

# Revue de presse américaine

Ambassade de France aux États-Unis

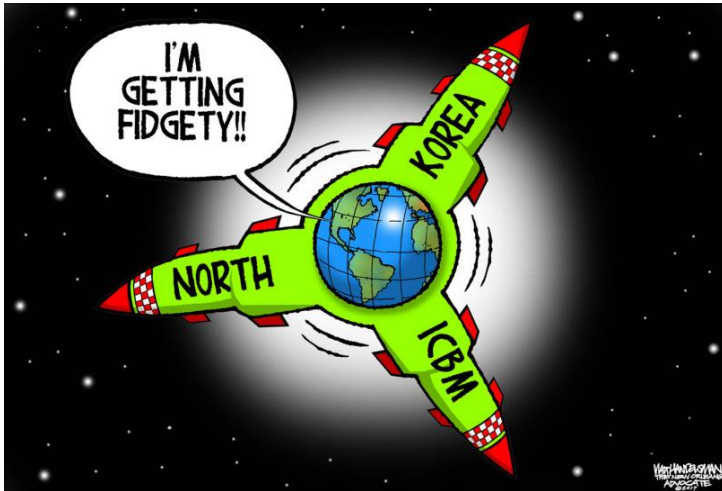
Service de presse et de communication



Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Lundi 10 juillet 2017, réalisation : Samuel Tribollet



<b>FRANCE - EUROPE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
France Inc. Lauds Macron's Plan to Loosen Labor Rules .....	3
Stick With European Stocks Even as Bonds Wobble .....	3
Editorial : Italy's Migrant Crisis Is Europe's Problem .....	3
Trump Has Picked America's Enemies in Russia Over Its Friends in Europe .....	4
Feeling That Trump Will 'Say Anything,' Europe Is Less Restrained, Too .....	5
EU Promises Trade War If Trump Imposes Steel Restrictions .....	6
U.K. Government Wavers on Austerity .....	6
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Iraqi Prime Minister Arrives in Mosul to Declare Victory Over ISIS (UNE) .....	7
Iraqi Prime Minister Praises Forces' Near-Ouster of Islamic State From Mosul .....	8
Battle for Mosul: Iraqi forces declare victory over ISIS (UNE) .....	9
Blinken : The Islamic State Is Not Dead Yet .....	9
Editorial : The Spoils, and Profits, of Conflict .....	10
A new Syrian ceasefire offers an early test of Trump's friendship with Putin .....	11
Turkey's opposition stages massive rally in a show of strength against Erdogan .....	11

One Year After Turkish Coup, Search for Justice Roils Nation .....	12
'March for Justice' Ends in Istanbul With a Pointed Challenge to Erdogan (UNE) .....	13
Nabil and Skorka: The Terror Problem From Pakistan. Self-Immolation, Catalyst of the Arab Spring, Is Now a Grim Trend (UNE) .....	14
Spyware Sold to Mexican Government Targeted International Officials (UNE) .....	15
Tillerson vows relations with Russia will be frosty until it leaves Ukraine alone .....	16
Tillerson Meets With Ukraine President .....	17
Tillerson Says Russia Must Restore Ukraine Territory, or Sanctions Stay (UNE) .....	17
Blow : Putin Meets His Progeny .....	18
Editorial : Putin Is Not America's Friend .....	19
Frum : Will Congress Hold Russia Accountable for the Behavior Trump Excuses? .....	19
Trump minimizes hacking allegations and seeks to 'move forward' with Russia (UNE) .....	20
'Time to Move Forward' on Russia, Trump Says, as Criticism Intensifies .....	21
5 Takeaways From the 'Very Robust,' 2-Hour Meeting Between Trump and Putin .....	22

<b>ETATS-UNIS</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Trump's Son Met With Russian Lawyer After Being Promised Damaging Information on Clinton (UNE) .....	23
Trump Jr. met with Russian lawyer during presidential campaign after being promised information helpful to father's effort (UNE) .....	24
Trump Jr. Met Russian Lawyer Who Claimed to Have Information on Hillary Clinton (UNE) .....	25
Following Recess, GOP Health-Care Push Gets Trickier (UNE) .....	26
Zelizer : How GOP could make health care deal with Democrats .....	26
Editorial : The Senate Health Care Charade .....	28
Senate Republicans head back to work with no health-care deal .....	28
Ted Cruz is suddenly in the hot seat to help pass a health-care bill (UNE) .....	29

Hunt : Republicans Won't Stop Fighting With Each  
 Other ..... 30  
 Editorial : Trump needs to answer more questions. Our  
 readers have a few for him.....31  
 Trump amateur hour with Putin meeting threatens U.S.  
 security.....31  
 Trump's cyber tweets cause dismay, confusion .....32

At Private Dinners, Pence Quietly Courts Big Donors  
 and Corporate Executives (UNE).....33  
 Editorial : The dream of 'clean coal' is burning up .....34  
 Vehicles as weapons of terror: U.S. cities on alert as  
 attacks hit the West .....35  
 Obama returns to political fray for a Democratic Party  
 cause.....36

# FRANCE - EUROPE

THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL

## France Inc. Lauds Macron's Plan to Loosen Labor Rules

Nick Kostov and  
Stacy Meichtry

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, France—French President Emmanuel Macron's plans to loosen rigid labor rules drew praise from business leaders attending an annual summer retreat, even as some warned the measures will take time to lower the country's chronically high unemployment.

French business elite gathered in sun-kissed Provence this weekend described an air of "Macron-mania" as many of the corporate chieftains who backed the presidential campaign of the former investment banker lauded his proposals to make it easier for firms to fire and hire staff.

"We're very keen for there to be change," said Ross McInnes, chairman of aerospace firm Safran SA.

Mr. Macron is counting on France Inc. to open its purse strings, betting that private-sector hiring, rather than public spending, will fuel France's recovery. The overall unemployment rate is nearly 10% and about a quarter of young people are jobless.

However, some managers struck a note of caution, saying firms that have long avoided investing in France could still take years to rev up their activity. Many are on standby until September when Mr. Macron is expected to pass the labor measures into law.

"The fruits of the reform will not come in one year. They will come after two or three years," said Antoine Frerot, chief executive of water and waste management giant Veolia Environnement SA.

The time frame illustrates why previous French governments have balked at taking the bitter medicine of labor market reform.

Since the start of the 2008 financial crisis, Germany and European regulators have demanded that countries along the bloc's Mediterranean rim boost their competitiveness by stripping away rules protecting workers from being fired, even in an economic downturn. Doing so would lower costs and legal uncertainty for firms and encourage them to hire, European officials say.

Left-wing unions, however, say such measures risk opening the floodgates for massive job cuts.

Economists have credited overhauls in Spain for helping its job market recover, but results have been mixed elsewhere. Mr. Macron wants to avoid the fate of another European centrist, former Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who was counting on his own overhaul of labor rules to spur a job market recovery. Instead, Italy's jobless rate has remained stubbornly high, and Mr. Renzi resigned last year.

Mr. Frerot estimates he added about 100 workers to Veolia's 2,000-strong staff in Italy after the Renzi overhaul, which he says allowed the firm to take on short-term contracts because it could hire staff on flexible terms to complete them.

"I'm only comfortable accepting this business if I know I'm not taking too many risks," he said.

Unlike his Italian counterpart, Mr. Macron has some economic wind in his sails. The Bank of France recently raised its forecast for economic growth to 1.6% of gross domestic output.

Some business leaders also are chafing over signs the Macron government wants to delay cuts to payroll and wealth taxes by one year in order to make up for overspending by the previous administration.

One French business leader said he was disappointed the lowering of the wealth tax would no longer coincide with the government's plan to privatize its stakes in large French companies.

"It would have meant a river of money coming from frozen assets in real estate and going into capital markets," the business leader said.

On Sunday, the government tried to assuage those concerns as Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told reporters in Aix-en-Provence that no "definitive decision" had been made on when the tax cuts will take effect.

"I think we can perfectly reduce public spending very significantly to meet our European commitments and at the same time cut taxes for French households and French companies," he said.

THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL

## Stick With European Stocks Even as Bonds Wobble

Richard Barley

After a strong start to the year, European stocks have come off the boil. In particular, the bond-market turmoil of the past two weeks has jolted the market. But a decent growth outlook means investors shouldn't be too nervous about Europe.

The Stoxx Europe 600 has given up roughly half of the gains it made up to early May, although it is still up 5% for the year. In local-currency terms, it is lagging behind the S&P 500, which is up around 8%, but the rise of the euro means that in dollar

terms it is still well ahead.

The European growth story looks solid, supporting earnings. And while the eurozone growth rate is already well above potential, relative growth does matter: Some of the drag on the headline Stoxx Europe 600 is from the U.K., where the economy seems to be suffering from Brexit uncertainty. Excluding U.K. stocks, the index is up nearly 7%.

Nervousness around monetary policy is understandable. Since ultralow interest rates and abundant liquidity have boosted the valuation of many financial assets, even a very gradual shift by the European

Central Bank toward the monetary-policy exit is a significant one. But it will create winners as well as losers, most notably in the financial sector, which should benefit from a steeper yield curve. European bank stocks are duly outperforming, up 10%; bond proxies like utilities have suffered.

One problem for European stocks, perversely, is that a lot has gone right so far in 2017. Political risks have faded, first-quarter earnings were strong, and cash has started to flow back into Europe. The continent is no longer so unloved. There are fewer catalysts for a big improvement in Europe's prospects.

So after an 18% gain in the past year, and with the Stoxx Europe 600 trading on 15 times forward earnings, near a post-tech bubble high, companies will need to deliver good results. Stoxx 600 earnings are expected to rise a lofty 17.8% this year, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

Relative to the skinny returns on offer in bonds, however, equities still look attractive. And if the global growth story maintains momentum, then European stocks should continue to perform.

Bloomberg

## Editorial : Italy's Migrant Crisis Is Europe's Problem

Summer makes it easier for migrants to cross the Mediterranean, so Italy is struggling to cope with another influx of refugees. And like before, its European partners are doing too little to help. The Italian government is asking for a new approach, and

it's right: The EU should see this as a pan-European issue, requiring a pan-European response.

More than 84,000 migrants have arrived in Italy by sea in the first six months of this year, nearly 20 percent more than in the first half of 2016. In future, the pressure on

Italy's southern shores will only increase, as the demographic boom in Africa and Asia leads more young people to risk their lives for a brighter future in Europe.

The EU's Dublin Regulation says the country in which an asylum-seeker first enters the union must process

his or her case. This shouldn't mean leaving that country to bear nearly all of the costs. In practice, it's meant something close to that.

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

Share the View

Granted, the EU has taken some steps to share the expense. Frontex, the agency patrolling the common border, has seen its budget increase from less than 20 million euros in 2006 to 300 million euros this year. Last week the European Commission approved a financial package with another 35 million euros for Italy to deal with the new surge of migrants, and 46 million

euros to help the authorities in Libya, a main point of departure.

Still, this is only a fraction of what Italy is spending and will continue to spend each year. The Commission has graciously allowed Italy to cover this cost by borrowing more than the EU's deficit rules would otherwise permit -- adding more debt to a pile that's already one of Europe's biggest. Italy's taxpayers might

reasonably see that as adding insult to injury.

The EU should set up a sizable common fund which member states can use to cover costs relating to the migrant crisis. Permitted spending could range from rescuing ships at sea to helping refugees into the labor market. The fund should be able to borrow, with a joint EU guarantee, and with the European

Commission overseeing how the money is used.

Many of Italy's EU partners still see the migrant crisis as not their problem. That's grossly unfair -- and from Italy's point of view, unaffordable. If European solidarity means anything, the EU will finally, belatedly, put this right.



## Trump Has Picked America's Enemies in Russia Over Its Friends in Europe

Max Boot

Donald Trump's first trip to Europe as president, back in May, was an unmitigated disaster. He scolded allies, publicly and privately, and shocked his own aides by refusing to affirm NATO's Article V mutual-defense provision. The best thing that can be said about his return is that at least this time he did voice support for Article V. So give this trip a D rather than the F he earned the first time around.

Why not a higher grade? Because President Trump can't help being himself, wherever he is. His nutty behavior is bad enough at home; it's even worse abroad when he is supposed to be representing not just his rabid base of "deplorables" but, rather, the whole country. That is something Trump simply does not know how to do.

Thus, in the course of this trip, he trashed his predecessor, the U.S. intelligence community, and the "fake news" media. Can you imagine Ronald Reagan in 1981 going abroad and attacking Jimmy Carter for not doing more to stand up to Soviet aggression? Or attacking the press for being hostile to him in the 1980 campaign (as they were) and the intelligence community for not predicting the Iranian revolution (as they did not)? It's unimaginable, yet Trump somehow thinks that it's appropriate.

Just as he thought it was appropriate to tweet a bizarre attack on former Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta right before his meeting with Vladimir Putin. And to give up his seat at the G-20 meeting to his daughter Ivanka, as if he were presiding over a hereditary monarchy like Saudi Arabia. Or to dissent from the consensus of the other 19 nations in favor of the Paris climate accord. If this is "modern-day presidential," as Trump claims, then please bring back pre-modern presidential -- you know, the ancient, long-forgotten standards of decorum that prevailed until January 19.

Trump is not entirely devoid of any knowledge of the expectations that await him. He knew enough, at least, to raise the issue of Russian interference in our election with Putin, realizing he would be pilloried if he did not. There is no agreement about what Trump said, because, being paranoid about "deep state" leaks, he refused to have a note-taker in the room. Both Putin and his foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, claimed that Trump "accepted" Putin's assurances that Russia was not behind the hacking of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign. A U.S. official anonymously denied this, while Secretary of State Rex Tillerson claimed that Trump "pressed President Putin on more than one occasion regarding Russian involvement."

Trump himself could clear up this disagreement in an instant if he would simply tweet that he did *not* accept Putin's duplicitous denials of Russian involvement. Instead his tweet on the subject gave every indication that he had accepted Putin's position -- hardly surprising, when just the day before in Warsaw he had questioned Russian responsibility for this blatant interference in the U.S. election.

Of course, even if one accepts the Tillerson readout, the meeting was a big win for Putin because Trump did not threaten any punishment for Russia's involvement in the 2016 election. Instead, according to Tillerson, "the two presidents, I think rightly, focused on is how do we move forward; how do we move forward from here." Imagine FDR and Tojo meeting in 1942 and agreeing to move on from that little unpleasantness at Pearl Harbor.

Trump and Putin apparently agreed on a principle of "non-interference in the affairs of other countries," something that Putin has long been seeking because he is paranoid about the United States aiding the democrats and dissidents who oppose him. Naturally, Putin has no intention of following this principle of "non-interference" when it comes to

U.S. politics -- now that Trump isn't retaliating for the 2016 hack-attack, expect more of the same in 2018 and 2020 -- but Trump will undoubtedly prevent the U.S. government from helping the embattled Russian opposition.

The final absurdity was Putin and Trump's discussion of, as Trump tweeted, "forming an impenetrable Cyber Security unit so that election hacking, & many other negative things, will be guarded."

The final absurdity was Putin and Trump's discussion of, as Trump tweeted, "forming an impenetrable Cyber Security unit so that election hacking, & many other negative things, will be guarded." What's next -- forming a human-rights unit with Bashar al-Assad and a nuclear non-proliferation unit with Kim Jong-un?

Even some of those who were critical of Trump's cave-in to Putin were complimentary of his speech in Warsaw. There were a few good moments, primarily Trump's tributes to Polish fortitude in fighting Nazi and Soviet oppression. "For America's part, we have never given up on freedom and independence as the right and destiny of the Polish people, and we never, ever will," he said. For a moment he almost sounded Reaganesque. But just as quickly he transitioned to sounding Bannonesque -- as in Stephen Bannon, his counselor and former chairman of the far-right website Breitbart.

"Americans, Poles, and the nations of Europe value individual freedom and sovereignty," Trump said. "We must work together to confront forces, whether they come from inside or out, from the South or the East, that threaten over time to undermine these values and to erase the bonds of culture, faith, and tradition that make us who we are." Later, he demanded: "Do we have the desire and the courage to preserve our civilization in the face of those who would subvert and destroy it?"

Coming from another leader, these sentiments might seem

unobjectionable. But coming from Trump, with his long history of Mexican- and Muslim-bashing, it's hard not to hear this as a coded appeal for the kind of ultra-nationalist populism that is Bannon's bread-and-butter. While the Declaration of Independence (which Trump did not mention two days after the Fourth of July) holds that "all men are created equal," Trump seems to be insinuating that freedom is only a product of American and European culture, and that it is threatened by hordes of newcomers who supposedly don't share our values. These are the internal subversives to whom he referred.

This message resonated with Poland's illiberal Law and Justice Party, which trucked in supporters to hear the president speak and shares Trump's aversion to "fake" (i.e., critical) news, but it further divided Trump from the majority of America's European allies. They are committed, just as America once was, to a more expansive vision of multicultural societies bound together by a shared devotion to the rule of law and individual rights.

The United States has long led the way in showing how newcomers of all different backgrounds and ethnicities can be integrated into our democracy. But Trump is walking away from that vision -- he did not mention the word "democracy" once in Warsaw and the only time he mentioned an election was when he bragged about all of the Polish-American votes he won in 2016. Trump seems to think that the only thing that unites Poland and America is "bonds of culture, faith, and tradition," but Russians could just as plausibly claim to share those bonds as well.

Indeed, there is every reason to suspect that Trump himself, in spite of a few mildly critical remarks about Russia's "destabilizing activities" (a nice way to describe the invasion of Ukraine, the subversion of the U.S. election, and the war crimes in Syria), shares this rosy view of Russian-American affinity peddled

by Putin. As Rex Tillerson said, "there was a very clear positive chemistry" between the two men, so much so that they refused to break up their tête-à-tête even when it ran long over-schedule. There was no

such warmth evident in Trump's meetings with European leaders such as Angela Merkel. After his return home, Trump tweeted, "Now it is time to move forward in working constructively with Russia!" No

mention of working constructively with Germany or France.

In the end, Trump's second trip to Europe confirms the message of the first one: For the first time ever, the

United States has a president who is more sympathetic to our enemies in Russia than to our friends in Europe.

**The  
New York  
Times**

## Feeling That Trump Will 'Say Anything,' Europe Is Less Restrained, Too

Steven Erlanger

HAMBURG, Germany — The Europeans have stopped trying to paper over their differences with President Trump and the United States.

Traditionally respectful of American leadership and mindful of the country's crucial role in European defense and global trade, European leaders normally repress or soften their criticism of United States presidents. Europeans were generally not happy with President Barack Obama's reluctance to involve the country in Libya and Syria, for example, or his tardiness to engage in what became an international confrontation with Russia in Ukraine, but their criticism was quiet.

But here at the Group of 20 summit meeting, public splits with Mr. Trump were the order of the day. Those rifts have been reflected in European domestic politics, too, from Britain and France to Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that Europe must "take our fate into our own hands" and stop "glossing over" clear differences.

The new French president, Emmanuel Macron, whose election has renewed confidence among Europeans, said bluntly: "Our world has never been so divided. Centrifugal forces have never been so powerful. Our common goods have never been so threatened."

Mr. Macron, who waved his iPhone around during the meeting as a symbol of global trade, sharply criticized those like Mr. Trump who do not support multilateral institutions but push nationalism instead.

"We need better coordination, more coordination," Mr. Macron said. "We need those organizations that were created out of the Second World War. Otherwise, we will be moving back toward narrow-minded nationalism."

Mr. Trump and the British vote to leave the European Union "have proved to be great unifiers for the European Union," said Mark Leonard, the director of the European Council on Foreign Relations. "There is a renewed sense of confidence in Europe after the French election," the apparent retreat of populism, an increase in

economic growth and the prospect of Ms. Merkel's re-election in September, he said.

"There is an increased willingness to be assertive toward Trump, who makes Merkel look like a figure of international importance," Mr. Leonard said. "If the election is about who can save the international world order from Trump," he added, then Ms. Merkel's opposition seems unimportant and she finds an eager partner in Mr. Macron. "They egg each other on and feel more self-confident together and help keep Europe together, too."

### Is a United Europe Important? 13 U.S. Presidents Think So.

For more than 70 years, U.S. presidents have spoken as one voice on how a free and united Europe is in America's national security interests.

By CAMILLA SCHICK and ROBIN LINDSAY on July 7, 2017. . Watch in Times Video »

Jan Techau, the director of the Richard Holbrooke Forum at the American Academy in Berlin, said: "There is now a more openly confrontational language with the United States. The European public is already outspoken about Trump, but now there is a more outspoken European leadership that won't paper over these divisions anymore."

If Europeans had previously felt constrained, Mr. Techau said, there is now a feeling that "Trump has no constraints and will say anything, and now the Europeans feel they can do the same." And, he said, "that means less respect for each other, and less mutual confidence."

François Heisbourg, a French security analyst, agreed. "The reticence has gone away," he said. "On an issue-by-issue basis, there is apparently no penalty for playing hardball with Trump without necessarily affecting security, on climate for example."

The strains were most visible here on climate policy and trade. Mr. Trump's withdrawal from the Paris accord was widely condemned, and all the leaders aside from Mr. Trump signed up to language that called the agreement "irreversible."

"Whatever leadership is," said one senior French diplomat, who was not authorized to speak by name and insisted on anonymity, "it is not being outvoted, 19 to 1."

The climate debate in the meeting displayed how hard it is to isolate the world's richest, most powerful country.

The Americans did try to persuade some countries, like Turkey and Poland, which Mr. Trump visited just before going to Hamburg, to move toward the American position on climate, but they were rebuffed. Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, said later that his country might still be in play, depending on money. The American withdrawal, he said, jeopardized compensation for developing countries to cope with compliance.

Australia and Saudi Arabia, which Mr. Trump has wooed, were also leaning toward adopting part of the American position in the final communiqué, especially on "working closely with other countries to help them access and use fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently," European officials said.

One negotiator familiar with the talks said some countries had expressed interest in supporting that American language. Sarah Ladislaw, the director of the energy and security program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, noted that a number of fossil fuel countries that want to continue to export more efficient coal and gas technologies might be relieved to see the change in tune

"There is likely a lot of pent-up sentiment that knows it's probably not the polite thing to say, but they're really pleased the U.S. is saying it," Ms. Ladislaw said.

Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain also tried to balance Mr. Trump's deep unpopularity in Britain with her need for American support for the country's exit from the European Union and for future trade deals. She was criticized for not making the climate issue one of her four priorities here, and found comfort in Mr. Trump's promise of a "very powerful" trade deal for a post-"Brexit" Britain that could be completed "very, very quickly."

Mrs. May even expressed the hope that Mr. Trump might change his

mind on the Paris accord, though Ms. Merkel did not agree. And in the end, all wavering members sided with the 19, not the one.

The White House saw progress nonetheless. "The vast majority of the G-20 supports the president's vision for universal access to affordable and reliable energy, including finding ways to burn fossil fuels more cleanly and efficiently," said George David Banks, a special assistant to the president on international energy and environment and lead negotiator for climate change during the G-20 conference.

On trade, there was more effort to find compromise, with previous G-20 positions for free trade and against protectionism watered down to secure American support. The communiqué cited, for the first time, the right of countries to protect their markets with "legitimate trade defense instruments" — wording that essentially gives Mr. Trump room to pursue his "America first" policy on issues like steel imports, where Washington is talking about restrictions based on "national security."

The group agreed to accelerate work on a global review of steel production and sales, though any sanctions must meet the standards of the World Trade Organization.

In a general way, such open disagreements can undermine future coherence in times of crisis, Eswar Prasad, a professor of economics and trade at Cornell University, wrote in an email.

"Trump has put the rest of the G-20 in a largely defensive mode," he said, as they try to limit the damage on issues like globalization, multilateralism and climate. But "it comes at a cost of eroding U.S. leadership," he said. "If even in calm times such rifts are exposed, it could make it more complicated for the group to work together in more complicated circumstances."

Yet politics also matter. The Europeans are determined to punish Mr. Trump for abandoning the Paris accord as a matter of "diplomatic dignity," said Paul Bledsoe, who was an aide to President Bill Clinton on climate change.

"Because European leaders pleaded with Trump to stay and he rebuked

them so directly," Mr. Bledsoe said, "I think they're determined to show the administration there's going to

be a price to pay, even if it's not entirely in Europe's own interest."



## EU Promises Trade War If Trump Imposes Steel Restrictions

• By David Francis

The results of the Trump administration's investigation into whether steel imports represent a national security threat are expected any day now, and could open the door to restrictions on U.S. imports — and spark conflict with the world's biggest economic bloc.

Ostensibly, the object of the administration's review of steel and aluminum trading practices is China, notorious for dumping cheap steel on global markets. But trade experts have repeatedly explained that any new restrictions on steel imports into the United States would actually hurt countries like South Korea, Germany, and Canada — not Beijing, which is already hamstrung

by a spate of trade restrictions.

"We will respond with countermeasures if need be, hoping that this is not actually necessary," European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said Friday ahead of meetings in Hamburg of the Group of 20 world economies. "We are prepared to take up arms if need be."

According to media reports, nearly all of Trump's advisers have warned against any additional steel import tariffs or quotas. That disharmony within the administration has delayed the conclusion of the security review.

In addition to aiming at the wrong target, and angering big trade partners, such tariffs would raise costs for millions of U.S. consumers and thousands of U.S.

manufacturers. But a small cadre of economic nationalists close to Trump are urging him to take advantage of the Cold War-era trade rules to protect a relatively small U.S. industry.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross is almost done with his multi-month inquiry into whether steel imports put national security at risk. He has argued that large steel imports from foreign sources makes the United States vulnerable because it undermines the domestic steel industry. (The Pentagon has never expressed much concern about foreign steel undercutting U.S. defense needs, but foreign aluminum is a different matter.)

The potential spat over steel added yet another contentious issue to the G20 meeting which was already tense because of Trump's decision

to leave the Paris climate agreement, making the United States one of only three countries outside that pact. But creeping trade protectionism, and what seems to be a deliberate abdication by the Trump administration of a commitment to global free trade, is concentrating minds in Hamburg — especially for European leaders who can recall the disastrous consequences of protectionism and autarky.

"It's up to us to avoid such things as protectionism, this very simple thing. That would be wrong," Juncker said.



## U.K. Government Wavers on Austerity

Paul Hannon and Wiktor Szary

LONDON—Britain's Conservative government, licking its wounds after an election setback last month, is having to consider easing curbs on public spending that have been a central policy of the party since it came to power in 2010.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond said in a speech this week that Conservatives "recognize that the British people are weary after seven years' hard slog repairing the damage of the Great Recession," even as he added that Britain had to acknowledge that "borrowing to fund consumption is merely passing the bill to the next generation."

According to British media reports, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson is one of several cabinet ministers who have recently pressed for a relaxation of strict spending rules.

"People's tolerance for austerity is drying up, even if that means higher taxes," said Roger Harding, head of public attitudes at the National Center for Social Research, which published a survey in late June showing that 48% of Britons—a higher share than at any time in the last decade—thought the government should increase taxes and spend more.

The potential shift away from a focus on bringing down the national debt, which ballooned after the financial crisis, comes in the wake of

Prime Minister Theresa May's reversal at the polls and a series of national traumas.

After a deadly fire in a public-housing block, opposition politicians suggested public spending limits had encouraged corners to be cut in reducing fire risks, while a series of terrorist attacks raised questions about budgets for policing.

Matthew Goodwin, professor of politics at University of Kent, said it wasn't clear those recent fatal events could be linked to public-spending cuts, but a connection between the two has "entered the public mind."

Several leading Conservative Party politicians, he added, have interpreted the election result as "a reflection of public anger over a continuing period of fiscal austerity and a desire for greater spending and wage growth."

By international standards, the U.K.'s budget tightening hasn't been particularly harsh. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the U.K. government cut its annual borrowings before interest payments to 2.0% of economic output in 2016 from 3.8% in 2008.

That reduction of 1.8 percentage points of gross domestic product was below the average for OECD members. Britain's belt tightening was nowhere near the 18.6 points cut by Greece or Ireland's 7.5-point reduction over the

same period. Indeed, it was below the 2.9-point drop in borrowing by the U.S.

But if the cuts haven't been deep, they have lingered. Explicit spending curbs have been in place for longer in the U.K. than for any other European country, bar Greece.

"Generally, people are tired of austerity and the same old thing," said Max Neal, a 19-year-old student at the University of Kent, who was among the many whose votes transferred the Canterbury electoral district to the opposition Labour Party after a century in Conservative hands. "This was a chance to put an end to the cuts."

Another factor encouraging austerity fatigue may be the pound's slump since the June 2016 referendum vote to leave the European Union, pushing up prices of imported goods and spurring inflation.

With wages lagging behind, real incomes have shrunk in Britain, especially for the 5.4 million public-sector workers subject to an austerity measure limiting annual pay rise to 1%.

Many Britons have already suffered large drops in income, government figures show. While the median British worker saw his or her real hourly pay fall by 5.8% between 2005 and 2015, teachers suffered a 10.1% drop and doctors a decline of 22.5%. Police officers' real pay declined by 7.5% over the same period.

Police forces have been shrinking too. The numbers of officers in England and Wales have fallen by nearly 19,000, or 13%. Even though crime fell in the wake of the cuts, hitting a 30-year low in 2013, police cite their lower staffing numbers as a reason why Britain's crime rate increased by 9% from 2015 to 2016, with knife and gun crime rising sharply by 14% and 13% respectively.

"I don't mean to say 'I told you so,' but we've been banging on about austerity and policing for years," said Steve White, the chairman of the Police Federation, which represents rank-and-file officers. "For years we've been saying that you don't know what you've got until it's gone."

Martin Hewitt, the assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, was more careful about such a link when speaking earlier this year about the rise in knife and gun crime.

"It would be a naive answer to say that if you cut a significant amount out of an organization, you don't have any consequences," he said. But he stopped short of drawing a "causal link" between austerity cuts and the crime rise.

Prime Minister Theresa May, in a heated exchange with the leader of the opposition Labour Party over public-sector pay Wednesday, reaffirmed the need to limit increases to bring down borrowing,

but didn't rule out rises in excess of the 1% cap.

"Our policy on public sector pay has always recognized that we need to balance the need to be fair to public sector workers, to protect jobs in the

public sector and to be fair to those who pay for it," she said. "That is the balance we need to strike and we continue to assess that balance."

## INTERNATIONAL

**The  
New York  
Times**

Gordon

MOSUL, Iraq — Dressed in a military uniform, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi arrived here in Mosul on Sunday to congratulate Iraq's armed forces for wresting the city from the Islamic State. The victory marked the formal end of a bloody campaign that lasted nearly nine months, left much of Iraq's second-largest city in ruins, killed thousands of people and displaced nearly a million more.

While Iraqi troops were still mopping up the last pockets of resistance and could be facing guerrilla attacks for weeks, the military began to savor its triumph in the shattered alleyways of the old city, where the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL, put up a fierce last stand.

Hanging over the declaration of victory is the reality of the hard road ahead. The security forces in Mosul still face dangers, including Islamic State sleeper cells and suicide bombers. And they must clear houses rigged with explosive booby traps so civilians can return and services can be restored.

Mosul was the largest city in either Iraq or Syria held by the Islamic State, and its loss signifies the waning territorial claims of a terrorist group that had its beginnings in the aftermath of the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. The group is also threatened with the loss of its de facto capital, the Syrian city of Raqqa, which is encircled by Arab and Kurdish fighters supported by the United States.

But the end of the Islamic State's hold on Mosul does not mean peace is at hand. Other cities and towns in Iraq remain under the militants' control, and Iraqis expect an increase in terrorist attacks in urban centers, especially in the capital, Baghdad, as the group reverts to its insurgent roots.

"It's going to continue to be hard every day," said Col. Pat Work, the commanding officer of the Second Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, which is carrying out the American advisory effort here.

### Iraqi Prime Minister Arrives in Mosul to Declare Victory Over ISIS (UNE)

Tim Arango and  
Michael R.

"Iraqi security forces need to be on the top of their game, and we need to be over their shoulder helping them as they move through this transition to consolidate gains and really sink their hold in on the west side," Colonel Work said as he rolled through the streets of western Mosul recently in an armored vehicle. "ISIS will challenge this."

The victory could have been sweeter as the Iraqis were denied the symbolism of hanging the national flag from the Grand al-Nuri Mosque and its distinctive leaning minaret, which was wiped from the skyline in recent weeks as a final act of barbarity by Islamic State militants who packed it with explosives and brought it down as government troops approached.

It was at that mosque in June 2014 where Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi strode to the top of a pulpit and declared himself the leader of a caliphate straddling the borders of Iraq and Syria, a vast territory where for three years Islamist extremists have governed with a strict form of Islamic law, held women as sex slaves, carried out public beheadings and plotted terrorist attacks against the West.

This past week, as fighting raged nearby, Iraqi soldiers took selfies in front of the stump of the minaret and posed at the spot where Mr. Baghdadi made his speech. Destruction surrounded them, as did the stench of decaying bodies of Islamic State fighters, left to rot in the blazing sun.

The battle for Mosul began in October, after months of planning between Iraqis and American advisers, and some Obama administration officials had hoped it would conclude before they left office, giving a boost to the departing president's efforts to defeat the Islamic State.

Instead, it lasted until now, and it was far more brutal than many expected. With dense house-to-house fighting and a ceaseless barrage of snipers and suicide bombers, the fight for Mosul was some of the toughest urban warfare since World War II, American commanders have said. Iraqi

officers, whose lives have been defined by ceaseless war, said the fighting was among the worst they had seen.

"I have been with the Iraqi Army for 40 years," said Maj. Gen. Sami al-Arabi, a commander of Iraq's special forces. "I have participated in all of the battles of Iraq, but I've never seen anything like the battle for the old city." He continued: "We have been fighting for each meter. And when I say we have been fighting for each meter, I mean it literally."

Even as Mr. Abadi arrived here outfitted in the black uniform of Iraq's elite Counterterrorism Service, Iraqi forces were pressing to erase a pocket of Islamic State resistance by the Tigris River. Speaking from his base in the old city, Lt. Gen. Abdul-Wahab al-Saadi, a senior commander in that service, said that the militants' enclave was about 200 yards long and 50 yards wide and that he expected it to be taken later in the day or on Monday.

After arriving here, Mr. Abadi met with the Federal Police, who have taken significant losses in the battle, and went to visit the joint command overseeing the operation. But in an acknowledgment that the victory he had come to proclaim was not completely sealed, Iraqi officials said the prime minister would not make a public statement until the last patch of Islamic State territory in Mosul was cleared.

Earlier in the day, a post on Mr. Abadi's official Twitter account stated that he had come to Mosul "to announce its liberation and congratulate the armed forces and Iraqi people on this victory."

Some militants had sought to escape by swimming across the river, but General Saadi said his soldiers had shot them. The general said he had planted the Iraqi flag on the banks of the Tigris on Sunday morning — an act he described as a "special moment" in which he reflected on the many soldiers he had lost in the long battle.

The retaking of the city, by all accounts, came at a great cost. Sensitive to the mounting casualties, the Iraqi government does not disclose how many of its troops

have been killed. But deaths among Iraqi security forces in the Mosul battle had reached 774 by the end of March, according to American officers, which suggests the toll is more than a thousand now.

Even more civilians are estimated to have been killed, many at the hands of the Islamic State and some inadvertently by American airstrikes. At least seven journalists were killed, including two French correspondents and their fixer, an Iraqi Kurdish journalist, in a mine explosion in recent weeks.

The Iraqis and their international partners will now be confronted by the immense challenge of restoring essential services like electricity and rebuilding destroyed hospitals, schools, homes and bridges, which were wrecked in the ground combat or by the airstrikes, artillery fire and Himars rocket attacks carried out by the American-led coalition to help Iraqi troops advance.

"When the fighting stops, the humanitarian crisis continues," said Lise Grande, the deputy special representative for Iraq for the United Nations secretary general.

Western Mosul, especially its old city, where the Islamic State made its last stand, was hit particularly hard, becoming a gray and decimated landscape. As the combat has drawn to a close, thousands of civilians have begun to return. But 676,000 of those who left the western half of the city have yet to come back, according to United Nations data.

It is not hard to see why. Of the 54 neighborhoods in western Mosul, 15 neighborhoods that include 32,000 houses were heavily damaged, according to data provided by Ms. Grande. An additional 23 neighborhoods are considered to be moderately damaged. The cost of the near-term repairs and the more substantial reconstruction that is needed in Mosul has been estimated by United Nations experts at more than \$700 million, she said.

In the heart of the old city, craters littered intersections and roadways, marking the places where bombs pummeled the ground, dropped from coalition warplanes. Street after

street was covered in soaring piles of rubble, with rebar poking out of shattered masonry.

In a church used as a weapons-making factory by the Islamic State, mortars were lying on the ground next to a pink backpack decorated with a picture of a kitten. When troops unzipped the backpack, they found plastic sachets of a white explosive powder, which they identified as C4 used in militants' bombs.

The military victory in Mosul has come without a political agreement between Iraq's two largest communities, Sunni and Shiite Arabs, whose stark sectarian divisions led to the rise of the Islamic State. For many members of Iraq's minority Sunnis, the Islamic State was seen as a protector against abuses they had suffered under Iraq's Shiite-led government, especially under the former prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki.

After the Islamic State seized Mosul in 2014, many Sunnis welcomed them. Mr. Maliki

was then removed from office, replaced by Mr. Abadi, a more moderate and less sectarian leader, but one widely viewed as weak. Under Mr. Abadi, there has been no meaningful reconciliation.

"I will leave Mosul because it has become a destroyed city," said Aisha Abdullah, a teacher who endured life under the Islamic State. "In every corner of it there is memory and blood."

And while the Islamic State, with its harsh rule, alienated many of the Sunni residents it sought to represent, residents said its ideology caught on among some of the population, particularly young men.

"There is no use in reconstructing the city if the people of Mosul don't change," Ms. Abdullah said. "There are still many people who assist ISIS, and the acts of violence will never end."

Marwan Saeed, another Mosul resident, who lives in the city's east side, which was liberated in January and where life has largely been

restored to normal, with schools and shops reopening and most civilians returning home, said he feared for the future, now more than ever.

"Frankly, I'm desperate over the future," he said. "ISIS destroyed the people's mentality, and the wars destroyed the infrastructure, and we paid the price. There is no such thing as the phase 'after ISIS.' ISIS is a mentality, and this mentality will not end with guns alone."

Iraqi forces still have to retake several Islamic State strongholds: Hawija and Tal Afar in northern Iraq and a series of towns in Iraq's Euphrates River valley, stretching from Anah to Qaim.

While this is happening, Syrian fighters backed by American firepower are to complete the taking of Raqqa before moving to surround and kill the militants in Euphrates River towns on the Syrian side of the border.

"Mosul and Raqqa is not the end of it by any stretch of the imagination," said Brig. Gen. Andrew A. Croft, a

senior Air Force officer with the American-led task force that is fighting the Islamic State.

And there is the fear that many Islamic State fighters who were not captured or killed had simply put down their guns and blended in with the civilian population, to live to fight another day.

The wives of Islamic State fighters also pose a risk. In the last week, a woman holding a baby and wearing a long-sleeved robe that disguised a hand-held detonator tried to blow herself up as she approached an Iraqi soldier, said Second Lt. Muntather Laft, a media officer with the Counterterrorism Service.

"Do you know that most of the ISIS fighters have shaved their beards and took off their clothes, and now they are free?" said Zuhair Hazim al-Jibouri, a member of Mosul's local council.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

# Iraqi Prime Minister Praises Forces' Near-Ouster of Islamic State From Mosul

Asa Fitch and Ali A. Nabhan

MOSUL, Iraq—Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi congratulated Iraqi military forces during a visit here following nearly nine months of battle to oust Islamic State, meeting with commanders and greeting residents, with the extremists confined to a tiny patch of territory.

But he stopped short of declaring a final victory on Sunday. Mr. Abadi's visit had raised expectations that he would announce the full recapture of the nation's second-largest city, but Iraqi forces were still battling Islamic State fighters on Sunday over a narrow strip of land near the Tigris River.

"Victory is settled and remaining Daesh [fighters] are trapped in the last spans," Mr. Abadi said, using another name for the ruthless Sunni Muslim militant group after meeting with security commanders at the Nineveh province operations command. "It's only a matter of time [before] we announce the big victory to our people."

Islamic State's defeat in Mosul would deal it a major military, psychological and political blow. It was in Mosul that it achieved perhaps its greatest military victory, its forces capturing the northern city in just four days in early June 2014, handing the Iraqi military a humiliating defeat and sending shock waves through the region.

The official declaration was likely to come Sunday evening or Monday, said Lt. Gen. Sami Al Ardhi, a counterterrorism commander who attended the meeting with Mr. Abadi.

"Our troops are advancing now, and we hope to have them finish their task tonight or tomorrow," he said. "Iraqi Army troops need a day or two to finish their duty."

Despite the slowness of the final advance, only one area that Iraqi counterterrorism forces are responsible for clearing remained in Islamic State control by Sunday evening, Sabah Al Numan, spokesman for those forces, told state television.

"There is nothing left except making sure that the last area, Al Qulai'at, is empty of terrorists," he said. "The whole world is awaiting the moment of the announcement of official victory in Mosul by Prime Minister Abadi."

The Iraqi army is responsible for clearing other areas north of Al Qulai'at, and hasn't yet completed that task, counterterrorism commanders said.

"We came today to do a field supervision and supervise the battle," Mr. Abadi said. "The terrorists have no way to escape but to die or surrender. Eventually the battle is settled, and the big victory is in hand."

Sen. John McCain (R., Ariz.), the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called the Mosul campaign a significant success, but cautioned that eliminating Islamic State for good would require a more sustained commitment from Iraq and a U.S.-led coalition that is backing the fight.

"A comprehensive post-Mosul strategy is the only way to ensure that the defeat of [Islamic State] will be enduring," he said. "We cannot afford for Mosul to turn out like Libya, where we squandered a long and brutal military success by walking away before winning the peace."

Islamic State lost its administrative grip over Mosul in October, when government forces pushed it from the eastern half of the city, and its ultimate defeat here after more than three years of savagery was all but a foregone conclusion.

In its final days, the terrorist group mustered only a couple hundred fighters, cornered on a tiny patch of territory on the western bank of the Tigris River.

Iraqi forces have in recent days been bogged down as they fight to advance through the sliver of Iraq's second-largest city still under Islamic State control. U.S.-backed Iraqi troops have fought to clear the final Islamic State-occupied pockets of Mosul's Old City.

The remaining Islamic State fighters in west Mosul, who commanders say are mostly foreigners, have had more than two years to entrench themselves in the dense neighborhood, where they are falling back on increasingly desperate tactics, including using women as suicide bombers to attack Iraqi forces.

On his tour of the nearly won city, Mr. Abadi visited Mosul's eastern half, which has in large part returned to normal life since being recaptured by Iraqi forces in February. A number of residents there waved flags from their cars and honked. Small groups of people set up loudspeakers and danced in front of Mosul University and in a central commercial area of the eastern city.

Islamic State seized Mosul in a 2014 blitz that saw it capture roughly one-third of Iraq's territory. The ensuing battle has displaced hundreds of thousands of people and killed several thousand Islamic State militants and Iraqi troops and civilians, according to government authorities and the United Nations.

Near the front lines in the Old City of west Mosul on Sunday, the smell of rubber and exhaust hung in the air as Iraqi forces prepared to make their final push. Buildings were mostly leaning or fallen, their windows knocked out and interiors battered while streets were littered with rubble and the twisted shells of cars.



Loaders and other heavy machinery cleared paths for Iraqi soldiers, who appeared at ease ahead of the recapture, despite staccato bursts of gunfire nearby. Humvees patrolling the area rolled over downed electrical lines in a stark reminder of the toll the siege has taken on Mosul's infrastructure and the likely high cost of rebuilding the city and resuming basic services there.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Battle for Mosul: Iraqi forces declare victory over ISIS (UNE)

MOSUL, Iraq — Iraq's prime minister

entered the city of Mosul on Sunday to declare victory in the nine-month battle for control of the Islamic State's former stronghold, signaling the near end of the most grueling campaign against the group to date and dealing a near-fatal blow to the survival of its self-declared caliphate.

On a walk through the city's eastern districts, Haider al-Abadi was thronged by men holding cameraphones as music blared and others danced in the streets.

"The world did not imagine that Iraqis could eliminate Daesh," he said, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State. "This is all a result of the sacrifices of the heroic fighters who impressed the world with their courage."

But in a sign of how tenaciously the Islamic State has fought, even as Abadi was touring the town, the sound of airstrikes echoed through the skies and smoke rose from the last pocket of territory the militants control, thought to be no more than 200 yards long and 50 yards wide.

The confusion of that moment came as a reminder that even though a complete victory now seems assured, it has come at a tremendous price. On a walk through Mosul's oldest quarters on Sunday, the stench of bodies filled the air. Between the rubble and rebar were the arms of a young child, still wrapped in pale pink sleeves.

As he toured the city, Abadi met commanders in west Mosul who led the battle but did not make a formal speech declaring the city free of militants, though one had been expected.

The battle has been the toughest yet in the Islamic State war, and one that lasted far longer than anticipated. When

The U.S.-led coalition on Sunday said it had carried out two strikes near Mosul that destroyed 21 Islamic State fighting positions.

In a forward headquarters outside the Old City, Iraqi counterterrorism forces commanders in black fatigues chain-smoked, drank coffee and gestured at a huge map taped to the wall that showed the progress of the battle.

the offensive was launched in October, U.S. officials were privately predicting a two-month fight, expressing hope that mass civilian displacement and widespread destruction could be avoided.

Instead, the fight lasted for nine months, longer than the siege of Stalingrad and longer than the final Allied push into Germany in World War II. It has cost thousands of lives, uprooted hundreds of thousands of people and shattered vast stretches of the city.

And the declaration of victory does not end the war. The Islamic State cannot now roll back the array of forces ranged against it. It is on a path to defeat in the Syrian city of Raqqa, the original capital of the militants' so-called state, where an offensive launched by U.S.-backed Kurdish and Arab forces is making progress. But that battle is just getting started.

Over the past three years since the Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared the existence of a "caliphate" in Mosul, his group has been driven out of 60 percent of the territory it once controlled in both Iraq and Syria, according to the U.S. military.

But that still leaves it in control of an extensive chunk of land spanning the border of the two countries and several other pockets, including key towns such as Hawija, Tal Afar and Qaim in Iraq and most of the entire province of Deir al-Zour in Syria.

As the battle for Mosul has demonstrated, the Islamic State is prepared to fight for every inch it holds, even as the neighborhoods its cadres lived in are destroyed around them. U.S. officials won't put a timeline on how much longer the war will last, but most analysts predict it will continue throughout this year and perhaps much of 2018.

And even after that there is the question of how and when the defeated militants will seek to

"We believed we would win from the very beginning, just as Daesh knew they would be defeated, and that's what happened," said Abdulwahab al-Saadi, a top commander of counterterrorism forces.

But Islamic State is far from vanquished in Iraq and elsewhere in the region, and the sense of grievance that gave rise to the group, animated it and made it a

regroup in the shadows of the ruined cities they have lost, to wage the kind of insurgency that fueled their rise in the decade before their conquests.

"Talk about complete military defeat is one thing. What ISIS devolves into is another discussion. Will they revert back into a terrorist organization?" said Col. Ryan Dillon, the U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad, using another acronym for the Islamic State.

"The loss of Mosul means ISIS is no longer the same, for better or worse. It's no longer the quasi-state that it projected itself to be. But everything achieved against the group is fragile. The ideology is still there, the appeal is still there, and so are the divisions that helped them take power," said Hassan Hassan, a resident fellow at the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy.

There is also the question of rebuilding Mosul. Many of the hundreds of thousands of people who fled the fighting to refugee camps nearby will find their homes destroyed. The scale of the misery is vast, and far from being adequately addressed.

Thousands of civilians had poured out of the Islamic State's shrinking redoubt in recent weeks, many of them in tears as they stumbled to safety. Stuck between the militants and the U.S.-led coalition airstrikes propelling the campaign to save them, many said they had spent weeks with barely any food or water. Without medical care, the wounded had died in or under their homes.

Mosul was the largest city to fall to Islamic State control. Three years after the caliphate was declared here at a medieval mosque, that building lies in ruins, after the Islamist militants blew it up as Iraqi forces moved in.

The United Nations predicts that at least \$1 billion will be required to rebuild Mosul's basic infrastructure.

world-wide scourge continues. It still controls small swaths of Iraq and large stretches of neighboring Syria. Its members and followers, more dispersed than ever, are likely to pose a terrorist threat in Baghdad, the Middle East and beyond for years to come.

More extensive reconstruction could cost billions more.

In parts of western Mosul, streets have been leveled. Debris and twisted metal are piled high through the alleyways, burying mattresses, flip-flops and other remnants of the lives Islamic State fighters built there. No one here knows how many civilians also remain under the rubble of their homes.

In the final days of the battle, commanders said militants had sent suicide bombers out among fleeing civilians and used children as human shields in the winding alleyways of the Old City.

Standing amid the ruins, Staff Sgt. Rasoul Saeed said the fight had been "incomparable."

"It is the hardest battle we have ever fought. At the end we are bogged down in alleyways, without vehicles, alone against the enemy," he said.

The intersection of culture and politics.

In Mosul's eastern districts, the first to be recaptured from the Islamic State, a relative lack of damage has seen life return to some kind of normalcy. The sidewalks were bustling Sunday night with fast food shops running a roaring trade.

But residents said the legacy of three years of Islamic State rule would be hard to forget. "They tortured me in their prison without mercy because I once served as a police officer," said Karam Abu Taif, his voice wavering on the verge of tears.

"Everyone here has a story now," he said. "I cannot forget. We will not forget."

Sly contributed to this report from Beirut.

**Read more**

**The  
New York  
Times**

## Blinken : The Islamic State Is Not Dead Yet

Antony J. Blinken

State's de facto capital in Iraq — marks a turning point in the war

against the world's most dangerous terrorist group. Daesh, as the

Islamic State is known throughout the Middle East, no longer controls

The liberation of Mosul — the Islamic

significant territory in Iraq where it can harbor foreign fighters or exploit resources, like oil.

And its core narrative — building an actual state — is in tatters. But while the Trump administration will be right to celebrate the end of the caliphate as we know it, it is far too soon to feel comfortable, especially in the absence of a strategy for the day after Daesh.

Fifteen years ago, at the start of President George W. Bush's run-up to the invasion of Iraq, then-Senators Joe Biden and Richard Lugar raised a prescient concern: "When Saddam Hussein is gone, what would be our responsibilities? This question has not been explored but may prove to be the most critical."

Substitute "Islamic State" for "Saddam Hussein" and the question they posed retains a fierce urgency today. Even when the Islamic State is defeated militarily, the political and economic conditions that facilitated its rise — unleashed in part by the 2003 invasion — will continue to fester. How, then, to ensure that Daesh stays defeated?

Most urgent is a fully resourced effort to stabilize, secure, govern and rebuild liberated cities so that displaced people can come home safely.

The good news is that a coalition of 68 countries led by the United States to fight the Islamic State has raised the necessary funds to start that process through the United Nations. A similar plan exists for Syria.

But the ongoing civil war there will make it challenging to implement, as evidenced by the slow process of bringing the city of Tabqa —

liberated two months ago and a gateway to the Islamic State's Syrian capital in Raqqa — back to life.

Even more challenging is what comes next. Twenty-five million Sunni Muslims live between Baghdad and Damascus. They have been alienated from their governments.

Unless they can be convinced that their state will protect and not persecute them, an Islamic State 2.0 will find plenty of new recruits and supporters.

Iraq offers the best prospects for success. But left to their own devices, its leaders are more likely to perpetuate the conditions that gave rise to violent extremism. And Iraq's neighbors will line up behind whichever sect they support, reinforcing a zero-sum mentality in Iraq itself.

That's where American diplomacy comes in.

The United States can't dictate outcomes to a sovereign Iraq. But it can support, incentivize and mobilize those willing to move Iraq in the right direction.

This starts with backing what Iraq's prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, calls functioning federalism — giving Iraqis at the provincial level the responsibility and resources to provide for their own security, services and schools and to govern their day-to-day lives.

That's the best way to convince Sunnis that their future is within Iraq and not with a new Islamic State. Iraq's Sunnis used to oppose federalism in favor of a strong central government; increasingly, they embrace it.

Iraq's constitution provides for decentralization, but it has yet to be put into effect. Some within the Shia community, goaded on by Iran, will insist on retaining the spoils of majoritarian rule, preserving a dominant Baghdad to lord it over the Sunnis.

Bringing functioning federalism to life begins with effectively implementing a law that governs Iraq's militia, known as the Popular Mobilization Forces. Shiite P.M.F. units must be placed under state control, kept out of politics and away from Sunni areas.

Sunni P.M.F. units mobilized into the fight against the Islamic State need to stay on the state payroll and assume responsibility for securing their own territory. Baghdad also must make sure that investment and major infrastructure projects don't bypass Sunni regions.

At the same time, the Trump administration should use the strong relations it has built with Iraq's Sunni Arab neighbors to press them to engage Baghdad and advance Iraq's regional integration, while moderating the Sunni community's ambitions.

Their absence from Iraq has left a vacuum for Iran to fill. Their unconditional support for every Sunni demand feeds the sectarianism that further empowers Iran with Baghdad and risks tearing Iraq apart.

Kurdish ambitions pose an equally volatile challenge to Iraq's stability. The Kurdish region's leader, Massoud Barzani, has called for a referendum on independence in September.

Meanwhile, the Kurds have taken advantage of the fight against the

Islamic State to seize control of 70 percent of the territories in northern Iraq that are in dispute between Arabs and Kurds, and which they won't be inclined to give up. Kurdish independence is a powerful dream and Mr. Barzani sees its realization as the heart of his legacy.

But moving too fast will incur the wrath of both Baghdad and the Sunnis, not to mention Turkey and Iran. If oil prices stay low, the Kurds will be hard pressed to become self-sufficient.

Here too, the United States should resume its role as an honest broker. There's a deal to be made that gives the Kurds greater control over the oil in their region, while keeping federal troops out and negotiating joint responsibility for the disputed and oil-rich city of Kirkuk. It won't happen by itself.

One final question: What, if any, United States military presence should remain in Iraq to help make sure the Islamic State does not rise again?

America's departure at the end of 2011 reflected the reality then, that most Iraqis simply wanted us gone. Now, as Iraq awakes from the Daesh nightmare, there may be greater appetite to keep some Americans around to train and enable Iraqi forces, and to provide intelligence and counterterrorism support — but not to engage in combat. How the Trump administration navigates this political minefield will be another crucial test of its strategy.

**The  
New York  
Times**

## Editorial : The Spoils, and Profits, of Conflict

According to Russian news outlets, the Syrian government has contracted with private Russian companies that have Kremlin connections to carry out security operations for the Assad regime in Syria in exchange for a share of oil, gas and mineral production in territory won back from rebels. Mercenaries and private contractors are nothing new in Middle Eastern conflicts, unfortunately, but sending private security services to fight for spoils on foreign land adds an insidious dimension to an already ugly conflict.

The deals are shadowy and secretive. According to the enterprising Russian news site Fontanka, one company, Evro Polis, working with a private security group

called Wagner — which is suspected of operating in eastern Ukraine and whose founder is under United States sanctions — stands to get a 25 percent share of oil and natural gas produced on territory it recaptures from the Islamic State. Evro Polis was registered only a year ago and is part of a network of companies owned by Evgeniy Prigozhin, a Kremlin caterer close to President Vladimir Putin. Another Russian company, Stroytransgaz, got rights to mine phosphate in central Syria in exchange for guarding the area. The company's owner is also under United States sanctions.

When Fontanka questioned the Ministry of Energy, the response was that the deals are "corporate secrets." But when Fontanka asked

a private security consultant about these kinds of deals, the consultant expressed no surprise. "War is business," he was quoted as saying.

Indeed, mercenaries have always been around, and private military contractors have played a major role with United States forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, guarding installations and officials, training local army and police officers and providing other services. In one notorious episode, several employees of Blackwater, a private military firm now called Academi, were accused of killing 14 Iraqi civilians in Baghdad.

It might also be expected that Russia, which has supported the Syrian regime from the outset of the civil war over the protests of the

United States and the European Union, would play a role in restoring oil production and mining on former battlegrounds. (The United States and the E.U. have barred the import of Syrian oil since 2011.) It is also a way for Russia to expand its presence in Syria, where it is competing with Iran for postwar influence.

But the Evro Polis deal goes beyond the notion of outsourcing security or reconstruction in hot spots. Pushing back the Islamic State and denying it access to oil may be in everyone's interest, but turning the fight into a private scramble for profit is a dangerous and ignoble gambit.

## A new Syrian ceasefire offers an early test of Trump's friendship with Putin

BEIRUT — The first attempt by the Trump administration to cooperate with Russia on an international crisis got underway on Sunday, with the implementation of a cease-fire in southwestern Syria that appeared to be widely holding.

If the truce can be maintained, it could open the door to deeper cooperation between the United States and Russia on ways to quell the violence and to progress on other cease-fire deals being pressed elsewhere in Syria.

The guns fell silent well ahead of a noon deadline, residents in the cease-fire zone said, lending hope that it would stop the violence for at least a while and save lives.

The agreement to work on a cease-fire in Syria was the first publicized achievement of the meeting on Friday between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Details remain vague, however, and it is unclear whether the agreement will lead to cooperation toward an enduring solution to Syria's six-year-old war.

This cease-fire is being referred to by the two powers as a "de-escalation," reflecting the modest expectations for success after several previous failed attempts by President Obama to work with Russia to end the fighting.

What makes this effort different, however, is that the peace push is now being driven by Russia, which took the lead in international diplomacy after the defeat of the Syrian rebels in

their Aleppo stronghold in December.

The cease-fire signals U.S. acquiescence to a broader Russian plan to end the violence by creating a series of de-escalation zones around the country, to be sponsored by the regional or international powers with influence in each area. An attempt to consolidate a similar de-escalation zone in the north in collaboration with Turkey, Syria's northern neighbor, has already somewhat reduced the violence there.

This accord creates a separate mechanism for the United States and Jordan to use their influence with allied rebels in southwestern Syria to halt the fighting while Russia exerts pressure on its ally, the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad.

The area affected by the cease-fire includes Daraa, the city where the revolt against Assad first flared in 2011, and where intensified fighting occurred in recent months, with the government launching an offensive aimed at recapturing the city. Also covered is the neighboring province of Quneitra, which has been a flash point in recent months between Israel and government forces, including the Iranian-backed militias whose advances toward the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights have alarmed Tel Aviv.

Iran, President Bashar al-Assad's other main ally, is not a party to this deal. Iran also holds considerable sway over the area through its network of militias, including the

Lebanese Hezbollah movement, and there are concerns that Iran, along with the Syrian government, may work to scuttle a deal that might significantly increase U.S. influence over this part of Syria.

Many details remain to be worked out, including an enforcement mechanism. The expectation is that Russian military police will eventually be deployed in the area, according to a senior U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations.

But it is unclear whether Israel will accept Russian enforcers along its border, because of concerns that Russia would be unable or unwilling to contain the expansion of Iran and its allies in that section, the Israeli Haaretz daily reported.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson spoke about an agreement between the U.S. and Russia about stopping fighting in a portion of Syria on July 7. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson spoke about an agreement between the U.S. and Russia about stopping fighting in a portion of Syria on July 7. (The Washington Post)

(The Washington Post)

A bigger question mark remains over a long-standing challenge to peace efforts in Syria, which is whether Russia exerts enough influence over the Syrian government and Iran to convince them to abide by the truce.

The deal, if implemented fully, would pose a threat to Iran's goal of carving out a zone of influence

along the Israeli and Jordanian borders and to Assad's goal of restoring his control over all of Syria, said Faysal Itani of the Washington-based Atlantic Council.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

"Both of these parties will go along with a cease-fire only until it stops serving their purpose," he said. "Who is going to stop them when they resume the offensive? Russia is either on the regime's side or unable to enforce its will anyway."

So many questions remain over how the cease-fire will work that residents aren't sure whether they should be hopeful or not, said Ahmed al-Masalma, a businessman and activist who lives in a rebel-controlled area of Daraa province.

"Some people are pessimistic because we have experience of the regime and Russia and Iran using truces to regroup their forces and advance," he said, speaking by Skype. "On the other hand, there is some optimism because people need stability to go back to their lives, and we hope this will lead to a political solution."

Zakaria Zakaria contributed from Istanbul.

## Turkey's opposition stages massive rally in a show of strength against Erdogan

ISTANBUL — Tens of thousands of Turks came out in force in an Istanbul suburb on Sunday in a direct challenge to their president as they called for an end to a state of emergency that has been in place since a failed coup in July 2016.

The mammoth protest — organized by the opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP — was a rare display of public dissent in a country where tens of thousands have been jailed as part of a systematic post-coup purge of dissidents and other government opponents. Even small demonstrations in central Istanbul have often been met with a harsh police response.

But Sunday's rally, which organizers claimed drew more than a million people, marked a triumphant end to a march started by opposition leaders in Ankara three weeks ago.

*[March for 'justice' by Erdogan opponents gains momentum and alarms government]*

Aytug Atici, a parliamentarian from the People's Republican Party, walked from Ankara to Istanbul to protest the government's detention of rights activists, journalists, and other lawmakers. Aytug Atici, a parliamentarian from the People's Republican Party, walked from Ankara to Istanbul to protest the government's detention of rights activists, journalists, and other

lawmakers. (Erin Cunningham/The Washington Post)

(Erin Cunningham/The Washington Post)

The lawmakers and others walked from the capital, Ankara, to Istanbul's seaside — a journey of about 280 miles. That walk, led by the mild-mannered CHP leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, ended up breathing new life into an opposition that just months ago was on the verge of irrelevance.

Kilicdaroglu, in an uncharacteristically fiery speech on Sunday, called the rally a "new step, a new history, a new birth." He read out a list of demands for the government of President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan, including "giving parliament back its authority" and "releasing jailed lawmakers and journalists."

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who was in Istanbul on Sunday, met with Erdogan and lauded Turkish citizens for taking to the streets a year ago to protest the coup attempt.

"Nearly a year ago, the Turkish people — brave men and women — stood up against coup plotters and defended their democracy," Tillerson said in remarks at an oil industry conference. He did not mention the Istanbul demonstration, nor did he raise the government crackdown.

In April, Kilicdaroglu failed to mount a successful challenge as a referendum on constitutional amendments granted sweeping powers to Erdogan. Last year, Kilicdaroglu voted along with the president's party to lift lawmakers' immunity from prosecution. That move was unpopular among his supporters. But in recent weeks, Kilicdaroglu has inspired ordinary Turks to join his march and voice their concerns about the country's direction. "We marched for our country. This is just the beginning," said Aydin Parlak, a 59-year-old retiree from the city of Samsun on Turkey's Black Sea coast.

"We live in a country that has the highest number of journalists in jail," he said. "This is the first time in 15 years [since Erdogan came to power] that the opposition party is on the news, that it's the main topic of conversation in the country."

*[As Erdogan gains power in Turkey, a weakened opposition tries to stand in his way]*

**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL.**

## One Year After Turkish Coup, Search for Justice Roils Nation

Ned Levin and Margaret Coker

MALTEPE, Turkey—As Turkey prepares nationwide commemorations marking last year's failed military coup, the country is divided over a single word—justice—and where to find it.

For nearly a month, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of the main opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP, has been seeking justice along State Road D100. His protest march from the capital Ankara, which ended Sunday in an Istanbul suburb, was intended to highlight what many see as a sharp undemocratic tilt in their nation.

"Do we have a republic? No. We have one man on a hill who gives all the orders," said Mr. Kilicdaroglu in a recent interview along on the 260-mile march, which some liken to Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March of civil disobedience in part because of the two men's physical likeness.

Officials in Turkey's ruling party say Mr. Kilicdaroglu is looking in the wrong place. "You don't seek justice in the streets," Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said shortly after his political opponent started the march on June 15. He chided Mr. Kilicdaroglu for not working through parliament.

The thousands of Justice Marchers who joined Mr. Kilicdaroglu along one of Turkey's main highways brought public attention on a topic that is hard for the ruling party to ignore. The protest also threatens to dim the spotlight on a

Turkey's political woes have percolated for years, buffeted by a homegrown ethnic Kurdish insurgency and spillover from the Syrian civil war next door. Amid the chaos, Erdogan, an Islamist once lauded as one of the few democratic leaders in the region, began exhibiting authoritarian tendencies. He targeted journalists for articles and tweets that he said "insulted the president." Rights activists also soon found themselves on trial or in jail.

But it was the coup attempt last summer — when a rogue faction of the military bombed parliament, seized bridges in Istanbul, and tried to assassinate the president — that accelerated the clampdown on dissent. In a bid to root out coup supporters, the government detained tens of thousands and dismissed thousands more from their jobs as judges, professors, police officers and doctors.

Kilicdaroglu, who condemned the coup and extended his support to Erdogan, began his march on June 15, one day after CHP lawmaker

week of events led by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government to mark the uprising, in which at least 270 people died. The CHP opposed last year's coup.

The government plans to unveil monuments across the country, including a nearly 100-foot-tall sculpture depicting heroic citizens raising the Turkish star-and-crescent across from the presidential palace in Ankara. The government also will hold a series of "democracy watches," echoing the mass rallies it held in the immediate aftermath of the coup attempt, as well as official visits to graveyards.

Mr. Erdogan will address the nation early on July 16, marking the time a year earlier when the tide turned against the coup.

On that day, military jets bombed parliament and tanks opened fire on the streets of Istanbul and Ankara. Millions of citizens from across Turkey's deeply divided political landscape mobilized overnight in a show of nonpartisan people power.

But that surge of national unity quickly fizzled, as the government used to the state of emergency called in the aftermath of the coup to purge tens of thousands of civil servants and arrest tens of thousands more.

The purges predominantly targeted people in the political opposition, not members of Mr. Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party party, despite their onetime close political alliance with the cleric

Enis Berberoglu was arrested. Berberoglu, a former journalist, was sentenced to prison for providing the independent Cumhuriyet newspaper with a video purportedly showing Turkish intelligence sending weapons to Syrian rebels.

"In a country where more than 150 journalists are in prison, there cannot be even a semblance of democracy," Kilicdaroglu said Sunday, as he shared his list of demands.

In his speech at the rally, he said the demonstration marked a "new beginning" for the country. "It's a new climate, a new history, a new birth."

Some who attended the protest were not as hopeful, though.

Major national and political news as it breaks.

"The judiciary is not independent. I'm hopeless about our situation. [Erdogan] is a dictator," said 41-year-old Gulben Efes, a doctor from Ankara. But, she said, she came to

Fethullah Gulen, whom the government blames for the coup. Mr. Gulen, who lives in the U.S., has denied any role in it.

At least a dozen trials are under way of military officials and civilians accused of treason and murder for their alleged roles in the coup—as well as alleged ties with Mr. Gulen.

The main trial of senior military officers alleged to be among the "Peace at Home Council" that was purportedly to take charge of the country in the event of a successful coup is set to wrap up this month in a specially built courthouse attached to the Sincan prison outside Ankara.

The trials have become morality plays about contemporary Turkey, with AKP officials urging citizens to attend as an act of patriotism and newspapers deriding arguments offered by the defense, reflecting broad national sentiment against the defendants.

The centrist Posta newspaper headline about a trial that opened in May was "Traitors' day of account" while the pro-government Yeni Safak's headline was "You are all murderers." Most media outlets published images of the mob outside the courthouse chanting for the death penalty as the suspects passed.

Mr. Yildirim has expressed impatience with the slow progress of the trials and defendants' expressions of innocence.

the demonstration "for my children, for my country."

In the blazing sun, with temperatures nearing 90 degrees, the young and the old, dressed in the red and white of the Turkish flag, chanted for "rights, law, justice!" Demonstrators also donned T-shirts and baseball caps emblazoned with the word "adalet," Turkish for "justice." Buses and ferries carried some demonstrators to the venue, in the Istanbul suburb of Maltepe. Police also patrolled the march.

"We did it, we are here," said Aytug Atici, a CHP lawmaker from the city of Mersin. He walked from Ankara to Istanbul.

"We are looking for justice," he said. "Since there is no justice in the courts, we are trying to find justice in the streets."

"It is certain who dropped the bomb, who gave them permission, who killed people, who drove the tanks and who flew the planes. What are we waiting for?" Mr. Yildirim told journalists last month.

Mr. Kilicdaroglu, a mild-mannered former bureaucrat, feels a similar impatience. He decided to protest after one of his CHP lawmakers, a former journalist, was convicted for spying. That followed Erdogan-backed constitutional changes which narrowly passed in an April referendum that the CHP says was fraudulent.

Mr. Kilicdaroglu said he has given up on Turkey's judicial system, turning to a march for justice for all those who stand against what they perceive as creeping authoritarianism in government and in the judiciary. Some opposition leaders with the CHP have participated, but it is unclear whether Mr. Kilicdaroglu has attracted broad support beyond his party.

The party faithful dominated recent crowds, with local CHP chapters bussing in protestors for the day and CHP politicians setting up roadside stands to dole out Turkish delight to hungry marchers.

Mr. Kilicdaroglu promises that this protest is just the beginning.

"The more we march, the more uncomfortable Erdogan feels," Mr. Kilicdaroglu said. "His discomfort makes me very happy."

## 'March for Justice' Ends in Istanbul With a Pointed Challenge to Erdogan (UNE)

Carlotta Gall

ISTANBUL — Hundreds of thousands of protesters turned out for a massive rally in Istanbul on Sunday evening, cheering the leader of the opposition as he concluded his three-week March for Justice and threw down a challenge to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to institute changes or face a "revolt against injustice."

"Nobody should think this march has ended; this march is a beginning," Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of the Republican People's Party, known as C.H.P., said as he walked onto a stage to rippling cheers. "This is a rebirth for us, for our country and our children. We will revolt against injustice."

The march, organized by politicians from Turkey's largest opposition party to protest the government crackdown against thousands of its opponents, drew tens of thousands of people, who trekked, beginning on June 15, from the capital, Ankara, to Turkey's first city, Istanbul, which is about 250 miles to the northwest.

Over a million people attended the rally on Sunday evening, the police told C.H.P. organizers, as youth groups and other opposition parties joined in. Marchers wearing T-shirts and carrying signs with the single word "adalet," or justice, called for the return of an independent judiciary and swift and fair justice for the tens of thousands of people arrested or suspended from their jobs since Turkey's failed coup last year.

Despite their differences, however, the government and opposition leaders appeared to be taking great pains to prevent a major confrontation as the march reached its culmination. The rally on Sunday could have easily been prohibited under the state of emergency that

has been in force since the coup attempt. Large numbers of police officers escorted the marchers but did not interfere.

### Hundreds of Thousands in Turkey Protest Erdogan

Hundreds of thousands of protesters arrived in Istanbul for the end of the three-week March for Justice. Led by Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the head of the main opposition party, they protested the government's recent crackdown on dissenters.

By DAPHNE RUSTOW and MARK SCHEFFLER on July 9, 2017. Photo by Chris Mcgrath/Getty Images. Watch in Times Video »

In a symbolic gesture, but also perhaps in an effort to manage the crowds, Mr. Kilicdaroglu walked the last two miles to the rally on his own. A former civil servant, Mr. Kilicdaroglu, 69, has captured the imagination of many supporters with his mild manner and his insistence on a peaceful march, in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi.

"This is not an anti-government protest," Samet Akten, communications director for the march, said in a statement on Sunday. "It is important to recognize the exceptionally peaceful nature of this process as well as its very specific goal. We will be expressing a collective, nonpartisan desire for an independent and fair judicial system, which has lately been lacking in Turkey."

Though the government allowed the march and rally to proceed despite security concerns and its evident criticism of Mr. Erdogan's authoritarian leadership, it is the largest sign of opposition since the failed coup last July, which resulted in the deaths of 249 people.

Politicians, including members of the C.H.P., rallied behind the president after the coup attempt, but

differences over the scale of his crackdown have since emerged. Mr. Erdogan has ordered the arrests of 50,000 people accused of links to the coup plotters, and organized a referendum that granted him greater powers, including over the judiciary.

In an interview with the German daily Die Zeit last week, Mr. Erdogan insisted that the judiciary in Turkey was independent and defended the widespread arrests, saying many of those detained, including journalists, face terrorism charges.

"If it turns out that they are innocent, the judiciary will release them," he said. "But if they are guilty, the judiciary will rule accordingly."

Sunday's rally passed without incident. Mr. Kilicdaroglu commended his supporters for completing the march peacefully and thanked the security forces for their management of the crowds.

But he was forthright in his accusations against Mr. Erdogan's government, calling on him to immediately lift the state of emergency and release two hunger strikers who are seriously ill. He also urged judges to resist government pressure or resign. "I am telling him directly from here, 'Your justice will not crush us,'" he said.

He presented a 10-point statement demanding that changes in the constitution be reversed, that last year's coup attempt be fully investigated and that journalists, members of Parliament and army privates be released and civil servants reinstated.

"Justice is a right, we want our right back," he said. "We millions here demand a new social contract."

Dursun Cicek, a C.H.P. member of Parliament and a former political prisoner, said the rally marked the opening of a campaign by

opposition parties to challenge Mr. Erdogan's government ahead of the presidential election in 2019. "If they change, then O.K.," he said. "But if they don't change, we will gain power — in a democratic way."

Mr. Erdogan, who was at the Group of 20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany, last week, and met with Rex W. Tillerson, the United States secretary of state, in Ankara on Sunday, did not react to Mr. Kilicdaroglu's challenge.

Supporters of Mr. Erdogan were largely absent from the rally. Some workers watched in silence. Drivers complained that roads were sealed off for the march.

"God sees everything," one driver said.

Supporters of the C.H.P. said they welcomed the call for action. "I am really happy that finally we have heard this is the beginning, and from the street," Ogun Gidisoglu said. Referring to Mr. Kilicdaroglu, he said, "He has unleashed us."

But some said they feared that the success of the march would lead to arrests of their leaders in coming days.

Mahmut Tanal, a senior C.H.P. member of Parliament and a member of the parliamentary human rights commission, said it was a risk they were prepared for. "I am one of their targets," he said. "If they try and arrest me, I will welcome them."

"Our aim was to raise awareness and serve a wake-up call for justice," Mr. Tanal said. "I think we have succeeded."

## Nabil and Skorka: The Terror Problem From Pakistan

Rahmatullah Nabil and Melissa Skorka

With the Trump administration considering how to break the stalemate between Taliban-allied groups and the government of Afghanistan, terrorists detonated a car bomb in Kabul on May 31, killing more than 150. Afghan intelligence blamed the violence on Haqqani, a terror network with close ties to the Taliban, al Qaeda and Pakistan's

spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence. The attack demonstrates that Washington needs to focus on the threat from Haqqani, which has also consolidated militant factions across strategic regions of the war zone.

Haqqani's ties to Pakistan make political solutions essential. Islamabad has shown no sign it is genuinely willing to end its support of terror proxies and reconcile with the Kabul regime. Yet the success

of the administration's recent decision to deepen U.S. involvement in the Afghan war will depend on whether Haqqani can be defeated, co-opted, or separated from the ISI, which for decades has relied on militant proxies to further Pakistani interests in Afghanistan.

Since 9/11, Haqqani has evolved from a relatively small, tribal-based jihadist network into one of the most influential terrorist organizations in South Asia. It is largely responsible

for the violence in Kabul and the most notorious attacks against the coalition. It masterminded the 19-hour siege on the U.S. Embassy and NATO headquarters in 2011, and allegedly facilitated an assault on a U.S. Consulate near the Iran border in 2013 and a 2009 suicide bombing of a U.S. base in Khost province, which killed seven CIA operatives. The group also holds five American hostages in Pakistan. Since the 2013 death of Taliban

leader Mullah Omar, Haqqani has become the only group with the cohesion, influence and geographic reach to provide Pakistan with "strategic depth"—a territorial buffer on its western border.

Pakistan denies sponsoring terror proxies and continues to work with the U.S. in counterterrorism against certain anti-Pakistan groups. But Western and Afghan officials say Islamabad also sponsors terrorism in order to undermine Afghanistan and India. In 2011 Adm. Mike Mullen, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, called Haqqani a "veritable arm" of the ISI.

Haqqani is a central element of the strategic challenge that faces the U.S. and its allies. The network's expanding operations in northern and southeastern Afghanistan, and especially in Kabul, over the past decade have enabled its Taliban affiliates to "control or contest" territory accounting for about one-third of the Afghan population, or nearly 10 million. That's a higher proportion of the population than Islamic State controlled in Syria and

Iraq at the height of its power in 2014, according to CNN's Peter Bergen. The militants' wide reach makes it hard for NATO forces to build enduring partnerships with Afghan civilians.

As the debate intensifies over how the U.S. should respond in Afghanistan, Washington must also change its approach to Pakistan. As a first step, the president should appoint an envoy who would lead diplomatic and intelligence efforts to buttress the Kabul regime against terrorism. The envoy would also sharpen the focus on Pakistan in bilateral diplomacy with countries that have good relations with Islamabad, such as China, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states.

The envoy would also oversee relations among Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Russia and India, focusing on the formulation of political solutions. A U.S. alignment with India would more effectively check Pakistan, while improved U.S. relations with China, cemented over shared concerns about escalating

violence and economic security, could pressure Islamabad and its proxies into a political settlement.

The U.S. should also press Pakistan to stop providing sanctuary to terrorists. That would require Washington to consider publicly exposing the extent to which officials at the highest levels of the Pakistan military and ISI support terror. Such moves against an ostensible ally would be unusual and would require advanced measures to protect intelligence sources and methods. But the U.S. has tolerated Pakistan's duplicity for 16 years, and it hasn't worked.

Equally important, the Afghan National Security Forces are unequipped for infiltration by Haqqani factions. The U.S. and NATO allies should increase political intelligence and military resources to ease into a strengthened combat-support role, training and mentoring the Afghan forces. A more adaptive political-military NATO campaign would help reduce the threat from Haqqani, eventually enabling Afghan troops to move from defense

to offense against increasingly capable adversaries.

Without a broader shift in the U.S. approach to build a more peaceful regional order, the Kabul terror attack may be a harbinger of a more dangerous war to come—one in which Haqqani would play a more important role in the Afghan conflict and global jihad than any other militant network in the region. Pakistan must account for its support of terrorists and face incentives to act more like an ally that would benefit from increased stability in South Asia and beyond.

*Mr. Nabil served as the head of Afghanistan's national directorate of security from 2010-12 and 2013-15. Ms. Skorka served as a strategic adviser to the commander of International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan from 2011-14 and is a research associate at Oxford's Changing Character of War Centre.*

## **The New York Times** Self-Immolation, Catalyst of the Arab Spring, Is Now a Grim Trend (UNE)

Lilia Blaise

TEBOURBA, Tunisia — When Adel Dridi poured gasoline on his head and set himself on fire in May, his first thought was of his mother, Dalila, whose name is roughly tattooed on his arm. But another person was also on his mind: Mohamed Bouazizi, the Tunisian street vendor whose self-immolation in 2010 set off the Arab Spring uprisings.

Mr. Dridi, 31, is also a fruit seller, and, like Mr. Bouazizi, he snapped after the police spilled his apricots, bananas and strawberries on the ground in front of the city hall here in his hometown.

"I wanted to burn myself because I was burning inside," Mr. Dridi said in an interview while lying on a mattress in his family's home, where he was still recovering, his neck and chest scarred by burns. "I wanted to die this way."

Seven years after Mr. Bouazizi's desperate and dramatic protest helped start revolutions across the region, frustration at the failed promise of the Arab Spring is widespread. Authoritarian rule has returned to Egypt. Libya is a caldron of chaos. Syria and Iraq are torn by civil wars. The gulf monarchies are essentially unchanged. Neighboring Algeria is paralyzed.

Yet it is a paramount irony that in Tunisia — cradle of the Arab Spring and the one country that has the

best hope of realizing its aspirations for democracy and prosperity — Mr. Bouazizi's once-extraordinary act has become commonplace, whether compelled by anger, depression or bitter disappointment, or to publicly challenge the authorities.

Tunisia has advanced more than any other country in the region toward freedom and democratic governance, yet it has been largely unable to provide hope and opportunity for a better life. Thousands of young people have abandoned the country to work abroad or to join the Islamic State.

The frustration at that failure has no more gruesome expression than Tunisia's tide of self-immolations.

Cases of self-immolation tripled in the five years after the revolution, according to one study. The country's main burn hospital in Ben Arous, a suburb of Tunis, admitted a record 104 patients who had set fire to themselves in 2016.

The hospital had seen an average of more than 80 cases a year since 2011, the surgeon in charge of the burn ward, Dr. Amen Allah Messadine, said. The public protest is now the second-most-common form of suicide in this country of 11 million people.

"The problem is that it does not decrease," said Dr. Messadine, who has been at the front line of the trend.

For public health officials, the phenomenon is as perplexing as it is disturbing. But it is also regarded as a profound measure of the unsettling change, economic hardship and lingering sense of injustice that define life in Tunisia, even since its democratic revolution.

"This kind of suicide stands more as a dissenting attitude toward the post-revolution society, which deeply changed," said Dr. Mehdi Ben Khelil, the forensic pathologist who conducted the study showing how the number of self-immolations had increased.

Mr. Dridi, the only breadwinner for his mother and family since the age of 14, said he had wanted to do "like Bouazizi" on the morning of May 10, when police officers ordered him to leave, saying he had not paid for his vending spot.

"The police knocked over my stall," he said. "But it got worse. They spilled my fruit and they took me to their car. Inside, they started beating me hard. I managed to escape and when I saw the gas station in front of me. I did not think twice."

He splashed gasoline on himself directly from the pump and put a lighter to his neck. He was saved by a bus driver who put out the flames with a fire extinguisher.

Whereas most suicides before the revolution were for reasons of mental health, those since have been driven largely by economic

hardship and a desire to challenge the authorities. They are often carried out in front of administration buildings.

Mr. Dridi had previously tried to burn himself in public in 2012, but was stopped by onlookers.

He said he had earned about \$400 a month before the revolution, which is twice the minimum wage in Tunisia. Now, he said, he never knows how much he will sell, or how many times the police will harass him.

Cases like his are a sign of social despair and resentment toward officialdom, medical personnel say.

"Most of those who survived told us they just could not take it anymore," said Nadia Ben Slama, a psychologist at the Ben Arous hospital. "They frequently used two words in Arabic: el kahra, which means helplessness or the feeling of being oppressed, and the word hogra, which means scorn or contempt from others."

"There is a symbolism in the public gesture of self-immolation," she added. "It is usually to denounce injustice or an oppressor, but also to make the other one feel guilty, the one who witnessed the injustice and who did not act on it. That one is society in general."

Sometimes self-immolation is threatened to force the hand of the authorities. That is what Imed

Ghanmi, 43, an unemployed teacher, did when the police confiscated smuggled merchandise he was selling on the street to support his family.

"I used to pour gas on himself as a way to blackmail the police so they would give him back his merchandise," his brother Ahmed Ghanmi said. "He had already done that as a last resort two or three times before and he told me it worked."

The last time Mr. Ghanmi tried, in a police station, he set himself on fire and died. His family is still investigating whether it was a suicide or an accident and why the police did not help him.

The trend is touching a new, younger generation that has come of age since the revolution.

Ramzi Messaoudi set himself afire on Feb. 15 in the courtyard of his

high school, while everyone was studying in class, in Bou Hajla, a small town in central Tunisia. He died three days later from his burns.

He had had disagreements with his English teacher, who repeatedly expelled him from class, his father and his friends said.

But his family is bewildered. His sister Rimeh, 20, who shared a bedroom with him, mourns over his school books. His father, Nourredine Messaoudi, a minibus driver, still holds on to his son's burned bus card, neatly folded in his wallet.

He knew about his son's problems at school and had tried to reason with him several times. "I told him he should call me if he had any more problems," he said.

"I still don't understand," he added. "He was a good boy. He loved martial arts and soccer, he had

many friends on Facebook and he wanted to be a military man."

"He just could not take it anymore," said Wissem Hadidi, 19, a childhood friend. "When he arrived at the hospital, he was still conscious and he was smiling and kept on repeating the word 'injustice.'"

Ramzi Messaoudi's act had a tragic aftermath. "I locked myself in my house for a week," Mr. Hadidi said. "I could not go back to high school. You see, I literally saw him burning and I can still remember the smell."

A week later, another pupil in the town, who was just 13, also tried to burn himself alive, but survived after a friend snuffed out the fire with his jacket.

Another study conducted by Dr. Mehdi concluded that the country was experiencing a copycat effect, in the wake of Mr. Bouazizi's revolutionary act. The study called

for urgent preventive measures in news coverage of suicides and in empowering young adults.

There has been a general increase of depression and suicide rates among teenagers since the revolution, said Fatma Charfi, who leads a Ministry of Health committee combating suicide.

"With the dictatorship, the state was ubiquitous; we were under a police rule and deviation was less possible," Ms. Charfi said. "There were already suicides with self-immolation or hanging, but it was in the privacy of the home, not in the public sphere like today, and the youth is very exposed to this new phenomenon."

## **The New York Times** Spyware Sold to Mexican Government Targeted International Officials (UNE)

Azam Ahmed

MEXICO CITY — A team of international investigators brought to Mexico to unravel one of the nation's gravest human rights atrocities was targeted with sophisticated surveillance technology sold to the Mexican government to spy on criminals and terrorists.

The spying took place during what the investigators call a broad campaign of harassment and interference that prevented them from solving the haunting case of 43 students who disappeared after clashing with the police nearly three years ago.

Appointed by an international commission that polices human rights in the Americas, the investigators say they were quickly met with stonewalling by the Mexican government, a refusal to turn over documents or grant vital interviews, and even a retaliatory criminal investigation.

Now, forensic evidence shows that the international investigators were being targeted by advanced surveillance technology as well.

The main contact person for the group of investigators received text messages laced with spyware known as Pegasus, a cyberweapon that the government of Mexico spent tens of millions of dollars to acquire, according to an independent analysis. The coordinator's phone was used by nearly all members of the group, often serving as a nexus of communication among the investigators, their sources, the

international commission that appointed them and the Mexican government.

Beyond that, the investigators say they received identical text messages on their own phones, too, luring them to click on links that secretly unlock a target's smartphone and turn it into a powerful surveillance device. Calls, emails, text messages, calendars and contacts can all be monitored that way. Encrypted messages become worthless. Even the microphone and camera on a smartphone can be used against its owner.

The effort to spy on international officials adds to a sweeping espionage offensive in Mexico, where some of the country's most prominent journalists, human rights lawyers and anticorruption activists have been the targets of the same surveillance technology. But the new evidence shows that the spying campaign went beyond the nation's domestic critics.

It also swept up international officials who had been granted a status akin to diplomatic immunity as well as unprecedented access to investigate a case that has come to define the nation's broken rule of law — and the legacy of its president, Enrique Peña Nieto.

Surveillance under Mexican law can be conducted only with the authorization of a federal judge, and only if the government can show cause to do so. But the kind of diplomatic immunity the investigators received meant that it

was extremely unlikely that a federal judge would have been allowed to sign off on such a warrant, the investigators said.

"You are not just hacking anyone's phone, you are hacking the phone of someone who has been granted immunity," said Francisco Cox, one of the investigators and a prominent Chilean lawyer. "They couldn't even search my bags in the airport."

"If this can happen to an independent body that has immunity and that is invited by the government, it is a bit scary to think of what could happen to a common citizen in Mexico," he said.

Since 2011, Mexico has purchased at least \$80 million worth of the spyware, which is sold exclusively to governments, and only on the condition that it be used against terrorists and criminals. But an investigation by The New York Times and forensic cyberanalysts in recent weeks determined that the software had been used against some of the country's most influential academics, lawyers, journalists and their family members, including a teenage boy.

The government has denied responsibility for the espionage, adding that there is no ironclad proof because the spyware does not leave behind the hacker's individual fingerprints. It has promised a thorough investigation, vowing to call on specialists from the United Nations and the F.B.I. for help. One of the surveillance targets, the forensic analysis showed, was a United States lawyer representing

victims of sexual assault by the Mexican police.

But the United States ambassador to Mexico, Roberta S. Jacobson, said the United States was not involved in the investigation. Opposition lawmakers and international officials are now calling for an independent inquiry into the spying scandal, declaring Mexico unfit to investigate itself.

"This case just on its face — and presuming the veracity of the allegations — is serious enough to warrant the creation of an international commission," said James L. Cavallaro, a commissioner on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which appointed the group of experts. "The commission shares the concerns of others: How can the government be trusted to investigate its own alleged violation of citizen rights given its track record in this matter?"

Another commissioner, Esmeralda Arosemena de Troitiño, backed the idea of an independent inquiry. "This investigation should find both the material and intellectual authors of the alleged spying," she said.

Top officials from the nation's main opposition party have come forward to say that they, too, have been targeted, raising the pressure on the government. The head of the National Action Party, Ricardo Anaya, says his party is pushing for a congressional committee to conduct its own inquiry and will also formally demand an international investigation into the spying.

"The grand tragedy of Mexico is impunity. Horrible things occur, and nothing happens," he said. "This time, we will not let that happen."

The disappearance of the students in September 2014 ignited an enormous outcry in Mexico. Hundreds of thousands poured into the streets to protest a case that, to many, represented all that afflicts Mexico, a nation where about 30,000 people have disappeared and more than 100,000 have been killed in the decade-long churn of the drug war.

The anger also focused on Mr. Peña Nieto, whose determination to change the narrative of his country from one of desperate violence to economic promise was suddenly, and permanently, upended. The outrage has been matched only by the disbelief that, almost three years later, nearly all of the 43 students are still missing. The remains of one have been discovered. Fragments of another may also have been identified. The rest of the students, whether dead or alive, have not been found.

Many Mexicans believed that their best chance of finding out what really happened to the students lay with the international investigators, who were appointed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, a regional body based in Washington that monitors countries and can refer cases to court. But the investigators said the government essentially obstructed their inquiry and then cast them out by refusing to extend their mandate — evidence, they said, that the government simply did not want the case solved.

Still, it is hard to prove who ordered the spying. Even the manufacturer of the spyware, an Israeli cyberarms manufacturer called the NSO Group, says it cannot determine who, precisely, is behind specific hacking attempts using its technology.

But the company says that it sells its

surveillance tools only to governments, and that stringent safeguards prevent them from being used by anyone outside of the government agencies that purchase the technology.

Moreover, once a person's phone is targeted, researchers can verify that the spyware has been deployed by examining the text message to determine whether it points to a server running NSO's technology. They have confirmed at least 19 cases in Mexico involving human rights lawyers, anticorruption activists, journalists and, now, international officials.

"Citizen Lab and our partners are finding people targeted with NSO spyware almost wherever we look in Mexico," said John Scott-Railton, a senior researcher at Citizen Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, which has worked with the digital rights group R3D in Mexico to identify the spyware on the phones of targeted activists and officials.

"I have never seen anything that matches the scale and scope of this case," he said of the surveillance campaign in Mexico.

Hacking attempts disguised as text messages appeared on the cellphone of the executive secretary for the investigators, the point person for all contacts with the group, on March 1 and 4, 2016, the forensic analysis found. Around the same time, lawyers for Centro Prodh, a human rights group looking into the mass disappearance of the students, were also being targeted by the software.

"The Mexican government implored the commission to create this expert group, and then when their investigation did not ratify the official version, things changed," said Mr. Cavallaro, who was the president of the Inter-American Commission at the time of the hacking attempts. "If it's true that the government spied or tried to spy on our experts, that

would be an outrage of historic proportions."

The investigators sent a private letter to the Inter-American Commission late last month, detailing their suspicions after The Times published an article about the hacking campaign. They said some of their phones had also been subject to suspicious messages.

One message, sent to one of the investigators in March, was from someone posing as a close friend whose father had died. A link was attached with the details of the funeral. When the link was opened, the website of a well-known funeral home in Mexico popped up. A similar message, with the same link, was also sent last year to an academic trying to impose a sugar tax in Mexico. In that case, the message was confirmed as Pegasus.

During the hacking attempts on the investigators, the group was in the throes of a crisis. The investigators had just complained publicly of being harassed, and they were less than two months from publishing their final report, which rejected the government's version of what happened to the students.

The mystery began on Sept. 26, 2014, when about 100 students from a teachers' college in the town of Ayotzinapa struck out to commandeer some buses. As they had in years past, the students planned to take the buses to Mexico City to attend a commemorative march and then return them, a tradition both the bus companies and the authorities typically tolerated.

But that night soon turned into an ominous chapter in Mexico's modern history. The police fired mercilessly on the students and the buses transporting them, leaving six dead and scores wounded. The police emptied two buses of students, detained them and whisked them away in patrol cars.

The government maintains that local police officers, along with the drug gang they worked for, kidnapped the students, killed them and incinerated their bodies in a nearby dump.

The government version, however, never offered a clear motive for the attack on the students, and Mexicans pushed for an international inquiry. Eventually, the government agreed, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights appointed a five-member team of prominent prosecutors and rights activists from across the Spanish-speaking world.

When the investigators arrived in Mexico, after months of local protests over the disappearances, it was an exceptional moment: a reclusive government opening itself up to external scrutiny.

But within a few months, the relationship between the government and the investigators began to sour. In its first report, the investigators contradicted a central tenet of the government's version, saying it could find no evidence of a fire big enough to burn 43 bodies, nor any remnants or bone fragments that matched those of the missing.

The acrimony came quickly. Pro-government newspapers began attacking the group, and the Mexican government opened a criminal investigation against the executive secretary of the Inter-American Commission, based on unsubstantiated claims about the misuse of funds.

"We always worked in good faith, and we went with open eyes and an open mind, only going where the facts led us," said Mr. Cox, one of the investigators. "Our purpose was to contribute to the rule of law in Mexico."

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Tillerson vows relations with Russia will be frosty until it leaves Ukraine alone

By Carol Morello

KIEV, Ukraine — Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday that Russia must make the first moves to rein in separatists and remove its weaponry from eastern Ukraine. He also vowed that sanctions would remain in place until Moscow reverses its actions and respects the border between the two countries.

After an hour-long meeting with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, Tillerson told reporters

that relations between Moscow and Washington will not improve until Ukraine gets back full control of its territory from separatists he characterized as Russia's "proxies" in two breakaway provinces.

"I have been very clear in my discussions with Russian leadership, on more than one occasion, that it is necessary for Russia to take the first steps to de-escalate the situation in the eastern part of Ukraine," he said in a joint news conference with Poroshenko

in which he called for Russia to use its influence on the separatists to enforce a cease-fire and allow international observers to do their work safely.

Poroshenko said that during their talks, Tillerson assured him that the United States is also committed to the return of Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014 after a hasty referendum that took place after Russian troops had seized the peninsula.

Tillerson did not mention the word Crimea but suggested that Russia's annexation of the peninsula remains a major sticking point, saying that "the U.S. and E.U. sanctions on Russia will remain in place until Moscow reverses the actions that triggered these particular sanctions."

Tillerson was in Kiev with his new special envoy, Kurt Volker, as part of a U.S. push to resuscitate stalled negotiations over ending three years of war.



During his visit of barely three hours, Tillerson also squeezed in a meeting with young reformers who are pushing for the government to be more responsible and attractive to foreign investment. Then he left for Turkey to talk with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan about the fast-moving offensive against the Islamic State militant group in Syria, before heading to the Persian Gulf for four days of shuttle diplomacy to mediate a dispute between Qatar and its neighbors.

The multipronged trip represents something of a pivot for the former Exxon Mobil chief executive, who came to the State Department job with no diplomatic experience. After months of complaints that the department is being sidelined, Tillerson is asserting himself in a more conventional manner for the top U.S. diplomat by throwing himself into an intensive round of diplomatic forays abroad.

He came to Ukraine at a time when the Trump administration is trying simultaneously to improve relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin's government and break the logjam in peacemaking efforts in a conflict that has brought punishing sanctions for Russia.

Many Ukrainians are encouraged by the greater U.S. involvement and the appointment of Volker, a seasoned diplomat who has backed sending lethal arms to Kiev to defend itself.

"It is welcomed, since the guy is a hawk," said Konstantin Batozsky, a political analyst in Kiev.

The Ukrainian government has been fighting separatists since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and began providing munitions and sending troops to fight alongside Ukrainian rebels in the breakaway provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk, known collectively as Donbas. In 2015, Germany and France helped broker agreements that provide a road map to peace that requires Russia to withdraw its support for the separatists and Ukraine to give Donbas a measure of autonomy.

But the road map enshrined in the Minsk accords, after the city in Belarus where they were negotiated, has faltered over each side's reluctance to compromise. The Ukrainians insist they will amend the constitution to provide the desired autonomy only after Russia backs off. The Russians demand that political guarantees come first.

Volker's appointment mollifies Ukrainians who have been concerned that President Trump might make a deal with the Russians unfavorable to Ukraine.

"Kurt has been very strong on Russia," said Taras Berezovets, a political analyst in Kiev who talked with Volker during a visit to Washington last month. "Germany and France have played a crucial role. But it is understood that if the United States gets involved, the

chances of getting a peace agreement will be much higher."

The conflict in eastern Ukraine has killed more than 10,000 people. But in the capital, Kiev, there are few signs of a nation at war, apart from the occasional military recruiting poster and young men on the streets in uniform. Sidewalk cafes are thronged, and fountains in the heart of the city, where protesters encamped for months in 2013 to oust the Russia-friendly government, now bubble to music at night.

However, progress on reforms that can restore confidence in the government is slow. Some improvements are notable, such as a U.S.-funded program to train, equip and adequately pay police patrol officers so they don't take bribes from motorists. But corruption is still so endemic that people routinely make small payoffs to university professors to pass an exam, or to doctors to get appointments.

Iryna Gerashchenko, the deputy speaker of parliament, noted that 120 Ukrainian soldiers and 70 civilians have been killed in the war this year. She also cited 132 "hostages," the Ukrainian term for prisoners held by separatists.

Politics newsletter

The big stories and commentary shaping the day.

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Tillerson Meets With Ukraine President

Thomas Grove  
MOSCOW—U.S.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson met Sunday with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, a visit that telegraphs U.S. support to Kiev after President Donald Trump's historic meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In an appearance with Mr. Poroshenko in Kiev, Mr. Tillerson said the Trump administration was looking for a fresh solution to the crisis in the country, which is locked in a conflict with separatists in the eastern Donbas region.

The U.S., Mr. Tillerson said, was committed to restoring "Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and integrity," adding, "It is necessary for Russia to take the first steps to de-escalate the situation in the east part of

Ukraine" by encouraging separatists to pull back heavy weaponry.

Mr. Tillerson traveled to Ukraine with Kurt Volker, the Trump administration's new point man on the crisis, appointed Friday as Washington's special representative for Ukraine negotiations.

"We are disappointed by the lack of progress under the Minsk agreement, and that is why we are appointing a special representative," Mr. Tillerson said, referring to a peace process that has failed to deliver a lasting cessation in hostilities.

Ukraine is one of the major sources of friction between Washington and Moscow. The conflict in Ukraine began after street protests in Kiev led to the ouster of Kremlin-friendly President Viktor Yanukovich in

2014. Russia then annexed the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea from Ukraine and has backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, prompting U.S. sanctions on Russia.

Mr. Poroshenko thanked Mr. Tillerson for the expression of U.S. support. He told journalists after the meeting that Washington said it had no intention of lifting sanctions on Russia until Ukrainian territory is "freed"—a reference to Crimea—and the Minsk agreements are fulfilled.

Mr. Trump's meeting with Mr. Putin on the sidelines of the Group of 20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany, had raised anxieties in Kiev about how the new U.S. administration plans to handle the crisis. Shortly after the meeting Sunday between Messrs. Tillerson and Poroshenko, Mr. Trump said he didn't discuss U.S.

By keeping sanctions against Russia in place and possibly adding new ones, as many in Congress want, she said, the United States can help restore Ukrainian sovereignty in the east and in Crimea.

"Putin wants to restore the empire and determine his borders," said Gerashchenko, who was assigned by Poroshenko to find a peaceful settlement. "It's Putin's calculus that Donbas and Crimea will be forgotten because the world is facing new threats. But for the United States, principles are important."

Others worry that the conditions that contributed to the failure of the Minsk agreements have not changed.

"It looks like a dead end," said Mikhail Pogrebinsky, who heads the Center on Political Research and Conflict Studies, citing divergent expectations among Ukrainians. "In the west of the country, the majority of the population wants a military victory over Russia with the help of the United States. In eastern Ukraine, even in territory controlled by Kiev, the majority want negotiations with the separatists leading to autonomy. People are tired of war, especially in the east and south. But the government of Ukraine is not tired."

sanctions in his meeting with Mr. Putin.

"Nothing will be done until the Ukrainian and Syrian problems are solved," he said on Twitter.

Mr. Tillerson also reiterated U.S. support for sanctions.

"The U.S. and the EU sanctions on Russia will remain in place until Moscow reverses the actions that triggered these particular sanctions," Mr. Tillerson said.

Ukraine's economy has been battered by the crisis, and Mr. Tillerson also re-emphasized the importance of anticorruption efforts and judiciary reform to encourage more foreign direct investment in the country.

## The New York Times

### Tillerson Says Russia Must Restore Ukraine Territory, or Sanctions Stay (UNE)

David E. Sanger

KIEV, Ukraine — Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson assured Ukraine's

leader on Sunday that the United States would not lift economic

sanctions against Russia until it "reverses the actions" that prompted

them and restores the country's "territorial integrity," appearing to set the same high bar for sanctions relief that the Obama administration did.

Mr. Tillerson's strongly worded statement, issued at a news conference in Kiev alongside President Petro O. Poroshenko of Ukraine, seemed to insist that Moscow withdraw Russian troops and heavy weapons from eastern Ukraine and return Crimea, the Black Sea territory that Russia annexed in 2014 — though Mr. Tillerson never specifically mentioned that disputed peninsula by name.

His comments came on the same day that President Trump said sanctions were not discussed at his meeting on Friday with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. And Mr. Trump walked into a new controversy with his declaration on Twitter that he and Mr. Putin had agreed to create "an impenetrable Cyber Security unit," suggesting for the first time that the two biggest adversaries in cyberspace would somehow police it together.

Mr. Trump's tweet came as intelligence officials appeared increasingly convinced that Russian cyberactivity continued well after the election, and that the Russian government was likely behind recent intrusions into business systems at American nuclear power plants.

Mr. Trump said Sunday he had "strongly pressed" Mr. Putin twice during their meeting last week on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit meeting in Hamburg, Germany, over interference in the election. Mr. Putin's primary diplomatic objective during their meeting was thought to be the lifting of Western sanctions. Mr. Trump had questioned the value of those

sanctions during his 2016 campaign for president, and Mr. Putin may have seen his best opportunity to achieve that goal.

But in a statement posted on Twitter minutes after Mr. Tillerson finished speaking, Mr. Trump wrote that "sanctions were not discussed in my meeting with President Putin," and added, "Nothing will be done until the Ukrainian & Syrian problems are solved!"

Mr. Tillerson's statement Sunday in Kiev was more definitive on the issue of sanctions than his boss's tweet, perhaps a reflection of the political reality in Washington, where the Senate voted, 97 to 2, last month to toughen sanctions because of Russia's continued intervention in eastern Ukraine, Moscow's attempts to intimidate former Soviet states and the conclusion of American intelligence agencies that Russia had interfered in the 2016 election.

The administration has sought to water down the sanctions bill to give itself more leeway in dealing with Russia, an effort that was viewed by many Republicans and Democrats as a way to relax sanctions without congressional approval.

It was unclear how the Russians might react to Mr. Tillerson's comments insisting that Moscow restore Ukraine's territorial integrity. A few days ago, Mr. Tillerson announced he was appointing a new special envoy, Kurt Volker, to help settle the dispute in Ukraine in part at the request of Mr. Putin. And Russian officials believed they had made progress in Mr. Putin's meeting with Mr. Trump.

As Mr. Tillerson spoke Sunday, Mr. Volker sat in the front row, and he was to remain in Kiev after Mr. Tillerson departed to discuss how to

enforce the largely ignored Minsk accord agreed in 2015 that envisioned a way out of the Ukraine impasse.

During his short news conference in Kiev with Mr. Poroshenko, who took office after one of Mr. Putin's acolytes was pushed from power, Mr. Tillerson also declined to say whether Mr. Trump, during his meeting with the Russian president, accepted Mr. Putin's denials that Russia was involved in efforts to influence the 2016 election.

Mr. Tillerson was the only other senior American official in the room during the presidents' meeting. His Russian counterpart, Sergey V. Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, told reporters after the meeting in Hamburg that Mr. Trump had been persuaded by Mr. Putin's arguments.

### Trump Sows Confusion Over Russian Hacking

After his meeting with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia at the Group of 20 summit on Friday, President Trump sent mixed messages about Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election.

By MARK SCHEFFLER and AINARA TIEFENTHÄLER on July 9, 2017. Photo by Al Drago for The New York Times. Watch in Times Video »

When pressed on the question, Mr. Tillerson used language he had used Friday night, calling the election hacks the "first topic for discussion."

"In all candidness, we did not expect an answer other than the one we received," he said Sunday. "And so I think that was about the way we expected the conversation to go."

lies about everything, all the time. Lying is his resting condition.

Therefore, absolutely nothing he or his team says is to be believed, ever.

With that in mind, we are told by Rex Tillerson, our secretary of state and the man upon whom Putin bestowed Russia's Order of Friendship, that Trump "opened his meeting with President Putin by raising the concerns of the American people regarding Russian interference in the 2016 election," and that Trump repeatedly "pressed" Putin on the issue, and of course Putin denied, again, Russian involvement.

Mr. Trump has frequently expressed doubts about Russia's involvement in hacking the servers of the Democratic National Committee and compromising the email accounts of prominent Democratic operatives, dismissing the conclusions of American intelligence agencies as politicized in the Obama era.

Mr. Tillerson suggested that the two leaders would never reach a common understanding of what happened last year. "I don't know if we will ever come to an agreement, obviously with our Russian counterparts on that. I think the important thing is how do we assure that this doesn't happen again."

The two sides announced a new effort last week in Hamburg, focused on avoiding interference in elections and curbing cybersabotage.

By Mr. Tillerson's telling, that effort will start modestly, with discussions about "a framework under which we might begin to have agreement on how to deal with these very complex issues of cyberthreats, cybersecurity, cyberintrusions."

Mr. Trump's tweet seemed to indicate the cooperation would go beyond merely discussions.

To many at the National Security Agency and United States Cybercommand, a "Cyber Security unit" between Russia and the United States as described by Mr. Trump would be akin to creating a joint missile-defense unit with the North Koreans. The United States is deeply inside Russian computer networks — for surveillance, and if need be to conduct offensive action — and the same is true about Russian penetration of American networks. It is hard to imagine intelligence services on either side giving that up.

The Russians say Trump accepted Putin's denial, although the White House denied that account. Trump is full of lies and Putin is full of tricks. Who to believe?

Tillerson's telling gives pause.

When asked if Trump spelled out consequences Russia would face for their attack on our election, Tillerson said Trump and Putin focused on "how do we move forward" because "it's not clear to me that we will ever come to some agreed-upon resolution of that question between the two nations." At another point, Tillerson said Trump and Putin agreed to establish a working-level group "around the cyber issue and this issue of non-interference."

## The New York Times **Blow : Putin Meets His Progeny**

Team Trump wants us all to get over this annoying Russia thing and just move on. Sorry sir, not going to happen.

At the G-20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany, Donald Trump met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the man whose thumb was all over the scale that delivered Trump's victory. It was like a father meeting his offspring. But was it their first meeting? Maybe, maybe not.

For years Trump claimed not only that he had met Putin, but also that the two men had a great relationship.

Then in July 2016 came the about-face. At a news conference, Trump

said, "I never met Putin," and "I don't know who Putin is." This, coincidentally, was the same news conference at which he encouraged Russia's cyberattack of Hillary Clinton's campaign to "find the 30,000 emails that are missing."

Thereafter, Trump would repeatedly deny meeting Putin or knowing him.

Clearly, Trump having a great relationship with Putin, and Trump not knowing Putin at all, cannot both be true.

I say this to remind you of something that you can never allow to become normal and never allow to become acceptable: Our "president" is a pathological liar. He

This is also outrageous. I didn't get the sense that Trump strongly asserted as fact that Russia attacked our elections or that Trump would seek to punish Russia. The readout tells the opposite story, one of Russia being let off the hook. And this whole business of setting up a cybersecurity working group with the Russians is like inviting the burglar to help you design your alarm system.

In a Twitter tirade Sunday morning, Trump wrote: "I strongly pressed President Putin twice about Russian meddling in our election. He vehemently denied it. I've already given my opinion. ..."

But Trump's opinion, as expressed the day before his meeting with Putin, was that the source of the attack was something of an open question. At a news conference in Warsaw, Poland, Trump said: "I

think it could very well have been Russia, but I think it could well have been other countries."

This is a slap in the face to our intelligence community that has unanimously rendered their verdict: It was Russia!

Trump continued on Twitter: "...We negotiated a ceasefire in parts of Syria which will save lives. Now it is time to move forward in working constructively with Russia!"

No, sir, this is not the time to "move forward" with Russia, but rather time to "move forward" against it.

Last week, CNN reported that "Russian spies are ramping up their intelligence-gathering efforts in the U.S., according to current and former U.S. intelligence officials who say they have noticed an increase since the election."

**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL.**

## Editorial : Putin Is Not America's Friend

We'll find out in the coming weeks how Vladimir Putin sized up Donald Trump in their first mano a mano meeting on Friday, but one bad sign is the Trump team's post-meeting resort to Obama-like rhetoric of cooperation and shared U.S.-Russia purposes.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson frequently lapses into this form of John Kerry-speak as he did trying to sell the new U.S.-Russia-brokered cease-fire in a corner of Syria. "I think this is our first indication of the U.S. and Russia being able to work together in Syria," Mr. Tillerson told reporters.

He added: "I would tell you that, by and large, our objectives are exactly the same. How we get there, we each have a view. But there's a lot more commonality to that than there are differences. So we want to build on the commonality, and we spent a lot of time talking about next steps. And then where there's differences, we have more work to get together and understand.

Maybe they've got the right approach and we've got the wrong approach."

The same objectives? The Russians want to help their client Bashar Assad win back all of Syria while retaining their military bases. If they are now talking about a larger cease-fire, it's only because they think that can serve Mr. Assad's purposes. The Trump Administration doesn't seem to know what it wants in Syria after Islamic State is ousted from Raqqa, and we hope Mr. Tillerson isn't saying the U.S. shares the same post-ISIS goals as Russia.

As for the right or wrong "approach" to Syria, the Pentagon believes Russia knew in advance about Mr. Assad's use of chemical weapons this year. The U.S. fired cruise missiles in response and has since shot down an Assad airplane bombing U.S. allies on the ground, which drew a threat of Russian reprisal if the U.S. did it again. Somehow "approach" doesn't capture this moral and military difference.

CNN continued: "The officials say they believe one of the biggest U.S. adversaries feels emboldened by the lack of a significant retaliatory response from both the Trump and Obama administrations."

And on Saturday, The New York Times reported on another undisclosed meeting between members of Trump's campaign and people connected to the Kremlin, writing:

"Two weeks after Donald J. Trump clinched the Republican presidential nomination last year, his eldest son arranged a meeting at Trump Tower in Manhattan with a Russian lawyer who has connections to the Kremlin, according to confidential government records described to The New York Times."

The Times continued: "The previously unreported meeting was also attended by Mr. Trump's

campaign chairman at the time, Paul J. Manafort, as well as the president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner." The Times pointed out that the meeting "is the first confirmed private meeting between a Russian national and members of Mr. Trump's inner circle during the campaign."

America is under sustained, possibly even accelerated, attack by a foreign power, the same one that attacked our election, and Trump not only wavers on the source of the attack, but also refuses to condemn the culprit and in fact has a penchant for praising him. This whole thing stinks to high heaven, and we must press on until we uncover the source of the rot.

Then there's Mr. Trump's Sunday tweet that "Putin & I discussed forming an impenetrable Cyber Security unit so that election hacking, & many other negative things, will be guarded." No doubt Mr. Putin, the KGB man, would love to get an insight into America's cyber secrets, though don't count on any of those secrets being "guarded," much less "impenetrable."

Republican Senator Marco Rubio had it right on Sunday when he tweeted that "partnering with Putin on a 'Cyber Security Unit' is akin to partnering with Assad on a 'Chemical Weapons Unit.'" He added, in advice Mr. Trump could help himself by taking, that "while reality & pragmatism requires that we engage Vladimir Putin, he will never be a trusted ally or a reliable constructive partner."

Mr. Trump's actions toward Russia so far, such as bombing an Assad airfield and unleashing U.S. oil and gas production, have been far tougher than anything Barack

Obama dared. But the U.S. President clearly wants a better relationship with Mr. Putin, and the comments by both Mr. Tillerson and Mr. Trump after their Friday meeting aren't exactly hardheaded. Next time they should invite national security adviser H.R. McMaster or U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley into the meeting. Those two seem less impressed by the Kremlin conniver.

Congress can play a fortifying role here by moving ahead with the bill toughening sanctions against Russia for its election meddling. The Senate passed the bill 98-2, and Republicans can move it quickly in the House with some fixes for oil investments. The White House objects that the bill takes away discretion from Mr. Trump to reduce sanctions unilaterally. But that discretion shouldn't be granted until Messrs. Trump and Tillerson show that they understand that Mr. Putin is not America's friend.

*the Atlantic*

## Frum : Will Congress Hold Russia Accountable for the Behavior Trump Excuses?

David Frum

From the start of the Trump-Russia story, there have been many secrets, but no mysteries.

Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election to help Donald Trump. Donald Trump publicly welcomed that help, and integrated the fruits of Russian intervention into his closing campaign argument. ("I

love WikiLeaks!") Since being elected he has attempted to tilt American policy toward Russia, above all by his persistent and repeated attempts to lift the sanctions imposed by President Obama to punish Russia for its invasion of Crimea in 2014 and for its election-meddling in 2016.

Uncertainties remain: Did the Trump campaign actively coordinate its

messaging with Russia? Were any U.S. laws violated along the way? What exactly are Trump's motives? What are Russia's? And Sunday's latest revelations added one more: Was Donald Trump Jr.'s meeting with a shady Russian lawyer who offered dirt on Hillary Clinton in any way connected to the WikiLeaks drop a few days later?

But the basic story line is clear. It was clear in real time—and it's clearer than ever after the Hamburg summit. Whatever exactly happened at the meeting between Trump and Putin, the president's Sunday morning Twitter storm confirms: Trump has accepted Putin's denials as the final word on the matter.

Why would Trump not accept it? He has insisted that the accounts of

Russian interference in the US election are a “made-up story,” a hoax by sore-loser Democrats. Putin told Trump nothing that Trump did not already believe—or anyway, that Trump wanted everyone else to believe. If there was any question before Hamburg, that question was settled at Hamburg: There will be no consequences for Russia. They attacked American electoral processes and succeeded. The president Russia helped to install will not punish Russia for helping to install him.

The question now turns to the rest of the American political system. Senate Majority Leader McConnell warned Obama against taking action against Russia during the election. Whatever is said of Obama’s decisions, one of Obama’s motives for inaction was the knowledge that congressional Republicans would take Trump’s and Russia’s side if he tried to act. Congressional investigations into Russian meddling have been stalled (in the Senate) and outright sabotaged (in the House). Even as Trump in Hamburg absolved Putin of consequences for

election interference, House Speaker Paul Ryan, at the behest of Trump, is stalling in the House the measure the Senate approved 97-2 to prevent Trump from lifting existing sanctions on Russia. It’s fine for Republicans like Senator Marco Rubio to tweet sarcastic comments about Trump’s plans for cyber cooperation with Russia. Congress can do more than tweet—if it chooses.

It’s no longer Donald Trump in the spotlight. It’s the Republican leaders in Congress. Whether or not Trump

colluded with Russia, the challenge to them is: Will they make themselves complicit after the fact? Or will they at last do what the president will not: defend American democracy and hold accountable those who have attacked it? Even to phrase the question is to confront the depressing answer. Congressional Republicans may not condone Trump’s misbehavior. But they are not willing to punish it—or to put at risk their enjoyment of its fruits.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Trump minimizes hacking allegations and seeks to ‘move forward’ with Russia (UNE)

President Trump on Sunday sought to move past allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election, effectively dismissing the importance of the intelligence community’s definitive conclusion about a foreign adversary in pursuit of a collaborative partnership with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Issuing his first public comments since sitting down with Putin in Germany, Trump vowed to “move forward in working constructively with Russia” and said the two leaders were discussing a cybersecurity unit that would protect against the kinds of illegal intrusions that U.S. intelligence agencies say Putin ordered in the United States.

After Putin denied in his meeting with Trump any such election interference, the U.S. president tried to turn the page altogether on the issue of Russian hacking. As special counsel Robert S. Mueller III investigates Russian interference and possible collusion with Trump campaign officials, Trump has repeatedly labeled the issue a hoax and has portrayed it as a dark cloud unfairly hanging over his first six months as president.

Trump’s pledge to partner with Putin drew swift and stern denunciations from both Democratic and Republican officials, who cast the U.S. president as dangerously naive for trusting his Russian counterpart and said Russia must be forced to pay a price for its election interference.

The president responded to the criticism late Sunday, tweeting his own doubts that a cyber unit could work. “The fact that President Putin and I discussed a Cyber Security unit doesn’t mean I think it can happen. It can’t — but a ceasefire can, & did!” he wrote, referring to an agreement among the United States, Russia and Jordan in a region of Syria.

Washington weighs in on President Trump’s visit to the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg, and whether he believes that Russia meddled in the 2016 presidential election. Washington weighs in on Trump’s visit to the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg, and whether he believes that Russia meddled in the 2016 presidential election. (Victoria Walker/The Washington Post)

(Victoria Walker/The Washington Post)

Trump said that he “strongly pressed” Putin twice about Russian meddling and that Putin “vehemently denied it.” Trump did not indicate whether he accepted Putin’s denial, saying only, “I’ve already given my opinion.”

*[Putin denies election hacking after Trump pressed him, Tillerson says]*

Trump delivered his account of the meeting with Putin, held Friday on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Hamburg, via several defiant tweets fired off Sunday morning from the White House, just before he visited his Northern Virginia golf course — as opposed to in a news conference such as the one Putin held with journalists on Saturday.

Putin and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Trump believed Putin’s assurances that Russia did not interfere in the election.

“It seemed to me that he took it into account and agreed,” Putin told reporters Saturday, although he added, “You should ask him.”

Initially, U.S. officials traveling with Trump would not dispute Putin’s and Lavrov’s accounts when asked by reporters. On Sunday, however, White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, who remained in Washington during the trip, rejected the Russian characterization.

“It’s not true,” Priebus said on “Fox News Sunday.” “The president

absolutely did not believe the denial of President Putin.”

U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded definitively that Russian authorities tried to influence the election in Trump’s favor with illegal hacking and propaganda and other activities.

Trump’s public comments on the issue have been far less definitive, varying widely from tepid acknowledgment to outright doubt about Russia’s role. Under questioning from “Fox News” host Chris Wallace, Priebus also showed varying degrees of certainty about whether Trump believes that Russia meddled in the election.

“He said they probably meddled in the election,” Priebus said, seeming to grow more definitive. But then Priebus seemed to back off: “Yes, he believes that Russia probably committed all of these acts that we’ve been told of. But he also believes that other countries also participated in this activity.”

Trump on Sunday revealed his continued fixation with some aspects of the Russia issue. He falsely accused Barack Obama on Twitter of doing “NOTHING” after learning of the Russian hacking before the election. In fact, on Oct. 7, about a month before the election, the Obama administration formally and publicly blamed Russia for the hacking. Some Obama administration officials have since said that they regret not responding more forcefully.

*[Obama’s secret struggle to punish Russia for Putin’s election assault]*

Trump also chided the news media and, in the context of his meeting with Putin, claimed vaguely that “questions were asked” about the level of cooperation between intelligence agencies and the Democratic National Committee, whose email server was among

those allegedly compromised by the Russians.

John Brennan, who served as CIA director under Obama and ran the agency’s response to Russia’s election interference, chastised Trump on Sunday for repeatedly casting doubt on the conclusions of the intelligence community, including at a news conference last week in Poland.

“I seriously question whether or not Mr. Putin heard from Mr. Trump what he needed to about the assault on our democratic institutions,” Brennan said on NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

Brennan added of Trump: “He said it’s an ‘honor’ to meet President Putin. An honor to meet the individual who carried out the assault against our election? To me, it was a dishonorable thing to say.”

Sens. John McCain (Ariz.), Lindsey O. Graham (S.C.) and Marco Rubio (Fla.) — three leading Republican hawks on Russia — said Sunday that Trump’s eagerness to partner with Putin was dangerous for the United States.

“When it comes to Russia, he’s got a blind spot,” Graham said on “Meet the Press.” “To forgive and forget when it comes to Putin regarding cyberattacks is to empower Putin, and that’s exactly what he’s doing.”

Rubio tweeted that Putin “will never be a trusted ally or a reliable constructive partner,” and that working with him to address cybersecurity threats was akin to partnering with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to protect against chemical weapons.

McCain, meanwhile, lamented that Russia has faced “no penalty whatsoever” from the Trump administration for its hacking.

“We know that Russia tried to change the outcome of our election last November, and they did not

succeed, but there was really sophisticated attempts to do so," McCain said on CBS's "Face the Nation." "So far, they have not paid a single price for that."

Invoking the language of Trump's tweet, McCain added, "Yes, it's time to move forward, but there has to be a price to pay."

McCain championed a bill, passed overwhelmingly in the Senate last month, to slap additional sanctions on Russia. The Trump administration has said it opposes the measure because it preempts the president's powers to apply sanctions.

During a visit to Ukraine, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday that existing sanctions would remain in place until Moscow reverses its intervention in Ukraine and respects the border between the two countries.

Trump tweeted Sunday, "Nothing will be done until the Ukrainian & Syrian problems are solved," adding a reference to Russia's role in Syria's civil war.

Trump also said the issue of sanctions was not discussed in his meeting Friday with Putin, contradicting what Tillerson, who was in attendance, told reporters soon after the meeting. Tillerson said that Trump "took note" of congressional efforts to push for additional sanctions against Russia but that he and Putin focused their discussion on "how do we move forward from here."

*[Tillerson vows relations with Russia will be frosty until it leaves Ukraine alone]*

McCain said Tillerson was a weak advocate for American values abroad. Asked by CBS's John Dickerson whether he regrets his Senate vote to confirm Tillerson as secretary of state, McCain said, "Sometimes I do."

Trump said Sunday he was eager to work with Putin on what he described as an "impenetrable Cyber Security unit" the two men discussed forming "so that election hacking, & many other negative things, will be guarded."

Tillerson explained the unit as a "framework under which we might begin to have agreement on how to deal with these very complex issues of cyberthreats, cybersecurity, cyberintrusions."

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, defended her boss's cooperation with Putin, saying "we won't ever trust Russia" but that working with Russia on cybersecurity will "keep them in check."

"From a cyber standpoint, we need to get together with Russia. We need to tell them what we think should happen, shouldn't happen, and if we talk to them about it, hopefully, we can cut this out and get them to stop," Haley said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union."

The day's most important stories.

She continued: "It doesn't mean we've ever taken our eyes off of the ball. It doesn't mean we ever trust Russia. We can't trust Russia, and we won't ever trust Russia. But you keep those that you don't trust

closer, so that you can always keep an eye on them and keep them in check, and I think that's what we're trying to do with Russia right now."

Trump's pledge to work with Putin on cybersecurity came as U.S. government officials told The Washington Post that Russian government hackers were behind recent intrusions into the systems of U.S. nuclear power and other energy companies.

The idea of a cyber partnership was roundly mocked. Former defense secretary Ashton B. Carter, who served under Obama at the time of Russia's interference, likened it in a CNN interview to "the guy who robbed your house proposing a working group on burglary."

McCain said facetiously on NBC, "I am sure that Vladimir Putin could be of enormous assistance in that effort, since he's doing the hacking."

Carol Morello in Kiev, Ukraine, and David A. Fahrenthold and David Weigel in Washington contributed to this report.



## 'Time to Move Forward' on Russia, Trump Says, as Criticism Intensifies

Julie Hirschfeld Davis

WASHINGTON — President Trump tried without success on Sunday to put the matter of Russia's election meddling behind him, insisting that he had "strongly pressed" President Vladimir V. Putin on the matter twice in a private meeting last week and declaring that it was "time to move forward."

But if Mr. Trump believed his willingness to raise the election interference directly with Mr. Putin would quiet questions about whether he could be trusted to stand up to Moscow — an issue that has shadowed his presidency — he grappled instead on Sunday with the reality that the meeting might have raised more suspicions than it quelled.

Lawmakers in both parties said Mr. Trump had appeased the Russian president by failing to insist that he was responsible for the breach or threaten any consequences, and empowered him by appearing willing to partner on a cybersecurity effort to prevent future incursions.

"You are hurting your ability to govern this nation by forgiving and forgetting and empowering," Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina, said of Mr. Trump, calling his meeting with Mr. Putin "disastrous."

"The more he talks about this in terms of not being sure, the more he

throws our intelligence communities under the bus, the more he's willing to forgive and forget Putin, the more suspicion," Mr. Graham added in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press." "And I think it's going to dog his presidency until he breaks this cycle."

As if to underscore the point, the White House confronted reports later Sunday that Donald Trump Jr., Mr. Trump's eldest son, was promised damaging information about Hillary Clinton before agreeing to meet with a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer at Trump Tower during the campaign last year. The accounts of the meeting, by three White House advisers briefed on it and two others with knowledge of it, represent the first public indication that at least some people in Mr. Trump's campaign were willing to accept Russian help.

Reince Priebus, the White House chief of staff, had played down that meeting during an appearance on "Fox News Sunday," calling it a "nothing meeting," and a "big nothing burger."

President Trump's account of his lengthy and closely scrutinized closed-door meeting with Mr. Putin on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit meeting came in a series of Twitter posts the morning after he had returned from the gathering in Hamburg, Germany. They appeared to be an attempt to move beyond the controversy after Moscow

characterized the election discussion as a meeting of minds rather than a showdown between the American president and his Russian counterpart.

Administration officials knew that Mr. Trump's much-anticipated meeting with Mr. Putin was risky and in some ways a no-win situation. The tangle of investigations into his campaign's possible dealings with Russia raised the stakes and created a damaging backdrop for Mr. Trump, while Mr. Putin's well-earned reputation for outfoxing and manipulating adversaries suggested that he would stage manage the meeting for maximum advantage, making himself appear to have the upper hand.

On Sunday, it appeared that Mr. Putin had to some degree succeeded in doing just that, after Mr. Trump's refusal to answer questions about the encounter essentially ceded the narrative to Mr. Putin.

Mr. Trump broke with tradition and declined to hold a news conference at the end of the G-20 summit meeting, instead sending three top officials to brief a small group of reporters on Air Force One as he was returning on Saturday to Washington. None of them would address the claims of Mr. Putin and Sergey V. Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, that Mr. Trump had seemed satisfied with Mr. Putin's denial of involvement in the hacking.

Mr. Trump's tweets on Sunday did little to dispel the notion that he had backed down on the election meddling issue. He characterized his position as an "opinion" and asserted that he was prepared to team with Moscow — which United States intelligence agencies say carried out a large-scale effort to interfere with American democracy last year, and will try to again — on forming an "impenetrable Cyber Security unit" to thwart future breaches.

"I strongly pressed President Putin twice about Russian meddling in our election," Mr. Trump said in one post. "He vehemently denied it. I've already given my opinion."

"We negotiated a ceasefire in parts of Syria which will save lives," Mr. Trump continued in another message. "Now it is time to move forward in working constructively with Russia!"

Mr. Trump's highlighting of the potential cybersecurity initiative with Moscow — which he backed away from hours later in a tweet that said it would never happen — prompted derision from Republicans and Democrats who said Russia was the last country the United States should trust on such matters.

"I am sure that Vladimir Putin could be of enormous assistance in that effort, since he's doing the hacking," Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona and the chairman of the

Armed Services Committee, said on CBS's "Face the Nation."

Representative Adam B. Schiff, Democrat of California and the ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, called the idea "dangerously naïve."

"I don't think we can expect the Russians to be any kind of a credible partner in some cybersecurity unit," he said on CNN's "State of the Union." "If that's our best election defense, we might as well just mail our ballot boxes to Moscow."

Mr. Trump appeared to abandon the idea on Sunday night, saying on Twitter that while he had discussed a cybersecurity unit with Mr. Putin, it "doesn't mean I think it can happen. It can't." He noted again that a cease-fire in a part of southwestern Syria that was discussed at the meeting had gone into effect on Sunday, an apparent effort to show concrete results from the discussion.

Mr. Trump has dispatched administration officials to defend his performance at the meeting. On Sunday, Mr. Priebus flatly said Mr. Lavrov's version was "not true," and described a confrontational meeting between the two presidents, saying that Mr. Trump "absolutely did not believe the denial of President Putin."

"This was an extensive portion of the meeting," Mr. Priebus said of the election interference discussion.

Senior administration officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they did not have authorization to talk about the private meeting, have said the discussion of the election interference occupied about 40 minutes of the 135-minute discussion.

In separate interviews that aired over the weekend, Nikki R. Haley, the United Nations ambassador, said Mr. Putin's description of the meeting was an attempt to obfuscate.

"This is Russia trying to save face, and they can't," she said on CNN's "State of the Union." "Everybody knows that Russia meddled in our elections."

In a brief question-and-answer session aboard Air Force One as Mr. Trump returned from the summit meeting on Saturday, senior officials did not address or dispute the Russian version of events. But Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary, said three times that Mr. Trump had handled the meeting "brilliantly" and had "made his position felt."

"After a very substantive discussion on this, they reached an agreement that they would start a cyberunit to make sure that there was absolutely no interference whatsoever, that they would work on cybersecurity together," Mr. Mnuchin said. "And President Trump focused the conversation on Syria and the Ukraine and North Korea."

But Mr. Putin, a former K.G.B. agent and a martial arts master, showed

none of Mr. Trump's reluctance to answer questions about the meeting. At his news conference on Saturday, he told reporters that Mr. Trump had asked about election interference repeatedly and "agreed" with his statements about it.

"When possible, I answered his questions in detail," Mr. Putin said. "I got the impression that my answers satisfied him."

Given Mr. Trump's past questioning of the extent of Russia's role — including in Warsaw the day before his meeting with Mr. Putin — that impression is likely to persist.

"He's worse off now, not better," said Michael A. McFaul, a former United States ambassador to Russia who served under President Barack Obama. "I don't think this meeting in any way advanced American national interests or took the air out of people's suspicions about Trump's relationship with Russia."



## 5 Takeaways From the 'Very Robust,' 2-Hour Meeting Between Trump and Putin

Emily Tamjkin

Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump finally had their first, and much-awaited, face-to-face meeting as world leaders on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Hamburg on Friday.

It was hard for Americans to suss out just what had happened in the meeting, which lasted much, much longer than expected. Unlike his Russian counterpart, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson did not hold an on-camera briefing after the meeting's conclusion, ceding to Moscow the narrative about what happened behind closed doors.

Tillerson said the meeting was "very robust," "very constructive," and featured that most important element of diplomacy, "clear positive chemistry."

Flying sparks and fawning eyes aside, here are five big takeaways from the Trump-Putin summit.

**We're no closer to getting a straight answer from Trump as to what role, exactly, he thinks**

**Russia played in the 2016 presidential election.**

By all accounts, Russia's meddling in the U.S. election came up in the meeting. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, with decades of diplomatic experience, said Trump accepted Putin's explanation that Russia did not hack America's 2016 presidential elections. Lavrov also said, "Trump mentioned that in the U.S. certain circles still inflate subject of Russian meddling in elections, even though they have no proof."

Tillerson said that Trump raised the issue with Putin, who denied a Russian role, and that the two see no point in relitigating the past.

"The two leaders agreed, though, that this is a substantial hindrance in the ability of us to move the Russian-U.S. relationship forward, and agreed to exchange further work regarding commitments of non-interference in the affairs of the United States and our democratic process as well as those of other countries."

Anonymous administration officials, who the White House says cannot be trusted, later told CNN that Trump did not accept Putin's claims.

**But Russia and the United States have agreed to work together on cybersecurity.**

The two sides agreed not to (further?) interfere in one another's affairs and cooperate on keeping their cyber strong. Or, to use Tillerson's parlance, they "agreed to explore creating a framework around which the two countries can work together to better understand how to deal with these cyber threats, both in terms of how these tools are used to interfere with the internal affairs of countries, but also how these tools are used to threaten infrastructure, how these tools are used from a terrorism standpoint as well."

**Putin and Trump bonded over their hostility toward a free press.**

**Another cease-fire was brokered in Syria.**

However, there are still "details" to be worked out as to who will enforce it. Also, Israel hates the idea. And Tillerson acknowledged that previous cease-fires have failed quickly.

**The two countries have more in common than separating them.**

This, according to Tillerson. "I would tell you that, by and large, our objectives are exactly the same." (That stuck in the throat of U.S. foreign-policy experts.)

Those areas of common ground do not, however, include Ukraine, North Korea's nuclear program, or the U.S. deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system to South Korea, which Russia has said should stop, and which apparently did not come up in the two-hour-and-15-minute meeting.

## ETATS-UNIS

## Trump's Son Met With Russian Lawyer After Being Promised Damaging Information on Clinton (UNE)

Jo Becker, Matt Apuzzo and Adam Goldman

President Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., was promised damaging information about Hillary Clinton before agreeing to meet with a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer during the 2016 campaign, according to three advisers to the White House briefed on the meeting and two others with knowledge of it.

The meeting was also attended by his campaign chairman at the time, Paul J. Manafort, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner. Mr. Manafort and Mr. Kushner recently disclosed the meeting, though not its content, in confidential government documents described to The New York Times.

The Times reported the existence of the meeting on Saturday. But in subsequent interviews, the advisers and others revealed the motivation behind it.

The meeting — at Trump Tower on June 9, 2016, two weeks after Donald J. Trump clinched the Republican nomination — points to the central question in federal investigations of the Kremlin's meddling in the presidential election: whether the Trump campaign colluded with the Russians. The accounts of the meeting represent the first public indication that at least some in the campaign were willing to accept Russian help.

While President Trump has been dogged by revelations of undisclosed meetings between his associates and the Russians, the episode at Trump Tower is the first such confirmed private meeting involving his inner circle during the campaign — as well as the first one known to have included his eldest son. It came at an inflection point in the campaign, when Donald Trump Jr., who served as an adviser and a surrogate, was ascendant and Mr. Manafort was consolidating power.

It is unclear whether the Russian lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, actually produced the promised compromising information about Mrs. Clinton. But the people interviewed by The Times about the meeting said the expectation was that she would do so.

When he was first asked about the meeting on Saturday, Donald Trump Jr. said that it was primarily about adoptions and mentioned nothing about Mrs. Clinton.

But on Sunday, presented with The Times's findings, he offered a new account. In a statement, he said he had met with the Russian lawyer at the request of an acquaintance from the 2013 Miss Universe pageant, which his father took to Moscow. "After pleasantries were exchanged," he said, "the woman stated that she had information that individuals connected to Russia were funding the Democratic National Committee and supporting Mrs. Clinton. Her statements were vague, ambiguous and made no sense. No details or supporting information was provided or even offered. It quickly became clear that she had no meaningful information."

He said she then turned the conversation to adoption of Russian children and the Magnitsky Act, an American law that blacklists suspected Russian human rights abusers. The 2012 law so enraged President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia that he halted American adoptions of Russian children.

"It became clear to me that this was the true agenda all along and that the claims of potentially helpful information were a pretext for the meeting," Mr. Trump said.

Two people briefed on the meeting said the intermediary was Rob Goldstone, a former British tabloid journalist and the president of a company called Oui 2 Entertainment who has worked with the Miss Universe pageant. He did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

Mark Corallo, a spokesman for the president's lawyer, said on Sunday that "the president was not aware of and did not attend the meeting."

Lawyers for Mr. Kushner referred to their statement a day earlier, confirming that he voluntarily disclosed the meeting but referring questions about it to Donald Trump Jr. Mr. Manafort declined to comment. In his statement, Donald Trump Jr. said he asked Mr. Manafort and Mr. Kushner to attend, but did not tell them what the meeting was about.

Political campaigns collect opposition research from many quarters but rarely from sources linked to foreign governments.

American intelligence agencies have concluded that Russian hackers and propagandists worked to tip the election toward Donald J. Trump, in part by stealing and then providing to WikiLeaks internal Democratic Party and Clinton

campaign emails that were embarrassing to Mrs. Clinton. WikiLeaks began releasing the material on July 22.

A special prosecutor and congressional committees are now investigating the Trump campaign's possible collusion with the Russians. Mr. Trump has disputed that, but the investigation has cast a shadow over his administration.

Mr. Trump has also equivocated on whether the Russians were solely responsible for the hacking. On Sunday, two days after his first meeting as president with Mr. Putin, Mr. Trump said in a Twitter post: "I strongly pressed President Putin twice about Russian meddling in our election. He vehemently denied it. I've already given my opinion....."

On Sunday morning on Fox News, the White House chief of staff, Reince Priebus, described the Trump Tower meeting as a "big nothing burger."

"Talking about issues of foreign policy, issues related to our place in the world, issues important to the American people is not unusual," he said.

But Representative Adam B. Schiff of California, the leading Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, one of the panels investigating Russian election interference, said he wanted to question "everyone that was at that meeting."

"There's no reason for this Russian government advocate to be meeting with Paul Manafort or with Mr. Kushner or the president's son if it wasn't about the campaign and Russia policy," Mr. Schiff said after the initial Times report.

Ms. Veselnitskaya, the Russian lawyer invited to the Trump Tower meeting, is best known for mounting a multipronged attack against the Magnitsky Act.

The adoption impasse is a frequently used talking point for opponents of the act. Ms. Veselnitskaya's campaign against the law has also included attempts to discredit the man after whom it was named, Sergei L. Magnitsky, a lawyer and auditor who died in 2009 in mysterious circumstances in a Russian prison after exposing one of the biggest corruption scandals during Mr. Putin's rule.

Ms. Veselnitskaya's clients include state-owned businesses and a senior government official's son, whose company was under

investigation in the United States at the time of the meeting. Her activities and associations had previously drawn the attention of the F.B.I., according to a former senior law enforcement official.

Ms. Veselnitskaya said in a statement on Saturday that "nothing at all about the presidential campaign" was discussed at the Trump Tower meeting. She recalled that after about 10 minutes, either Mr. Kushner or Mr. Manafort left the room.

She said she had "never acted on behalf of the Russian government" and "never discussed any of these matters with any representative of the Russian government."

The Trump Tower meeting was disclosed to government officials in recent weeks, when Mr. Kushner, who is also a senior White House aide, filed a revised version of a confidential form required to obtain a security clearance.

The Times reported in April that he had not disclosed any foreign contacts, including meetings with the Russian ambassador to the United States and the head of a Russian state bank. Failure to report such contacts can result in a loss of access to classified information and even, if information is knowingly falsified or concealed, in imprisonment.

Mr. Kushner's advisers said at the time that the omissions were an error, and that he had immediately notified the F.B.I. that he would be revising the filing.

Mr. Manafort, the former campaign chairman, also recently disclosed the meeting, and Donald Trump Jr.'s role in organizing it, to congressional investigators who had questions about his foreign contacts, according to people familiar with the events. Neither Mr. Manafort nor Mr. Kushner was required to disclose the content of the meeting.

Since the president took office, Donald Trump Jr. and his brother Eric have assumed day-to-day control of their father's real estate empire. Because he does not serve in the administration and does not have a security clearance, Donald Trump Jr. was not required to disclose his foreign contacts. Federal and congressional investigators have not publicly asked for any records that would require his disclosure of Russian contacts.

## Got a confidential news tip?

The New York Times would like to hear from readers who want to share messages and materials with our journalists.

But in an interview with The Times in March, he denied participating in any campaign-related meetings with Russian nationals. "Did I meet with people that were Russian? I'm sure, I'm sure I did," he said. "But none that were set up. None that I can think of at the moment. And certainly none that I was representing the campaign in any way."

In addition to her campaign against the Magnitsky Act, Ms. Veselnitskaya represents powerful players in Russia. Among her clients is Denis Katsyv, the Russian owner of Prevezon Holdings, an investment company based in Cyprus. He is the son of Petr

Katsyv, the vice president of the state-owned Russian Railways and a former deputy governor of the Moscow region. In a civil forfeiture case in New York, the Justice Department alleged that Prevezon had helped launder money linked to the \$230 million corruption scheme exposed by Mr. Magnitsky by putting it in real estate and bank accounts. Prevezon recently settled the case for \$6 million without admitting wrongdoing.

Ms. Veselnitskaya and her client also hired a team of political and legal operatives in the United States. The team included Rinat Akhmetshin, an émigré to the United States who once served as a Soviet military officer and who has been called a Russian political gun for hire. Fusion GPS, a consulting firm that produced an intelligence dossier that contained unverified allegations about Mr. Trump, was

also hired to do research for Prevezon.

The F.B.I. began a counterintelligence investigation last year into Russian contacts with any Trump associates. Agents focused on Mr. Manafort and a pair of advisers, Carter Page and Roger J. Stone Jr.

Among those now under investigation is Michael T. Flynn, who was forced to resign as Mr. Trump's national security adviser after it became known that he had falsely denied speaking to the Russian ambassador about sanctions imposed by the Obama administration over the election hacking.

Congress later learned that Mr. Flynn had been paid more than \$65,000 by companies linked to Russia, and that he had failed to disclose those payments when he

renewed his security clearance and underwent an additional background check to join the White House staff.

In May, the president fired the F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, who days later provided information about a meeting with Mr. Trump at the White House. According to Mr. Comey, the president asked him to end the bureau's investigation into Mr. Flynn; Mr. Trump has repeatedly denied making such a request. Robert S. Mueller III, a former F.B.I. director, was then appointed as special counsel.

The status of Mr. Mueller's investigation is not clear, but he has assembled a veteran team of prosecutors and agents to dig into any possible collusion.



## Trump Jr. met with Russian lawyer during presidential campaign after being promised information helpful to father's effort (UNE)

Donald Trump Jr., the president's son, said in a statement Sunday that a Russian lawyer with whom he met in June 2016 claimed she could provide potentially damaging information about his father's likely Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

He said he had agreed to the meeting at Trump Tower in New York because he was offered information that would be helpful to the campaign of his father, then the presumptive GOP presidential nominee.

At the meeting, which also included the candidate's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and then-campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, the Russian lawyer opened by saying she knew about Russians funding the Democratic National Committee and Clinton, the statement said.

Trump Jr. said that her comments during the meeting were "vague, ambiguous and made no sense" and that she then changed the subject to discuss a prohibition that the Russian government placed on the adoption of Russian children as retaliation for sanctions imposed by Congress in 2012.

Donald Jr. said that his father "knew nothing of the meeting or these events" and that the campaign had no further contact with the woman after the 20- to 30-minute session.

The president's son did not disclose the discussion when the meeting was first made public by the New York Times on Saturday and did so only on Sunday as the Times prepared to report that he had been

offered information on Clinton at the session.

The revelations about the meeting come as federal prosecutors and congressional investigators explore whether the Trump campaign coordinated and encouraged Russian efforts to intervene in the election to hurt Clinton and elect Trump. Hackers began leaking emails stolen from the Democratic Party in July 2016, and U.S. intelligence agencies have said the effort was orchestrated by Russia to help elect Trump.

The meeting suggests that some Trump aides were in the market to collect negative information that could be used against Clinton — at the same time that U.S. government officials have concluded Russians were collecting such data.

Trump officials have vigorously denied they colluded with Russia in any way.

In his statement, Trump Jr. said he did not know the lawyer's name, Natalia Veselnitskaya, before attending the meeting at the request of an acquaintance. He said that after pleasantries were exchanged, the lawyer told him that "she had information that individuals connected to Russia were funding the Democratic National Committee and supporting Ms. Clinton."

"No details or supporting information was provided or even offered. It quickly became clear that she had no meaningful information," he said, saying he concluded that claims of helpful information for the

campaign had been a "pretext" for setting up the meeting.

Mark Corallo, a spokesman for Trump's attorney, said Trump was unaware of the meeting and did not attend it.

Neither Manafort nor his spokesman responded to requests for comment Sunday evening. Attorneys for Kushner also did not respond to requests for comment Sunday. On Saturday, a Kushner attorney, Jamie Gorelick, said her client had previously revised required disclosure forms to note multiple meetings with foreign nationals, including the session in June with Veselnitskaya. "As Mr. Kushner has consistently stated, he is eager to cooperate and share what he knows," Gorelick said.

In his statement, Trump Jr. said he was approached about the meeting by an acquaintance he knew from the 2013 Miss Universe pageant.

He did not name the acquaintance, but in an interview Sunday, Rob Goldstone, a music publicist who is friendly with Trump Jr., told The Washington Post that he had arranged the meeting at the request of a Russian client and had attended it along with Veselnitskaya.

Goldstone has been active with the Miss Universe pageant and works as a manager for Emin Agalarov, a Russian pop star whose father is a wealthy Moscow developer who sponsored the pageant in the Russian capital in 2013.

Goldstone would not name the client. He said Veselnitskaya

wanted to discuss ways that Trump could be helpful about the Russian government's adoption issue should he be elected president.

"Once she presented what she had to say, it was like, 'Can you keep an eye on it? Should [Trump] be in power, maybe that's a conversation that he may have in the future?'" Goldstone said.

In the Sunday interview, Goldstone did not describe the conversation about Clinton or indicate that he had told Trump Jr. that he could provide information helpful to the campaign. He did not respond to a second request for comment late Sunday. Likewise, a spokeswoman for Donald Trump Jr. did not respond when asked whether Goldstone was the acquaintance to whom the president's son was referring.

His role in the meeting has not been previously reported.

### Local Politics Alerts

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

Veselnitskaya's client roll includes individuals and companies close to the Kremlin. She has for the past several years been a leading advocate around the world to fight Magnitsky Acts, sanctions intended to rebuke Russia for human rights abuses. The acts are named for Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian lawyer who died under mysterious circumstances in a Moscow prison in 2009 after exposing a corruption scandal.



She did not respond to requests for comment from The Post but told the Times in a statement that she had never acted on behalf of the Russian government and that the meeting included no discussion of the presidential campaign.

The meeting occurred during a period of intense focus on the Magnitsky sanctions. Four days

after the Trump Tower session June 9, Veselnitskaya was in Washington attending a House Foreign Relations Committee hearing that discussed sanctions and other aspects of U.S.-Russia relations.

That evening, a film critical of the Magnitsky sanctions — and the story behind them — showed at the Newseum. On June 15,

Veselnitskaya was featured on the Sputnik News website criticizing the sanctions and its leading advocate, William Browder, a financier who left Russia a decade ago amid concerns about corruption, including that exposed by Magnitsky, the lawyer and auditor he had hired.

Browder led the lobbying for the Magnitsky Act's passage in 2012, a

vote that infuriated Putin, leading the Russian leader to retaliate by halting American adoption of Russian children. The adoption issue is frequently used as a talking point by opponents of the Magnitsky Act, Browder said.

**THE WALL  
STREET  
JOURNAL.**

## Trump Jr. Met Russian Lawyer Who Claimed to Have Information on Hillary Clinton (UNE)

Rebecca Ballhaus

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump's eldest son arranged a June 2016 meeting between top campaign aides and a Russian lawyer who has been linked to the Kremlin after being told she "might have information helpful to the campaign."

In a statement Sunday, Donald Trump Jr. said he didn't know the lawyer's name before the meeting, and said they were set up by an "acquaintance" from the 2013 Miss Universe pageant. The meeting, in New York City, was also attended by Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law and senior adviser, and Paul Manafort, President Trump's campaign chairman at the time. The younger Mr. Trump said he told Messrs. Kushner and Manafort "nothing of the substance" of the meeting beforehand.

Mr. Manafort resigned about two months later amid reports of his connection to pro-Russian political forces in Ukraine. Investigators are currently examining whether Mr. Manafort's work for foreign interests violated the Foreign Agents Registration Act and related laws. Mr. Manafort's spokesman has said he is taking the "appropriate steps" to respond to guidance from federal authorities about his FARA disclosures.

In the meeting, the lawyer, Natalia Veselnitskaya, "stated that she had information that individuals connected to Russia were funding the Democratic National Committee and supporting [Hillary] Clinton," Mr. Trump Jr. said in his statement. "Her statements were vague, ambiguous and made no sense. No details or supporting information was provided or even offered. It quickly became clear that she had no meaningful information." When Ms. Veselnitskaya then raised the issue of the Magnitsky Act, which placed sanctions on Russian human-rights abusers, Mr. Trump Jr. said he cut off the meeting.

Ms. Veselnitskaya couldn't be reached for comment.

Revelations of the 2016 meeting arrived over the weekend as President Trump was returning to Washington after a G-20 summit meeting in Hamburg, where he met one-on-one with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In Sunday morning tweets, the U.S. president said he "strongly pressed" the Russian leader twice about meddling in the U.S. election and that Mr. Putin "vehemently denied it." But he also suggested the U.S. could "work with" Russia on cybersecurity issues.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle were critical of Mr. Trump's handling of the meeting, saying he could have more strongly protested Russian meddling and that he appeared overly willing to look past Russia's efforts to interfere in the U.S. election. They also questioned Mr. Trump's suggestion that the U.S. could work with Russia on cybersecurity issues, saying it would only empower a regime that has hacked systems in the U.S.

U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that Russian hackers, who analysts say work for that country's military and intelligence apparatus, stole emails from the DNC, as well as another Democratic organization and the chairman of Mrs. Clinton's presidential campaign, as part of their effort to harm her candidacy and boost Mr. Trump. That finding was first publicly addressed in the fall of 2016.

Investigators in Congress as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation are examining whether Russian money could have made its way into the U.S. election process, according to multiple officials with knowledge of the investigation. But whether those money flows took the form of laundered campaign contributions—foreign parties cannot donate to U.S. politics campaigns—or whether Russian funds were used in support of candidates is unclear.

A person close to the Trump campaign recalled getting an email around the time of the meeting with the Russian attorney asking about

the campaign's stance on the Magnitsky Act. The person could not recall if they responded to the email, or whether it was before or after the meeting took place.

In a statement on Saturday about the meeting, Mr. Trump Jr. had made no mention of the promise of helpful information Ms. Veselnitskaya could provide, or of her statements about Russian campaign funds. Instead, he said the meeting "primarily discussed a program about the adoption of Russian children that was active and popular with American families years ago and was since ended by the Russian government."

The Trump aides met with Ms. Veselnitskaya on June 9, about a month after Mr. Trump effectively clinched the Republican nomination. The New York Times first reported the meeting on Saturday.

The president didn't become aware of the meeting with Ms. Veselnitskaya until recent weeks, according to a person familiar with the conversation.

The U.S. intelligence community has concluded that Mr. Putin ordered a campaign to influence the outcome of the 2016 U.S. presidential election in Mr. Trump's favor, and a special counsel appointed by the Justice Department earlier this year is investigating whether Trump campaign aides colluded with Russia in that effort. Mr. Trump has denied that there was any collusion and has said he doubts the intelligence community's assessment, saying earlier this week, "No one really knows for sure."

Brian Fallon, who served as press secretary for the Clinton campaign, said the younger Mr. Trump's decision to take a meeting with a Russian individual who promised helpful campaign information raised further questions about potential collusion.

Mr. Kushner disclosed the meeting with Ms. Veselnitskaya earlier this year in a required form to obtain a security clearance, according to a

statement by his attorney, Jamie Gorelick. Mr. Kushner initially filed a disclosure that didn't list any contacts with foreign government officials, but the next day submitted a supplemental disclosure saying that he had engaged in "numerous contacts with foreign officials."

Mr. Kushner has since submitted information about "over 100 calls or meetings with representatives of more than 20 countries, most of which were during transition," Ms. Gorelick said.

"Mr. Kushner has submitted additional updates and included, out of an abundance of caution, this meeting with a Russian person, which he briefly attended at the request of his brother-in-law, Donald Trump Jr.," Ms. Gorelick said. "As Mr. Kushner has consistently stated, he is eager to cooperate and share what he knows."

Two previously disclosed meetings Mr. Kushner held with key Russians—the head of a state-run bank that has faced U.S. sanctions and Sergei Kislyak, the Russian ambassador to the U.S.—had already drawn the interest of agents conducting a counterintelligence investigation to determine the extent of those contacts. Mr. Kushner agreed earlier this year to speak to the Senate Intelligence Committee, becoming the first White House official to do so.

Ms. Veselnitskaya counts among her clients state-owned companies and family members of top government officials and her husband previously served as deputy transportation minister of the Moscow region.

As a lawyer, she has campaigned against the Magnitsky Act, which targets Russian human-rights abusers, and the Russian accountant for whom the measure was named, Sergei Magnitsky was jailed and died in prison after he uncovered evidence of a large tax-refund fraud.

In a move seen as retaliation to that law, Mr. Putin in 2012 signed a law

banning adoption of Russian children by American families.

In postings on her social media accounts, Ms. Veselnitskaya appeared critical of former President Barack Obama and the Democratic Party. Last July, she

shared an article posted by another page and highlighted the quote, "Liberalism is a f—ing mental disorder." She has also appeared to cheer some of Mr. Trump's top achievements, such as the confirmation earlier this year of Neil

Gorsuch, Mr. Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court.

—Shane Harris contributed to this article.

Write to Rebecca Ballhaus at [Rebecca.Ballhaus@wsj.com](mailto:Rebecca.Ballhaus@wsj.com)

Appeared in the July 10, 2017, print edition as 'Trump's Son Met With Russian About Campaign.'

## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### Following Recess, GOP Health-Care Push Gets Trickier (UNE)

Stephanie Armour

WASHINGTON—Senate Republicans returning from a July 4 recess are so divided over a health-overhaul bill that they are also struggling to agree on what to do if they fail to pass their legislation.

Some conservative lawmakers say an implosion of the Republican legislation would give them a chance to return to their goal of fully repealing the Affordable Care Act, putting off until later a decision about what system to put in its place. Others, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.), are considering the possibility of legislation to shore up the law's marketplaces where individuals buy health coverage, action that would involve working with Democrats.

The focus on possible steps to take if Senate Republicans can't unite around a health bill is the strongest sign yet of the growing pessimism about the fate of the GOP legislation and the party's seven-year pledge to topple the ACA. Some Republicans now say a vote to pass a bill could stretch beyond August, if there is a vote at all.

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R., La.) said Sunday on Fox that he has reservations about the bill. Mr. Cassidy, a physician, was one of three Republicans who held town hall-style meetings over the July 4 congressional recess. He gives the bill a 50-50 chance of passing this month.

The weeklong recess has only made Senate Republicans' path toward health legislation harder, with lawmakers returning to Washington facing at least one more defection and negotiations sputtering between conservatives and centrists. Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota told a local newspaper that he doesn't support the current legislation, joining nine other members who had already come out against it.

In addition, Mr. McConnell's suggestion over the break that lawmakers would have to act to stabilize health-insurance markets if GOP senators can't agree on legislation drew sniping from within his own party.

Negotiations over changes to the bill to bring more Republicans on board have reached an apparent standoff. Conservatives, like Mike Lee of Utah, are insisting on a provision that would let insurers sell cheaper, less-comprehensive plans. But centrists have signaled they would oppose such a measure, fearing it would erode protections for people with pre-existing health conditions.

The intraparty divide presents a tough obstacle for Mr. McConnell. Republicans initially aimed to get health legislation to President Donald Trump's desk by early April, according to a presentation by GOP leaders. Then a vote was planned for just before the recess, but Mr. McConnell, of Kentucky, was forced to postpone it.

Now a vote, if one occurs, would likely come in mid-to-late July, with Congress's August recess serving as the next deadline. If that fails, the legislative calendar would only get more difficult.

While the ACA funds expansions in health coverage with taxes on health industries and high-income households, the GOP bill does the reverse. It would repeal taxes and lower projected government spending toward Americans' health coverage while phasing out the ACA's Medicaid expansion and cutting Medicaid more broadly. It would reduce the ACA's tax credits for low-income consumers and would let states get waivers from some insurance regulations. It also would scale back ACA requirements imposed on employer-based health plans.

The most conservative senators say the bill doesn't go far enough toward repealing the ACA, while more centrist lawmakers such as Sen. Susan Collins of Maine worry

that it guts too much of the current law and takes coverage from too many people.

The legislation would leave 22 million more people uninsured in a decade compared with the ACA, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

As Republicans struggled to unite behind a bill, Mr. Trump said in late June that if they can't, they should pass a bill repealing the ACA, sometimes called Obamacare, and then work on a replacement. He reiterated that message in a tweet on Sunday. Mr. McConnell has shown little enthusiasm for that idea, and some Capitol Hill aides say Mr. Trump's suggestion has complicated the ability to get legislation passed.

The majority leader, who presides over a narrow 52-48 majority, can afford to lose two GOP votes and still pass the bill, with Vice President Mike Pence breaking a potential 50-50 tie.

Mr. McConnell hoped to assemble a revised bill over the recess but, publicly at least, Senate Republicans seem at least as polarized as before. Mr. Hoeven said he is concerned the bill doesn't do enough to help low-income people in his state and those with pre-existing conditions.

Still, he said he hopes health-care legislation, possibly composed of multiple bills instead of one, would pass.

"I think there's a number of ways to do it, but we're going to have to make sure that between Medicaid and the refundable tax credit that we have a good option for low-income individuals," he said in an interview last week.

Conservatives responded sharply to Mr. McConnell's suggestion that Republicans, presumably working with Democrats, would have to pass a measure to stabilize the insurance markets if they couldn't agree on their own health bill. Such efforts could include continuing billions of dollars in payments to insurers to

offset their costs for providing subsidies that lower out-of-pocket costs for low-income consumers. Mr. Trump has threatened to stop those payments.

"If the Republican Party wants to work with Democrats to bail out Obamacare, the results will be catastrophic for the party," said Michael Needham, CEO of Heritage Action for America, the lobbying arm of the Heritage Foundation, the conservative group. "For seven years it has pledged it is the party of repeal, and now is the time to work toward that goal."

A recent proposal from Sen. Ted Cruz (R., Texas) has also provoked divisions. It would let insurers that sell plans complying with ACA regulations also sell health policies that don't.

Health analysts say that would likely cut premiums for younger, healthier people, who would buy more limited policies, while causing premiums to rise for people with pre-existing conditions who would buy the more comprehensive plans that comply with the ACA.

Conservative groups are insisting the Cruz proposal be a part of the Senate legislation. Mr. Cruz's plan has been sent to CBO, which is expected to provide an analysis of its financial and coverage impact as early as this week, according to a person familiar with the talks.

Mr. Cruz has said that providing additional choices would lower premiums for many, and that sicker people would still have options. "Under this amendment, the protections for pre-existing conditions remain there," Mr. Cruz told a Dallas television station.

But Democrats said the plan would create a bifurcated system with insurance becoming increasingly expensive for older, less-healthy individuals. "This is nothing more than a two-track system for making Trumpcare even meaner," said Sen. Patty Murray (D., Wash.).



## Zelizer : How GOP could make health care deal with Democrats

Julian Zelizer, a history and public

affairs professor at Princeton University and a CNN political

analyst, is the author of "The Fierce Urgency of Now: Lyndon Johnson,

Congress, and the Battle for the Great Society." He's co-host of the

"Politics & Polls" podcast. The opinions expressed in this commentary are his own.

(CNN)Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell surprised the White House and many Republicans last week when he floated the idea that his party might end up working with Democrats if they fail to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

McConnell's words sound like more of a threat than a promise, particularly to intransigent Republicans who might fear that a bipartisan bill would be far less palatable to them and to the GOP base.

But let's imagine there is something to McConnell's idea. What if he is able and willing to mobilize a coalition of Democrats and moderate Republicans such as Senator Susan Collins to fix the Affordable Care Act through subsidies and other reforms that stabilize the health insurance markets?

### Reagan and Social Security

One of President Ronald Reagan's biggest defeats early in his administration came on his proposal to cut Social Security benefits for early retirees. When he included this measure in his budget, congressional Democrats snapped to attention. Dejected after Reagan's 1980 victory over President Jimmy Carter, Democrats criticized Reagan for trying to slash the benefits that elderly Americans depended on.

But Reagan didn't back away forever. In 1982, Social Security was back on the agenda when experts warned that Franklin Delano Roosevelt's greatest legacy faced a massive budgetary imbalance in the near term that threatened the program. The government would be spending more on benefits every month than it was raising through payroll taxes.

Reagan, still stinging from his defeat, established a bipartisan commission to offer recommendations about how to fix the program. Reagan appointed Alan Greenspan to serve as the chairman of the 15-person commission. The panel, which had more Republicans than Democrats, reviewed every possible solution. Democrats like Claude Pepper of Florida warned that the commission was stacked with conservatives and would not produce anything that his side could accept.

And other Democrats warned that the commission would have trouble making recommendations that were acceptable to their party. After all, the GOP was the party of Reagan, who had repeatedly expressed his

opposition to the basic structure of Social Security, as well as Medicare.

In the 1982 midterm elections that took place while the commission met, many House Democrats -- who picked up 26 seats -- ran on the saying that, "It's not fair . . . It's Republican" in reference to the Social Security plan and other conservative domestic policies. Democrats handed out bumper stickers that read, "Save Social Security -- vote Democratic."

The commission came back with a recommendation to put the program on sound footing. The report "rejected proposals to make the Social Security program a voluntary one." But there were concerns that partisan pressures would sink the commission's recommendations.

Greenspan's panel proposed increasing Social Security revenues by taxing a larger number of employees, accelerating tax rates, taxing some Social Security benefits, delaying cost of living adjustments and more. Reagan expressed his support for their recommendations, saying, "Well, sometimes, even here in Washington, the cynics are wrong. Through compromise and cooperation, the members of the commission overcame their differences."

### Dole and Moynihan

Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, the stalwart conservative from Kansas, had made a number of statements indicating his support for modest reforms to save the program, including

an op-ed

in The New York Times published on January 3.

Dole argued that "Through a combination of relatively modest steps, including some acceleration of already scheduled taxes and some reduction in the rate of future benefit increases, the system can be saved." He added that "When it is, much of the credit, rightfully, will belong to this President and his party."

Democratic Senator Patrick Moynihan of New York, who was on the commission with Dole and had just been sworn in to a second term, was energized by Dole's op-ed. Moynihan

approached

Dole on the Senate floor and asked: "Are we going to let this commission die without giving it one more try?" The op-ed was crucial to Moynihan, who recalled that until that point Republicans "were talking about scrapping the system."

White House Chief of Staff James Baker organized a "gang of five" (also called the "gang of nine" for those who included the four White House staffers who participated) with members from both parties who entered into an intense, secretive set of meetings to find a resolution. Hardly "anyone expected the negotiations to succeed,"

according to the Times

given the intensity of partisan division.

Their meetings were conducted behind closed doors, leaving some to fear the kind of wheeling and dealing that was taking place. In his classic account of the reforms,

"Artful Work: The Politics of Social Security Reform,"

political scientist Paul Light wrote that the closed-door negotiations were essential to success so that members could make "painful choices" on key issues.

Other than a long break on January 8 to watch the Washington Redskins compete in the NFL playoffs, the negotiations were nonstop. In the end, both sides agreed that the final deal had to inflict some political pain on both parties -- that was the only way it could work. They reached a deal on January 15.

The administration found support from such congressional Democrats as Speaker Tip O'Neill who was eager to join the president in this effort to save a key part of the social safety net.

Congress eventually passed legislation that raised the payroll tax, raised the retirement age from 65 to 67, delayed the cost of living adjustment for six months and required government workers to pay for Social Security. The Social Security Amendments of 1983, a \$168 billion package, remain a landmark moment in the history of the program. It made the program solvent for several more decades.

Reagan said the legislation "demonstrates for all time our nation's ironclad commitment to Social Security." He continued, "It assures the elderly that America will always keep the promises made in troubled times a half a century ago. It assures those who are still working that they, too, have a pact with the future."

### The health care impasse

In 2017, repeating this success with health care seems almost inconceivable. The polarization in Washington has become so much worse that it is hard to imagine the two parties coming together on any issue of this significance.

House Republicans who are part of the Freedom Caucus and their allies in the Senate will have little appetite to join Democrats on any initiative. Shifting to the center feels to them like the ultimate act of political betrayal. Any Republican willing to sign on to such a deal would face great political risks back home. Repealing Obamacare has been so important symbolically that compromising on this question could be politically disastrous for Republican members of Congress.

Democrats will likewise have little appetite to hand President Trump a victory of this sort. The utter failure of Republicans to deliver on repealing the ACA, with the realization that much of the program is far more popular than conservatives believed it to be, has been one of the main rallying points for the Democratic Party. Continuing to hammer away on this issue, rather than giving Republicans a victory, could be critical to success in the 2018 election, allowing them to both save the program and regain control of the House. So why compromise right now?

And both parties must grapple with the reality that millions of Americans who now have health coverage are likely facing rising costs.

Yet maybe the politics will move Washington in the most unexpected of directions. Perhaps McConnell will see that bipartisanship might in fact offer his party the best way to save itself on health care and to move on to more appetizing issues, such as cutting taxes for business and investors. This could be a legacy-making moment for him as a congressional leader, even if there are big short-term political costs.

### What a deal could mean

For Trump, it could allow him to finally claim a domestic victory and give some credence to the notion that he is a maverick. Should he defy the conservative Republicans, he might come out of this with more leverage to move the party on other issues.

Democrats could break the lock that Tea Party Republicans have had on Capitol Hill since 2010 and create a precedent for other sorts of alliances, such as a deal on rebuilding infrastructure, that go against the conventional wisdom. Republicans who locked in march step with the conservative caucus would know that the possibility of bipartisanship was a real option.

Democrats face the real risk that if gridlock prevents Congress from fixing the program, the costs of premiums will continue to rise and more insurers will pull out of health

care markets, leaving the party to shoulder the responsibility of these problems. Instead, through a deal, the Democrats could come out of this bruising battle with a new and improved ACA.

In entering this alliance, they could save a health care program that is

central to their party's recent rule, and offer ongoing evidence -- in the midterms and the next presidential election -- of what they can accomplish when they are in power.

The President could immediately generate some good press coverage by creating a bipartisan

commission to offer recommendations for fixing the ACA.

The odds of any of this happening are slim. Intense partisan polarization is not some imaginary force in national politics -- it defines our era.

Yet every now and then, as the nation saw in 1983, both parties can find a way to join hands with the opposition in ways that benefit both of their interests and help citizens achieve more security in their lives.

**The  
New York  
Times**

## Editorial : The Senate Health Care Charade

It is tempting to think that the Republican health care proposal, which would do so much damage to so many Americans, will collapse in the Senate, since conservatives and centrists alike have come out against it. But that would be premature. After all, House leaders managed to cobble together a narrow majority for their bill after similar protests in that chamber.

At least some of the Senate opposition to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's opening bid in the health care wars is mere political theater. Far-right senators who are protesting that the bill does not do enough to get rid of the dreaded Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, are almost certainly posturing. These lawmakers want to be seen as making the bill more extreme to burnish their conservative bona fides. But they do not want to be blamed for blocking legislation that by any objective analysis achieves the Republican goal of destroying the A.C.A. and more. It would greatly weaken Medicaid, a program that many in the party have long despised. And it would leave more people uninsured than if Congress repealed Obamacare without putting anything in its place, according to a recent analysis by the Urban Institute.

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas has already floated a potential compromise that could get him and

at least one more conservative, Mike Lee of Utah, to vote for the bill. His proposal would let insurers sell two different kinds of policies: ones that meet the requirements of the A.C.A. and ones that do not. The idea is to let younger, healthier people buy skipper, cheaper plans that do not cover many medical services and that have very high deductibles. Older and sicker people would be able to buy plans that are more comprehensive.

But experts say dividing the insurance risk pool in this way would force insurers to raise premiums a lot, because plans that cover more services would primarily attract people who have more health problems. Many middle-class families would not be able to afford those plans, since they earn too much to qualify for subsidies. This so-called compromise smacks of the kinds of changes demanded by the Freedom Caucus, whose members objected to Speaker Paul Ryan's original bill in the House. As a result of their demands, the measure passed by the House would let insurers discriminate against people with pre-existing conditions.

In reality, the lawmakers who will make or break the Senate bill are centrist Republicans and lawmakers who represent states that expanded Medicaid under the A.C.A. This group includes Susan Collins of Maine, Shelley Moore Capito of

West Virginia, Cory Gardner of Colorado, Dean Heller of Nevada, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Rob Portman of Ohio. Mr. McConnell, President Trump and other Republicans are putting lots of pressure on them -- and are trying to win them over with modifications that may seem like improvements but do not change the bill's substance.

For example, Mr. McConnell has reportedly agreed to allocate \$45 billion over 10 years to deal with the opioid epidemic, up from \$2 billion in his original proposal. This change is aimed at winning the support of Republican senators from states that are struggling with the scourge of addiction. Granted, this would be a big increase, but experts say it is hardly enough given the scope of the problem. And it cannot make up for the faults in the rest of the bill, which would most hurt people in states at the epicenter of the opioid crisis.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the legislation will take health insurance away from 22 million people by 2026, including 15 million who will be kicked off Medicaid. More federal spending on the opioid problem might help some of those people get addiction treatment if they need it, but it will not help them if they happen to need, say, chemotherapy, insulin or heart surgery.

Expect Mr. McConnell to offer more such sweeteners to his members, because his bill would reduce the federal deficit by \$321 billion over 10 years, nearly three times as much as the House bill, according to the budget office. This leaves Mr. McConnell with enough room to throw some trinkets at legislators who are on the fence or need cover for their vote. The legislation achieves these savings by dramatically slashing government spending on health care. Unsurprisingly, Mr. McConnell uses a big chunk of those savings to cut taxes on wealthy families and corporations.

This all-out effort to sway votes is all the more shameful given how unpopular the bill is with Americans. Just 17 percent of the country approves of the legislation, according to a recent NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll. By contrast, about 63 percent say Congress should either leave the A.C.A. untouched or change it so that it does more.

Some senators are surely eager to make a deal and will accept whatever Mr. McConnell offers them. But conscientious lawmakers who care about the health care of millions of Americans should know that tinkering around the edges will not make this bill any less dreadful or any more deserving of their vote.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Senate Republicans head back to work with no health-care deal

Senate Republicans returned to Washington from a holiday recess with new and deepening disagreements about their health-care bill, with key Republicans differing Sunday not merely on how to amend the bill, but also on whether a bill could pass at all.

"I would probably put that as 50-50," Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) said in a "Fox News Sunday" interview.

"They will get a repeal and replace bill done," White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus said on the same show.

"My view is it's probably going to be dead," Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said on CBS's "Face the Nation."

President Trump on Monday added to the friction within the GOP. In a tweet, Trump effectively warned Republican senators not to leave on their summer break without moving ahead on a health-care plan.

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) predicted the Republican bill to roll back Obamacare would likely fail in the Senate if put to a vote. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) predicted the Republican bill to roll back Obamacare would likely fail in the Senate if put to a vote. (Reuters)

(Reuters)

"I cannot imagine that Congress would dare to leave Washington without a beautiful new HealthCare bill fully approved and ready to go!" Trump wrote.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's decision to push debate on the Better Care Reconciliation Act past the Independence Day recess was supposed to create space for dealmaking. "Legislation of this complexity almost always takes longer than anybody else would hope," McConnell (Ky.) said at a June 27 news conference announcing the delay.

Instead, Republicans have run in different directions, proposing

everything from a bipartisan deal to pay for insurance subsidies to a "repeal and delay" plan that would give them a few years before the Affordable Care Act would be fully gutted.

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), the author of a "Consumer Freedom Option" amendment designed to bring conservatives on board with the bill, spent part of Sunday insisting that its critics were wrong. His amendment, also supported by Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), would allow insurers to once again offer cheaper plans that did not include the Affordable Care Act's essential health benefits.

"You have millions of people who are winners straight off: young people," said Cruz in a "Face the Nation" interview. "Young people get hammered by Obamacare. Millions of young people suddenly have much lower premiums."

Over the recess, however, key Republicans told local media outlets that the amendment weakened protections that the party had promised to keep in place.

"I think that reopens an issue that I can't support, that it would make it too difficult for people with preexisting conditions to get coverage," Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) told the Charleston Gazette-Mail on Friday.

"There's a real feeling that that's subterfuge to get around preexisting conditions," Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) told Iowa Public Radio on Wednesday. "If it is, in fact, subterfuge, and it has the effect of annihilating the preexisting conditions requirement that we have in the existing bill, then obviously I would object to that."

On ABC's "This Week," Cruz said that colleagues such as Grassley were simply being misled. "What's being repeated there is what [Senate Minority Leader Charles E.] Schumer said this week, which is that he called it a hoax," he said.

"Chuck Schumer and Barack Obama know a lot about health-care hoaxes."

Schumer's Democrats, meanwhile, have continued campaigning against the BCRA, saying that they will come to the table on health care only if Republicans give up on repeal. Throughout the recess, progressive activists, urged on by Democrats, protested and occupied the offices of Republican senators. On Friday, 16 protesters were arrested at the Columbus office of Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), joining dozens arrested in civil disobedience around the country.

"We aren't going to allow a handful of Socialists, many of whom are from New York, to disrupt our ability to serve the needs of the Ohio constituents who contact us in need of vital services every day," Portman's office said in a statement.

Still, opponents of the health-care bill were far more visible than its supporters. The pro-Trump organization America First Policies floated then abandoned a plan to organize pro-BCRA rallies. While no prominent Senate Democrats appeared on Sunday's talk shows, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) spent the day rallying voters in West Virginia and Kentucky against the bill.

"Mitch McConnell is now trying to make side deals in order to win votes," Sanders said in West Virginia. "I say to Senator Capito: Please do not fall for that old trick. This legislation is fatally flawed, and no small tweak here or there will undo the massive damage that it will cause to West Virginia and the entire country."

Republicans, meanwhile, were openly talking about next steps if they could not amend the BCRA to win 50 votes. (Vice President Pence, who has signaled that the White House would sign off on any repeal bill, would cast the tiebreaking vote.) On "Fox News Sunday," Cassidy suggested that his own bipartisan legislation to continue much of the Affordable Care Act could get a second look, and that in the meantime, Republicans could work with Democrats to provide more subsidies for private plans.

"I do think we have to do something for market stabilization," said Cassidy. "Otherwise, people who are paying premiums of \$20,000, \$30,000 and \$40,000 will pay even that much more."

Other Republicans, including McConnell, had warned that the BCRA's failure would lead to a deal on subsidies. Yet conservatives, not ruling out the bill's passage, spent

the weekend talking up another backup plan. At a Republican fundraising dinner in Iowa, Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) suggested that Republicans could repeal most of the ACA, forcing Democrats to the table to work on a replacement.

"If we can't replace and repeal at the same time, then repeal the law and stay and work on replace full time," said Sasse.

#### The Energy 202 newsletter

Your daily guide to the energy and environment debate.

On Fox, Cassidy — one of the Senate's few physicians — said the repeal-and-delay plan was a fantasy.

"It gives all the power to people who actually don't believe in President Trump's campaign pledges, who actually don't want to continue to cover and care for preexisting conditions and to lower premiums," Cassidy said. "It gives them the stronger hand. I think it's wrong."

## The Washington Post

# Ted Cruz is suddenly in the hot seat to help pass a health-care bill (UNE)

By Sean Sullivan

AUSTIN — During a week most Republican senators spent in the political equivalent of the witness protection program, Sen. Ted Cruz willingly stood trial before his constituents all across this sprawling state over his push to repeal much of the Affordable Care Act.

He debated a self-described "dirty liberal progressive." He met a psychologist who told him that he and his colleagues were "scaring the living daylights" out of her. He encountered protesters in a border town, a conservative Dallas suburb and this liberal stronghold.

Some who attended his events took the opposite view — that not shredding the law known as Obamacare would be the real misdeed. But Cruz's main offense, in the view of the most vocal and most frustrated attendees, has been to participate in the GOP effort to undo and replace key parts of the ACA — which will resume when lawmakers return to Washington on Monday.

Cruz, who did two Sunday news show interviews, is suddenly at the center of a last-gasp attempt to work out differences among GOP senators and pass a bill by the end of July — a goal that Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said on CBS's "Face The Nation" is "probably going to be dead."

The Texas Republican is pushing a controversial amendment that would prompt a deeper rollback of the ACA. The measure could bring reluctant conservatives on board, but it also threatens to alienate key GOP moderates.

"I think really the consumer freedom option is the key to bringing Republicans together and getting this repeal passed," Cruz said on ABC's "This Week with George Stephanopoulos." His proposal would let insurers sell narrower plans that don't comply with ACA coverage requirements — to cover maternity or dental or preventive care, for instance — so long as they also offer even one plan that does.

"I think that reopens an issue that I can't support, that it would make it too difficult for people with

preexisting conditions to get coverage," Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) told the Charleston Gazette-Mail.

Cruz is grappling with a state that, much like the rest of the country, has been deeply divided and firmly gripped by the months-long GOP effort to fulfill its signature campaign promise. Virtually everywhere he traveled over the July Fourth recess, no matter where the conversation started, it inevitably veered to health care. That may help explain why so many of his colleagues kept much lower profiles.

But Cruz, who built a national reputation on strident conservatism and has fiercely criticized the ACA for years, seemed to relish debating health care with vocal liberal critics. In a red state where he holds little crossover appeal, Cruz sees his best path to a second term, which he will seek next year, in rallying his conservative base to turn out for him. Even as he antagonizes a growing number of voters concerned about the fate of the ACA, doing his part to push for a full or even partial repeal is one key

way his allies think he can make that happen.

Whether such legislation can pass is increasingly uncertain — to both Cruz and Senate GOP leadership. "I believe we can get to yes," said Cruz last week. "I don't know if we will."

#### Engaging with foes

Cruz spent Thursday evening in a hotel ballroom here at a town hall hosted by Concerned Veterans for America, a group backed by the billionaire conservative Koch brothers. The organization held two events for Cruz over the past week, with one more coming Saturday, with the aim of offering a more controlled environment than typical town hall meetings.

To attend, people were required to register in advance. The group's policy director, Dan Caldwell, moderated the discussions, keeping them mostly focused on veterans' issues and selecting a handful of audience questions submitted in advance.

The first half of Thursday's event here so closely resembled

Wednesday night's version in suburban Dallas that Cruz even cracked the same joke about banishing bureaucrats to Iceland — and received similarly limited laughter.

But the predictability ended when Gary Marsh and others jumped in without being called on by Caldwell and engaged Cruz in a tense back-and-forth over health care.

"Can I please request that you refer to it as the Affordable Care Act," Marsh told Cruz at one point. Cruz declined, drawing some applause. The senator said he did not believe in "deceptive speech" — prompting outraged laughter from his critics.

Cruz, dressed in a dark blazer, khaki pants and brown cowboy boots, then launched into a detailed defense of his opposition to Obamacare and the imperative to roll it back.

Caldwell tried to redirect the conversation to the questioner he had originally called on. But Cruz overruled him, allowing Marsh a chance to respond. Marsh, a 67-year-old retiree, said he knew he could not change Cruz's mind, but he hoped to sway others in the room.

"Repealing Obamacare was the single biggest factor producing a Republican House, a Republican Senate and I think ultimately a Republican president," Cruz said. He said the "central focus" of Republicans now should be to lower premiums.

Marsh proudly called himself a "dirty liberal progressive" in a conversation with reporters after the event. John Walker, 69, walked over to confront him. The self-described conservative wasn't pleased.

"You monopolized the meeting. That's the problem I have with you and everybody else that does that," Walker told him. In an interview, Walker, who is retired and on Medicare, said he favors replacing Obamacare with "something better" that would make coverage affordable for his adult children, who can't manage premiums. He said he is not yet convinced that the Senate GOP bill would accomplish that.

A similar flash of discord appeared Wednesday in McKinney, the Dallas suburb. After Cruz finished speaking, Buddy Luce was not happy with what he heard from the senator about overhauling Obamacare.

"I'm not impressed with a plan that takes away —" the 65-year-old attorney started explaining to a reporter. Before he could finish his thought, Ivette Lozano had rushed over to argue with him.

"I'm a family practitioner," she told him. "Obamacare is putting me out of business."

"Don't you think health care is a human right?" he asked her.

"No, I think it's personal responsibility to take care of you," she responded.

"If you don't think health care is a human right, then we're just on a different wavelength," Luce retorted.

'Manifest disaster'

For 47 minutes, the McKinney town hall was free of controversy. As Cruz spoke to Caldwell about veterans' matters, the audience listened quietly. But then came a query from a far corner of the hotel ballroom. And the mood quickly shifted.

"You all on the Hill are scaring the living daylights out of us with the health-care nonsense that you're doing," said Misty Hook, who described herself as an "overflow" psychologist who works with veterans unable to obtain services through the Department of Veterans Affairs. She worried about the GOP push to allow insurers in some states to opt out of certain coverage requirements.

"What are you going to do to help make sure that mental-health-care services are reimbursed at a proper rate so that we can continue to provide services for veterans?" asked Hook, the urgency apparent in her voice.

Cruz, leaning forward in his armchair, offered an extended defense of the effort to undo key parts of Obamacare. He called it a "manifest disaster," prompting some

to shake their heads in disagreement.

"You didn't answer her question about how mental health is going to be covered," one woman interjected.

"Well, I am answering it right now," Cruz replied. But before he could continue, Luce abruptly jumped into the conversation from the other side of the room. He continued breaking in, eventually drawing a warning from the senator: "Sir, I'm happy to answer your questions, but I'm not going to engage in a yelling back-and-forth."

Outside the event, a few dozen protesters lined up about an hour before it started and displayed signs with such messages as "GOP Care Treats the Rich Kills the Weak" and "Yea! ACA fix it don't nix it." Pam Slavin, who helped organize the protest, estimated that about 150 people showed up for it by the time it ended. Cruz had encountered similar protests when he visited McAllen on the U.S.-Mexico border.

After the event, Cruz called the health-care back-and-forth a "good and productive exchange."

"This is an issue that inspires passion, and quite understandably. People care about their health care," Cruz said.

As Republican senators prepare to return to the Capitol, there is ample doubt among them that they will be able to strike a deal.

A '50-50' prospect?

"I would probably put that as 50-50," Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) said on "Fox News Sunday." Cassidy is among the GOP senators who have voiced concerns about Cruz's amendment.

But to many on the right, Cruz's idea could be key to winning over hesitant conservatives who want to see a more forceful strike against Obamacare. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) is expected by some to place greater responsibility on Cruz to pitch his amendment to skeptics, which could put more of a burden on the Texan to help save the broader effort. Cruz's team said he looks forward to continuing his push.

Many close observers say they think Cruz is likely to support the final version of the bill, even though he does not support the initial version McConnell released.

*[At parades and protests, GOP lawmakers get earful about health care]*

*[A town hall in Kansas shows Republican struggles with health-care bill]*

Cruz, like President Trump, thinks that if Republicans fall short, the Senate ought to vote on a narrower bill to repeal the law — what he calls a "clean repeal" — and focus on replacing it afterward. But McConnell has embraced a very different kind of backup plan: Working with Democrats on a more modest bill to stabilize insurance markets.

Broad disagreements over how to structure the nation's health-care system are sharpening the contrasting way lawmakers such as Cruz are viewed at home.

As she stood in line with her husband to talk to Cruz after the Wednesday town hall, Jennifer Beauford, 42, said she wants a "full repeal and I don't want a replacement."

The Energy 202 newsletter

Your daily guide to the energy and environment debate.

"Health care is not a constitutional right. It's a privilege," said Beauford, who identified as a conservative Cruz supporter.

Outside among the protesters stood Kerry Green, 46, a history teacher who wore a shirt printed with the Declaration of Independence. A self-identified Democrat, Green held up a sign urging health care "for the 21st Century" rather than the 20th. She sharply criticized the GOP bill.

As for Cruz? "He needs to go," she said.

David Weigel in Washington contributed to this report.



## Hunt : Republicans Won't Stop Fighting With Each Other

The ruling Republicans are trying to defy Washington's political gravity: pushing through massive health-care and tax overhauls crafted largely in secret, on a partisan basis, brushing aside congressional expertise and overcoming the policy ignorance of

President Donald Trump with products of dubious quality, at best.

QuickTake Obamacare

They want to do it twice, starting with the Senate's struggle to replace Obamacare this month. Senate Majority Leader Mitch

McConnell sees this as a nuisance that must be resolved to get to the real priority: tax cuts, especially for the wealthy.

It's doubtful that Republicans will succeed and send a health-care bill to the White House. If they do, it will be a jerry-built political patchwork

that few defend as good policy. It would fulfill a promise to the party's base to repeal Obama's signature law, though at the political cost of denying coverage to many supporters.

For Republican leaders, disposing of their health-care problem, even

unsuccessfully, would clear the decks for taxes. They will argue then that a big tax bill must be passed or the entire year will be a failure. If a 2018 budget is approved, they'd be able to consider taxes under a procedure that would only require Republican votes.

Passage of even a flawed health-care measure might make it easier, however. Slashing spending for Medicaid, which principally helps the poor, the elderly and people with disabilities, would allow tax cuts of about \$1 trillion over 10 years. That would mostly help the affluent, especially if Republicans eliminate the 3.8-percent tax on investment income over \$250,000 that Obamacare uses to finance expanded health-care coverage.

Then Republican tax cutters could slash deeper into corporate and individual taxes.

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

Share the View

But while McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan insist that tax legislation will be easier for Republicans to pass than a health-care overhaul, party schisms are

already emerging. The small band of moderate Republicans is objecting to the substance and optics of giving goodies to the rich while slicing social programs. Fiscal hawks are fretting over spiraling deficits even as supply-side colleagues and those representing special interests believe most any tax cut is good.

"The tax bill will be a mirror reflection of what's happening on health care," said Representative Richard Neal of Massachusetts, the ranking Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee. "They are divided over everything."

Ryan promises sweeping tax-reform legislation that won't reduce government revenues, balancing reductions in tax rates with elimination of deductions and other preferences.

But he starts by vowing to eliminate the estate tax, a source of revenue that involves only the most affluent taxpayers.

Fewer than one in 500 estates are affected because assets up to almost \$11 million are exempted for couples filing jointly. Eliminating the tax would be a \$225 billion gift, over 10 years, to heirs of the richest Americans. There's little evidence

that it would help the economy, though it would certainly comfort campaign contributors.

All the Republican stabs at offsetting revenue-raisers are collapsing. The result, as Brookings Institution economist Bill Gale says, is "there will be tax cuts but very little tax reform."

Even that has problems. The budget rules require that tax cuts that add to the deficit must expire after 10 years. Some Republicans talk about forcing tax-policy analysts to craft a "dynamic scoring" system that would make cuts appear to pay for themselves by means of unrealistically optimistic forecasting of economic growth.

Or tax cutters might try to ignore any credible scorekeeping on the cost, as they're trying to do by discrediting the Congressional Budget Office analysis that shows 22 million fewer people with coverage under the Senate health-care plan. Senator Pat Toomey, a Pennsylvania Republican, wants to change the rules, from a 10-year deficit window to 20 or 30 years.

That should give genuine deficit hawks heartburn. The CBO estimates that under current policies the federal deficit will rise sharply in

a decade to 5.2 percent of the gross domestic product (it's 3.6 percent now) and overall debt will soar to 91 percent of GDP. That's before any tax cut that would add trillions to these numbers.

As Trump's Goldman Sachs alums and Washington newcomers, White House economic adviser Gary Cohn and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, try to assemble a real proposal for this fall, his populist bomb thrower Steve Bannon floats the idea of a tax *increase* on the wealthy and bigger tax cuts for the middle class.

That's not going anywhere; Ryan and McConnell would join the resistance movement and Trump would want to know how it affects his financial interests. But it underscores how politically dicey the tax issue may be this time for Republicans.

The final red flag: Virtually without exception, any big legislation that doesn't enjoy some bipartisan support turns into a substantive or political disaster. That's even more certain if done with little transparency.



## Editorial : Trump needs to answer more questions. Our readers have a few for him.

PRESIDENT TRUMP took a few questions from reporters as he traveled through Europe over the past week, responding to one about Moscow's meddling in the 2016 election with this confounding statement: "I think it was Russia, but I think it was probably other people and/or countries," he said. "Nobody really knows. Nobody really knows for sure."

Mark this as yet another moment in which Mr. Trump has made a bizarre declaration on a crucial national issue, leaving the press and public baffled about where he stands. Yet when reporter Hallie Jackson tried to ask a follow-up question, a moderator shut her down and ended the news conference.

Whether intentionally or not, the Trump administration fosters confusion and opacity. The president almost never holds wide-ranging news conferences in which a diverse group of reporters has the opportunity to question him and pose follow-ups. He sometimes takes questions in joint appearances with world leaders, but only a handful, and sometimes not. Though President Obama also conducted too few news conferences, he submitted himself to substantive questioning from citizens at town hall meetings in the early months of his presidency.

Read These Comments

The best conversations on The Washington Post

And when journalists could not ask Mr. Obama directly, they could turn to White House spokes-people for clarification. Mr. Trump's surrogates, by contrast, are of little use. Their evasions insult the intelligence of anyone listening. When questioned about Mr. Trump's perplexing Twitter statements, they insist that presidential tweets speak for themselves. On simple questions such as whether the president accepts that humans are warming the planet, they say they have not asked Mr. Trump. On a staggering assortment of issues, they say they will get back to reporters later and never do so.

Though it is the journalist's job to press those in power on behalf of the public, reporters are not the only ones who can pose good questions. We asked readers what they would

like to ask Mr. Trump, and many of you shared your questions. David Drabold from Athens, Ohio, wants to know what the president is doing to prepare the American workforce for a new wave of automation. Rebecca Fliestra from San Diego wonders what, specifically, can be done to reduce the U.S. prison population. Adam Bloom from Los Angeles asks what Mr. Trump is doing to minimize civilian casualties in the bombing of Raqqa, Syria. Submit your own here .

We would add one more for the president: What do you have to fear in taking fair questions such as these, more than a handful at a time?



## Trump amateur hour with Putin meeting threatens U.S. security

Tom Nichols

The Group of 20 summit is over, and some conservatives — after giving President Trump a mulligan for his clumsy outing at NATO in May —

are declaring his first major international conference a success.

In fact, the president's trip to Hamburg and his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin were, to use one of the president's

favorite words, a disaster. Not only did he fail to restore the West's shaken confidence in American leadership, he also made a series of rookie blunders in his meeting with Putin that will now bedevil U.S. national security for years to come.

Before his arrival at the G-20, Trump read a speech in Poland that many conservatives gamely tried to compare to the Cold War rhetoric of earlier presidents, in a flash of hope that Trump would later put the smirking Russian president in his

place. Despite a few nice turns, however, it nonetheless carried the usual anti-Muslim barnacles that Trump's White House can't help but stick onto everything. If the president opened a child care center in Wisconsin, his staff would find a way to claim it as a blow against jihadi terror.

Once in Hamburg, the president demonstrated America's seriousness of purpose by saying nothing of note and letting his daughter sit at the principals' table. (So much for Ivanka Trump's assurances that she wasn't planning to be involved in politics.) While Germany's Angela Merkel politely allowed that national leaders can delegate their seats, one can only imagine the incandescent rage of conservatives had a President Hillary Clinton named her daughter to a White House position and then seated her among the leaders of the G-20. Instead, they pointed to Merkel's politeness as a host, claiming that Trump's embarrassing nepotism was not a big deal.

But no one was really watching the G-20 meetings. Nor was there much focus on the protesters, who now attend these events the way kids used to follow the Grateful Dead on tour. No, the main attraction was the Trump-Putin meeting Friday, and it went as poorly as some of us feared.

First, Trump and his team lost control of events because they banned everyone but the principals and the translators from the room. In what looks like a vote of no-confidence in his own staff, the president is apparently now so concerned about leaks that he went into a mini summit without his top Russia expert or his national security adviser. This is not only risky but foolish, since these are the people who would need to analyze what happened later. Even the Russians wanted more people in the room, according to *The New York Times*, and it is a remarkable turn of events when the Kremlin fears transparency less than the White House.

Once the meeting was over, Russian television showed Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reading out the meeting. The White House, inexplicably, insisted on an awkward audio-only brief from Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. This deprived Tillerson of some of the gravitas of a personal appearance, and once again made the Russians look more confident and open than the Americans.

Worse, the Russians immediately dropped a version of events that made Trump look weak. The president, they asserted, had indeed raised Russia's meddling in the 2016 election — and been told off by Putin, who not only denied

everything but also arrogantly demanded proof. Later, in a masterful bit of public trolling of the White House, Putin said he had convinced Trump that Russia was not involved.

The White House scrambled to insist that Trump talked tough, especially Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. But she wasn't there and increasingly seems disconnected from Trump's actual policies. The president's staff and even Tillerson, one of the few in the room, were not convincing.

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

And now the administration is trying to assure the American public it will hold Putin accountable with an agreement to open a joint Russian-American cybersecurity center. This is an idea so ridiculous that even in Moscow they must be wiping tears of laughter from their eyes. A major goal of U.S. cybersecurity policy should be defending against the Russians, not handing them the keys to our computers and explaining our strategy to them as though they are a trusted ally. (As Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., put it, this would be like partnering with the Syrians to form an anti-chemical weapons unit.)

In summary, the G-20 "successes" were: a competent speech in

Warsaw that nonetheless contained the usual dog whistles to authoritarians and white nationalists; a humiliating absence of leadership in Hamburg (except for the brief unveiling of Princess Regent Ivanka); an American team woefully unprepared and understaffed for the president's first meeting with his Russian counterpart; a narrative of the meeting now controlled by the Kremlin; the Americans giving a pass to the most brazen Russian attack on U.S. political institutions ever; and a cybersecurity proposal so inane it beggars belief.

A smashing success, perhaps, for Trump loyalists who either don't know any better or who must disingenuously keep pushing the party line against reality itself. For the rest of us, it was exactly the collapse of the American amateurs in the face of the Russian professionals we predicted — and feared.

*Tom Nichols, a Russia specialist and professor of national security affairs at the Naval War College, is the author of The Death of Expertise. The views expressed here are solely his own. Follow him on Twitter: @RadioFreeTom*

## **POLITICO Trump's cyber tweets cause dismay, confusion**

By Cory Bennett

President Donald Trump floated, then seemingly disavowed, a deal for greater cybersecurity cooperation with Russia -- an idea that drew dismay and mockery from lawmakers of both parties, and which numerous cyber analysts warned could even make the U.S. less secure.

Trump cryptically declared on Twitter early Sunday that he and Russian President Vladimir Putin had "discussed forming an impenetrable Cyber Security unit so that election hacking, & many other negative things, will be guarded ... and safe."

Story Continued Below

By Sunday night, Trump was tweeting apparent doubts that the idea was even feasible. "The fact that President Putin and I discussed a Cyber Security unit doesn't mean I think it can happen. It can't-but a ceasefire can, & did!," the president tweeted Sunday night, referencing a cease-fire that was negotiated for part of Syria.

Trump's initial idea had even Republicans in Congress

expressing disbelief at the notion of working hand-in-glove with a nation whose hackers are suspected of launching cyberattacks against the 2016 presidential election, American power plants and email systems at the White House, Pentagon and State Department.

Cyber policy specialists also noted that similar attempts at cooperation between the two former Cold War adversaries have swiftly run aground in recent years.

Several former George W. Bush and Obama-era cyber officials insisted the latest deal would be unlikely to help digitally secure upcoming U.S. elections, and instead would widen the rift between America and its European allies combating Moscow's online aggression — a broader Putin goal. And when the deal inevitably falls apart, former Bush homeland security adviser Fran Townsend said on Twitter, "#Russia will blame #US" — handing Putin a significant narrative-setting victory.

"It's strategic idiocy," said Chris Finan, a former director for cybersecurity legislation and policy in Barack Obama's White House.

Even worse, the attempt at cooperation itself could result in the U.S. exposing even more secrets to a country that has already stolen so many, cautioned former Obama administration official R.D. Edelman, who negotiated with Moscow on cyber issues at both the State Department and White House.

"On the heels of their election hacking, giving a country with that record access to sensitive information about our cybersecurity capabilities — and perhaps inadvertently, our citizens — is a mistake," said Edelman, who now leads a project on cybersecurity issues at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Internet Policy Research Initiative, in an email to POLITICO.

Trump's comments appeared to refer to a White House announcement Friday that said the two nations had agreed to form a joint cyber working group tasked with establishing a framework to resolve digital disputes, such as Moscow's alleged election interference.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson portrayed the dialogue on Sunday

as a way to "assure the American people that interference in our elections will not occur by Russia or anyone else."

"We're going to have a dialogue around how do we gain such assurances," Tillerson said at a joint news conference with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, whose country has felt perhaps the greatest harm from suspected destabilizing Russian cyberattacks.

But Trump's tweets added the confusing prospect of an unhackable joint cyber team focused on protecting America's elections, sparking consternation across the political spectrum.

Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers, including former GOP presidential candidate Sen. Marco Rubio, derisively compared the notion to partnering with Syria on chemical weapons or joining forces with North Korea on nuclear technology. Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois accused the president of "letting the fox guard the henhouse," while Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.) blasted the decision as "dumb as a rock."



"Would we form a unit with the Russians to study how we prevent a Russian nuclear attack on the U.S.? We wouldn't," Lieu, who holds a degree in computer science, told POLITICO.

Another Democrat, Pennsylvania Rep. Brendan Boyle, even vowed to introduce legislation on Tuesday and pursue amendments that would "make sure, in absolutely no shape or form, we spend taxpayer money on this crazy and dangerous idea."

"This is an opportunity for Republicans to show that they truly do care about this issue and that this is an issue that rises above party politics," Boyle, who sits on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said in an interview.

Lieu threw his support behind Boyle's push, and also encouraged Republican leadership to insert similar language into a Russia sanctions bill pending in the House that recently passed the Senate by a 98-2 vote. That measure would codify harsher sanctions on Russia for its apparent election-year interference.

While Trump's tweet has shed light on the prospect of U.S. and Russian cooperation on cybersecurity, the two sides have actually been tentatively exchanging digital information, in fits and starts, for years — though those efforts have been regularly thwarted by tensions involving Moscow's broader activities.

In 2013, the Obama administration signed a major agreement with Russia to communicate more closely on cybercrime, while also establishing a Cold War-style cyber "hotline" between Washington and Moscow to reduce the risks of a digital misunderstanding leading to a dangerous escalation.

Much of that deal was scuttled within months, though, derailed by escalating tensions over Russia's encroachment in Ukraine and Moscow's unwillingness to budge on numerous issues, recalled several former Obama-era cyber officials.

Ongoing law enforcement swaps of cybercrime information were even turned "into recruitment tools for Russian intelligence and criminal groups," said Megan Stifel, the National Security Council's director for international cyber policy from 2013 to 2014.

U.S. cyber policy specialists don't dismiss the entire concept of maintaining a dialogue with the country's main digital adversaries — but they say Russia is a uniquely difficult case.

"I think it is right to try and reset relations," said Rob Knake, a former White House cyber policy director and current senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "But there is a depth of ill will from the Russians towards the U.S., as well as an ongoing criminal investigation into the Russians hacking our election."

The Obama administration did negotiate a deal in 2015 with China to prohibit the digital pilfering of intellectual property, which government officials said was draining hundreds of millions of dollars from the U.S. economy. Intelligence leaders and cybersecurity researchers say the pact has helped reduce Beijing-backed cyberthefts of America's corporate secrets, even if the two countries remain at odds over China's other apparent digital espionage campaigns — most notably, the thefts of 20 million highly sensitive background investigation files from the Office of Personnel Management.

But many experts are deeply skeptical of getting similar success from a deal with Russia.

On cybersecurity, "the Russians work with the U.S. when it is in their interest, and do not work with the U.S. when it is not in their interest," said Ari Schwartz, one of Obama's senior cybersecurity directors at the NSC. "It has rarely been in their interest to cooperate in the past, and I can't imagine that on ... election issues it will ever be in their interest to cooperate."

Added another former White House official: "As long as cyber-enabled operations are an effective and cheap tool for them, Russia won't have much incentive to come to the table and make meaningful progress."

Trump's Cabinet heads still tried to sell the working group concept on Sunday. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin called it "a very important step forward" during an appearance on ABC's "This Week," adding that the engagement "is about having capabilities to make sure that we both fight cyber together." And Tillerson, whose department will jointly lead the talks with White House national security adviser H.R. McMaster, insisted the agreement was necessary. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

"I think the election interference really shows how complicated the use of these types of tools are becoming," Tillerson said during his news conference. "We have to find a way to begin to address that, and it's not going to be only about Russia. It's going to be about an international engagement as well."

The administration's assurances have yet to win over cyber watchers.

"The road ahead looks not just as troubled as the past, but worse," Stifel said.

*Eric Geller and Martin Matishak contributed to this report.*

## **The New York Times** At Private Dinners, Pence Quietly Courts Big Donors and Corporate Executives (UNE)

Kenneth P. Vogel

WASHINGTON — Vice President Mike Pence has been courting scores of the country's most influential donors, corporate executives and conservative political leaders over the past several months in a series of private gatherings and one-on-one conversations.

The centerpiece of the effort is a string of dinners held every few weeks at the vice president's official residence on the grounds of the Naval Observatory in Washington. Mr. Pence and his wife, Karen, have presided over at least four such soirées, and more are in the works. Each has drawn roughly 30 to 40 guests, including a mix of wealthy donors such as the Chicago hedge fund manager Kenneth C. Griffin and the brokerage firm founder Charles Schwab, as well as Republican fund-raisers and executives from companies like Dow Chemical and the military contractor United Technologies.

The guests and their families collectively donated or helped raise millions of dollars to support the Trump-Pence ticket in 2016, and some are viewed in Republican finance circles as likely supporters for two new groups created to promote President Trump, Mr. Pence, their legislative agenda and congressional allies. The dinner guest lists were curated in part by two of Mr. Pence's closest advisers, who have also played important roles in starting the new political groups, America First Policies and America First Action. Mr. Pence has appeared at recent events outside his official residence with prospective donors to the groups.

The off-site events and dinners at Mr. Pence's residence underscore the vice president's outreach to donors for an administration led by a president who dislikes courting contributors, who often expect personal attention in exchange for their support. Mr. Pence's activities have fueled speculation among

Republican insiders that he is laying the foundation for his own political future, independent from Mr. Trump.

If nothing else, the assiduous donor maintenance by Mr. Pence and his team reflects his acceptance of a Washington reality that Mr. Trump sharply criticized during the campaign, when he assailed some of his party's most generous donors as puppet masters who manipulated the political process to further their own interests at the expense of working people. Mr. Trump frequently said that because of his own real estate fortune, he didn't need or want support from wealthy donors or the political groups known as "super PACs," to which donors can give seven-figure donations and which Mr. Trump blasted as "very corrupt."

Mr. Pence's aides point out that he also has dinners at the residence for groups other than donors, including members of Congress, world leaders, military families, civic leaders and friends. They cast the

donor dinners as an effort to build support for the administration's agenda, not for Mr. Pence personally.

"Mike Pence is the ultimate team player and works every day to help the president succeed," said Robert T. Grand, an Indianapolis lawyer who helped raise money for Mr. Pence's campaigns in Indiana for Congress and for governor. Mr. Grand attended a dinner at the vice president's residence in June. "There were a lot of folks who, if you were vice president, you would want to meet," Mr. Grand said. "Corporate executives, other government leaders, people from past administrations, not just donors."

He added that "any administration, past and present, has an interest in getting to know folks. If you're an incumbent president and vice president, then that's part of what you do."

Mr. Pence's office declined to release the lists of guests invited to the dinners, which have not appeared on schedules released by the vice president's office to the news media. Marc Lotter, Mr. Pence's press secretary, called the dinners "private" and said that the vice president had not held any political fund-raisers at his residence, which would be complicated by a law barring the solicitation of political contributions in government buildings.

But the dinners fit a long tradition of presidential administrations leveraging the grand trappings of the office to reward loyal supporters or to induce influential people to become supportive. President Bill Clinton drew ire for inviting major donors to his 1996 re-election campaign to stay overnight in the White House's Lincoln Bedroom, for instance, though his team drew an explicit link between the contributions and the rewards, one that Mr. Pence's advisers have been careful to avoid. President Barack Obama also entertained donors at the White House, as did former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. when he lived at the Naval Observatory residence.

Mr. Pence typically kicks off his dinners with a cocktail hour at which he recounts the history of the taxpayer-funded residence, followed by a brief assessment of his administration's legislative and foreign policy agendas and a question-and-answer session, according to guests. After people are seated for dinner at four or five separate tables, they said, Mr. Pence makes his way around the room, chatting for a few minutes with each guest.

Mr. Pence's willingness to use his residence to host wealthy donors has been reassuring to Republican finance and political operatives, who

worry that their congressional candidates could be severely hampered if they faced financial shortfalls during 2018 midterm elections, when Mr. Trump's unpopularity is expected to create strong headwinds.

The dinners are "a smart way for Vice President Pence and his team to recognize major supporters of his and the president's agenda, and build resources that are going to be necessary for the upcoming battles," said Charles Spies, a leading Republican election lawyer.

Mr. Pence, who came to Mr. Trump's ticket with a reputation as an enthusiastic cultivator of wealthy patrons, has worked to win over donors who clashed with Mr. Trump during the campaign, among them the billionaire industrialist Charles G. Koch. Mr. Pence spent nearly an hour last month with Mr. Koch in a private meeting at a Colorado Springs hotel, where the vice president praised Mr. Trump for his leadership in pushing to fulfill campaign promises and in selecting strong cabinet nominees, according to James Davis, an executive at a Koch-backed group who attended the meeting.

Mr. Pence also summoned about a dozen megadonors, including some who had not supported Mr. Trump during the campaign, for a legislative briefing in the White House's Roosevelt Room on June 9. Mr. Trump stopped by the gathering briefly to greet the donors, according to an administration official and others briefed on the gathering.

Associates say Mr. Pence has discussed with the president the importance of encouraging major donors to support America First Policies. Mr. Pence signaled his own support for the group by appearing with his wife at a reception in Washington this spring

for prospective donors to America First Policies that was hosted by a fund-raising consultant, Jeff Miller.

The group was founded soon after Mr. Trump's inauguration by political operatives outside the administration, including two close advisers to Mr. Pence — Nick Ayers and Marty Obst — who helped arrange the Naval Observatory dinners and attended some of them.

In March Mr. Obst, who was a top fund-raiser for Mr. Trump's campaign and inauguration, told Politico that America First Policies had received \$25 million in commitments and had collected more than half that money. In recent weeks, America First Policies has spent money on one advertising campaign questioning the national security bona fides of the Democratic nominee in a special election for a Georgia congressional seat, and another chastising Senator Dean Heller, Republican of Nevada, for his opposition to the Senate health care bill that would supplant the Affordable Care Act.

While Mr. Ayers has stepped away from America First Policies and related groups in recent days as he prepares to take a position as Mr. Pence's new chief of staff, the team behind the political groups is ramping up its efforts.

In May, Mr. Obst and Mr. Ayers founded Great America Committee, a political action committee to fund Mr. Pence's political operation — an unusual step for a sitting vice president. Typically, vice presidents rely on their respective party committees for such functions. This past Thursday Great America Committee held a reception for prospective donors at the Washington offices of the powerful lobbying firm BGR.

America First Policies, a nonprofit required to spend the majority of its

money on costs unrelated to partisan political campaigns, has in the meantime spun off a super PAC called America First Action that will have more legal flexibility to directly advocate for the election of Mr. Trump's allies and the defeat of his opponents. As a super PAC, America First Action is required to publicly disclose its donors but America First Policies is not.

Katie Walsh, a senior adviser to America First Policies who has attended some of Mr. Pence's dinners, said the group did not use the gatherings to prospect for donations.

Although Ms. Walsh said that some attendees "happen to support" groups backing the administration, "a lot of those folks have never given to anything related to Trump or Pence, and are leaders of businesses and industries that have worked, and continue to work, with the administration to get things done."

Some dinner guests — including Andrew N. Liveris, the chief executive of Dow Chemical, and Gregory J. Hayes, the chairman and chief executive of United Technologies — have donated either primarily to Democrats or to a mix of Democrats and Republicans.

Other guests — including the hedge fund manager Mr. Griffin and the investors Ronald Weiser of Michigan; Lewis Eisenberg of Florida and Doug Deason, Ray Washburne and Tom Hicks Jr., all of Texas — were significant donors or fund-raisers for Mr. Trump's campaign and the committees supporting it. Mr. Trump has since nominated Mr. Washburne to head the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.



## Editorial : The dream of 'clean coal' is burning up

THE UNITED STATES can now officially count two disastrous, expensive failures of carbon capture and storage — a technology key to realizing the dream of "clean coal." The Kemper County Energy Facility was supposed to burn cheap, dirty lignite coal without emitting climate-altering carbon dioxide. Mississippi ended up with a very expensive natural gas plant that pumps carbon dioxide into the atmosphere like any other.

The idea was to turn coal into a synthetic gas, from which planet-warming carbon dioxide would be removed before it was burned.

Backed by federal cash, Kemper was supposed to show that, under the right circumstances, power generators could burn coal without contributing to global warming. The plant was supposed to cost \$2 billion. Instead, the technology never operated for long stretches, and the project went nearly \$5 billion over budget. Last week, its owners finally relegated the plant to burning natural gas, the most common fuel used in electricity generation in the United States, without any diversion of greenhouse emissions.

This is the second federally funded clean-coal boondoggle. The first, known as FutureGen, was

supposed to showcase innovative carbon capture and storage technology at a breakthrough Illinois plant. Despite a strong push from the local congressional delegation, the George W. Bush administration ended the hapless experiment, and the plant never operated, despite an Obama-era effort to revive it. More wasted money.

Most popular stories, in your inbox daily.

It is tempting to say this history proves that "clean coal" is a fantasy. To that, there is strong pushback from the coal industry and some environmentalists who believe the technology will be needed to tackle

climate change. China has built many coal plants in recent years, facilities that will not be retired for decades; it will be disastrous if they continue belching carbon dioxide into the air for that whole time.

The technology's advocates point to a federally backed Texas plant that came online in January, which experienced none of the usual budget problems and is supposed to cost-effectively provide captured carbon dioxide to local drillers, which use it to extract hard-to-obtain oil. Other carbon capture technologies in development may work better.

Or maybe not. Scarce dollars supporting clean coal could go to a variety of other on-the-cusp technologies — from innovative batteries that can help scale up renewables to revolutionary nuclear reactor designs. No one, and certainly no one in Congress, knows what a decarbonized energy sector

will look like. Lawmakers should resist channeling cash to favored experiments and distribute research money and other incentives on merit.

Much of the government's complex web of energy programs, tax breaks and other incentives could be

eliminated if Congress fostered markets in which the best low-carbon technologies were profitable and would therefore rise into use naturally. The preferences of private companies, entrepreneurs and consumers, spurred by simple price signals, would determine how to wring carbon dioxide out of the

economy. This freedom-maximizing, flexibility-preserving, waste-minimizing policy is a carbon tax. It is long past time the country had one.

**The  
Washington  
Post**

## Vehicles as weapons of terror: U.S. cities on alert as attacks hit the West

Last month, attackers using a vehicle and knives killed eight people and wounded dozens more on London Bridge. A few weeks later in an incident nearby, a man drove into people leaving mosques after Ramadan services, killing one and injuring 10.

And in May, a man driving in New York's Times Square plowed into a crowd during lunchtime, killing one person and injuring 22. While authorities said the incident was not terrorism, the Islamic State, inspired by the crash, used it to warn that more attacks on the nation's largest city and popular tourist destinations would follow.

As terrorists overseas increasingly turn to vehicles as weapons, cities across the United States, concerned such attacks could happen here, are ramping up security in public spaces to protect areas with heavy pedestrian traffic.

"There's unfortunately almost no end to the number of times these things happen by accident and, unfortunately, it is increasing the number of times these things are happening on purpose," said Rob Reiter, a pedestrian safety expert and chief security consultant at Calpipe Security Bollards, one of the nation's top bollard manufacturers.

Bollards and security barriers, as well as increased police presence at events, are among some of the strategies that cities are using to guard against such attacks. Seven hundred bollards are being installed along the Las Vegas Strip this year at a cost of \$5 million in what has been called "a matter of life and death" to protect people from those who would use vehicles as weapons. Although there is no specific threat, authorities said that recent terrorist propaganda featuring snapshots of the Las Vegas Strip cannot be overlooked. Each barrier is designed to resist a 15,000-pound, 30-foot vehicle, officials said.

In New York, officials have been calling for the installation of more bollards, citing the ones that stopped the speeding sedan in the May incident. The Los Angeles City

Council, meanwhile, is to vote this summer on whether to direct the police department and other agencies to issue a report on mitigation methods for vehicle attacks.

Transportation planners are exploring innovative ways to use landscaping to create buffers between roadways and sidewalks. Security companies say they are being consulted on how to protect main streets.

"Big cities are realizing that they could have a mass casualty event on all four sides of an intersection at any time," Reiter said.

Attacks with vehicles used as improvised weapons became the single most lethal form of attack in Western countries for the first time last year, according to the London-based Risk Advisory Group, which keeps track of every terrorist attack worldwide. Just over half of the terrorism-related deaths in the West were the result of vehicle-ramming attacks, the data shows.

In the most deadly one, in Nice, France, a truck mowed down dozens of people celebrating Bastille Day last July, killing 87 and injuring 434. On Dec. 19, 12 people were killed and 56 injured when a man drove a truck into a Christmas market in Berlin.

In the United States, a man inspired by the Islamic State drove into students at Ohio State University last fall, then emerged with a knife, injuring 11 people.

Experts say Europe will probably continue to experience such attacks because of the ease with which they can be carried out. As countries have stepped up security and counterterrorism efforts, terrorists have found it more difficult to strike using traditional means. It is easier to rent a truck than to acquire explosives or firearms without raising suspicion.

"It is much more nebulous. It is much more spontaneous," said Henry Wilkinson, director of intelligence analysis for the Risk Advisory Group, which keeps track of terrorist attacks and provides

security assessments for large events.

Views are mixed on the risk of such attacks in the United States.

"Obviously, the United States has invested huge sums of money and time and resources into its counterterrorism program and the scale of intelligence collection and training and other things reduces the threat significantly," Wilkinson said.

The availability of firearms in the United States makes it more likely that they would be the weapon of choice, he said.

A Canadian man who yelled the Arabic phrase "Allahu akbar" before allegedly stabbing an airport police officer in Flint, Mich., last month was indicted Wednesday on charges of committing an act of violence at an international airport and interfering with airport security, in what authorities say was a possible act of terrorism. But most acts of terror on U.S. soil, including several domestic terrorist attacks, have involved firearms and explosives. The 2015 San Bernardino, Calif., terrorist attack, which killed 14 people and injured more than 20, was a mass shooting.

"If someone was inclined to go and carry out a terrorist attack, it seems more logical that one would use the effective way of carrying out that attack, and if given choice between using a car and a machine gun, you will probably use a machine gun," Wilkinson said.

Still, U.S. law enforcement officials say the threat of such attacks is real. In an advisory issued in May, the Transportation Security Administration alerted the nation's trucking companies about the rising risk of rental trucks and hijackings and thefts for purposes of such an attack. The agency urged vigilance as terrorist groups continue to employ the less sophisticated tactics, which can be carried out with minimal planning and training, but have potential to inflict mass casualties.

"No community, large or small, rural or urban, is immune to attacks of

this kind by organized or 'lone wolf' terrorists," the TSA report said.

Act Four newsletter

The intersection of culture and politics.

From 2014 through April of this year, terrorists carried out 17 vehicle ramming attacks, killing 173 people and injuring 667, the report said. While the statistics represent only a fraction of all casualties from terrorist attacks worldwide, the potential for mass casualties and difficulty for law enforcement in planning for or preventing such attacks makes them attractive for would-be terrorists.

In the 1990s, barriers were designed to protect from car bombs after the 1998 vehicle bombings at U.S. embassies in East Africa. The use of barriers such as bollards skyrocketed after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks as officials sought to protect federal buildings and increase security at potential targets, such as airports and stadiums.

The latest threat has cities in Europe, Australia and North America making new investments, from barriers along a number of bridges across the River Thames in London to retractable bollards in the tourist area of Surfers Paradise in eastern Australia. Vehicle barriers along roads around the All England club were among the enhanced security measures surrounding Wimbledon this week.

In Washington, which is filled with high-profile targets as the nation's capital, law enforcement officials would not discuss specific tactics, but they acknowledged that they are pursuing various means to protect pedestrians, including the installation of more bollards on city streets.

"We are always trying to stay a step ahead of these terrorists," said Jeffery Carroll, the assistant D.C. police chief

## Obama returns to political fray for a Democratic Party cause

Former president Barack Obama will formally

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) also are scheduled to appear.

reenter the political fray this week less than six months after leaving office, headlining a fundraiser for a group that could prove critical to the Democratic Party's rebuilding efforts.

*[Obama, once a party outsider, seeks to restore some of Democrats' strength]*

Obama's appearance Thursday before a few dozen people at a closed-door event in the District on behalf of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee (NDRC) highlights the balance he is trying to strike as his party seeks to regain its footing at both the state and national levels. Obama does not want to cast "a long shadow," in the words of Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez, but he remains a central figure for a party that has yet to settle on a single strategy to combat President Trump.

Corry Bliss, the Congressional Leadership Fund executive director whose super PAC is affiliated with House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wis.), said in an interview that Democrats' efforts to regain ground will be hampered by the fact that "people in the middle think they are out of touch with the problems of ordinary Americans."

Perez said in an interview Sunday that while some Democrats have urged Obama recently, "You've got to get out front on issue X or issue Y," the former president wants instead to "build the bench" for the party. Democrats suffered a greater loss of power during Obama's tenure than under any other two-term president since World War II.

"It's a brand that is beholden to Nancy Pelosi and liberal, Left Coast elitism," Bliss said. "The Democrats couldn't find real America with Nancy Pelosi's chauffeur and a map."

"Because tomorrow's president is today's state senator. And he knows that very personally," said Perez, referring to Obama's experience as a state senator in Illinois. "When you lose 900 state legislative seats, those are people who could have been the next governors and senators and Cabinet positions, and that is something that he's very committed to."

Bliss added that the GOP already has multiple groups working on redistricting, "and I am confident they will be well funded and well run."

The NDRC's executive director, Kelly Ward, would not say how much the fundraiser is expected to bring in. But she said Obama "still has such a microphone" to help convince donors to invest in state-level races and help in "shining a light" on a phenomenon that influences the outcome of elections year after year.

In his final news conference as president in January, Obama said that he would wade into the national political debate only at "certain moments where I think our core values may be at stake," including voter suppression. Since then, he has issued statements on some of the Republicans' highest-profile assaults on his legacy, including Trump's executive actions to curb immigration and exit the Paris climate agreement, and congressional Republicans' efforts to unravel the Affordable Care Act through legislation crafted behind the scenes and without Democrats' input.

"That bully pulpit still very much rests with him," Ward said.

The fundraiser is a more targeted political act, focused on the upcoming legislative apportionment that will establish the electoral playing field for the next decade.

The NDRC aims to influence how state and federal legislative districts are drawn and hopes to create "a centralized, strategic hub for a comprehensive redistricting strategy," she said. The group's chairman, former U.S. attorney general Eric H. Holder Jr., and

The process of drawing districts differs by state: some have independent commissions, while most are drawn by state legislators and subject to approval by governors. But even with those variations, the 2017 and 2018 cycle will feature 38 gubernatorial races and 322 state senate races with four-year terms. Perez described it as "a 12- or 13-year cycle, because whoever wins is going to control redistricting in a very real way."

In a statement, Obama's spokesman Kevin Lewis said the

former president wants to support the committee's "efforts to address unfair gerrymandering practices that leave too many American voters feeling voiceless in the electoral process."

"Restoring fairness to our democracy by advocating for fairer, more inclusive district maps around the country is a priority for President Obama," Lewis said.

One senior Obama adviser, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk frankly, said the former president will be "supporting efforts that tackle the inequities of our current political system," although he would only weigh in publicly on political questions sparingly.

While still nascent, the new tax-exempt group represents the party's most ambitious effort yet to try to erase the steep disadvantage it faces on the state and federal level due to the maps put in place after the 2010 Census. A recent analysis by New York University's Brennan Center for Justice found that lines drawn in battleground states to aid one party over another — a process known as gerrymandering — provides the GOP with a "durable advantage" of at least 16 House seats.

The GOP's massive electoral gains in 2010, bolstered by a roughly \$30 million effort by party donors, has continued to benefit the party in subsequent elections.

In 2011, when state legislators and governors were drawing districts in many states, Republicans have 22 states in which they held the governor's mansion and both legislative chambers, while Democrats controlled 11. The situation has grown even bleaker for Democrats, since they have just six such trifectas now to the GOP's 25.

*[These 3 maps show how dominant Republicans are in America after 2016]*

But Democrats now see cause for optimism, in part because of several recent legal victories. In May the Supreme Court struck down two North Carolina congressional districts as unconstitutional, finding that lawmakers used race as the dominant factor when crafting their lines. The court has made similar rulings regarding Alabama and Virginia, and has agreed to take up a case regarding gerrymandering in the coming year.

And a federal judges panel in Texas, which found that lawmakers had intentionally discriminated against minority voters in crafting state and U.S. House seats in 2011, has scheduled a trial that will start Monday, which could lead to new maps for these districts in 2018.

Justin Levitt, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, said in an interview that if the justices side with the Democrats in upcoming cases involving Wisconsin and Texas, for example, it "will certainly change the way legislatures go about drawing lines."

Post Most newsletter

Most popular stories, in your inbox daily.

But he added that "the sea wall" Republicans have created through state and federal legislative maps has proved durable, and preserves state legislative districts that will make it more difficult to win state legislative seats in the next couple of years.

"Even though it is seven years later, that sea wall is still up, and that means Democrats are still fighting uphill," Levitt said.

For that reason, Democrats will strongly focus on critical gubernatorial races in the next couple of years, including in Virginia, New Jersey, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Holder already has spoken at an event on behalf of the Democratic nominee in the Virginia governor's race, Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam, and the NDRC is working with multiple state legislative candidates there. It is also weighing whether to back redistricting reform ballot initiatives in Ohio or elsewhere.

"In those states where gubernatorial approval is required for a redistricting plan, the race for governor is the largest prize in the competition to ensure one's party does not get completely punished in the redistricting process," said Stanford Law School professor Nathaniel Persily, who has served as a special master or court-appointed expert in New York, Connecticut, Maryland and Georgia to draw nonpartisan redistricting plans.