be legal, it hardly ceases to be a problem if this somehow manages to squeak through some hole in our federal election laws. What they did is so obviously *wrong* that a 10-year-old child would know better.

Social media indicates that there are some people out there still trying to defend the Trump camp's relationship with Russia, so it bears spelling out why this is, as the ethicists and public relations pros say, "not OK."

Donald Trump is an American. He is an American who ran for office under a slogan of patriotic pride and love of country. People who love their country do not help rival powers intervene in their country's

elections, even if that intervention might have the lovely side effect of getting them elected. Countries gonna country, and spies gonna spy. But Americans running for American office must pick sides: the will of American voters or the influence of a foreign power. Hint: You choose your fellow Americans.

What happened at the meeting could ultimately be irrelevant. The sin to which Donald Trump Jr. has already confessed is egregious enough. A decent person would not give an audience to a foreign power promising to help tear down the opposition. A decent person certainly would not contemplate and suggest timing of any document release -- which moves this revelation beyond merely "taking a meeting you shouldn't have" and into the territory of "a presidential campaign actively coordinating with foreign agents."

Even Trump supporters seem to be having trouble mustering much of a

defense. There was a lot of irrelevant sputtering on social media this morning. One Trump apologist asked me: What about Aipac? (Unfortunately, Twitter offered no way to transmit my response: an astonished, incomprehending stare.) Others mounted standard complaints about leaks and sly implication. We are now past the point of anonymous sources and innuendo. Donald Trump Jr. showed us the primary sources, pleading guilty in the court of public opinion.

The president's supporters have already retreated to what now looks to be their last rhetorical stand: to say that this isn't collusion, but just politics. They get creative and postulate that this isn't unlike what Clinton's campaign would have

done.

Here's the reality: Once you are given the details of a Russian attempt to change the outcome of an American election, there is only one patriotic thing you can do, and that is to get on the phone to the FBI and say "I have some very disturbing news." End of story.

But no, no, Trump's supporters continued to insist; it's not really collusion with a potential enemy of the U.S. They submitted close parsings of the legal definition of collusion and claimed that any other usage of this common word was wrong. They suggested that in fact Donald Trump Jr. was doing his moral duty to find evidence of criminal behavior by Clinton, though they could not explain why, if he was so concerned about her

possible criminality, he did not get the relevant authorities involved.

These dogs won't hunt. These dogs have joined PETA and are moping around the house in "Meat Is Murder" T-shirts. And the fact that this is where supporters have ended up after mere hours of social media badinage tells you just how weak the defense is. As a general rule, at the point where you are pretending to have a shaky command of ordinary English words, you are losing the argument. Just ask Bill Clinton how convincing anyone found his creative interpretations of the verb "to be."

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After months of suggesting that all the fears of Russian scheming to interfere in our elections were just so much hype and hysteria from a hopelessly biased media, the Trump family has now confirmed that they were not only aware of these efforts, but were hoping to help. It seems wildly implausible that news of both the Russian efforts, and his own campaign's fellow-traveling, failed to reach Donald Trump Sr.

Whether or not Russian efforts made a difference in the vote tally, they should certainly make a difference in America's view of its president.

The New York Times Krugman : The Cruelty and Fraudulence of Mitch McConnell's Health Bill

Paul Krugman

5-7 minutes

Mitch McConnell, center, arriving on Capitol Hill on Thursday. Al Drago for The New York Times

A few days ago the tweeter in chief demanded that Congress enact "a beautiful new HealthCare bill" before it goes into recess. But now we've seen Mitch McConnell's latest version of health "reform," and "beautiful" is hardly the word for it. In fact, it's surpassingly ugly, intellectually and morally. Previous iterations of Trumpcare were terrible, but this one is, incredibly, even worse.

Before I get to what makes it worse, let's talk about the one piece of the new bill that may sound like a step in the right direction, and why it's largely a scam.

The original Senate bill got a lot of justified bad press for slashing Medicaid while offering big tax cuts for the rich. So this version rolls back some though by no means all of those tax cuts, which sounds like a concession to moderates.

At the same time, however, the bill would allow people to use tax-favored health savings accounts to pay insurance premiums. This effectively creates a big new tax shelter that mostly helps people with high incomes who (a) can afford to put a lot of money into

such accounts and (b) face high marginal tax rates, and hence get big tax savings.

So this is still a bill that takes from the poor to give to the rich; it just does so with extra stealth.

Still, this tax shuffle does give McConnell a bit more money to play with. So how does he address the two big problems with the original bill — savage cuts to Medicaid and soaring premiums for older, less affluent workers? He doesn't.

Aside from a few tweaks, those brutal Medicaid cuts are still part of the plan — and yes, they are cuts, despite desperate Republican attempts to pretend that they aren't. The subsidy cuts that would send premiums soaring for millions are also still there.

The good stuff, such as it is, involves some new money for the opioid crisis, some (but not nearly enough) money for patients at especially high risk, and some additional aid for insurers — you know, the same thing Republicans denounced as outrageous corporate welfare when Democrats did it.

The most important change in the bill, however, is the way it would effectively gut protection for people with pre-existing medical conditions. The Affordable Care Act put minimum standards on the kinds of policies insurers were allowed to offer; the new Senate bill gives in to demands by Ted Cruz that insurers

be allowed to offer skimpy plans that cover very little, with very high deductibles that would make them useless to most people.

The effects of this change would be disastrous. Don't take my word for it: It's what the insurers themselves say. In a special memo, AHIP, the insurance industry trade group, warned against adopting the Cruz proposal, which would "fracture and segment insurance markets into separate risk pools," leading to "unstable health insurance markets" in which people with pre-existing conditions would lose coverage or have plans that were "far more expensive" than under Obamacare.

Or to put it another way, this bill would send insurance markets into a classic death spiral. Republicans have been predicting such a spiral for years, but keep being wrong: All indications are that Obamacare, despite having some real problems, is stabilizing, and doing pretty well in states that support it. But this bill would effectively sabotage all that progress.

And let's be clear: Many of the victims of this sabotage would be members of the white working class, people who voted for Donald Trump in the belief that he really meant it when he promised that there would be no cuts to Medicaid and that everyone would get better, cheaper insurance. So why are Republican leaders pushing this? Why is there even a chance that it might become law?

The main answer, I'd argue, is that what would happen if this bill passes — a big decline in the number of Americans with health insurance, a sharp reduction in the quality of coverage for those who keep it — is what Republicans have wanted all along.

During the eight-year jihad against the Affordable Care Act, of course, the G.O.P. pretended otherwise: denouncing Obamacare for failing to cover everyone, attacking the high out-of-pocket expenses associated with many of its policies, and so on. But conservative ideology always denied the proposition that people are entitled to health care; the Republican elite considered and still considers people on Medicaid, in particular, "takers" who are effectively stealing from the deserving rich.

And the conservative view has always been that Americans have health insurance that is too good, that they should pay more in deductibles and co-pays, giving them "skin in the game," and thus an incentive to control costs.

So what we're seeing here is supposed to be the last act in a long con, the moment when the fraudsters cash in, and their victims discover how completely they've been fooled. The only question is whether they'll really get away with it. We'll find out very soon.

The Washington Post Trump's legal team faces tensions — and a client who often takes his own counsel (UNE)

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

8-10 minutes

The challenge for President Trump's attorneys has become, at its core, managing the unmanageable — their client.

He won't follow instructions. After one meeting in which they urged Trump to steer clear of a certain topic, he sent a tweet about that very theme before they arrived back at their office.

He won't compartmentalize. With aides, advisers and friends breezing in and out of the Oval Office, it is not uncommon for the president to suddenly turn the conversation to Russia — a subject that perpetually gnaws at him — in a meeting about something else entirely.

And he won't discipline himself. Trump's legal team, led by Marc E. Kasowitz of New York, is laboring to underscore the potential risk to the president if he engages without a lawyer in discussions with other people under scrutiny in widening Russia inquiries, including Jared Kushner, his son-in-law and senior adviser.

Nearly two months after Trump retained outside counsel to represent him in the investigations of alleged Russian meddling in last year's election, his and Kushner's attorneys are struggling to enforce traditional legal boundaries to protect their clients, according to half a dozen people with knowledge of the internal dynamics and ongoing interactions, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the matter candidly.

Compounding the challenges have been tensions between Trump's and Kushner's legal teams in a frenzied, siege-like environment. Senior White House officials are increasingly reluctant to discuss the issue internally or publicly and worry about overhearing sensitive conversations, for fear of legal exposure.

"Stuff is moving fast and furious," said one person familiar with the work of the legal teams. "The tensions are just the tensions that would normally exist between two groups of lawyers starting to work together and struggling with facts that we don't all know yet."

A third faction could complicate the dynamic further. Trump's eldest child, Donald Trump Jr., hired his own criminal defense attorney this week amid disclosures that he met with a Russian lawyer with ties to the Kremlin who he thought could

provide incriminating information about Democrat Hillary Clinton during the campaign. Trump Jr. also is considering hiring his own outside public relations team.

In remarks to reporters on Air Force One before his arrival in Paris on Thursday, Trump defended his son as "a good boy" who had done nothing wrong and suggested he would support Trump Jr. testifying about the case "if he wants to."

['Category 5 hurricane': White House under siege by Trump Jr.'s revelations]

As in Trump's West Wing, lawyers on the outside teams have been deeply distrustful of one another and suspicious of motivations. They also are engaged in a circular firing squad of private speculation about who may have disclosed information about Trump Jr.'s meeting with the Russian lawyer to the New York Times, said people familiar with the situation.

Michael J. Bowe, a partner at Kasowitz's firm and a member of Trump's legal team, said the lawyers are collaborating effectively. "The legal teams have worked together smoothly and professionally from the start," he said.

President Trump's personal attorney Marc Kasowitz hit back at former FBI director James Comey's testimony on June 8, saying that Trump never asked Comey to let the Flynn investigation go or for Comey's "loyalty." President Trump's personal attorney Marc Kasowitz hit back at former FBI director James Comey's testimony on June 8. (Photo: Ricky Carioti/The Washington Post/Reuters)

(Reuters)

Another question is who will pay the legal fees for the president and administration officials involved in the Russia inquiries. Some in Trump's orbit are pushing the Republican National Committee to bear the costs, said three people with knowledge of the situation, including one who euphemistically described the debate as a "robust discussion."

Although the RNC does have a legal defense fund, it well predates the Russia investigations and is intended to be used for legal challenges facing the Republican Party, such as a potential election recount.

The RNC has not made a decision, in part because the committee is still researching whether the money could legally be used to help pay legal costs related to Russia. But many within the organization are resisting the effort, thinking it would be more appropriate to create a separate legal defense fund for the case.

RNC officials declined requests for comment. The White House has not said whether Trump, Kushner and other officials are paying their legal bills themselves or whether they are being covered by an outside entity.

Those retained by the parties involved include Kasowitz, Bowe and Jay Sekulow for Trump; Jamie S. Gorelick and Abbe Lowell for Kushner; and Alan Futerfas for Trump Jr.

The president has been irritated with Kasowitz, which the Times first reported this week. The two men have known each other for decades, and both are hard-charging, prideful and brash.

[Trump is struggling to stay calm on Russia, one morning call at a time]

But people briefed on the evolving relationship said Trump has made Kasowitz absorb his fury about the Russia inquiries — in keeping with how the president treats his White House staff, quick to blame aides when things go awry.

The lawyers are now faced with the challenge of trying to force change on Trump, 71, who throughout his life has often thrived amid freewheeling chaos. He made his name as a flamboyant Manhattan developer, trafficking in hyperbole and mistruth — or "puffery," as one former aide put it — while exhibiting little discretion in his daily conversations. For Trump, this was a formula for success.

"There's no question that Donald Trump has lied flagrantly and almost pathologically his entire life," said Timothy L. O'Brien, author of the Trump biography "TrumpNation" and a Bloomberg View columnist. "For good parts of his life, he's been insulated from the consequences of doing that."

Trump is now the highest elected official in the nation, and with that outsize perch comes potentially outsize consequences. His legal team is trying to impress upon him and those in his orbit that there could be severe ramifications for

lying to federal investigators or congressional committees.

O'Brien said, "He is now in a completely different world, and it's a world unlike any he's ever existed in before — both in terms of the sophistication and honesty that's required of him to do his job well, and most especially the titanic legal and reputational consequences of Donald Trump continuing to be the same old Donald Trump."

['A million miles per hour': Inside Trump's campaign when Trump Jr. met with Russian]

The president, however, believes he has done nothing wrong and is the target of what he repeatedly has called "a witch hunt." His instinct, those close to him have said, is to trust his gut and punch back.

Barry Bennett, who was a Trump campaign adviser, said that Trump isn't used to losing and that "he never stops fighting. That's what life has taught him. In Washington, politics is a full-contact sport, and it's certainly tougher than having it out with a magazine. It's a new arena for him and he's treating it like every arena he's ever been in. He may be right, but it's messy."

During last year's campaign, Bennett recalled, "do you know how many times people came to him and said, 'That was lethal, you're never going to survive it'? Every time, he survived. When somebody tells him he can't do something, he's at a minimum circumspect."

When it comes to Twitter, however, the president is hardly circumspect. His political advisers have long urged him to restrain his first impulses on social media and to think twice before tweeting — and now, his lawyers are asking the same.

Still, the president persists.

"It's my voice," Trump said in a recent interview with the New York Times Magazine. "They want to take away my voice. They're not going to take away my social media."

Robert Costa, Rosalind S. Helderman and Carol D. Leonnig contributed to this report.



Hawaii Judge Orders Loosening of Trump Travel Ban

Brent Kendall

4-5 minutes

Updated July 14, 2017 1:27 a.m. ET

WASHINGTON—A Hawaii judge late Thursday ordered a nationwide loosening of President Donald Trump's temporary ban on U.S.

entry for some travelers from six Muslim-majority countries, ruling the administration's strict approach

contradicted a recent Supreme Court ruling.

The decision is a fresh legal blow for the president just two weeks after a Supreme Court ruling allowed the administration to implement its travel ban against refugees and foreign nationals from six countries who have no connection to the U.S.

The justices said Mr. Trump's administration couldn't enforce the ban against people with bona fide relationships to people or organizations in the U.S. Days after, the Trump administration adopted a narrow view of what relationships counted for an exemption from the ban.

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokeswoman for the Justice Department, which is defending the ban, had no immediate comment on the court order.

Administration officials said visa applicants and refugees with U.S.-based spouses, children, parents and siblings would be allowed in. But those with

only lesser ties—such as grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles and cousins—would be subject to the ban.

U.S. District Judge Derrick Watson in Hawaii took issue with that interpretation. He issued an order late Thursday, which applies nationwide, that says people with broader family ties are also exempt from the ban.

"The Government's definition of close familial relationship is not only not compelled by the Supreme Court's June 26 decision, but contradicts it," the judge wrote.

Mr. Trump's restrictions sought to impose a 90-day ban on U.S. entry for people from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, and to suspend temporarily the U.S. program for admitting refugees. Mr. Trump has said the order would help prevent terrorism and allow his administration time to study vetting procedures world-wide.

Thursday's order, like previous decisions in the legal saga, wasn't a final ruling on the ban, but instead a decision on what rules should be in

place while litigation continues over whether Mr. Trump's restrictions are legal.

The Supreme Court will give the case a full airing in October, and it intended its June ruling to strike a balance in the meantime, allowing Mr. Trump to bar some travel, but not for people with close connections to the U.S., such as with family, schools and employers.

Judge Watson said the Trump administration's ban implementation after the high court ruling tilted the scale too far in its favor and against those travelers with U.S. family connections. He ordered that the ban not apply to "grandparents, grandchildren, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins of persons in the United States."

"Common sense, for instance, dictates that close family members be defined to include grandparents. Indeed, grandparents are the epitome of close family members," the judge wrote.

Judge Watson also loosened some Trump administration restrictions on

what type of U.S. relationships qualify to exempt refugees from the ban. The judge said refugees aren't subject to the ban if they are covered by a formal admissions agreement between the U.S. government and a refugee resettlement agency.

Lawyer Neal Katyal, who is representing Hawaii in its challenge to the Trump travel ban, on Twitter called the ruling a sweeping victory.

The Justice Department had argued the Trump administration's implementation of the ban was faithful with the Supreme Court's ruling. It also argued that only the high court should be able to clarify or modify its ruling.

Write to Brent Kendall at brent.kendall@wsj.com

Appeared in the July 14, 2017, print edition as 'Judge Exempts Some in Travel Ban.'

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

4-5 minutes

Updated July 14, 2017 1:32 a.m. ET

WASHINGTON—Peter W. Smith, a Republican political activist and financier from Chicago who mounted an effort to obtain former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's emails from Russian hackers, died on May 14 after asphyxiating himself in a hotel room in Rochester, Minn., according to local authorities. He was 81 years old.

Mr. Smith's body was found in the Aspen Suites hotel, located across the street from the Mayo Clinic, according to a medical examiner's report. An associate of Mr. Smith said that he had recently visited the clinic. A representative for the facility wouldn't confirm if Mr. Smith was a patient.

It wasn't clear who found Mr. Smith's body.

GOP Activist Who Sought Hillary Clinton Emails Killed Himself

Shane Harris and Reid J. Epstein

Mr. Smith died about 10 days after an interview with The Wall Street Journal in which he recounted his attempts to acquire what he believed were thousands of emails stolen from Mrs. Clinton's private email server. He implied that Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, then serving as the senior national security adviser to presidential candidate Donald Trump, was aware of his efforts.

Mr. Smith's attempts to obtain what he believed would be politically damaging emails marked the first potential evidence of coordination between members of the Trump campaign and Russian hackers, a central issue in probes by Congress and the Federal Bureau of Investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

When the Journal reported on Mr. Smith's efforts last month, it wasn't clear how he died. His obituary listed no cause of death, officials in the town where he lived didn't release information, and messages left at Mr. Smith's home went unanswered.

The Chicago Tribune, which first reported Mr. Smith's cause of death on Thursday, said a pile of documents and a statement that police called a suicide note were found with his body. The note said that Mr. Smith had been ill and that he held a life-insurance policy that was due to expire, the Tribune reported.

Mr. Smith apologized in the note and said that "no foul play whatsoever" had occurred with his death, according to the Tribune.

In emails and documents meant to recruit others to his efforts to find Mrs. Clinton's deleted emails, Mr. Smith and an associate identified Mr. Flynn's company, Flynn Intel Group, and Michael G. Flynn, the general's son, as allies in the operation.

Neither Mr. Flynn nor his son responded to requests for comment at the time of the original article.

The group Mr. Smith assembled included technical experts, lawyers and a private investigator in Europe

who spoke Russian, he said. The group made contacts with five groups of hackers, including two that were Russian, who claimed to have obtained Mrs. Clinton's emails, Mr. Smith said. He ultimately didn't acquire the messages because he said he couldn't verify their authenticity. Instead, he urged the hackers to give the emails to WikiLeaks.

Mr. Smith also listed senior members of the Trump campaign, including some who now serve as top aides in the White House, in a recruitment document for his effort. The White House officials contacted by the Journal said they were unaware of his efforts and why their names appeared in the document.

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The Washington Post

5-6 minutes

Given what we know about the collusion — and there is no other

Gerson : In Trump's world, innocence is proved by guilt

By Michael Gerson

word for it — between then-candidate Donald Trump's most senior advisers and what they thought was a Kremlin-tied lawyer offering dirt on Hillary Clinton, the most shocking thing is that no one on the Trump side was shocked. The most offensive thing is that no

one took offense. Trump's son, son-in-law and campaign manager treated the offer of aid by a hostile foreign power to tilt an election as just another day at the office. "I think many people would have held that meeting," the president affirmed. It is the banality of this

corruption that makes it so appalling. The president and his men are incapable of feeling shame about shameful things.

Donald Jr. certainly doesn't know what all the fuss is about. Instead of offering a hint of contrition, he

offered a complaint that the proffered information was not particularly useful. "I applaud his transparency," father said of son. But disclosure is not really a virtue if you are admitting highly unethical actions without apology. It is more like the public confession of serious wrongdoing, and the attempted normalization of sliminess.

The ultimate explanation for this toxic moral atmosphere is President Trump himself. He did not attend the meeting, but he is fully responsible for creating and marketing an ethos in which victory matters more than character and real men write their own rules. Trumpism is an easygoing belief system that indulges and excuses the stiffing of contractors, the conning of students, the bilking of investors, the exploitation of women and the practices of nepotism and self-dealing. A faith that makes losing a sin will make cheating a sacrament.

Today's Headlines newsletter



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9-11 minutes

President Trump's budget would not add to economic growth or eliminate the deficit in coming years, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said Thursday, casting doubt on a plan the White House has touted as central to achieving the president's domestic agenda.

The CBO projected that the economy would grow at only 1.9 percent under the White House's plan — far below the 3 percent goal the administration continued to outline as recently as Thursday. It also warned that contrary to White House claims that deep cuts to the safety net in the budget would lead to a financial surplus in a decade, the deficit would actually be \$720 billion.

The report was one of several big questions that emerged Thursday about whether Trump would be able to deliver on the central promises of his populist agenda for governing.

Today's Headlines newsletter

The day's most important stories.

He had pledged to replace President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act with a better policy that guaranteed "insurance for everybody." But Republican Senate leaders on Thursday were

The day's most important stories.

Republicans have sometimes employed the excuse that members of the Trump team are new to politics — babes in the woods — who don't yet understand all the ins and outs. Their innocence, the argument goes, is proved by their guilt. This might apply to minor infractions of campaign finance law. It does not cover egregious acts of wrongdoing. Putting a future president in the debt of a foreign power — and subject, presumably, to blackmail by that power — is the height of sleazy stupidity. It is not a mistake born of greenness; it is evidence of a vacant conscience.

The foundation for this approach to campaigning and governing is a belief that politics is an essentially dirty business. Trump seems honestly convinced that the system is "rigged" against him — to the point of defrauding him of millions of votes. If the system is truly manipulated by political enemies, then only suckers are bound by its norms and requirements. Those

advancing a proposal — its fate uncertain — that would still swell the nation's ranks of the uninsured by tens of millions.

Trump also faced questions about whether he would follow through on repeated promises to stop foreign competitors from "killing our companies and our workers" by dumping steel at ultra-cheap prices onto the global market — and he repeated to reporters traveling on Air Force One during his trip to France that "it'll stop."

(Jenny Starrs, Daron Taylor/The Washington Post)

Yet he has been promising action for weeks, and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross would only tell a meeting of senators on Thursday that he planned to provide options to Trump soon.

Trump's combination of setbacks and delays on key policy initiatives highlight how the president is struggling to advance a populist vision of governing in a Republican Party that historically has not been receptive to such an approach.

With his budget and health care, Trump is falling in line with some of his party's most conservative voices, even if the policies threaten to harm many of the working-class voters who elected him.

On trade — an issue where he could act unilaterally — Trump is facing opposition from companies,

who denigrate our system of government are providing an excuse for gaming it. And that is precisely what Trump Jr. was doing — trying to game American democracy.

Some believe that the political enterprise is noble but fallen. They have the goal of restoring something lost and loved. Others believe that politics is essentially low and grubby, and must be conducted by its own ruthless rules. This attitude makes it difficult, apparently, to distinguish between political hardball and subversion.

During the Trump campaign and his young, paralyzed presidency, we have heard some conservatives argue, "We're not electing a pastor in chief." It has been particularly strange to hear religious conservatives claim that the character of leaders doesn't count. But the character of a president leaves an imprint on everyone around him. A high ethical standard — think Gerald Ford or George H.W. Bush — creates a general

foreign allies and numerous White House advisers who say restricting imports could hurt U.S. industry broadly far more than it helps steel companies.

The delay on steel imports follows a decision not to label China a currency manipulator as he advocated during the campaign, and a last-minute decision not to abandon the North American Free Trade Agreement, which he had often maligned.

"He certainly, as a president, has not been able to articulate a coherent agenda that responded to the concerns of the country, or the concerns of the people who elected him. A lot of them were low-income blue-collar whites, and his agenda is not addressing those concerns or those problems," said Peter Wehner, a former speechwriter for Republican president George W. Bush. "House and Senate Republicans weren't in tune with what he was running on either, so that was always going to be a problem."

As it emphasized progress on health care and trade, the White House dismissed the CBO report as flawed because it had earlier misjudged how many people would sign up for the Affordable Care Act.

"It's not surprising that a bureaucracy which underestimated by more than 100 percent Obamacare participation would also underestimate the economic

expectation of probity. A low ethical standard — think Richard Nixon or Donald Trump — has a pervasive influence of its own, inevitably resulting in scandal.

C.S. Lewis posited three elements that make up human beings. There is the intellect, residing in the head. There are the passions, residing in the stomach (and slightly lower). And then there are trained, habituated emotions — the "stable sentiments" of character — which Lewis associated with the chest.

In the realm of political ethics, voters last year did not prioritize character in sufficient numbers, during the party primaries or the general election. Now we are seeing the result. "In a sort of ghastly simplicity," Lewis said, "we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst."

benefits of MAGAnomics," Office of Management and Budget spokesman John Czwartacki said, using a new buzzword for the administration's economic policy that stands for "Make America Great Again"-economics. "They are great people, but are just wrong on this."

Building a coalition

The CBO report Thursday creates new complications for Republicans who need to build a coalition of conservatives and moderates to vote for a single budget proposal, the first step for what the GOP hopes will be an ambitious fall of policymaking.

By rejecting the White House's declaration that large-scale spending reductions and unspecified tax cuts will lead to economic growth, the CBO could make it harder for this coalition of GOP lawmakers to band together.

Some key elements of the White House's agenda rely on Congress's ability to pass a budget. Only 50 Republicans are needed in the Senate to approve a tax plan if it is part of an already authorized budget plan, through a process known as reconciliation. If Congress does not pass a budget plan, however, the Senate will need 60 votes to authorize tax cuts — and the GOP has only 52 seats.

The CBO's projections came with a caveat. It said the lack of detail the

White House has provided about its plans — primarily its plan to overhaul the tax code — made it difficult for the agency to determine what the economic impact of these ideas would be. The White House has put out only a sparse, one-page blueprint for overhauling the tax code.

“The President’s proposals would affect the economy in a variety of ways,” the CBO wrote in its assessment. “However, because the details on many of the proposed policies are not available at this time, CBO cannot provide an analysis of all their macroeconomic effects or of the budgetary feedback that would result from those effects.”

If the CBO, which is run by a Republican appointee, raises questions about the lack of details in the White House’s tax plan now, it could serve as a warning to the White House and other Republicans as they try to design a more comprehensive plan in the coming months that is still expected to rely in large part on the assumption that the economy will grow markedly because of large tax cuts.

Overall, the CBO said the White House’s plan would cut government spending by \$4.2 trillion over 10 years compared with existing law.

The White House seized on this element of the CBO’s assessment.

“This administration is committed to making the necessary investments to restore our military, secure our borders and modernize our infrastructure,” OMB spokeswoman Meghan Burris said.

The White House’s budget proposal was released in May, to set government spending levels for the year that begins Oct. 1. It essentially makes recommendations to Congress, which is responsible for drawing up the budget and appropriating funds to use. Congress often uses the White House’s budget proposal as a set of guidelines.

‘Whole bunch of home runs’

Trump’s allies point to several successes, including reducing regulations and making good on his promises to withdraw from international agreements the he argued subordinated U.S. interests — the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Paris climate accord.

“He’s hit a whole bunch of home runs,” said Larry Kudlow, who has advised the president on taxes.

Those initiatives have not required congressional approval. “Within the areas that the president has control over ... he is doing a magnificent job,” said Diana Furchtgott-Roth, who served as the Labor Department’s chief economist under President George W. Bush.

Meanwhile, Trump suggested Wednesday once again he is planning to take action to restrain imports of steel into the U.S. market, telling reporters aboard Air Force One that China and other countries were “dumping steel.”

“We’re like a dumping ground, okay? They’re dumping steel and destroying our steel industry. They’ve been doing it for decades, and I’m stopping it,” he said.

When asked if he was considering tariffs, the president replied, “There are two ways — quotas and tariffs. Maybe I’ll do both.”

Trump’s comments came as company executives and foreign leaders eagerly await a decision on two separate investigations that the Trump administration launched in April, into the potential for imports of steel and aluminum to threaten U.S. national security.

If the Trump administration finds that imports are threatening security, it could take broad action to limit shipments through tariffs or quotas — an action that could spark retaliation from trading partners and cause prices to spike throughout the supply chain for the many U.S. industries that use steel.

Ross had said that the report’s findings would be available by the end of June. But a decision has been delayed because of pushback

from steel-using industries in the United States and members of the administration who fear igniting a trade war.

Meeting with senators on the Senate Finance Committee on Thursday, Ross said he would present Trump with a menu of options next week for how he could act, the lawmakers said. Ross suggested different countries could be treated differently under any restrictions, and he singled out Canada, which he said had not dumped an oversupply of steel, unlike other countries, a person in the meeting said.

Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) gave Ross a copy of a letter from agricultural groups at the meeting that warned of the potential retaliatory blowback that could occur if the White House cracks down too harshly on steel.

In a letter sent Tuesday, 18 agricultural groups, including the National Pork Producers Council, argued that the restrictions on steel and aluminum could result in other countries retaliating by restricting their products, an outcome that they said would be “disastrous for the global trading system and for U.S. agriculture in particular.”



Trump Budget Would Not Balance in 10 Years, CBO Says

Kate Davidson
5-6 minutes

on safety-net programs like unemployment insurance—while the CBO projects 1.9% growth a year on average under the Trump budget.

Critics have called the administration’s economic projections overly optimistic. The administration has said its estimates are justified by its plans for a broad rewrite of the U.S. tax code, an overhaul of financial and other regulations, infrastructure spending, tougher trade positions and other policies.

The CBO said it wasn’t provided with enough information about some of the proposals to conclude they would charge up the growth rate.

“The president’s proposals would affect the economy in a variety of ways; however, because the details on many of the proposed policies are not available at this time, CBO cannot provide an analysis of all their macroeconomic effects or of the budgetary feedback that would result from those effects,” the report said.

The CBO assessment shines a light on a challenge the administration could face later this year when it tries to advance its tax-overhaul proposals. Administration officials have said the proposals will partially pay for themselves because they will spur faster economic growth. If congressional scorekeepers disagree, it could become harder to pass the overhaul.

Democrats pointed to the CBO analysis as evidence that Mr. Trump’s first fiscal blueprint doesn’t provide a realistic path for eliminating deficits. The Trump budget is “built on fantasy projections,” said Rep. John Yarmuth (D., Ky.), the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee.

A spokeswoman for the Office of Management and Budget, which is part of the president’s executive office, said the administration is “thrilled” with the analysis. “CBO agrees that this is the largest deficit reduction package in American history,” OMB spokeswoman Meghan Burris said.

The Trump White House in the past has been critical of the CBO, arguing its forecasts are often

inaccurate and possibly politically motivated. In an interview in late May, OMB Director Mick Mulvaney suggested the day of the CBO “has probably come and gone.”

In its report, the CBO said the Trump budget would reduce federal deficits to a range of 2.6% to 3.3% of gross domestic product over the next 10 years, down from the CBO’s projection that the deficit will total 3.6% of GDP this year.

Federal debt held by the public would total 80% of GDP by 2027, 11 percentage points below the CBO’s projection under current policy.

The bulk of the savings would come from significant cuts to mandatory federal spending, including Medicaid, food stamps and Social Security disability insurance—programs that some Republicans have been unwilling to trim given their popularity among constituents.

The CBO and Congress’s Joint Committee on Taxation, which helped evaluate the proposal, relied on administration cost-saving estimates for some policy proposals that it deemed “achievable targets.”

Updated July 13, 2017 8:30 p.m. ET

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump’s budget proposal would shrink federal deficits by nearly a third over the coming decade but not eliminate them as the White House says it would do, the Congressional Budget Office said Thursday, presenting a challenge to the administration’s economic-policy plans.

Under the Trump budget, the federal deficit would total \$720 billion in fiscal 2027, compared with a \$16 billion surplus estimated by the White House, the CBO said in an analysis of the proposal.

The main reason for the difference: The White House projects the economy will grow much faster than the CBO.

The White House estimates economic output will expand at an average annual rate of 2.8% over the next decade—implying more federal revenue and less spending

In some cases when proposals lacked specificity, including a plan to save \$139 billion by reducing improper government payments and \$35 billion by easing financial regulations, the CBO and JCT didn't

count the potential savings in their estimates.

The CBO also said the White House proposal for tax overhaul "lacked the specificity necessary to evaluate any [economic] effects from such a

change." For that reason, the report used the administration's estimate that the proposal would have no net budgetary effect.

Write to Kate Davidson at kate.davidson@wsj.com

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Editorial : California's Cap-and-Trade Problem

The Editorial Board

4 minutes

July 13, 2017 7:27 p.m. ET

California Governor Jerry Brown plans to host a global climate summit next year, and there's no better exhibit of the tension between the left's environmental and social justice goals. Witness the Democratic rupture over reauthorizing cap and trade.

Democrats control a supermajority in both legislative chambers that lets them increase taxes without GOP support. Because the state raises revenues by auctioning emissions permits, a two-thirds vote is needed to extend cap and trade through 2030 (from 2020) and insulate the program from legal challenges.

The Governor says cap and trade is essential to meet the state's statutory requirement to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions to 40% below 1990 levels—the same goal that Europe committed to in Paris. His problem is that Democrats from low-income areas are reluctant to extend cap and trade after voting this spring to raise gas taxes and impose a new vehicle registration fee.

Manufacturers, oil refiners and food processors—major employers in low-income areas—will have to buy permits or expensive new equipment to comply with the state's emissions cap. Cap and trade has raised the cost of gas by about 12 cents a gallon and this surcharge will increase as emissions controls tighten. Californians already pay about 65 cents more per gallon than the national average.

To win support from business and balky Democrats, Mr. Brown has offered to extend a partial sales tax exemption (3.94%) for manufacturing equipment that renewable companies could also exploit. So businesses will get a

small discount on the millions of dollars they will have to spend to comply with the emissions restrictions while the renewables lobby gets another fillip. What a deal. Mr. Brown has also agreed to suspend a fee on rural residents for fire prevention—which may be struck down in court anyway—through 2031 and prohibit local air quality management districts from imposing more stringent emissions standards than those of the California Air Resources Board.

The California Chamber of Commerce and Business Roundtable suffer from Sacramento syndrome and have endorsed Mr. Brown's green bargain. They fear a more liberal Governor like Gavin Newsom or Tom Steyer would impose more costly regulations. But there's nothing to stop Democrats with a simple majority from doing the same as they have repeatedly ratcheted up the state's renewable mandate.

This year the state Senate passed legislation doubling the renewable

mandate to 100% by 2045—and, by the way, California is producing so much solar power on some days that it has to pay other states to unload it. Senate Democrats have also proposed jacking up the price of emissions permits and imposing a border carbon fee to tax out-of-state imports.

Yet groups like the Sierra Club say the Governor's deal gives businesses too much flexibility. Facing opposition from his party's progressive and moderate factions, Mr. Brown wants Republicans to provide the votes he needs to extend cap and trade. GOP support would let Democrats in competitive districts off the hook and make it harder to break their supermajority in 2018. If Republicans go along, they can look forward to being a permanent superminority.

Appeared in the July 14, 2017, print edition.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Wallison: Has Trump Flipped on Financial Regulation?

Peter J. Wallison

4-5 minutes

July 13, 2017 7:15 p.m. ET

President Trump showed his independence last week at the Group of 20 meeting in Hamburg by opposing an international consensus on climate change. Yet in another area, the G-20's attempt to regulate global finance, Mr. Trump signed on to a communiqué that runs counter to his promises on the campaign trail and in office.

The summit's official statement lauds the Financial Stability Board's "considerable progress" in developing new international regulations. It says G-20 leaders "welcome the FSB assessment of the monitoring and policy tools available to address risks from shadow banking."

The FSB is a group of central bankers and regulators deputized by the G-20 in 2009 to set up an

international system to supervise finance. The U.S. is represented on the board by the Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve and the Securities and Exchange Commission. But most of its members are European officials. It is difficult to understand how Mr. Trump, who has promised to reduce financial regulation in the U.S., could possibly endorse the FSB's effort to create an even more stringent global system of financial regulation.

Once the FSB received its mandate in 2009, it moved aggressively—with the full support of the Obama administration—to create a regulatory structure covering all financial services and institutions in developed countries, including the U.S.

As the G-20 communiqué suggests, the FSB's particular focus has been developing a framework to capture what it calls "shadow banks," which it broadly defined as any financial firm engaging in "credit intermediation" outside the

regulated banking system. That includes, according to a 2013 FSB statement, "securities broker dealers, finance companies, asset managers and investment funds, including hedge funds."

During the previous administration, it was realistic to believe that the U.S. would join this scheme. President Obama was a supporter of the G-20's international regulatory program. Not only that, in the U.S. the Dodd-Frank Act created the Financial Stability Oversight Council, which was given the power to regulate and prohibit "activities" it judged as a threat to financial stability. This power alone would enable it to impose in the U.S. virtually all the regulations the FSB might develop.

The FSB's rules were not intended to be voluntary. The group's chairman, Bank of England Gov. Mark Carney, made clear in memorandums to other FSB members that all G-20 countries, including the U.S., were expected to adopt its regulations in their own

jurisdictions. Compliance, he said, would be monitored.

It is not difficult to see that this is a power grab by the regulators who sit on the FSB. They are trying to leverage an international agreement to create a closed, uniform, global system of financial regulation and supervision. Trapping American firms in this kind of complex web is clearly inconsistent with President Trump's promise to deregulate the financial system and put the American economy first.

Unfortunately, the G-20 communiqué has now created the impression—mistaken, one hopes—that Mr. Trump favors the FSB's program. If he does not, he should make his position clear by withdrawing the U.S. from the FSB. Then he should restrict the Financial Stability Oversight Council to acting only as a consultative body for financial regulators, with no special powers to regulate or prohibit financial activities. That's the way to get America back to business.

The Washington Post

Robinson : Ivanka and Jared begin the plunge from grace

<https://www.facebook.com/eugenerobinson.columnist>

6-7 minutes

Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump have tried their best to soar gracefully above the raging dumpster fire that is the Trump administration. Unhappily for the handsome couple, gravity makes no allowances for charm.

Kushner, already reported to be a "person of interest" in the Justice Department probe of President Trump's campaign, is arguably the individual with the most to lose from the revelation that the campaign did, after all, at least attempt to collude with the Russian government to boost Trump's chances of winning the election.

The president's hapless eldest son, Donald Trump Jr. — who convened the June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer for the purpose of obtaining dirt on Hillary Clinton — had no operational role in the campaign. Paul J. Manafort, who also attended, was the campaign's chairman, but his many shady business dealings with several Ukrainian and Russian characters were already under scrutiny, so the encounter with attorney Natalia Veselnitskaya could be seen as just another item on the list.

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Kushner was at the meeting, too, however, and he had oversight of the campaign's digital operations. That could be a problem, given the U.S. intelligence community's conclusion that Russia interfered with the election and that the meddling took place largely in cyberspace.

And unlike the other participants, Kushner has an official position in the Trump administration. He serves in the White House as a senior adviser to the president with responsibility for numerous high-profile initiatives — and with a top-secret security clearance, which should be revoked immediately.

What you need to know about Jared Kushner's ties to Russia. What you need to know about Jared Kushner's ties to Russia. (Thomas Johnson/The Washington Post)

(Thomas Johnson/The Washington Post)

Trump Jr. says that Kushner didn't stay long at the session with Veselnitskaya and that no damaging information about Clinton was imparted. But because he kept the meeting secret for more than a year, scoffing indignantly at the very notion of collusion with the Russians, and then twice lied about the nature of the meeting before finally coming clean, no one should believe another word that Trump Jr. says on the subject. At least, not until special counsel Robert S. Mueller III puts him under oath, which I believe is likely to happen.

At one point in his changing story, Trump Jr. said that Kushner and Manafort didn't even know what the meeting was about. Yet he copied both of them on an email chain that begins with an intermediary's offer of campaign help from the "Russian government." The proper thing to do would have been to call the FBI, but this crowd knows nothing of propriety.

The Veselnitskaya encounter was one of more than 100 meetings or phone calls with foreigners that somehow slipped Kushner's mind when he applied for his security clearance. He revealed this one in one of his subsequent efforts to amend the form.

It is hard to imagine what connection Kushner might have had to the Russian hacking of Democratic National Committee computers and Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta's emails. But there was another component of the clandestine effort to help Trump get elected: Investigators believe that as Election Day approached, Russian trolls and "bots" flooded the social media accounts of key voters in swing states with "fake news" and disinformation about Clinton, according to a report Wednesday by McClatchy .

How would the Russians know which voters to target, down to the precinct level, in states such as Wisconsin and Michigan? This is a question that surely will be posed to Kushner, since at the time he happened to be overseeing a sophisticated digital campaign

operation that tracked voters at a granular level.

Ivanka Trump's name has not surfaced in the Russia affair. But she, like her husband, is serving as a presidential adviser, and she received unwanted attention when she briefly took her father's place at the head table during the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg. We expect officials representing our country to have been elected by the voters or appointed because of merit, not installed by the caprices of heredity.

She also received unwanted scrutiny when three labor activists were arrested in May for investigating alleged sweatshop practices at a factory in China where Ivanka Trump-brand shoes have been manufactured.

Among Manhattan's progressive upper crust, Jared and Ivanka — they really are first-name-only celebrities at this point — were expected to at least temper the hard-right policy positions being pushed by other presidential advisers. If this indeed is what they are trying to do, they've had a negligible impact to date.

Writing in Time magazine, Henry Kissinger wished Kushner well "in his daunting role flying close to the sun." Jared and Ivanka have first-class educations. They know how the Icarus story ends.

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